

Cha Dao: The Way of Tea

CAMELLIA SINENSIS (CHA) USE IN TRADITIONAL CHINESE MEDICINE, PART TWO: TCM HERBAL CHA DECOCTIONS

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Traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) herbal decoctions using *cha* date back to the San Guo dynasty (also known as the Shi Dai dynasty), which occurred between 25 AD and 220 AD.

The classic text *Guang Ya* was written by Zhang. This book discusses tea picking, tea cakes (tea pressed into bricks), drinking tea, and using tea as a topical skin treatment. The use of *cha* with fresh ginger and green onions to cure drunkenness was referenced.

Traditionally, it was common and very practical to sun-dry the herbs, then grind them into a powder to be added to boiled water. This is referred to as a "draft" in TCM. Many of the early *cha* herbal formulas were prepared and taken in this manner.

TCM Herbal *Cha* Formulas

A. *Chuan Xiong Cha Tiao San* (most well-known *cha* formula)

- *Radix ligustici W. (chuan xiong)*, 120 grams
- *Flos schizonepetae (jing jie)*, 120 grams
- *Angelicae dahuricae (bai zhi)*, 60 grams
- *Notopterygii (qiang huo)*, 60 grams
- *Radix glycyrrhizaea (gan cao)*, 60 grams
- *Herba asari (xi xin)*, 30 grams
- *Radix ledebouriellae (fang feng)*, 45 grams
- *Herba menthe (bo he)* ["never touch fire"], 8 grams

Preparation: Grind into powder, take in 6 gram doses with green tea beverage after a meal.

Function: Clears head, wind headache, chills, fever, vision, sinus, phlegm, excessive floating pulses. Nature of tea: bitter, cooling, nourishing, and clearing to the head. The cooling effect of the *cha* counteracts warming herbs.

Treats: Exopathic wind cold to alleviate pain, aversion to cold, nervousness, migraine headache, fever, dizziness, nasal obstruction, thin white tongue coating, floating pulse.

B. Four Related Formulas

1. *Cha Tiao San*

- *Radix scutellariae* (*haung qin*), sliced, cooked three times in wine, 60 grams
- *Radix ligustici* W. (*xiao chuan xiong*), 30 grams
- Spring green tea (*ya cha*), 9 grams
- *Radix angelicae dahuricae* (*bai zhi*), 15 grams
- *Herba menthe* (*bo he*), 15 grams
- *Flos schizonepetae* (*jing jie*), 12 grams

Preparation: Grind into powder, take 2-3 grams per dose in tea beverage.

Function: Wind heat invasion headache.

Analysis: *Huang qin* was added to *chuan xiong cha tiao san*; the warming herbs *qiang huo*, *xi xin* and *fang feng*, and harmonizing tonification herb *gan cao* were subtracted.

2. Ju Hua Cha Tiao San

- *Chuan Xiong Cha Tiao San* plus:
- *Flos chrysanthemum* (*ju hua*)
- *Bombyx batryticatus* (*jiang can*)

Preparation: Grind into powder, take with green tea.

Function : Both additional herbs clear wind heat and treat headache pain.

Analysis: Modifies *chuan xiong cha tiao san* for wind heat invasion and headache pain caused by muscle spasms with underlying internal wind.

3. Cang Er Zi San

- *Flos magnoliae* (*xin yi*), 15 grams
- *Fructus xanthii* (*cang er zi*), 7.5 grams
- *Radix angelica dahuricae* (*bai zhi*), 30 grams
- *Herba menthe* (*bo he*), 1.5 grams

Preparation: Grind into powder, 6 grams per dose, take with green tea.

Function: Expels pathogenic wind and promotes restoration of consciousness, treats rhinorrhea, stuffy nose, with turbid discharge without stopping and headache of forehead.

Analysis: A rather simple yet effective formula to concentrate on clearing the sinuses.

4. Chuan Xiong Cha San

- *Radix ligustici* W. (*chuan xiong*), 3 grams
- Tea (*cha*), 6 grams

Preparation: Makes one dose.

Function : Stops pain caused by wind cold attacking head, nasal blockage and dizziness, to migraines and arthralgia of the extremities.

Analysis: A very simple crude formula used for wind invasion.

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