

Nature's Field

An Electronic Journal for NSP Distributors

Ginseng

American and Korean

By Steven H. Horne

Our theme this month is Chinese herbs, and nothing says Chinese herbs quite as clearly as ginseng, the one Chinese herb practically everyone knows. Ginseng is one of the finest tonic herbs in the world and has been valued as a medicine for about 7,000 years. Difficult to cultivate, Korean ginseng (*Panax ginseng*) is very rare in the wild, so when an older wild ginseng root (like the one pictured in the photo) is found it can sell for thousands of dollars.

Wild populations of American ginseng (*Panax quinquefolium*) have similarly been destroyed, although some can still be found. Cultivation is a problem because it takes four years to get a crop, and unfortunately most cultivated ginseng is heavily sprayed with pesticides. That's why it's great that NSP has *wild* American ginseng.

Why is ginseng so highly prized?

Well, as we get older (I'll turn 52 this year) we usually start to feel the effects of our age. We just don't have the stamina we used to have. Our immune system often weakens, too. And for some people, sex drive diminishes as well.

All of this is due to increasing hormonal deficiencies and imbalances that occur as our glands get tired and start to wear out. Ginseng acts as a tonic to these glands. It helps restore energy and vitality to the elderly and enhances their immune function. It was traditionally taken by men and women (middle-aged and up) in Northern and Central China to help keep them healthy during the winter. It also acts as a sexual tonic in men, stimulating male hormone production, and helping overcome impotence in older men.

American ginseng, in particular, also acts as a digestive tonic. Digestive function tends to decline with age, causing an increase in fat deposition and a decrease in lean muscle mass. Wasting also occurs frequently in the elderly as they lose bulk and muscle



Photo by Steven Horne
Taken in China 1986

tone. Again, American ginseng was often given to the elderly in Native American society to keep them from becoming depleted.

Ginseng is also adaptogenic, meaning it reduces the output of stress hormones that contribute to the aging process. It has been shown to help build the blood, counteracting anemia, reduce high blood sugar, thus aiding diabetes, and to help balance blood pressure.

People often abuse ginseng in this country. They want to use it like caffeine as a stimulant, but traditional wisdom says that ginseng is not a remedy for the young (especially teenagers who are already suffering from raging hormones). It's also not a remedy for excess conditions (fever, inflammation, hyperactivity, etc.). It's a corrective for deficiency and has its best effect on those of us who are middle-aged and up.

As a daily tonic, you only need 1-2 capsules of ginseng per day to help maintain stamina and resistance. A little goes a long way, and more is not better in this case.

Korean ginseng is the more warming remedy, and works best for those who tend to be pale and cold. American Ginseng is a cooler remedy and better for those who tend to have a "hotter" constitution. Besides being available as a single, ginseng is also found in many NSP

formulas, especially the Chinese ones.

Selected References

The Encyclopedia of Medicinal Plants by Andrew Chevallier.

The Comprehensive Guide to Nature's Sunshine Products by Tree of Light Publishing

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It's Nature's Field's 20th Anniversary This Year

Twenty years ago, 1986—it was an amazing year for me. Not only was it the year I started teaching Manager School for Nature's Sunshine, it was also the year I launched the business that has become Tree of Light Publishing. Our first issue of Nature's Field was the May/June 1986 issue. So, this year marks our 20th anniversary.

It was also 20 years ago that I had the opportunity of traveling to Mainland China with Subhuti Dharmananda and two staff members from NSP's research and development department. It was part of our launch of NSP's Chinese herbal product line, which S. Dharmananda put together for Nature's Sunshine.

Although I had been studying herbs off and on for about 16 years, and had been strongly involved in herbal and natural health studies for the previous five years, Chinese herbal medicine opened up a whole new realm of understanding for me. The insights I gained into the human body and health from traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) have certainly deepened through the years, too.



Our Chinese herbalism theme for the month of February is part of a series of events focusing on Chinese herbalism this year. Besides our Sunshine Sharing newsletter and Herbal Hour Video on the topic, we're revising and updating our Ancient Herbs: Modern Times booklet on Chinese herbs. We're also putting out a new Chinese constitutional questionnaire to help a person determine which Chinese herbal formula is right for them. We've also updated all our Chinese herbal handouts for our Silver and Gold Associate Members to share with their organizations.

But this is only the beginning. I'm co-authoring a course on TCM for Nature's Sunshine people with K.P. Khalsa, who is one of my most respected colleagues in the American Herbal-



ists Guild. It will be a new NHC course and we will be team teaching this course before the NSP National Convention.

I'm also going to have a special birthday class (an herb walk and more) June 23-25 at my home in St. George, UT. Mark your calendars, you'll be hearing more about this later.

But the most exciting part is that we're going back to China. I'll be accompanying the TAC trip winners to mainland China in October to help with the Chinese Herbal Immersion Program that will be a part of that experience. Those of you who qualify for this event will have the opportunity to experience the "flavor" of China for yourselves, just like I did in 1986. The pictures on this page were taken on my trip to China. I'm really looking forward to going back and hope to see you there!

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What I've Learned From Chinese Herbal Medicine

by Steven H. Horne, RH (AHG)

When I heard Subhuti Dharmananda lecture on NSP's Chinese herb line in 1986, I immediately became fascinated with Chinese herbal medicine. It opened my mind to a whole new understanding of herbal therapy, and the more I have learned about it, the more valuable it has become.

I believe that Western herbalists will really improve their herbal practice by learning to understand some of the basic principles of traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM). It really contributes to one's ability to think like an herbalist, rather than thinking like a medical doctor who is using herbs.

So, with that in mind, I'm going to share some of the principles of TCM that have really helped me become a better herbalist.

Energy (Chi)

The first thing that attracted me to Chinese philosophy was its focus on energy. The Chinese call the basic life energy, chi. In the West, this same life energy was known as the vital force. Native Americans would probably call it Spirit. Yoda, the fictional character in Star Wars, might call it "the force." But, whatever you choose to call it, there is an energy operating in all life processes.

Modern western medicine sees life as a mechanical process. The entire practice of modern Western medicine is based on treating the body like a biochemical machine. Everything is either a physical problem or a chemical imbalance. Modern psychiatry even tends to see mental and emotional problems as purely physical phenomenon to be treated with chemicals.

Many people in the West are familiar with the idea that there are energy fields in and around the body, but Western minds tend to believe that these energy fields are created by the body. In Chinese medicine, the belief is reversed, the body is created by the energy fields. In fact, all traditional systems see it that way, and so do I.

What is life if it is not a process of energy? If you've ever had someone close to you die, you know what a weird sensation it is to see the lifeless body of someone you love. The parts are all there. The chemicals are all there. But something very essential, but intangible is missing.

In spite of this obviously recognizable fact that there is an energy about life that disappears when we die, modern Western medicine still maintains its chemical/mechanistic view of health. TCM, however, sees health as adjusting energy. As the energy (or chi) is balanced and regulated, the biochemistry and structure of the body are rebalanced. So, the focus is not on chemistry or structure, it is on energy.

Once you understand this, Chinese herbalism doesn't seem so mysterious. Furthermore, you will also understand all traditional systems of herbal medicine better, since all of them are based on looking at energy as the causal factor affecting the structure and chemistry of the body. Furthermore, since personality and emotion are manifestations of energy, it becomes very clear that one can't separate mind and body. Imbalances in the energy of the body manifest in both the personality and the structure and function of the body. It is energy that links these two phenomena.

Excess and Deficiency

Prior to listening to Subhuti, the primary focus of herbal therapy that I'd learned about was cleansing. That's because Western herbal medicine focuses very heavily on the importance

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of detoxification and supporting elimination. The reason for this is obvious. As a whole, Americans tend to be given to excess.

We eat too much, work too much, and tend to do everything to excess. The almost insatiable appetite for material goods is a manifestation of this tendency to excess, which creates not only tremendous stress in our lives, but also causes us to pollute our environment. Food is plentiful, but not always of the best quality. Obesity is rampant. Obviously, we're getting too much of a good thing.

That's why learning to "let go" by regularly cleansing and detoxifying our bodies is so important. It reduces the excess, bringing balance back to our lives.

China on the other hand, has been a nation where a large part of the population has lived in poverty. They have been subject to frequent famines. So, their medicine has evolved around tonifying or nourishing therapy. They are less focused on cleansing and more focused on building. So, when it comes to tonic formulas, which make up for deficiency, the Chinese are the masters.

NSP's Chinese Herb Line

NSP's entire Chinese herb line consists of pairs of formulas. One formula in each pair reduces some kind of excess. In effect, it cleanses away some kind of overbuild up of energy. As this built up energy dissipates, congestion is relieved and toxins are eliminated.

The second formula in each pair strengthens some kind of deficiency. In other words, it builds up or increases an area that is deficient in energy. As energy flow is restored, strength and vitality return to that area of the body.

Each of these formulas also affects people's emotional state. In fact, I find the emotional indications to be some of the most useful in determining which formula I should select. These emotions also are paired off. For instance, the wood element gives people the drive that allows them to succeed in business or other endeavors.

When this energy is excessive a person will be irritable, aggressive, angry and frequently frustrated. A whole host of health problems will develop centered on this excess of wood energy. Conversely, when a person has a deficiency of this energy they will lose that will to succeed. They will feel tired, disappointed, depressed and discouraged, although they may still be prone to occasional outbursts of anger. Again, a whole host of physical health problems will develop around this deficiency of wood energy.

I find this stuff easy to understand because I'm a poet and this way of looking at things is very metaphorical. It's seeing the big picture. In the West, we're so used to trying to be "pre-

cise" about everything that we often are completely unable to see the bigger picture. This makes it very difficult for some people to understand traditional herbal medicine of any kind (including Chinese herbal medicine). So, they try to categorize the formulas in terms of physical diseases, and miss the whole point of NSP's Chinese product line.

The Five Elements

Since we can't see energy, we only know it exists because we can observe its effects on tangible objects that we can see. Thus we describe energy metaphorically. When we see a person who has a lot of drive and passion we say they are "on fire." When we see a person who is unsure of themselves in a given situation we might comment that they were "wet behind the ears." A person who is sensible is "down to earth." A person who is tough "has a lot of mettle (metal)."

Need More Information?

This month's Herbal Hour Video,

TCM: Ancient Wisdom

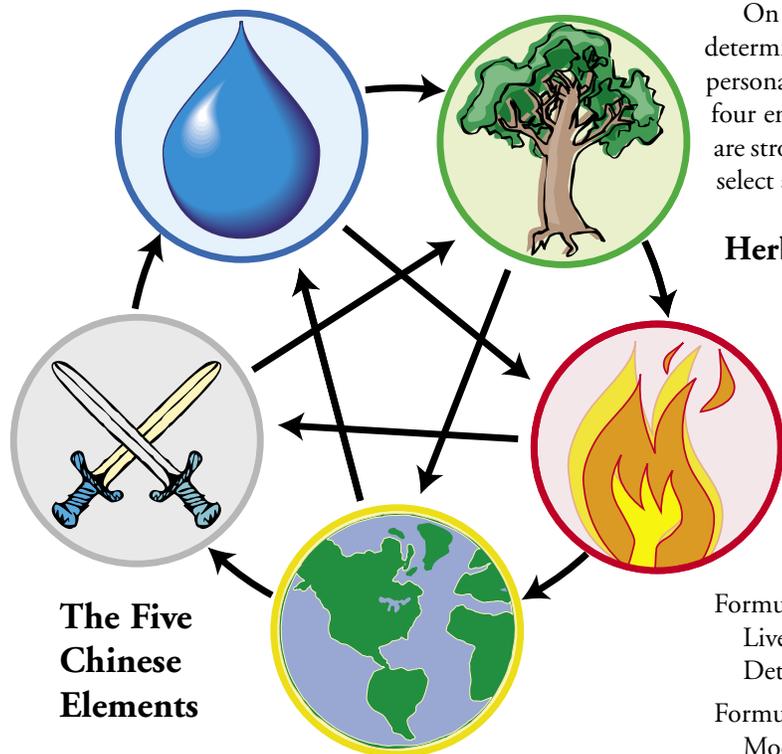


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It is no different in Chinese medicine, except that they have developed an elaborate system of health care based on these observations. They have noted over the course of a couple of thousand years that people with these particular “energies” are prone to certain types of diseases. They have also correlated their remedies with this system and classified them by how they affect the body’s energies.

It is not voodoo, mysticism or mysterious. It’s just better thought out than our Western definitions of “fiery” or “wishy-washy” personalities. The key is to recognize that what is being observed is energy and that energy is what moves life.

Above is a depiction of the five elements of Chinese herbal medicine—wood, fire, earth, metal and water. There are also two sets of arrows on this chart. The outer set of arrows is called the creation cycle. This means that each element feeds or enhances the element which follows it. Water nurtures wood and makes it grow. Wood burns to create fire. Fire leaves ash (earth) behind. Metal is mined from the earth. Water condenses on metal.

The inner set of arrows represents the destruction or control cycle. Wood grows out of the earth. Fire tempers metal. Earth dams up and channels the course of water. Metal cuts or chops wood. Water douses fire. So, for example, an excess of water would reduce fire, but enhance wood.

All this theory, however, does little good, unless we can put it to practical use. Well, we’ve devised a lot of materials this month to help you do just that. One of them is inside this newsletter.

On the last page you’ll find a little quiz that will help you determine your current energetic balance by assessing your personality. This quiz will not only help you understand the four energies, it will also help you determine which qualities are strongest in you and which are weakest. This will help you select an appropriate formula to balance your energy.

Herbal Formulas

Here’s a quick guide to formulas for balancing these energies. I’ve included both Western and Chinese formulas, and I want you to take note that there are usually many Western options for formulas that treat excess (i.e., have a cleansing effect), but very few Western options for formulas that treat deficiency (i.e., have a building or tonic effect). This is simply a validation of what I was explaining previously about the difference between Chinese and Western Herbalism.

Formulas that reduce Wood Energy: Liver Balance, LIV-J, Liver Cleanse Formula, BP-X, Enviro-Detox, All Cell Detox

Formulas that increase Wood Energy: Chinese Blood Build, Mood Elevator

Formulas that decrease Fire Energy: Chinese Stress Relief, Stress-J, Nutri-Calm, Herbal Sleep, Nerve Eight

Formulas that increase Fire Energy: Nervous Fatigue Formula, Adrenal Support, Thyroid Support

Formulas that decrease Earth Energy: Anti-Gas with Lobelia, Chinese Anti-Gas, Papaya-Mint Tablets, BLG-X, Catnip and Fennel

Formulas that increase Earth Energy: Spleen Chi Activator, Trigger Immune

Formulas that decrease Metal Energy: Breathe EZ, AL-J, Sinus Support

Formulas that increase Metal Energy: Chinese Lung Support, Trigger Immune

Formulas that decrease Water Energy: Kidney Activator, Chinese Kidney Activator, Urinary Maintenance, Kidney Drainage Formula, JP-X, Cranberry Buchu

Formulas that increase Water Energy: KB-C

I find the Chinese herb formulas, especially the ones for weakened conditions, invaluable in my work as an herbalist, but I find that the concepts of TCM have greatly enhanced my ability to understand herbs and know how to apply them effectively. As you learn to apply them, principles of TCM will do the same for you.



Kimberly Balas' Clinician's Corner

Liver Stagnation, Burning Feet and Supplements for Kids

Liver Stagnation

I have a client who has not had a period for a year. She is on Chinese Blood Build now. She went to the acupuncturist who says she is not blood deficient but has liver stagnation. I'd like to know if the Chinese Blood Build will take care of liver stagnation or do we need to go in another direction?

P.

I use the Blood Build formula for lots of stagnant issues, but what the Chinese doctor is calling stagnant may not be the same as what I'm talking about. Blood Build deals with deficient or weakened liver energy and a deficiency of blood as a result. If there is plenty of blood and energy, but it is stuck, then the Chinese Liver Balance is the Chinese formula to get it moving.

I would also look at using folic acid and possibly Guggul here too. This would create a methyl folation chain for the hormone combustion and would help reduce the stagnation. The guggul will also help with glycerol combustion in the cells so there is more transport activity.

Burning Feet

I have been on Eight B-Complex and 6 Pantothenic Acid a day for over 8 months, just for the issue of burning feet, as suggested a long time ago on the NSPadvisor forum. Nothing has changed. It is about to drive me to Amitriptylyn or Neurontin. Is there anything else you can think of to help me? I know how to cleanse, so that's not the issue. I've already done all that.

N.

Generally speaking if you aren't seeing improvement on a program after two or three weeks it isn't working, so you can stop and try something else. Have you tried extremely high levels of Thai Go for its Xanthones? These help with the underlying "forest fires" in the body.

There are a couple of the Chinese tonic formulas that have indications for burning in the hands or feet. These include Nervous Fatigue Formula and HY-C.

Supplement Program for Kids

What would be a good, simple, daily program for kids? Currently, I give my children the Herbasaur's Chewable Multi-Vitamin and a little Herbal CA at night (capsule opened and mixed in water

with Stevia). Is this enough or is there something else I should add? I want to keep the program simple and do-able.

Is Herbal CA actually a source of calcium, or does it just help whatever else you're taking in to be absorbed? Is this the best choice for kids who eat little dairy? What about Liquid Chlorophyll? Is it a substitute for the vitamins?

We have a good diet. We eat organic 90% of the time, and have no sodas and very little sugar. Raw veggies or fruit are consumed two to three times daily.

Also, while I'm asking about kids I'll throw this out there—is there anything that helps or encourages proper tooth alignment that I could start a 9-year-old on? His teeth are large and quite crooked on top with gaps in between, and crowded together on the bottom. Thanks for any input or either of these questions!

G.

Sounds like you are doing a great job here. I would consider adding some Thai Go for its antioxidant value. Liquid chlorophyll is NOT a substitute for anything. It is just copper and chlorophyll. It is great for helping keep the blood delivering the nutrients though.

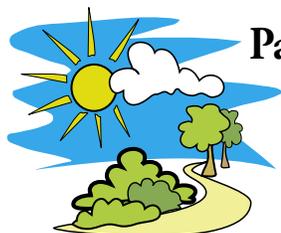
The Herbal CA is a great source of calcium for kids and adults because it is bioavailable—our bodies can absorb it quickly and easily. The calcium in dairy is not available because it becomes bound after pasteurizing. It mostly is just good for producing allergies and stomach upset.

I understand that minerals are what help keep the teeth aligned. I would add the Mineral Chi or Colloidal Minerals to the child's program to help with the teeth.

Editor's Note: Congratulations to Kim on the birth of a healthy baby girl, Lily, last month. We wish both mother and baby all the best.

Kimberly Balas is a board certified naturopath and co-owner of Vital Solutions. She is an instructor for Tree of Light and is the head of our research department. She is available for personal consultations. To schedule a consult call Balanced Health Solutions at 321-626-9243.





Parting Thoughts from the Herb Guy

A Little Chinese Quiz

by Steven H. Horne, RH (AHG)

In addition to the Chinese questionnaires I put together for Sunshine Sharing and our Silver and Gold Associates, I created this little five-element quiz that can help you determine which of the Chinese five elements you tend to be strongest in (excess) and weakest in (deficient). This questionnaire is based entirely on personality traits.

Directions: On each row put a 5 by the characteristic that best describes you, a 4 by the characteristic that is the second best at describing you, a 3 by the next best characteristic, a 2 by a characteristic doesn't describe you very well, and a 1 by the characteristic that least describes you. There should be a 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 on each row.

Example:

<u> 5 </u> Calm	<u> 1 </u> Driven	<u> 2 </u> Scattered	<u> 4 </u> Deliberate	<u> 3 </u> Precise
<u> 4 </u> Philosophical	<u> 2 </u> Decisive	<u> 1 </u> Charming	<u> 5 </u> Diplomatic	<u> 3 </u> Reserved

Water	Wood	Fire	Earth	Metal
<u> </u> Calm	<u> </u> Driven	<u> </u> Scattered	<u> </u> Deliberate	<u> </u> Precise
<u> </u> Philosophical	<u> </u> Decisive	<u> </u> Charming	<u> </u> Diplomatic	<u> </u> Reserved
<u> </u> Private	<u> </u> Assertive	<u> </u> Talkative	<u> </u> Supportive	<u> </u> Formal
<u> </u> Serene	<u> </u> Irritable	<u> </u> Playful	<u> </u> Easy-Going	<u> </u> Well-mannered
<u> </u> Stubborn	<u> </u> Aggressive	<u> </u> Flighty	<u> </u> Overprotective	<u> </u> Aloof
<u> </u> Creative	<u> </u> Dramatic	<u> </u> Curious	<u> </u> Comforting	<u> </u> Idealistic
<u> </u> Patient	<u> </u> Direct	<u> </u> Optimistic	<u> </u> Nurturing	<u> </u> Gracious
<u> </u> Willful	<u> </u> Demanding	<u> </u> Witty	<u> </u> Predictable	<u> </u> Inhibited
<u> </u> Mystical	<u> </u> Direct	<u> </u> Spontaneous	<u> </u> Tactful	<u> </u> Neat
<u> </u> Wise	<u> </u> Bold	<u> </u> Cheerful	<u> </u> Relaxed	<u> </u> Elegant
<u> </u> Stubborn	<u> </u> Fast	<u> </u> Unpredictable	<u> </u> Slow	<u> </u> Careful
<u> </u> Deep	<u> </u> Loud	<u> </u> Nervous	<u> </u> Consistent	<u> </u> Clean
<u> </u> Intellectual	<u> </u> Passionate	<u> </u> Flirtatious	<u> </u> Sociable	<u> </u> Analytical
<u> </u> Introspective	<u> </u> Active	<u> </u> Expressive	<u> </u> Involved	<u> </u> Refined
Total <u> </u>	Total <u> </u>	Total <u> </u>	Total <u> </u>	Total <u> </u>

Total your scores at the bottom. The element with the highest score is the one you are most excessive in. The element with the lowest score is the one you are most deficient in. You can actually use this information to help you select appropriate Chinese herbal formulas for your constitution.

Try it out on your friends and family. See what “elements” they are strongest in and weakest in. It’s a great way to introduce people to Chinese herbs.

Steven H. Horne is a professional member and past president of the American Herbalists Guild, a certified iridologist with the International Iridology Practitioners Association and a gifted teacher and consultant in the field of natural health care. He is president of Tree of Light Publishing.

