



Early stages of a warm epidemic

From the Treatise on Warm Epidemics by Wu Youke, 1640¹

Translation by Steve Clavey

In the early stages of a warm epidemic (溫疫 wēn yì) there is first chills and then fever; in the days that follow there will be only fever and no chills. In the first two to three days the pulse will be neither floating nor deep but it will be rapid. Fever will continue day and night, but the evening will be worse with headaches and body aches.

AT THIS TIME the pathogen is occupying the space in front of the spine but behind the Stomach and Intestines, and despite the aching of the head and body, the pathogenic heat has leapt over the channels (浮越於經 fú yuè yú jīng) and cannot be regarded as a cold damage exterior pattern, so you cannot just strongly force a sweat with formulas such as *Gui Zhi Tang* (Cinnamon Twig Decoction) or *Ma Huang Tang* (Ephedra Decoction). The pathogen is not in the channels, so forcing a sweat will only damage their exterior protective qi and the fever will not diminish.

You also cannot purge them, because the pathogen is not gathered in the Intestines, so purging will only damage their Stomach qi and their thirst will only get worse. What you should use is *Reach the Source Drink* (達膜原飲 *Dá Mó Yuán Yǐn*).

Reach the Source Drink

(達膜原飲 *Dá Mó Yuan Yin*)

Bing Lang	6g	Areca Semen
Hou Po	3g	Magnolia officinalis Cortex
Cao Guo Ren	1.5g	Tsaoko Fructus (kernels only)
Zhi Mu	3g	Anemarrhenae Rhizoma
Bai Shao	3g	Paeoniae Radix alba
Huang Qin	3g	Scutellariae Radix
Gan Cao	1.5g	Glycyrrhizae Radix

Decoct down to 80% and take warm after noon.

Comments

Bing Lang (Areca Semen) can disperse and it can grind away obstructions, so in eliminating lurking pathogens it is a dredging and facilitating herb that also gets rid of the miasmatic qi associated with the semitropical south. *Hou Po* (Magnolia officinalis Cortex) breaks up perverse knotted qi. *Cao Guo* (Tsaoko Fructus) is intensely pungent and aggressive in eliminating the base that a lurking pathogen occupies.

The power of the three combined can penetrate directly into the hidden nest to defeat the pathogenic qi and vent it rapidly out of the membrane source (膜原 *mó yuán*). That is why the formula is called *Reach the Source*.

Fever damages the body fluids so *Zhi Mu* (Anemarrhenae Rhizoma) is added to nourish yin. Heat damages the nutritive qi so *Bai Shao* (Paeoniae Radix alba) is added to harmonise the blood. *Huang Qin* (Scutellariae Radix) cools any residual drying heat. *Gan Cao* (Glycyrrhizae Radix) is used to harmonise the middle.

These four herbs are there only to harmonise the intense actions of the three

main herbs, like giving a bit of water to one who is thirsty; these latter four are not there to uproot the pathogen.

Also if the epidemic pathogen has seeped out into the channels then you should make adjustments depending upon the channel in order to lift it outward

1. *Wen Yi Lun* 溫疫論 by Wú Yǒuxìng 吳有性 (aka 吳又可 Wú Yòukè).

Lei Feng's adjustment of Da Mo Yuan Yin

This variation on Wu Youke's *Reach the Source Drink* by Lei Feng could be even better suited to the very damp-oriented covid-19.

Damp obstructing the membrane source

(from the *Shi Bing Lun* (時病論 Treatise on Seasonal Diseases by Lei Feng)

If the patient has alternating chills and fever resembling malaria with a tongue coat slippery white, this is a pathogen obstructing the membrane source (邪遏膜原 *xié è mó yuán*) and the Vent and Disseminate the Membrane Source Method should be used.

Vent and Disseminate the Membrane Source Method

達膜原法 *Dá Mó yuán Fǎ*

Treats damp malarial-like disorders with severe cold and mild heat, aching body with sweat, heavy limbs and epigastric fullness.

Hou Po	3g	Magnolia officinalis Cortex, prep with ginger
Bing Lang	4.5g	Areca Semen
Cao Guo Ren	2g	Tsaoko Fructus baked (kernels only)
Huang Qin	3g	Scutellariae Radix soaked in wine then dry-fried
Gan Cao	1.5g	Glycyrrhiza Radix
Huo Xiang	3g	Pogostemonis/Agastaches Folium
Ban Xia	4.5g	Pinellia Rhizoma, prep with ginger

3 slices of raw ginger as guide.

or drain it away. For example, if the patient has pain in the flanks, deafness, chills and fever, nausea and bitter taste in the mouth, then this is pathogenic heat seeping into the *shaoyang* channel: just add 3g of *Chai Hu* (Bupleuri Radix) to the original formula.

If the patient has pain in the back and neck, this is pathogenic heat seeping into the *taiyang* channel: just add 3g of *Qiang Huo* (Notopterygii Rhizoma seu Radix) to the original formula.

If the patient has pain around and in the eyes, the bone of the eyebrow hurts, the sinus is dry and they can't sleep, this is pathogenic heat in the *yangming* channel, add *Ge Gen* (Puerariae Radix) 3g to the original formula.

Patterns are not all the same, they can be fast or slow, mild or severe. Herbs, too, are different: many or few, gentle or intense. Each should be used at the proper time and in the right situation. So those doses are just guidelines, do not get stuck on them.

Some patients will have a mild exposure and their tongue coats will be white but thin and their fever will also be low without a rapid pulse. When in these patients the pathogen does not turn toward the interior, then one or two bags of *Reach the Source Drink* will resolve the illness.

For those in whom the exposure is stronger, when they take the *Reach the Source Drink* they will sweat the epidemic pathogen out through the surface. But if they do not or cannot sweat, this shows the pathogen has set up camp in the membrane source (膜原 *mó yuán*) and has cut off from each other the interior and the exterior. The interior cannot reach the exterior, the exterior cannot reach the interior. In this situation you cannot force a sweat. Some patients or their families see dispersing herbs in the prescription and they insist on using thick clothing, heat packs or steaming to make the patient sweat. This is really not the right method.

So in this situation when the interior and exterior are cut off, at this time there is no pathogen roaming around in or seeping into the channels, so you do not need to use the "three yang channel method" described above. Just use the *Reach the Source Drink* by itself and that will be enough.

When the exposure is more serious, the tongue will be covered all over in a thick and white coat. In cases like this, when they take

Reach the Source Drink they will not sweat the pathogen out, but instead the pathogen will drop into the interior.

When the root of the tongue turns yellow and the yellowness reaches the middle of the tongue, the pathogen is gradually entering the Intestines. At this point it becomes a pattern for *Sān Xiāo Yǐn* (三消飲 Three Dispersing Drink—see Separate transmission to the exterior and interior, Page 9).

If the patient is feverish, thirsty, sweating profusely and the pulse is long, tidal and rapid, this means the pathogen is preparing to leave the membrane source and head toward the exterior for release. This is a *Bai Hu Tang* (白虎湯 White Tiger Decoction) pattern.

If the tongue coat is pure yellow and the patient also has symptoms showing that the pathogen has gathered in the Intestines, then this is a *Cheng Qi Tang* (承氣湯 Order the Qi Decoction) pattern.

In some cases the pathogen will break out and leave the membrane source within two or three days; in other cases even after two or more weeks there may be little change in the symptoms, showing that the pathogen is still in the membrane source.

In still other cases, patients have few if any symptoms for four or five days then suddenly on day five or six it turns serious.

When the source qi (元氣 *yuán qì*) is strong the toxin will transform easily and will leave the membrane source; when the source qi is weak the pathogen will not easily transform and leave the membrane source, i.e. it will not turn and pass [either outward or inward so that it can be expelled through sweating or stool].

If the patient also has another illness or long-term weakness, even if they have a mild exposure the pathogen does not easily leave the membrane source, and so how can the illness be resolved? Without an exit route, the pathogen remains and the illness cannot resolve. It goes on for days, the pathogen knots and clumps ever more deeply and the illness worsens. These cases are often mistaken for deficiency patterns so tonifying herbs like *Ren Shen* (Ginseng Radix) or *Huang Qi* (Astragali Radix) are used, but the more tonification the worse the pathogen becomes, right up until they die.

So we need to be careful.