LESSON 7: Aromatic Herbs to Transform Dampness & Herbs that Relieve Food Stagnation

Aromatic Herbs that Transform Dampness

Dampness, as mentioned in lesson 5, is an accumulation of fluid in the body; it is caused from either a dysfunction of the Spleen and its transformation and transportation mechanism, or from the Kidney not governing the water. In this lesson we will be discussing dampness that arises from Spleen deficiency.

When the Spleen’s transformation and transportation functions are obstructed by dampness aromatic herbs come to the rescue. Aromatic herbs are light and have a tendency to the lift the qi; they assist the spleen with their warming, pungent and aromatic qualities, and are ascribed to the qualities of transforming sludge to mist.

This group of herbs acts on the spleen and stomach, relieving symptoms of distention in the epigastrium, abdomen and chest, nausea, and lack of appetite or thirst. Due to the yang nature of these herbs they may injure yin, so care must be taken to ensure yin is preserved.

Herbs in this section are:

- Huo Xiang - *Agastache rugosa*
- Hou po - *Magnolia officinalis*
- Cang zhu - *Atractylodes lancea*
- Bai dou kou - *Amomum kravanh*
- Sha ren - *Amomum villosum*

Of these herbs, Huo xiang is most effective for relieving the exterior and stopping vomiting; Cang zhu is most effective for drying dampness and expelling wind damp; Hou po is most effective for relieving fullness and distention; Sha ren is best for middle burner obstructed by dampness and Bai dou kou is best for upper and middle burner obstruction by dampness.

Herbs that Relieve Food Stagnation

Food stagnation is the accumulation of food in the middle burner. It is may be caused by a number of factors such as: the liver over acting on the spleen (may be associated with emotional irritation), a spleen or stomach
deficiency, eating too fast, eating too much, eating excessively hot or cold natured foods, or too much greasy foods.

Herbs that relieve food stagnation do so by reducing or dissolving the accumulation or they guide the stagnation out through the digestive tract.

Herbs in this section are:

- Shan zha - *Crataegus pinnatifida*
- Mai ya - *Hordeum vulgare*
- Shen qu - *Massa Fermentata*
- Lai fu zi - *Raphanus sativis*
- Ji Nei jin - *Gigeriae galli Endothelium corneum*

Of these Mai ya is most effective for food stagnation from carbohydrates and tonifies the spleen as well; Shan zha is for excessive consumption of meat; Shen qu is most effective for over consumption of alcohol and starches.
Huo Xiang  *Agastache rugosa*  

**Other names:** tu huo xiang, agastache, guang huo xiang (pogostemon), patchouli

**Plant description:** Good quality has many leaves, blue-green stems and branches, and is aromatic (agastache); or has a coarse stem, soft and thick leaves, and is green and aromatic (pogostemon). In general *Herba Pogostemi* is considered better quality.

**Part used:** stem and leaves

**Habitat, ecology and distribution:** Throughout China (agastache); Guangdong, Guangxi, Taiwan, Yunnan (pogostemon); harvested June to July when plant grows vigorously

**History:** Miscellaneous Records

**Constituents:** methylchavicol, anethole, anisaldehyde, d-limonene, p-methoxycinnamaldehyde, alpha-pinene, 3-octanone, 3-octanol, p-cymene, locten-3,01, linalool, beta-humulene, alpha-ylangene, beta-farnesene (agastache), patchouli alcohol, benzaldehyde, eugenol, cinnamaldehyde, pogostol, patchoulipyridine, epigualpyridine, caryophyllene, beta-elemene, alloaromadendrene, y-patchouleme, beta-gurjunene, alpha-guaiene, balencene, alpha-gurjunene, y-cadinene, o-guaiene, alpha-patchouline, calamenene (pogostemon)

**Energetics Properties and Channels Entered:** pungent and slightly warm, entering the Lung, Spleen and Stomach meridians

**Actions and Indications:** antibiotic, stomachic, anti-emetic, anti-diarrhea, antipyretic, diaphoretic, anti-fungal, antibacterial (active against *leptospira*), mild sedative, anti-spasmodic

**Medical Research:**
- Preparations of huo xiang have a significant inhibitory effect in vitro on many pathogenic fungi and leptospirosis. In the latter case, high concentrations on the order of 31 mg/ml are required to have any killing effect.

**Toxicity, Contraindications and cautions:** yin deficiency with heat signs and stomach fire

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Medicinal uses:
- Aromatically transforms dampness: for turbid dampness creating internal obstruction. For dampness obstructing the middle burner and interfering with the spleen's transformative functions, presenting with symptoms of abdominal or epigastric distention and fullness, nausea, vomiting, reduced appetite and a white, moist tongue coating.

- Harmonizes the middle burner and stops vomiting: commonly used for cases of nausea or vomiting due to dampness obstructing the middle burner; also useful for morning sickness.

- Releases the exterior and transforms turbidity: for exterior disorders with dampness including the early stages of damp warm-febrile diseases or summerheat, as well as externally contracted wind-cold with internal injury from dampness, with the accompaniment of dampness interfering with spleen.

Pharmacy and dosage: 4.5-9g, not to be cooked for more than 15 minutes.

Major Combinations:
- With ban xia (Rhizoma Pinelliae Ternatae) and cang zhu (Rhizoma Atractylodis) for nausea and vomiting; fullness and distention of the chest, epigastrium and abdomen; reduced appetite and diarrhea due to turbid dampness obstructing the middle burner.
- With huang lian (rhizome Coptidis) and zhu ru (Caulis Bambusae) for vomiting due to damp heat.
- With sha ren (Fructus Amomi) for morning sickness.
- With bai zhu (Rhizoma Atractylodis Macrocephalae) and dang shen (Radix Codonopsis Pilosulae) for vomiting and diarrhea due to spleen and stomach deficiency.
- With pei lan (Herba Eupatorii Forunei) for symptoms such as fatigue, stifling sensation in the chest, abdominal distention, nausea, and a thin, greasy coating on the tongue associated with damp summerheat.
- With zi su ye (Folium Perillae Frutescentis) and hou po (Cortex Magnoliae Officinalis) for fever and chills, stifling sensation in the chest and epigastrium, wind-cold dampness obstructing the middle burner.
- With huang qin (Radix Scutellariae Baicalensis), lian qiao (Fructus Forsythiae Suspensae), and hua shi (talcum) for early stages of damp warm febrile disease with fever, achy limbs, lethargy, abdominal distention and dark scanty urine.

REFERENCES
2. Bensky, D. and Gamble, A.; Chinese Herbal Medicine Materia Medica; Eastland Press, Seattle; 1993; p214
3. Bensky, D. and Gamble, A.; Chinese Herbal Medicine Materia Medica; Eastland Press, Seattle; 1993; p214
4. Bensky, D. and Gamble, A.; Chinese Herbal Medicine Materia Medica; Eastland Press, Seattle; 1993; p214
5. Bensky, D. and Gamble, A.; Chinese Herbal Medicine Materia Medica; Eastland Press, Seattle; 1993; p214
Image www.futurosity.com
Hou po  *Magnolia officinalis*  

**Other names:** chuan po, magnolia bark

**Plant description:** Good quality bark is thick, finely textured, oily, and aromatic, with a deep purple inner surface.

**Part used:** bark; the flower (hou po hua) is pungent, warm, and aromatic, with similar but weaker actions than the bark, but focuses more on the upper and middle burners and also regulates the liver qi. It is often used in treating a stifling sensation in the chest or stomachache due to disharmony between liver and stomach, dosage 3-6g.

**Habitat, ecology and distribution:** Sichuan, Hubei, Zhe jiang, Jiang xi, harvested April to June (the bark of plants 15-20 years old is used).

**History:** Divine Husbandman's Classic of Materia Medica

**Constituents:** magolol, iso-magnolol, honokiol, machilol, eudesmol, magnocurine

**Energetics Properties and Channels Entered:** Bitter, pungent, warm aromatic, entering the large intestine, lung, spleen and stomach meridians

**Actions and Indications:** antimicrobial, antiviral

**Medical Research:**
- Hou po has an inhibitory effect in vitro against a variety of pathogenic bacteria including *Streptococcus pneumoniae, b-hemolytic Streptococcus, Shigella sonnei, and Staphylococcus Aureus.*
- When used for artificially induced viral hepatitis in guinea pigs, huo po showed and ability to improve pathological changes.
- In treating amebic dysentery, on clinical study of 46 patients with amebic dysentery treated with huo po, 43 recovered and 2 improved with the vast majority of symptoms resolved by the third day and negative stool cultures by the fifth day.
- Decoctions of hou po stimulated mouse and guinea pig intestinal specimens

**Toxicity, Contraindications and cautions:** Hou po is safe orally, however, when administered intravenously it does exhibit some curare (poison arrow) like effects. The LD50 for an intraperitoneal injection of a decoction is 6g/kg, and the lowest lethal dose in cats is 4.25g/kg. Use with caution during pregnancy, some traditional sources believe this herb to antagonize Ze xie (*Rhizoma Alismatis*) and Han shui shi (*Calcitum*)
**Medicinal uses:**
- Promotes the movement of qi, transforms dampness, and resolves stagnation: used when dampness distresses the spleen and stomach or in the cases of food stagnation with such symptoms as chest and/or abdominal distention and fullness, loss of appetite, vomiting, and diarrhea. This herb is an important herb for reducing and eliminating distention and fullness, especially when due to excess.

- Warms and transforms phlegm and directs rebellious qi downward: for wheezing, primarily due to obstruction by phlegm with coughing and a stifling sensation in the chest.

**Pharmacy and dosage:** 3-9g

**Major Combinations:**
- With cang zhu (Rhizoma Atractylodis) and chen pi (Pericarpium Citri Reticulatae) for stomach excess manifesting as epigastric fullness and distention, acid regurgitation, distasteful belching, and nausea or vomiting.
- With zhi ke (Fructus Citri Aurantii) for epigastric and abdominal distention due to qi and food stagnation.
- With da huang (Radix et Rhizoma Rhei) and zhi shi (Fructus Immaturus Citri Auranti) for constipation due to accumulation and stagnation.
- With ren shen (Radix Ginseng) and gan cao (Radix Glycyrrhizae Uralensis) for distention and fullness due to cold from deficiency.
- With xing ren (Semen Pruni Armeniacae) and ma huang (Herba Ephedrae) for cough and wheezing with copious sputum due to congested fluids.

**REFERENCES**
1 Bensky, D. and Gamble, A.; Chinese Herbal Medicine Materia Medica; Eastland Press, Seattle; 1993; p216
Image www.suntenglobal.com
Cang Zhu *Atractylodis rhizoma*

**Other Names:** sojutsu (Japanese), changchul(Korean), Southern Atractylodes root, Shan cang zhu

**Parts used:** Root

**Habitat, ecology and distribution:** Superior quality from Mao shan (Mt. Mao), *Mao shan cang zhu*, in Jiangsu province and near by city Nan jing (jing cang zhu), more commercial varieties harvested in other areas of China

**History:** Materia Medica Arranged According to Pattern

**Constituents:** Volatile oils (attractylol, elemol, hinesol, patchoulene etc.), alcohol, trytophane, sesquiterpine glycosides

**Energetics Properties and Channels entered:** Acrid, warm and bitter, enters the Spleen and Stomach meridians

**Actions & Indications:** dries dampness, induces sweating, strengthen the spleen and stomach, helps vision

**Medical research:** none noted, some research has been done on cang zhu's ability to treat pain associated with Diabetic neuropathy (reference needed)

**Toxicity, Contraindications and cautions:** Internal heat from yin deficiency and deficiency sweating from exterior deficiency.

"*Acrid, warm and extremely drying, it is contraindicated in those with dry clumped stools or excessive sweating*" Harm and Benefit in the Materia Medica

**Medicinal uses:**

- Dries dampness and strengthen the spleen: dampness blocking the middle jiao therefore blocking transformation and transportation, symptoms: reduced appetite, diarrhea, distention of the epigastrium, nausea, vomiting, thick greasy tongue coating.

- Promotes sweating and dispels wind-damp: due to exterior attack of wind, cold and damp causing chills, headache, fever, body ache and nasal congestion

- Eliminate damp from lower Jiao/ burner: vaginal discharge, swollen and sore joints.
• Improves Vision: night blindness

**Pharmacy & dosage:** 3-9g, dry fry to enhance harmonizing the middle jiao

**Major combinations:**
• with Chuan xiong (*chuanxiong rhizoma*), Bai zhi (*Angelicae dahuricae radix*), Qiang huo (*Notopterygium rhizoma*) for exterior wind cold damp
• with Shi gao (*gypsum fibrosum*) and Zhi mu (*Anemarrhenae rhizoma*) for early stages of damp heat
• with yi yi ren (*Coicis semen*) for damp painful obstruction where damp is predominant symptom
• with hei zhi ma (*sesami semen nigrum*) for night blindness, cataracts and glaucoma

**REFERENCES**
1 Bensky, D. and Gamble, A.; Chinese Herbal Medicine Materia Medica; Eastland Press, Seattle; 1993; Image www.tcm.health-info.org
Bai Dou Kou *Amomum kravanh*

**Other names:** *Amomum cardamomum*, bai kou ren, kou ren, white cardamom fruit

**Plant description:** Good quality is large full and thick skinned

**Part used:** seed

**Habitat, ecology and distribution:** Southeast Asia, harvested in October to December when fruit is yellow green and not completely ripe

**History:** Omissions from the Materia Medica

**Constituents:** borneol, camhor, humulene, eucalyptole, pinene, caryophyllene, laurelene, terpinene, myrtenal, carvone, sabinene

**Energetics Properties and Channels Entered:** pungent, warm aromatic, entering the lung, spleen and stomach meridians

**Actions and Indications:** anti-tubercular, anti-flatulence, laxative

**Medical Research:**
- In experiments on guinea pigs, preparations of bai dou kou were helpful in increasing the potency of small doses of streptomycin against tuberculosis
- α-pinene and β-pinene expells phlegm and inhibits cough
- 8-Cineole can have calming, pain relieving and asthma inhibiting effects
- β-pinenean has strong antibiotic and anti-inflammation effects; geraniol has strong antibiotic and antifungal effects
- Small amounts of bai dou kou can stimulate intestine but large amount inhibits it. When taken orally geraniol inhibited the activities of the digestive tract of rats. Small amount mildly promotes urination
- Rids guinea pigs of round worms

**Toxicity, Contraindications and cautions:** Contraindicated in cases of blood and yin deficiency.

Use with caution in cases with out damp cold
**Medicinal uses:**

- Aromatically transforms dampness: used in damp warm febrile diseases with such symptoms as a stifling sensation in the chest, lack of appetite and a very greasy tongue coating.

- Warms the middle burner and causes rebellious qi to descend: for vomiting due to cold from deficiency of the spleen and stomach or stomach cold.

- Promotes the movement of qi and transforms stagnation: for stagnant qi of the spleen and stomach with such symptoms as fullness in the chest or epigastrium with distention and lack of appetite.

**Pharmacy and dosage:** 3-6g, add at the end of decocting or (preferably) as a powder in doses of 1.5-4.5g.

**Major Combinations:**

- With xing ren (*Semen Preuni Armeniacae*) and yi yi ren (*Semen coicis Lachryma jobi*) for headache, stifling sensation in the chest, fatigue, dark urine with reduced output, diarrhea and usually accompanied by a white, greasy tongue coating as in the early stages of damp warm febrile diseases.

- With huang qin (*Radix Scutellariae Baicalensis*), hua shi (*talcum*) and zhu ling (*Sclerotium Polypori Umbellati*) for damp warm febrile disease in the middle burner with recurrent fevers and body aches.

- With sha ren (*Fructus Amomi*) for fullness and a stifling sensation in the chest, vomiting and diarrhea due to spleen and stomach deficiency with a subsequent accumulation of turbid dampness.

- With huo xiang (*Herba Agastaches seu Pogostemi*) and ban xia (*Rhizoma Pinelliae Ternatae*) for nausea and vomiting, epigastric discomfort and reduced appetite due to either damp cold or food stagnation.

- With chen pi (*Pericarpium Citri Reticulatae*) for fullness and discomfort in the chest and abdomen, belching, nausea, vomiting and diarrhea due to spleen and stomach deficiency with a subsequent accumulation of turbid dampness.

- With hou po (*Cortex Magnoliae Officinalis*) for distention due to qi obstruction or damp cold in the spleen and stomach.

**REFERENCES**


Image www.chineinformations.com
Sha Ren *Amomum villosum*

Family: Zingiberaceae

Other names: chun sha ren, grains of paradise fruit, cardamon

Part used: seeds

Plant description:

Habitat, ecology and distribution: Guangdong, Guangxi, Southeast Asia, harvested in August to September when fruit has ripened

History: Origins of the Materia Medica

Constituents: camphor, borneol, bornyl acetate, linalool, nerolidol, limonene

Energetics Properties and Channels Entered: pungent, warm, aromatic, entering the spleen and stomach meridians

Actions and Indications: Stomachic, carminative, expectorant, tonic, anti-emetic, anti-spasmodic interferon inducent

Medical Research: none noted

Toxicity, Contraindications and cautions: in cases of yin deficiency with heat signs and blood deficiency due to drying nature

Medicinal uses:

- Transforms dampness and stops vomiting: used when dampness distresses the spleen or stomach with symptoms of discomfort in the epigastrium, nausea, abdominal pain, and diarrhea

- Promotes the movement of qi and strengthens the stomach: for spleen or stomach stagnant qi patterns that manifest in loss of appetite or epigastric or abdominal distention, pain and diarrhea

- Calms the fetus: for morning sickness or restless fetus

- Also used to prevent tonifying herbs from causing stagnation

Pharmacy and dosage: 1.5 - 6g, added near the end of decoction, should be crushed prior to use
Major Combinations:
• With hou po (*Cortex Magnoliae Officinalis*) and bai dou kou (*Fructus Amomi Dravanh*) for epigastric and abdominal pain, distention, nausea and vomiting due to qi obstructing the spleen and stomach
• With bai zhu (*Rhizoma Atryactylodis Macrocephalae*) and dang shen (*Radix Codonopsis Pilosulae*) for abdominal pain and diarrhea due to dampness obstructing the spleen and stomach. This combination is also used for morning sickness
• With mu xiang (*Radix Aucklandiae Lappae*) and zhi shi (*Fructus Immaturus Citri Aurantii*) for qi stagnation due to food stagnation
• With sang ji shen (*Ramulus Sangjisheng*) for restless fetus

REFERENCES
1 [http://www.herbalists.on.ca/resources/freemaniAMMOMUM.html](http://www.herbalists.on.ca/resources/freemaniAMMOMUM.html)
Images www.futurosity.com
Shan Zha *Crataegus pinnatifida*  
山楂

**Other names**: shan zha rou, bei shan zha, nan shan zha, hawthorn fruit, crataegus, C. cuneata

**Plant description**: Rounded slices shrunken and uneven, 1 - 2.5 cm in diameter, 2 - 4 mm thick. Externally red, wrinkled, with small grayish-white spots. Pulp dark yellow to pale brown. Transverses slices of the middle part showing 5 pale yellow kerns, mostly fallen off, and loculi hollowed. Some slices exhibiting a slender fruit stalk or remains of calyx.

**Part used**: fruit

**Habitat, ecology and distribution**: Shandong, Hebei, Henan, Liaoning, Jiangsu, Zhejiang, Guangdong, Guangxi, Yunnan; harvested in autumn when fruit has ripened

**History**: Supplement to the Extension of the Materia Medica

**Constituents**: crategolic acid, citric acid, tartaric acid, flavone, sugars, glycosides, vitamin C

**Energetics Properties and Channels Entered**: sour, sweet, slightly warm, entering the liver, spleen and stomach meridians

**Actions and Indications**: antibiotic, vasodilator, uterine restorative, cardiovascular restorative, circulatory, nervous sedative, vermifuge

**Medical Research**:
- In experiments involving rabbits, intravenous administration of a preparation of Shan zha lowered blood pressure for up to three hours. In other experiments this herb caused systemic vasodilation. Experiments in China and other countries have shown that Shan zha from plants grown in various parts of the world may be useful in the prevention and treatment of atherosclerosis. In animal experiments, changes have been observed in both serum cholesterol levels and the degree of potency of the coronary arteries and aorta. In one clinical trial of 20 cases, the mean serum cholesterol decreased from 253 mg% to 207 mg%. Statistically this was considered to be highly significant.
- Preparations of Shan zha have a significant inhibitory effect in vitro against *Shigella app.* and *Pseudomonas aeruginosa*.
- Hawthorn fruit is hypolipidemic in rabbits fed a high cholesterol diet.

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A 20% solution of Shan zha and sugar was used in two series of patients with acute bacillary dysentery. Of the combined total of 54 patients, only 3 did not show significant improvement with in one week.

**Toxicity, Contraindications and caution**: use cautiously for cases of spleen and stomach deficiency without food stagnation, and in cases with acid reflux.

**Medicinal uses**:
- Topically, hawthorn leaf is used as a poultice for boils, sores, and ulcers.
- Hawthorn fruit preparations are used as a wash for sores, itching, and frost bite.
- Orally, hawthorn is used for cardiovascular conditions such as congestive heart failure (CHF), coronary circulation problems, and arrhythmia's. It is also used to increase cardiac output reduced by hypertension or pulmonary disease, to treat hypotension and hypertension, atherosclerosis, hyperlipidemia, and Buerger's disease. Hawthorn is also used as a sedative, antispasmodic, astringent, and diuretic. It is also used for gastrointestinal conditions such as indigestion, enteritis, epigastric distention, diarrhea, and abdominal pain. Hawthorn fruit is also used orally to treat tapeworm infections, acute bacillary dysentery, and amenorrhea.

**Pharmacy and dosage**: 9-15g, use raw for blood stasis, and dry-fried for food stagnation. When used alone the dosage may be as high as 30g.

**Major Combinations**:
- With mai ya (*Fructus Hordei Vulgaris Germinantus*) and shen qu (*Massa Fermentata*) for abdominal distention, belching and reduced appetite associated with food stagnation. Also effective for childhood malnutrition due to improper breast-feeding.
- With zhi ke (*Fructus Citri Aurantii*) for epigastric and abdominal distention.
- With mu xiang (*Radix Aucklandiae Lappae*), rou dou kou (*Semen Myristicae Fragrantis*) and bian dou (*Semen Dolichoris Lablab*) for abdominal distention and pain, diarrhea and dysenteric disorders; dry fry ingredient before concocting.
- With chuan xiong (*Radix Ligustici Chuanxiong*) and dang gui (*Radix Angelicae Sinensis*) for menstrual pain and post partum lower abdominal pain due to blood stasis.
- With dan shen (*Radix Salviae Miltiorrhizae*) for painful obstruction of the chest due to blood stasis in the heart meridian.
- With xiao hui xiang (*Fructus Foeniculi Vulgaris*) for hernial conditions with testicular pain and swelling associated with prolapse.

**REFERENCES**
Shen Qu *Massa fermentata*

*Other names*: medicated leaven, shen chu, shinkyoku (Japanese), singok (Korean), spirits leaven

*Plant description*: A fermented product containing wheat flour, bran and various herbs. It may contain Xing ren (*Armeniaceae semen*), Chi xiao dou (*Phaseoli semen*), Qing hao (*Artemisiae annua herba*), and Cang er cao (*Xanthii herba*). Good Quality consists of dry, aged pieces without insect holes or an unpleasant moldy smell.

*Part used*: whole mixture

*History*: Materia Medica of Medicinal Properties

*Habitat, ecology and distribution*: Varies, see each individual herb

* Constituents*: yeast, glycosides, vitamin B

*Energetics Properties and Channels Entered*: sweet, pungent and warm, entering the spleen and stomach meridians

*Actions and Indications*: stomachic

*Medical Research*: None of significance noted

*Toxicity, Contraindication and cautions*: use with caution during pregnancy and in cases of stomach fire

*Medicinal uses*:
- Reduces food stagnation and harmonizes the stomach: for stomach cold with food stagnation or accumulation with such symptoms as epigastric and abdominal fullness or distention, lack of appetite, borborygmus and diarrhea
- Used to aid digestion and absorption of minerals
- Promotes qi flow, regulates middle jiao, and unbinds the stomach. Best for digestion of carbohydrates and grains

*Pharmacy and dosage*: 6-15g, dry-frying enhances the relieving food stagnation actions
Major Combinations:
• With bai zhu (Rhizoma Atractylodis Macrocephalae) for food stagnation and diarrhea due to spleen deficiency
• With zhi ke (Fructus Citri Aurantii) for reduced appetite and fullness and distention of the epigastrium and abdomen due to cold stagnation
• With bing lang (Semen Arecae Catechu) for childhood malnutrition or focal distention of the abdomen due to food stagnation
• With mu xiang (Radix Aucklandiae Lappae) and sha ren (Fructus Amomi) for abdominal pain associated with food stagnation
• With exterior releasing herbs for diarrhea accompanying externally contracted disorders

REFERENCES
Image www.futurosity.com
Mai Ya *Hordeum vulgare*  
麦芽

**Other names:** da mai ya, barley sprout, malt

**History:** Grand Materia Medica

**Plant description:**

**Part used:** grain seed

**Habitat, ecology and distribution:** through out China, harvested year round

**Constituents:** amylase, invertase, dextrin, phospholipid, maltose, glucose, vitamin B

**Energetics Properties and Channels Entered:** sweet and neutral, entering the liver, spleen and stomach meridians

**Actions and Indications:** Stomachic, enzymatic digestant, carminative, aids digestion process in candidiasis, nutritive, anti-galactagogue

**Medical Research:**

- The combination of enzymes and vitamin B in mai ya are useful in aiding digestion
- Preparations of powdered mai ya and sugar were used, together with enzyme preparations and vitamins, in treating 161 cases of hepatitis. As measured by a reduction in symptoms, hepatomegaly, and transaminase levels, the treatment was successful in 108 cases. It was much more effective in acute than chronic cases.

**Toxicity, Contraindications and cautions:** according to Materia Medica of Diet Therapy long-term use of mai ya may injure the kidneys.

**Medicinal uses:**

- Reduces food stagnation and strengthens the stomach: for poor digestion due to stagnation and accumulation of undigested starchy food, as well as poorly digested milk in infants. Also for weak digestion and loss of appetite in cases of spleen deficiency
- Inhibits lactation: for women who are discontinuing nursing, or for distended and painful breasts
- Facilitates the smooth flow of liver qi: for constrained liver qi manifesting as a stifling sensation and distention in the epigastrium or ribs, belching and loss of appetite
Pharmacy and dosage: 6-15g directly as a powder, or 12-30g as a decoction; large doses of 60g for cessation of lactation. Raw form it is neutral and used mainly to guide out and reduce, dry-fried tends to be warmer and more potent in strengthening the spleen, improving appetite, and inhibiting lactation; powdered is stronger for aiding in digestion of grains/starches.

Major Combinations:  
- With shen qu (Massa Fermentata) for indigestion due to food stagnation; Also for breast tenderness and swelling associated with discontinuation of nursing. Use larger doses and dry-fried  
- With gan jiang (Rhizoma Zingiberis Officinalis) for indigestion due to spleen and stomach deficiency  
- With tonifying herbs to prevent undesirable side effects such as gas and distention

REFERENCES  
1 http://www.herbalists.on.ca/resources/freemanHORDEUM.html  
Image www.tcm.health-info.org

Similar herb

Gu ya 谷芽  Setariae (Oryzae) fructus germinatus

Other names: grain sprouts typically rice, Gu refers to grain sprouts but can be sprouted rice, unhusked rice or millet. Millet is often called Su ya.

Part used: seed

Energetics Properties and Channels Entered: Sweet and neutral, enters the spleen and stomach meridians

Medicinal uses:  
- Dissolves Food Stagnation, Harmonizes the Middle Jiao, Promotes Digestion  
Mildly improves food digestion. Treats indigestion and poor appetite.  

- Strengthens the Spleen, Improves Appetite, Treats poor digestion, diarrhea, and poor appetite
**Lai Fu Zi  *Raphanus sativus***  

**Family:** Cruciferae

**Other names:** luo bo zi, diakon seed, radish seed, turnip seed, raphanus, raifukushi (Japanese), naebokja (Korean)

**Part used:** seed

**Plant description:** basal leaves, scattered hairs on the leaves and stems, and a taproot. Flowers are white, lavender, or yellowish with pink or purple veining. It favors disturbed areas such as roadsides.

**Habitat, ecology and distribution:** throughout China, harvested in summer until autumn when seeds have ripened

**History:** Materia Medica of Ri Hua Zi

** Constituents:** erucic acid, oleic acid, linolenic acid, linoleic acid, glycerol sinapate, raphanin

**Energetics Properties and Channels Entered:** acrid, sweet and neutral, entering the lung, spleen and stomach meridians

**Actions and Indications:** antimicrobial, antiseptic

**Medical Research:**
- Raphanin has a significant inhibitory effect against such bacteria as *Staphylococcus Aureus*, *Streptococcus pneumoniae*, and *E. coli*
- Preparations of lai fu zi have a significant inhibitory effect in vitro against many pathogenic fungi

**Toxicity, Contraindications and cautions:** preparations of lai fu zi were slightly cardiotoxic in experiments with frog heart specimens. Contraindicated in weak qi or deficiency. Not to be used with Ren shen (*Ginseng radix*), Shu di huang (*Rehmanniae radix preparata*), and Zhi he shou wu (*Polygoni multiflori radix preparata*).

**Medicinal uses:**
- Reduces food stagnation and transforms accumulation: for food stagnation accumulating in the middle burner with fullness and distention, belching with a rotten smell, acid regurgitation or abdominal pain with difficult diarrhea

- Descends qi and reduces phlegm: for chronic productive cough or wheezing.
• Most effective in cases due to excess

**Pharmacy and dosage:** 6-12g, raw for food stagnation and raising qi, dry fried for productive cough and directing qi downward

**Major Combinations:**
• With shan zha (*Fructus Crataegi*), shen qu (*Massa Fermentata*) and chen pi (*Pericarpium Citri Reticulatae*) for abdominal distention, borborygmus, belching, acid regurgitation and diarrhea due to stagnation in the stomach and intestines
• With zhi ke (*Fructus Citri Aurantiij*) for focal distention, belching and loss of appetite due to food stagnation
• With ban xia (*Rhizoma Pinelliae Ternatae*) for damp phlegm induced cough and wheezing. This combination is also used for distention and vomiting due to food stagnation
• With xing ren (*Semen Pruni Armeniacae*) for chronic productive cough
• With su zi (*Frucus Perillae Frutescentis*) and bai jie zi (*Semen Sinapis Albae*) for chronic cough and wheezing, especially that due to excessive phlegm disorders

**REFERENCES**
Image chineinformations.com
Ji Nei Jin  *Gigeriae galli Endothelium corneum*  

**Other names:** Chicken gizzard, literal English translation: chicken inner gold, keinaikin (Japanese), kyenaegum (Korean)

**Part used:** lining of chicken gizzard

**History:** Divine Husbandman’s Classic of Materia Medica

**Constituents:** Proteins: ventriculcin, amylase, pepsin, diastase, keratin; Amino acids: lysine, histidine, arginine, glutamic acid, aspartic acid, leucine, threonine, serine, glycine, alanine, casteine, valine, methionine, isoleucine, tyrosine, phenylalanine, proline, tryptophane; vitamin B1, B2, C, nicotinic acid

**Energetics Properties and Channels Entered:** Sweet and neutral, enters the urinary Bladder, small intestine, spleen and stomach meridians

**Actions and Indications:** stomachic, antiemetic, anti-enuresis

**Medicinal uses:**
- Strongly reduces food stagnation of various types. Improves the spleen transformation and transportation function; treats nausea, vomiting, diarrhea
- Childhood nutritional impairment from accumulated undigested food
- Transforms urinary and biliary stones
- Secures the kidney essence and halts enuresis: spermatorrhea, urinary incontinence and childhood bedwetting

**Toxicity, Contraindications and cautions:** Caution with Spleen deficiency where food stagnation is absent. “If there is accumulation, it reduces it. If there is no accumulation, it reduces one’s primal qi.” Harm and Benefit in the Materia Medica. Not suitable for vegetarians and vegans. There has been one reported case of epistaxis following ingestion.¹

**Pharmacy and dosage:** 3-9 g

**Major Combinations:**
- With Mai ya (*Hordei fructus germinatus*), and Shan zha (*Crataegi fructus*) for indigestion, fullness and distention of epigastrium and abdomen.

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¹ Harm and Benefit in the Materia Medica.

• With Tu si zi (*Cuscutae semen*) and Wu wei zi (*Schisandrea fructus*) for spontaneous emissions

REFERENCES
1. Bensky, D. and Gamble, A.; Chinese Herbal Medicine Materia Medica; Eastland Press, Seattle; 1993

Image futurosity.com