

Qi Ye Lian Analgesic

By Susan Johnson, L.Ac.

I will never forget the first case that I treated with Qi Ye Lian Analgesic. It was 1985 and her name was Rosalis. She was a 69-year-old stained glass artist who lived in her studio very close to her art, where she could work at any time of the day or night. She lived and literally breathed stained glass. I remember the actual conversation that I had with May, the owner of Mayway Corporation, then located on Broadway, in San Francisco's North Beach. I was frustrated with the results that I had gotten with all of the arthritis formulas in patent form I had tried so far. I remember it was at least five. May recommended that I try Qi Ye Lian, but couldn't tell me too much about it.

Rosalie was burnt out on boiling herbs. I'd tried most of the pills available; we didn't have a whole lot to lose. The only listed ingredient was Qi Ye Lian. The bottle showed the pinyin character for the name, but at that time it did not list the Latin name, which is Scheffler root. My gut said to do it; my mind said it was irresponsible. I gave it to her anyway... and that turned out to be a very good call.

Rosalie had done glass work all of her life and she had lead poisoning in her hands. On all of her fingers, every knuckle was swollen to the size of an unshucked almond, and both hands were a deep purple color. She complained of pain all the time, but did not use any medications or aspirins to deal with it. We were in a Lightworker's group together, and that was how she dealt with the pain – through meditation and prayer. She took the dose recommended on the bottle: four pills TID. The first thing we noticed was a very dramatic change in the color of her hands, after three weeks. They had turned to a slightly dusky, but much more healthy, rose color, and the pain had lessened by 25-30%. I became determined to find out more about Qi Ye Lian. I looked in every store in Chinatown for the herb, for books, for more information, but found almost nothing. I did discover that it was hard to get, and would only be available for a short time each year, and then it would be gone again. I heard that it was a wild herb and therefore seasonal, and had limited production. I stocked up on it. I talked to my teachers, I went to the library; I found nothing.

As there were no signs of any adverse effects, we increased her dose to 6 pills TID, knowing that the recommended doses are usually conservative and that hers was a severe case. Of course we also did acupuncture, mostly a Tung's Points combination called Correct Tendons for the neck and upper back, with 2.5" insertion on Hou Xi and Da Bai (SI3 and LI3) through and through the palm of each hand. Occasionally, I would cup her neck and shoulders. Even though she continued to do her art (and livelihood) working with lead and glass, slowly, over the course of the following year, each knuckle returned to a normal size and the pain lessened and lessened, until it was virtually gone.

We worked together for a total of two years. She took Qi Ye Lian the entire time, along with Liu Wei Di Huang for a terribly dry mouth and Xiao Yao Wan for irritability. I still

love the two stained glass lamps I received in trade for our work, one of which hung in the De Young Museum for some time. It was a good case. When I left San Francisco, I did not see Rosie for about 10 years, after which time we met up at a memorial service for a mutual friend. I was very pleased to see that after 10 years, her hands still looked great, without any further treatment.

Toward the end of the first year of Rosie's treatment, I was browsing the new books at China Books in the Mission, always hoping to find Qi Ye Lian, and there it was, in the brand new 1986 edition of "Pharmacology and Applications of Chinese Materia Medica" by Chang and But. Five whole pages, in fine print. I was thrilled.

Qi Ye Lian is derived from the root, stems and leaves of *Schefflera arboricola* Hayata. It has a bitter taste and a "warm" property. It is a muscle relaxant, channel stimulant, detumescent, and analgesic. It is used as a folk remedy for pain, rheumatic arthritis, fractures, sprains, lumbago and stomachache. For you brainy types, its chemical composition is as follows: the herb has analgesic, sedative and anticonvulsant properties. The active components are organic acids including fumaric acid, succinic acid, malic acid, citric acid, γ -hydroxybutyric acid, tartaric acid, and aconitic acid. The herb also contains alkaloids, glycosides (cardiac glycosides and saponins), proteins, amino acids, resin, and phenolic substances.

Discussed at length in this pharmacology book by Chang and But are the following effects: analgesic, sedative and hypnotic, anticonvulsant, antispasmodic on gastrointestinal muscles, bronchodilatory, uterine stimulant, cardiovascular, and toxicity (which is virtually none). I cannot possibly go into "all of that" here, but I do highly recommend these books, and Qi Ye Lian. Due to its stimulating effects, Qi Ye Lian is contraindicated in pregnancy.

I have personally used this formula in hundreds of cases, and am very pleased with the results. It consistently stops pain, not by blocking one's sensation of pain, but rather by bringing down inflammation and by increasing circulation. It is an excellent anti-inflammatory. I have found that Qi Ye Lian can take up to six weeks for good effect with some people, so do not give up too early. The only side effect that I have ever noticed is a slight increase of intestinal gas with a few patients. It seems to work better in chronic, rather than acute situations, though I have used it for both. I like it. Plum Flower makes it now, so it is always available. Thank you Mayway!

Published in The Mayway Mailer, Winter 2005, Issue 6, Volume 3