

The February 2021 Newsletter of The GP-TCM Research Association



Monthly Chinese Materia Medica Highlights

Isatis (*Isatis indigotica*, Brassicaceae/Cruciferae, 菘蓝, left) and *baphicacanthus* (*Baphicacanthus cusia*, Acanthaceae, 马蓝, right)



Native to China and widely cultivated all over China, *isatis* is the botanical origin of the Chinese medicinal *daqingye* (*Isatidis Folium*) and *banlangen* (*Isatidis Radix*). Coming from different parts (leaf and root) of the same plant, these 2 medicinals are under the same category of medicinals that clear heat and resolve toxicity. Attention should be paid that *daqingye* tends to cool the blood and disperse macules, while *banlangen* is especially good at benefiting throat and reducing swellings. Native to south China and sometimes cultivated, *baphicacanthus* is the botanical origin of the Chinese medicinal *guangdongdaqingye* (*Baphicacanthis Cusiae Folium*) and *nanbanlangen* (*Baphicacanthis Cusiae Rhizoma et Radix*). Being different parts (leaf and rhizome and root) of the same plant, they are mainly produced and used in south China (such as in Guangdong) claiming similar functions with that of *daqingye* and *banlangen*.

According to <http://www.theplantlist.org/>, *Isatis indigotica* and *Baphicacanthus cusia* are synonyms of *Isatis tinctoria* and *Strobilanthes cusia*, respectively. Different forms of binomial nomenclature are sometimes seen in botanical and pharmaceutical (such as Chinese Pharmacopeia) literature. This phenomenon may reflect the fact that pharmacy does not keep in step with the latest progress in botany for some reason.

菘蓝

相逢北国在田间
怕涝喜温又耐寒
若是家中无此物
时闻热血起波澜

马蓝

闻香移步得时闲
南国初逢绿水前
欲做躬身勤探问
原来相识已多年

The above colour photographs, English texts and Chinese poems are contributed by Prof **Hubiao Chen** (Hong Kong), Dr **Ping Guo** (Hong Kong) and Prof **Jiqing Liu** (Shenzhen), respectively. This column is advised by Prof **Zhongzhen Zhao** (Hong Kong).