

The November 2019 Newsletter of The GP-TCM Research Association



Monthly Chinese Materia Medica Highlights

Chinese foxglove (*Rehmannia glutinosa*, Scrophulariaceae, 地黄, left) and
purple foxglove (*Digitalis purpurea*, Scrophulariaceae, 洋地黄, right)



Native to China, Chinese foxglove reflects the concept of *daodi* medicinal material. Its tuberous root is used medicinally and is produced and assembled in Henan province with designated natural conditions, ecological environment, as well as the particular attention to cultivation, harvesting and processing techniques. In Chinese *materia medica*, either its fresh or dried tuberous root clears heat, cools the blood, stops bleeding, nourishes *yin*, and engenders fluids; while the processed product nourishes *yin*, supplements the blood, benefits the essence, and replenishes the bone marrow.

Native to Europe, purple foxglove witnessed the procedure of drug discovery. Since purple foxglove was proved to be the active ingredient of a “secret remedy” for dropsy, its dried leaf was used as a crude drug and led to the discovery of cardiac glycosides from digitalis species for the treatment of heart failure.

地黄

根植沃土紫花身
守望田园朴亦真
莫待寒来自冷静
风雨未改幼时心

洋地黄

生于外域紫花身
涉水云山韵犹存
问遍千人无作答
为何有毒却强心

The above photographs, texts and poems are contributed by Prof **Hubiao Chen** (Hong Kong), Dr **Ping Guo** (Hong Kong) and Prof **Jiqing Liu** (Shenzhen), respectively. We thank Prof. **Zhongzhen Zhao** (Hong Kong) for advising this column and thank Dr **Qihe Xu** (London) for help with editing.

Inspired by the poems by Prof Liu, Prof. Zhao wrote another piece on Chinese foxglove (地黄):
根植中州沃土深，别号地髓朴亦真。可干可熟可鲜用，天下谁人不识君？