Just the Beginning of an Ending:

**MENOPAUSAL MANAGEMENT BY CHINESE HERBAL MEDICINE**

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Menopausal Management by Chinese Herbal Medicine

An essay presented to the Academy for Traditional Chinese Medicine Qing-Bai to fulfill the requirements for the degree of herbalist

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When I look for the origin of things, it goes back to infinity; when I look for their end; it proceeds without termination.

Zhuang Zi (C.369-286 B.C.)
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Preface

My first so called encounters with menopause and menopausal symptoms date back several years ago, seeing my own mother and other female family members experience ‘menopausal symptoms’.

In my practice I encounter more and more women with menopausal complaints in the ages ranging from approximately 42 till 75 years. I recon with our increasingly ‘graying’ population and people generally reaching higher ages, the group of women going through menopause will get increasingly bigger.

Menopause is not a disease, but the way women go through these transitional/ menopausal years (from fertility to non-fertility) and the severity of accompanying symptoms is directly related to modern lifestyle habits in the broadest sense of the word.

For all these reasons I found this a very interesting topic to further explore in the form of this essay; one of the requirements for obtaining the “herbalist license” from the Academy Qing-Bai. Thereby, in my continuing and probably everlasting journey through the TCM-field, I strongly believe that Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), which includes Chinese herbal Medicine, can offer one of the best “natural” ways to help female’s go through these “natural transitional years” called menopause as smoothly as possible.

A word of thanks and appreciation of course goes out to my close family members and a few dear friends for their endless support and believe in me.

I wish to express my deepest respect and gratitude to Prof. Dr. Li Jie whom profoundly changed my life in several ways. Thank you for you’re inspiring lessons and insightful herbal theories.

Renate Bekker
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Introduction

Menopause and “menopausal syndrome’s” belong in Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) to the department of medicine for women: “Zhong Yi Fu Ke”, or as one would call it in Western terminology; Gynecology department.

One of the first explanations in TCM on menopause and female physiology is recorded in the Huang Di Nei Jing, the book of the Yellow Emperor written approximately 5000 years ago. It divides female reproductive physiology in seven year cycles, starting at seven and ending with menopause at seven times seven: forty-nine. Interestingly the average age of menopausal women from this prospective has hardly changed and ranges today between 46-52 years, with an averaged of 51.4 years in Holland.

Now a day an estimated 80% of females in Western society will experience several menopausal associated complaints varying from a view hot flashes per hour to multiple per day; sweating at night, having mood swings end so on.

Socio-cultural wise women can have distinctively different experiences with menopause; depending on geographic’s, status, lifestyle etc. This paper will basically focus on the way women in modern Western society go through the menopausal period.

An attempt is made to broadly shed some light on the menopausal process; trying to address and explain the basic understandings of the TCM-theory behind the “menopausal transitions” and possible practical treatment through Chinese herbal medicine.
Chapter 1
The definition of Menopause in Western Medicine

Menopause is a natural phenomenon in the life of a women occurring in the age span ranging from approximately 46 till 52 years. Beware, it is not a disease, but rather a biological transformation process from being fertile to becoming non fertile. Menopause is also referred to as the climacteric. The term climacteric comes from the Greek word for rung of a ladder and refers to the transmission years/period in a women’s life. It encompasses pre/peri-menopause, menopause and the early post-menopausal years. Approximately amidst the climacteric the actual menopause occurs. Menopause literally means ‘end of menstruation’.

To better understand the concept of menopause or climacteric, and the possible problems that may occur around it, first there needs to be looked at the biophysical process in the uniqueness of women.

1.1 General reproductive physiology of Women

A female’s egg supply starts developing in the womb and is already determined by the time she is born. The time span in which she releases the eggs extends from menarche/puberty to menopause.

In the fetal period the process is of egg production is called oogenesis. Oogonia, the diploid stem cells of female gametes, will transform into primary oocytes producing up to 7 million; about 2 million will be left in the cortical region of the immature ovary by the time she’s born. At puberty +/- 400,000 remain. Continued reduction of oocyte numbers occurs during the reproductive years through ovulation and atresia. Only 400-500 actually are being ovulated. At the age of thirty, there are still some 100,000 oocytes left in the ovaries. Around the time menopause could occur, 50-52 years, approximately 1000 remain. By this time, most of the oocytes that remain often are histological deviated and do not respond to gonadotropins, (hormones from the pituitary gland) anymore.

1.1.1 H-P-O Axis

The female reproductive system is controlled and regulated by the H-P-O axis; hypothalamus, pituitary and ovaries axis. The hypothalamus secretes GnRH (gonadotropin-releasing hormone), which stimulates the anterior pituitary gland to release FSH (follicle stimulating hormone) and LH (luteinizing hormone), which in turn acts on the ovaries. The ovaries process estrogen and progesterone.

The hormones of the H-P-O axis actively start to interact at the menarche (men = month, arche = first), the first menstrual period, approximately occurring around 10-14 years of age. They regulate the ovarian (and uterine) cycle. At menopause the H-P-O axis sort of shifts to becoming an H-P-A axis, where in the ‘A’ stands for adrenal gland; which will become the main estrogen provider.

1.1.2 Menstruation

Every menses is the beginning of an approximately four week menstrual cycle, starting at the menarche and stopping at menopause.
Monthly FSH and LH act in sequence on the ovary to produce growth of the ovarian follicle, which secretes estrogen. Secondly ovulation occurs, followed by formation and maintenance of the corpus luteum (yellow body), which secretes estrogen and progesterone.

Estrogen facilitates the growth of the ovarian follicles and increases the motility of uterine tubes. The functioning of the uterus is so called “estrogen dominated”. If no fertilization of an egg takes place, the uterus will shed the endometrial lining and menses occurs. Afterwards the cyclic events of waxing and waning of hormones continues.

In menopause estrogen starts to decrease as does the reproductive systems it influences.

More detailed schedules on the menstrual events can be found at paragraph 2.2.2 where both Western- and Traditional Chinese Medicinal prospective of female menstrual physiology are presented.

1.1.3 Pre-menopause

The ovary gradually become unresponsive to gonadotropins (the hormones released by the pituitary gland) with advancing age. They will no longer secrete progesterone and estradiol (a type of estrogen) in high enough quantities. The negative feedback effect of estrogens and progesterone is reduced and secretion of FSH and LH is increased. As the oocyte numbers decrease, inhibin (a polypeptide hormone) levels fall, resulting in a rise in FSH. Since plasma FSH and LH (will) rise to high levels, one can determine via a blood test how far along a women’s menopausal process is.

Because of these hormonal changes, the menses start to become irregular, anovulatory (no real ovulation occurs) and the length of the menstrual cycle will slowly decrease. Firstly the follicular phase shortens, which can be attributed to the higher FSH level(s) and their speeding up follicular development. Eventually the entire menstrual cycle shortens.

Beside of an irregular menstrual cycle and/ or less or more bleeding, usually the first signs of pre-menopause, there can also be vasomotor complaints like hot flashes and nightly sweating, and somatic complaints like dizziness, reportorial difficulties, and uro-genital discomfort.

1.1.4 Menopause

The actual menopause, permanent cessation of menses, can be determent in retrospective view: it is considered to have occurred when a whole year has past without menstruating.

Menopause literally means ‘end of menstruation’ and avertedly occurs between the ages of 46-52 years. In Holland the average menopausal age is 51.4 years.

Estrogens levels will have significantly start to drop about 2 years prior to menopause. Also progesterone production diminishes because the main provider, the corpus luteum is gone.

1.1.5 Post-menopause

After menopause, post-menopause the production of estrogens by the ovaries is dropped to a minimum. From here on out the adrenal gland will be the main source of estrogens, but direct secretion will be minimal.
Androgens, hormones developed by the adrenal gland, like androstenedion and testosterone are the precursors of estrone (and estradiol). This is the result of peripheral aromatization of androstenedione. The transformation of these endrogens takes place in vet tissue, muscles, liver, kidney and the brain.

Also the ovaries don’t contain functional follicles anymore; ovulation does not occur which causes progesterone levels to be and remain low.

The uterus, as mentioned before, is so called "estrogen dominated", so with less and less estrogen being available, the uterus (including endometrium, myometrium etc.) and vagina gradually become atrophic.

There’s a reduction of secretion of cervical mucus, making the vaginal area less lubricated and contributes to vaginal dryness, a situation often encountered in menopausal females.

Estrogen is also responsible for feminizing the body-skeleton (particularly the pelvis), moistening of the skin and promoting the fat metabolism by enhancement of HDL and reducing LDL blood levels.

Therefore other possible problems in the post-menopausal period that could occur are: degeneration of bone mass causing osteoporosis, pain during intercourse do to atrophy of vaginal epithelium and dryness, skin is less hydrated and becomes wrinkly, high blood pressure and arthrosclerosis.

1.2 Etiology & Pathogenesis

Two types of menopause can be differentiated; shown as followed, according to cause.

1. Physiologic menopause

This involves the natural process (growth and decline) of egg cell development. As mentioned before starting in the womb and the gradual and continuing reduction of the oocytes (egg cells) at birth, through puberty and reproductive years up to menopause.

During menopause the few remaining oocytes become unresponsive to gonadotropins (pituitary hormones). Menstruation stops and the reproductive stage has changed to the non-reproductive period in a women life. This is a natural phenomena average happing around 50-51 years of age.

Spontaneous cessation of menses before age 40 is considered premature menopause or premature ovarian failure. According to western medical research smoking, excessive exposure to ionizing radiation, chemotherapeutic drugs and surgical procedures that impair ovarian blood supply are/ or can be associated with early menopause.

2. Artificial menopause

The failure of the ovarian functions caused by for instance surgical removal of the ovaries (oophorectomy) or radiation therapy is what is called artificial menopause. This so called artificial menopause can be employed as treatment for endometriosis among other things.
Chapter 2
The definition of Menopause according to Traditional Chinese Medicine

In Traditional Chinese Medicine the Kidney system is responsible for all the major events and cycles in human life; reproduction, embryonic development, puberty and aging; menopause/ the climacteric belonging to last. During conception the embryo is endowed with a lifetime supply of Jing (Vital Essence) from the parents. This Jing is also called Pre-natal Jing (constitutional inheritance from both parents). It determents the female constitution etc., and needs to “last her a life time”. Menopause basically means a natural decline of Kidney-Jing. The process preceding menopause will be first discussed.

2.1 Sù Wèn Chapter 1 Shang Gu Tian Zhen Lun: Reproductive physiology of women occurs in seven year cycles

The physiology of women can be traced as far back as the Huang Di Nei Jing (book of the Yellow Emperor) written about 5000 years ago, which discusses the development, growth, and decline of female-life in seven year cycles (for men in eight year cycles).

Su Wen Chapter 1 states:

Huang Di asked: When one grows old, one cannot have children. Is it because one’s energy has already been exhausted or due to a natural phenomenon?

7 years
Qi Bo replied: For a girl, her Kidney Energy (Qi) becomes prosperous when she is seven, as Kidneys determines the condition of the bones, and teeth are the surplus of bone, her milk teeth fall off and the permanent teeth emerge when her Kidney Energy is prosperous; as hair is the extension of Blood and the Blood is transformed from Kidney Essence (Jing), her hair will grow when the Kidney is prosperous.

14 years
Her Tian Gui appears at the age of fourteen (2x7). At this time her Ren Mai begins to put through, and her Chong Mai becomes prosperous and her menstruation begins to appear. As all her physiological conditions being mature, she can be pregnant and bear a child.

21 years
The growth of Kidney Energy reaches the normal status of an adult by the age of twenty one (3x7). Her wisdom teeth have grown up by this stage, and her teeth are completely developed.

28 years
At twenty-eight (4x7) her Vital Energy and Blood become substantial, her extremities become strong, the development of tissues and hair of her whole body are flourishing. In this stage her body is in the strongest condition.

35 years
After thirty-five (5x7) the physique of women turns gradually from prosperity to decline. So, by this time, her Yangming channel turns to debility, her face becomes withered and her hair begins to fall

42 years
By the age of forty-two (6x7) her three Yang channels (Taiyang, Yangming, Shaoyang) all begin to decline. Her face complexion becomes wane, and her hair begins to turn white.
49 years
After the age of forty-nine (7x7), her Ren and Chong channels are both declining, her menstruation ceases as her Tian Gui being exhausted. Her physique turn old and feeble and she can no more conceive.

The following will show a closer look at the process belong to the 7 year cycles of women.

2.2 General Physiology of Women in TCM

Xue (Blood) is the basis of women, Qi of men. During the reproductive years there is a super abundance of Qi and Xue. At the same time Xue is monthly released via menstruation. Or during a possible pregnancy it nourishes the fetus and after birth it’s being transformed into breast milk. Even without the last two events taking place, Xue is because of this with time slowly decreasing. Since Yangming (Bright Yang) is abundant with Qi and Xue, it will be the first to decline; slowly starting at age 35, the onset of pre-menopause. More elaborate discussion will follow, but first there needs to be looked at the events leading up to (pre) menopause, before we talk about the ending of the reproductive years.

To fully understand female physiology there will be a general overview of the bodily structures that are unique to women and what differentiates them from men. This is generally outlined below, starting with the concept of the ‘bao’.

2.2.1 The Bao

Both women and men have a so called ‘Bao’, an energetic area situated in the Dan Tian (Lower Field of Elixir) approximately three cun below the umbilicus.
In women this where the Uterus houses; also referred to as ‘the blood chamber’ (Xue Shi). In men it is called the cinnabar field or ‘the room of sperm’. The term for Uterus, when used in a Chinese medicinal context translates as Bao Gong or Zi Gong, meaning ‘baby’s wrapper or palace’; it encompasses the fallopian tubes, ovaries, endometrium and cervix. The Bao Gong is said to be connected through special channels with the Kidneys and Heart, respectively the Bao Luo (Uterus-Channel) and Bao Mai (Uterus-Vessel). Extraordinary meridians like the Ren-, Chong-, and Dumai, likewise have close relations with the Bao Gong/ Dan Tian area, which will be discussed later on.

2.2.2 Arrival of Tian Gui

Tian Gui or Heavenly Water is a manifestation of Kidney Jing (Essence). In females Tian Gui is the material basis for menstrual blood, in men for sperm production. It is formed by Kidney-Yin with the support of Heart-Yang. Also the Liver and Spleen play a part in this process, the first among other things; by storing Blood and moving Blood to the Uterus and the second contributes to the formation of Blood and Qi by transforming food/ Post-natal Qi into Xue.

The arrival of Tian Gui is related to menarche and the cessation of the Tian Gui to menopause.

Fu Qing Zhu, a famous gynecologist from the Qing period explains Tian Gui as followed:

Fu Qing Zhu (1607-1684)
"Menstrual blood is not Blood but Heavenly Water, originating within the Kidneys, it is the Essence of extreme Yin and Qi of extreme Yang. It is red like blood but is not blood. That’s why it is called Heavenly Gui. People nowadays regard menstrual blood as Blood, a mistake perpetuated for 1000 years…in fact it is not called Blood-Water (Xue Shui) but menstrual water (Jing Shui)...the generation of Kidney Water (and therefore menstrual blood) has nothing to do with Heart, Liver and Spleen, but the transformation of Kidney
**2.2.3 Menstrual Cycle**

Chinese Medicine describes the menstrual cycle in terms of the effect of Qi and Xue and Yin and Yang on the Uterus. Broadly viewed it is a cyclic waxing and waning of Yin and Yang. Yin relates to the Western follicular phase of the menstrual cycle and estrogen. Yang on the other hand relates to the luteal phase or secretory phase and progesterone.

An overview of the events of the menstrual cycle

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Menstrual Cycle</th>
<th>TCM events</th>
<th>Western physiology</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Phase 1</strong>&lt;br&gt;Day 1-5</td>
<td>Xue phase/ Menses&lt;br&gt;Xue is moving downward influenced by Liver Qi and Xue and leaves the uterus</td>
<td>- estrogen en progesterone levels are low&lt;br&gt;- shedding of endometrial lining</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Phase 2</strong>&lt;br&gt;Day 8-14</td>
<td>Yin Phase&lt;br&gt;Just after menses&lt;br&gt;Xue, Yin, Renmai and Chongmai are relatively empty&lt;br&gt;Yin is rising&lt;br&gt;At day fourteen Yin reaches her top and turns, with help of Liver-Qi, into Yang = ovulation</td>
<td>- estrogen levels rise under influence of FSH (follicle-stimulating hormone)&lt;br&gt;- the uterine lining proliferates&lt;br&gt;- cervical glands start producing fertile mucus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Phase 3</strong>&lt;br&gt;Day 15-21</td>
<td>Yang phase&lt;br&gt;Chong- and Renmai are relatively filled up&lt;br&gt;Jing moves from the Kidneys via the Bao Luo (Uterus Channel) to the Bao Gong (Uterus)&lt;br&gt;Xue moves from the Heart via the Bao Mai (Uterus Vessel) to Bao Gong&lt;br&gt;Normal Blood changes into fertile Blood: Tian Gui</td>
<td>- ovulation occurs, the ovum is released from the follicle&lt;br&gt;- corpus luteum (yellow body) develops under influence of LH (luteinizing hormone)&lt;br&gt;- corpus luteum secretes progesterone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Phase 4</strong>&lt;br&gt;Day 22-28</td>
<td>Qi phase&lt;br&gt;Liver-Qi flows freely to move Liver-Blood to the Uterus&lt;br&gt;Yang-Qi grows and accumulates in the Xia Jiao (lower burner) in order to push out menses</td>
<td>- also belonging to the luteal phase&lt;br&gt;- the corpus luteum dies and progesterone and estrogen levels start to drop</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.2.4 Main organs involved

Looking at the previous schedule of menstrual events there can be seen that the Kidneys, Heart, Uterus and Liver play a major part in female physiology. The first three of them are inner connected via Chong-, Ren-, and Dumai (Extra-Ordinary Meridians) in the same way the H-P-O-axis (Hypothalamus-Pituitary-Ovary) is in Western physiology and are comparable in function.

The Kidneys also connect to the Brain (Nao) through the Dumai and infuses it with pure Jing. Therefore the Brain is called the “Sea of Marrow”. Dumai and Renmai connect the Kidneys, Heart and Brain together (see picture on the right; left line/ front side representing the Renmai, right line/ backside the Dumai).
The Liver, like the Uterus, has the function to store Blood and also masters the flow of Blood throughout the body and in particular helps send Blood down to the Uterus to release menses. The relative state of Blood deficiency in menopause will therefore disturb the Liver and create symptoms of irritability and instability. The Blood-flow is dependent on Qi flowing freely, which is again to be attributed to the Liver. As seen in the menstrual schedule the Liver controls the flow of Blood in the Uterus.

Other important organs are Spleen and Stomach; mainly because they form the fundamental base for Post-natal creating of Qi and Xue in the body. A brief review: From food and fluids they create Gu-Qi (Grain-Qi) which will ascend to the Zheng Jiao (Upper Burner) to mix with the Energies of the Fei (Long) to create Qi, and with the Energies of the Xin (Heart) to create Xue (all under influence of the catalyzing effect of Yuan-Qi/Original-Energy from the Kidneys).

The following schematic overview gives a good illustration of the interrelationships of the Organs with the Vital Substances (Qi, Xue/ Blood and Jing/ Essence), the Uterus and the Qi Jing Ba Mai; the last will be addressed next.
2.2.5 Qi Jing Ba Mai

Beside the Zheng Jing (the 12 main, ordinary meridians), there are also 8 extra-ordinary meridians: the Qi Jing Ba Mai. Qi meaning: extraordinary, odd or unique, Jing means: meridians, Ba means: eight, Mai means: network or vessels.

The Qi Jing Ba Mai:

1) Chong Mai (Penetrating vessel)  
2) Ren Mai (Conception/ Directing vessel)  
3) Du Mai (Governing vessel)  
4) Dai Mai (Girdle vessel)  
5) Yin Qiao Mai (Yin Heel vessel)  
6) Yang Qiao Mai (Yang Heel vessel)  
7) Yin Wei Mai (Yin Linking vessel)  
8) Yang Wei Mai (Yang Linking vessel)

In relation to general female physiology, I will start off discussing the first and perhaps 3 most important meridians mentioned above.

Li Shi Zhen (*a great ancient master*): calls Chong-, Ren and Du-Mai ‘three branches of one vessel’. For the reason: that all 3 originate in the region between the Kidneys (where Dong-Qi residences), pass through the Uterus and flow down to Huiyin, Ren-1. From here on out they will start to follow there own pathway. Basically: Renmai traveling the middle-front of the body and Duma going along the spine over the backside of the body. Chongmai emerges at Qichong St-30 *(connecting with Yangming and Post-natal Energies)*, then flowing upwards with the Kidney meridian to Youmen Kid-21 *(connecting with Kidney-Qi and Pre-Natal Energies)*

The extra meridians contain Jing as well as Qi and Xue and connect the Heart-Uterus-Kidney axis and are thereby also are related to the H-P-O axis. They control the energies that determine growth, maturing and aging. They thrive during the reproductive years and start to diminish when a women enters the pre-menopause (*also see the 7 year cycles of women in 2.1*).

The Chong & Ren Mai are the most important pair in relation to menstruation and menopause.

*Chongmai* is called “the Sea of Xue (Blood)” and masters the 12 main meridians. It influences the supply and movement of Xue in the Uterus. From the Chongmai arise the Ren- and Du Mai, which direct the Yin and Yang Energies of the body.
Renmai is called “the Sea of Yin Channels”, it supply's the entire body with Yin substances (including Jing, Xue, JinYe), thereby being of great influence on the female reproductive system and physiological processes like puberty, conception, pregnancy, childbirth and menopause.

In clinical treatment generally speaking the Chongmai is used for problems surrounding menstruation. Since Blood is slowly depleting in pre-menopause (starting at age 35), one could consider to start treating the Chongmai preventively via herbs or acupuncture. And certainly in cases of irregular menstruation; usually being one of the first signs of pre-menopause.

The Renmai is used to nourish the Yin Energies of the body and could therefore be used in treatment during and after menopause to reduce symptoms like Deficiency Heat caused by Yin-Xu (deficiency).

Dumai is called “the Sea of all Yang Channels”, and regulates all the Yang-Qi in the body. It represents the Yang aspect of female reproductive functions because of its connection with Mingmen Fire (the Gate of Life, situated between the Kidneys at Dumai 4).

In general the Dumai can be used for treating genitalia and vaginal problems (see its pathway). In menopause it can be used for instance for Kidney-Yang-Xu or even in Kidney-Yin-Xu with Fire; to guide back the Fire to Mingmen.
**Daimai**, also called the *Girdle* or *Belt* meridian is the only horizontal vessel, encircling the waist. The Daimai influences the smooth flow of Liver-Qi, the ascending and descending of Spleen-Qi and Kidney-Qi and also supports the Qi of the Uterus and the Jing (Essence).

The Daimai could be considerate treating (depending on differential diagnosis) in menopausal problems like organ prolapse (anal or uterine), or leucorrhea.

In regard to fertility and reproduction the main emphasize is usually put on treating the Ren-Chong- and Du Mai. In menopause they are evenly very important, but in clinical practice one should also not forget the Yin- and Yang Qiao Mai and the Yin- Yang Wei Mai.

**Yin- and Yang Qiao Mai**, in contrary to the meridians above, don’t have their own meridian points but rather ‘borrow’ points of the 12 main meridians. Their pathways given in the Nan Jing difficulty chapter 28 are:

- **Yang Qiao Mai** arises from the middle of the heel; it passes over the external malleolus and penetrates Fengchi Gb-20

- **Yin Qiao Mai** also arises from the middle of the heel; it passes over the internal malleolus and rises; it reaches the pharynx; it crosses the joins the Chongmai.  

A good summation of the Yin- and Yang Qiao Mai from Elisabeth Rochat:

“The Yin- and Yang Qiao Mai give the rhythm of the Yin and Yang in each moment of life; the equilibrium between Essences and Qi, Blood and Qi, but also a good balance of Yin and Yang in our surroundings, for example night and day”.  

**Yin- and Yang Wei Mai**, a description of their pathologies from the Nan Jing difficulty chapter 29:

- **Yang Wei Mai** connects the Yang, **Yin Wei Mai** connects the Yin. If Yin and Yang cannot connect with one another then there is annoyance (Chang Run) and loss of Will (Shi Zhi). One is without strength, and one no longer has a hold on oneself.

  When Yang Wei gives rise to illness one suffers from **Cold and Heat**. When Yin Wei Mai givers rise to illness one suffers from **pain in the Heart**.
The Yang Wei Mai also maintains a strong relationship with the Gallbladder meridian; Shaoyang of the foot. As said before, when quoting Su Wen; that among other things; at 42 years of age Shaoyang starts declining. Shaoyang being a pivot could therefore cause altering cold and heat signs. In menopause one can often see heat signs above combined with cold symptoms below.

In summery one can say that: in menopause the Qiao Mai are very useful for treating insomnia/ sleeping disorders and the Yin- and Yang Wei Mai for emotional disorders.

2.2.6 Pre-menopause & Menopause

Here I choose to address pre-menopause and menopause together for the reason that, as explained before, the actual menopausal event, permanent cessation of menses, is determent in retrospective view. When one would also including post-menopause, actually all three events overlap; by the time you’re concluding menopause to have occurred, you are already in the post-menopausal period. Hence, they are 3-stages of one process.

In Chinese pre-menopausal syndrome is translated as: Jing Duan Qian Hou Zhu Zheng. Here the word Jing refers to menses. Duan to “cut off” or “stop” as in stopping one’s water supply, as we know, the Kidney system pertains to “Water”, the Water element and is the material base for formation of Tian Gui. Qian and Hou, mean before and after. Zhu Zheng means “various pathological conditions”.

In Traditional Chinese Medicine pre-menopause is said to gradually start setting in from age 35 (see Su Wen quotation in 2.1). This process begins with diminishing of Spleen-Qi (Spleen-Energy) and declining of Yangming. The two, among other things, naturally start to decline caused by constant blood loss (through menstruating and possible child-delivery/ breast milk). Spleen (Pi) and Stomach (Wei) are, as explained earlier, the basic source of Postnatal Qi and Jing, by creating Gu-Qi from food en fluids. So when Spleen (and Stomach) Qi diminishes automatically this influences the Post-natal production of Qi and Xue in the body and therefore their natural decline will be part of creating a relative state of Qi- and Xue Xu (deficiency) presenting in (pre) menopause. Actually this is only part of the story because also the Pre-Natal creating of Xue is less, caused by decline of Kidney-Qi.

Infact this means that; because both Pre-natal and Post-natal sources of Blood production are weakening, in the end there is also no longer an abundance of blood being produced to overflow the Chongmai and create menstruation/ Tian Gui. This means that the sea of Qi and Xue; Yangming also becomes less abundant. Ren- and Chongmai are connected to the Kidneys (the source of Prenatal Xue and Jing) and therefore also are depleting. Plus the Chongmai also connects to, and is filled by Yangming at the point Qichong ST-30.

When we look back at the female lifecycle according to Su Wen, at 5x7 it states: her face becomes withered and her hair begins to fall. This can be explained due to decline of Xue; hair being the extension of Xue and Yangming becoming less abundant with Qi and Xue; Yangming travels trough the face, therefore the skin of the face it less nourished.

At 42 years of age Su Wen also says: “and her hair begins to turn white”. Here we can see that decline of Kidney-Qi also starts to become more prominent.

The main sources of Tian Gui (Kidney-Jing and Spleen-Qi) are depleting. Eventually the Kidneys will completely stop providing Jing for the Uterus and the formation of Tian Gui (menstruation). Therefore Tian Gui totally ceases at age 49 according to Su Wen and today in the modern western society at approximately 51 years.
As we can see, the weakening of Kidneys and Spleen are at the root of the female transformation process from fertility to becoming non-fertile. Another aspect though, that needs to be taken in account here is: for any kind of transformation process Qi is needed. More specifically, Liver-Qi must flow freely to set this process in motion.

So when this “life-change” proceeds smoothly, few or non pathological sign and symptoms will occur. Unfortunately in Western society this is hardly the case and females experience various complains/ symptoms from hot flashes, night sweats, insomnia to irritability, emotional instability and forgetfulness (to mention a few). Beside of these complaints, the first sign of pre-menopause setting in usually is irregularity of the menstrual cycle, varying from profuse bleeding to shortened and anovulatory cycles. In Western medicine, as explained before, this is attributed to increasing FSH (follicle-stimulating hormone) levels, which speeds up follicular development and thereby shortens the total follicular phase. In TCM the follicular phase pertains to Yin, and its decline causes the length of the menstrual cycle to decrease. Deficiency of Yin can give cause for deficient Heat or Fire to arise, which in turn can (or could be the) cause profuse Bleeding and accounts for several of the other symptoms mentioned above.

Over time eventually Yang could also diminish, since Kidney Water is the source of both Yin and Yang.

2.2.7 Post-menopause

During or after menopause, of course Blood supply doesn’t stop entirely, but there is no longer a superabundance of Xue in the Chong- and Renmai to overflow the uterus and create menstruation.

According to some books the Bao Mai (Uterus Vessel), which sends down Heart Qi- and Xue to nourish the Uterus, is being redirected or cut off when menopause occurs:

Bob Flows (A Compendium of Chinese Medical Menstrual Disease, 2005) book two, Chapter 10, page 547: ‘...a change is initiated primarily in the relationship between the kidneys and heart via the uterus and chong mai/ bao mai. Rather than sending down Blood from the heart, the bao mai reverses the direction of its flow, sending essence up to nourish the spirit residing in the heart. Instead of preparing the uterus for the growth of a physical addition to the community of humankind, the blood focuses on the heart to nourish the woman’s spirit.

Elisabeth Rochat (The Extraordinary Fu, 2003) page 164 quotes: Su Wen chapter 33 says: 'The monthly affair, yue shi, does not come. The reason is that the vital circulation proper to the uterus (bao mai) is closed (bi).'

Nevertheless, this transition of Energies during the menopausal years is initiated by Xue- and Qi Xu (Energy- Blood Deficiency) and Yin- and Jing Xu (Deficiency).

Consequently, as Su Wen states; ‘her Ren and Chong channels are both declining, her menstruation ceases as her Tian Gui being exhausted. Her physique turn old and feeble and she can no more conceive.’
As Kidney Energy is depleting, also the Yin and Yang parts will decrease, since the Kidneys are the basis of all Yin and Yang Energy in the body.

In post-menopause bone degeneration like osteoporosis is also more prone to happen. Bones belong to the Kidneys, and there depletion can deprive them from sufficient nourishment. Vaginal dryness could occur caused by insufficient lubrication caused Yin/ Jin Ye deficiency etc.

The severity of possible problems occurring around menopause will be dependable on several things: Pre-heaven inherited Jing; ask mother or aunts when and how they went through menopause., Post-heaven creation of Qi and Xue; by eating good and healthy food, environmental situation, Qi Qing (7 Emotions)/ Stress etc..
Chapter 3
Etiology of Menopausal Syndromes in TCM

There are several factors that can determine the way a woman goes through menopause and what the severity of possible complaints will be. Following an overview of the most common causes is presented. All the etiologic factors mentioned below (automatically) incorporate health care practices or lack off them in the years prior to menopause. The menarche and the emotional and physiological events during the reproductive years form the base for a healthy climacteric, the menopausal period in the life of a woman.

Emotional stress
Every form of stress will initially influence the mechanism of Qi, Qi Ji. This in the long run has a negative effect on Xue, Jin Ye, Zang-Fu (Yin/Yang Organs) and the right balance between Yin and Yang. All this effects female physiology; i.e. disturbing menstruation, and creating more Qi and Xue related pathology in pre- and post-menopause (Qi is the commander of Xue, and Xue the mother of Qi etc.).

The Golden Mirror of Medicine (1742) says:
'Women cannot control themselves and are frequently affected by worry, pensiveness, anger or depression: these make the Blood move, stop, rebel or conform, which is all due to Qi movement'.

Long term stress depletes Kidney-Qi, which might speed up the aging process and thereby the time menopause sets in. It also probably worsens the symptoms arising from the natural decline of Kidney Qi and Jing.

Western medicine also recognizes the impact of stress on female physiology and explains this in terms of hormones getting out of balance. Initially adrenaline levels rise; hyper activating the central nervous system. When stress is relieved by the so called “fight or flight” reaction, the hormones re-balance and bodily functions return to normal. Unfortunately our modern society isn’t very exceptive of these primitive reactions like fighting or flighting; often leaving the central nervous system too long in a hyperactive mode, which will definitely induce more hot flashes to appear.

Without getting into detail, a brief review of the emotions and there specific effect on Qi:
→ Anger, causes Qi to raise (suppressed anger will probably create Stagnant-Qi)
→ Joy, slows Qi down
→ Worry, knots or stagnates Qi (especially of the Lung, Heart and Spleen)
→ Sadness, consumes Qi
→ Fear, makes Qi descend
→ Shock, creates chaotic Qi

Diet
Healthy food intake and dietary habits are undeniably important, for it is the source (together with air) of Post-natal Qi and therefore the fundamental base for Qi and Xue production in the body.

Insufficient or non-nutritive food intake will cause Qi and Xue deficiency, which can aggravate the natural ‘relative state’ of Xue deficiency in (pre-) menopausal women and cause amenorrhea.

Too strict vegetarianism in young females also gives cause for Qi and Xue Xu and in the long run also affects the menopausal process negatively.
Since Yangming, i.e. digestion starts diminishing in pre-menopause it is imperative to nourish Spleen and Stomach to create Post-natal Qi; doing so by proper and healthy food consumption.

Excessive intake of cold foods and liquids can lead to Cold in the Uterus (especially around the menstrual period and after child labor). Cold prohibits the smooth flow of Blood and is a major cause for dysmenorrhea.

Overly consuming hot foods may create Blood-Heat (Xue-Re). As seen before in discussing pre-menopause, Heat in the Blood causes excessive Blood loss/ menorrhagia, often the reason for excessive menstrual bleeding in pre-menopausal cases.

Eating excessive amounts of dairy foods disturbs the Yun-Hua (transport and transformation) function of the Spleen and creates Dampness in the body.

Overeating can lead to food stagnation in the Stomach, which can lead to chronicle overheating and therefore damages Stomach-Yin and or Jin-Ye (body fluids).

Greasy food consumption causes internal Dampness, often settling in the Xia Jiao (Lower Burner). It can give cause for excessive vaginal discharge (Dai Xia), dysmenorrhea or cysts.

**Overwork**

By ‘overwork’ is meant an improper balance between working/ doing things (Yang) and resting (Yin). In our current ‘achiever orientated’ society agenda’s are filled with activities and often too less moments of rest are planned in. This is a major cause for stress and all kinds of pathologies can arise because of it. The modernization of our time has brought women in particularly new prospective in life, but most often her pile of tasks has expended instead of replacing one task by another.

The inadequate rest over time depletes Kidney-Yin and therefore is a common cause of menopausal problems and menorrhagia.

To prevent disease one must balance Yin and Yang on a daily basis. Not annually, monthly or even on a weekly base. People who do so are the one’s who became ill during holidays or often experience headache or a generalized unhealthy feeling particularly in the weekends.

**Excessive or insufficient sexual activity**

Excessive sexual activity exhausts Ming Men (the gate of life Fire) by depleting (Kidney) Jing. In women the impact is generally less than in men, as they lose Jing by ejaculating sperm. Still it is relevant to mention in regard to women. For instance females being sexual active before or during puberty can cause disturbance in Chongmai and Renmai and seriously weakens the Kidneys. Hence, all three are involved in creation and distribution of Tian Gui/ menstruation and therefore this can have serious consequences for her future physiological development.

Sexual intercourse during the menstrual period, which still occurs in pre-menopause, is another issue to advice against. Among other things, during the menses the Uterus is literally more open and therefore prone to pathogenic invasion.
Fu Qing Zhu says:

‘Some women engage in sexual intercourse that leads to unstoppable bleeding…If a woman has sexual intercourse during the period, sperm travels upwards along the [woman's] blood vessels…One should know that the blood vessels are tender and should be protected from injury by sperm…If sperm is ejaculated into the uterus when the menstrual flow is surging and gushing out, the blood will retreat and contract…and the sperm will gather and transform Blood’.

Shortly said this means that having sex during the menstrual period causes blood to become static. Now this doesn’t imply that one could have intercourse during the period when wearing a condom. The following quote from Fu Qing Zhu will show why:

‘When a women is aroused the uterus is wide open and the Imperial and Minister Fire are stirred…the Essence chamber is agitated and the Sea of Blood overflows and cannot be contained. The Liver, which likes storage, cannot store Blood; the Spleen which likes containment, cannot contain Blood. Thus, menstrual flow follows sexual intercourse like an echo follows a sound.’

This means that another pathological consequence of having intercourse during menses is excessive or unstoppable bleeding. As we know women lose Jing by losing Blood and therefore the Kidneys will also get depleted.

**Surgery and hysterectomy**
Operations in the abdominal area often lead to formation of adhesions, or in TCM: Stagnation of Qi and/or Xue. Hysterectomy, especially when the ovaries are also removed, is one of the procedures that impair ovarian blood supply and is associated with early (artificial) menopause.
The Uterus is one of the main organs in female physiology, it stores Xue and removing it induces Xue Xu. Also Kidney Energy will deplete since the Uterus and Kidneys are closely connected via the Extraordinary meridians, Kidney channel etc.

**Hormone therapy**
This involves a variety of drugs administrated by Western Medicine like, contraceptive pills, ERT (estrogen replacement therapy), HRT (hormone replacement therapy). They have in common that they manipulate the hormones and thereby disrupter the Chong- and Renmai. Using hormonal drugs could cause delay of the menopause. They postpone menopause by suppressing the natural events that lead up to the climacteric. This causes females in their seventies still experiencing menopausal problems. Often women are not aware of this fact and think the artificial drugs will help them control the symptoms that can arise from menopause.
Chapter 4
Pathology of Menopause in TCM

As mentioned before in the definition of menopause, the natural decline of Kidney-Jing is the root mechanism from menopausal problems to occur. This natural decline of Jing, weakening of Kidney-Qi including the Sea of Blood (Chongmai) and Sea of Qi (Renmai) causes Tian Gui or menses to cease, hence menopause occurs. Also Spleen-Qi diminishes and therefore Post-heaven creation of Qi and Xue becomes less exuberant and Yangming declines. If and in what way symptoms or patterns manifest is therefore related to both Pre-heaven Jing, (the constitutional inheritance of both parents) and Post-heaven Jing which relates to lifestyle habits.

First a short discussion on 3 basic pathological-mechanisms presenting in the menopausal years:

**Kidney-Yin Xu**

In pre-menopause because of decline of Qi and Xue, also the dynamic balance between Qi and Xue (in their mother Child relationship) becomes disturbed. Yin and Yang also begin to come out of balance because Kidney-Qi, the fundamental base of all Yin and Yang in the body, is declining. The first manifestation of this disequilibrium between Yin and Yang is Kidney Yin Xu (Deficiency).

Xu Dan-Xi (1281-1358), a great doctor of the Jin/Yuan Dynasty stated: "Yang tends to ever have an excess, Yin tends to be ever deficient."

This reflects the typical imbalance of Yin/Yang which he saw in most of his patients. In Chinese medicine it is said that by 40 years of age, Yin is half used up. 

Since Yin and Yang are interdependent, deficiency of Yin causes Yin failing to root the Yang, thereby creating a relative state of Yang excess. The physical manifestations in (pre) menopause causes by Kidney Yin Xu (and a relative Yang Shi/ excess) are: Hot flashes, night sweats, insomnia, vaginal dryness, excessive of frequent bleeding. The last two mentioned mainly occur in pre-menopause and are often due to Heat arising from the Yin Xu.

Eventually long term Kidney Yin deficiency could result in Kidney Yang deficiency for they are one and the same and are two manifestations of the same source; Kidney-Jing.

**Qi and Yang Xu**

Other manifestations of problems happening can be seen in the relationship between Qi and Yang. As talked about before, Yangming/ Spleen-Qi begins to weaken at age 35. Since Kidney-Yang is the prenatal root of Spleen-Qi; deficiency of Spleen-Qi can easily lead to deficiency of Kidney-Qi and Yang. The physical manifestations of Spleen-Qi Xu and Kidney-Yang Xu in menopause could be: Fatigue, low libido, lower back pain, urinary leakage, phlegm/ damp accumulations, cold limbs and heavy uterine bleeding.

**Liver Qi Stagnation**

Liver Qi Stagnation needs addressing because of its strong involvement in general female physiology, the necessity of Qi required for the transformation process of fertility to non-fertility and the fact that Liver-Qi is highly prone to stagnate due to Stress. The physical manifestations of Liver-Qi Stagnation in menopause are: inducement of other substances to stagnate (Xue, Damp, Food, Phlegm), irritability, depression, mood swings, accumulation and masses, erratic or irregular bleeding. Vice versa aging can give tendency for more Qi stagnation to happen due to the natural decline of Qi, Xue, Yin and Yang; all basic necessities for healthy functioning of the Zang-Fu (Yin-Yang Organs) and the free flow of Qi.
The main syndromes occurring around menopause are:

- Kidney-Yin Xu
- Kidney-Yang Xu
- Kidney-Yin and Kidney Yang Xu
- Kidney- and Liver-Yin Xu with Liver-Yang Rising
- Kidney and Heart not Harmonized
- Phlegm Accumulation and Qi Stagnation
- Stasis of Xue

Each of these patterns will individually be further defined in the next chapter on treatment through Chinese herbal medicine.

Before doing so I would first like to end this chapter by bringing forward and sharing some thoughts on the possible pathology-mechanism of the number one complaint in menopause: Hot flashes.

The answer for hot flashes to appear can partly be found in previous analyses on Kidney-Yin Xu. In general (Kidney) Yin Xu cases we can see several Heat signs and because Yang is not rooted also Deficiency Heat rising to the Upper Burner. Asking menopausal women how they experience hot flashes; the difference that comes forward is, in contrary to general Heat signs in Yin Deficiency, that hot flashes come and go rapidly, and frequently; varying from a few a day to several so to speak ‘heat waves’ per hour. Besides; no matter the underlying syndrome, hot flashes will occur, also when Yang deficiency is present (which makes Yin Xu as the main instigator not entirely true).

For a possible explanation I would like to turn attention to the Chongmai, the Sea of Blood. As seen before Blood naturally diminishes during the menopausal years, which automatically implies that the Sea of Blood, the Chongmai also becomes relatively Blood deficient. It is actually the lack of Blood in the Chongmai, causing the Chongmai, or rather Blood in the Chongmai to fail holding Qi. The intimate interaction between Qi and Blood gets disturbed: Qi is the commander of and Blood is the mother of Qi. In a natural effort of self regulation by time’s the Blood that is still present (but less in quantity) in the Chongmai does hold the Qi and by time’s doesn’t; causing Qi to rise upward along the pathway of the Chongmai (chest, throat, face) creating hot flashes. The relative state of Xue Xu also gives rise to Liver-Wind, since also Liver Blood is relatively deficient and cannot control and hold down Wind properly. Therefore Wind travels via the Liver-meridian to the Chongmai. This aggravates the situation in the Chongmai and could explain the nature of hot flashes, which is their spontaneous “coming and going”; a typical Wind phenomenon. So beside concerning the root mechanism of menopause; the natural decline of Kidney-Jing, Qi and Blood deficiency and the disharmony of their interaction (and Wind deriving from it) are a direct consequence and should therefore just as much be taken in consideration when treating menopausal syndrome’s, especially when hot flashes are dominantly present.
Chapter 5
Differentiation and Treatment of Menopausal Syndromes with Chinese Herbs

The main patterns mentioned above will now be addressed, differentiated and given a suitable formula.

1. Kidney-Yin Xu

Clinical signs and symptoms:
Hot flashes, night sweats, vaginal dryness, 5-palm heat, thirst or dry mouth, dry skin and hear, weakness of the lower back. (Often in menopause beside of Kidney-Yin also Liver-Blood diminishes and could give accompanying sign and symptoms like; headaches, blurred vision, dizziness etc.)
Tongue: red body, with little or no coating
Pulse: Xi-mai (fine), Shou-mai (fast)

Chinese herbal formula:

Liu Wei Di Huang Wan – Six-Ingredient Rehmannia Pill

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Composition</th>
<th>Dosage</th>
<th>Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shu Di Huang</td>
<td>24g</td>
<td>nourishes Yin and Xue, tonifies the Kidneys and Kid-Jing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shan Zhu Yu</td>
<td>12g</td>
<td>tonifies Liver and Kidneys, astringes Jing (Essence)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shan Yao</td>
<td>12g</td>
<td>tonifies Spleen, Liver and Kidney</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ze Xie</td>
<td>9g</td>
<td>clear Heat, promotes urination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fu Ling</td>
<td>9g</td>
<td>strengthens the Spleen, expels Damp, promote urination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mu Dan Pi</td>
<td>9g</td>
<td>clears Liver fire, cools the Blood</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This is the most common used formula to tonify and enrich Kidney-Yin. Because Kidney-Yin and Liver-Yin are of the same source, the formula secondly also supplements Liver-Yin.

Formula Analysis
The Emperor/ chief (Jun) herb in this formula is Shu Di Huang.
Ministers (Chen) are both Shan Zhu Yu and Shan Yao, together they help Shu Di Huang enriching and supplementing Kidney-Yin. The first does so by constraining Yin, astringe Jing and warming the Liver (because of their common source, tonifying Liver-Yin automatically effects Kidney-Yin); the second herb mainly tonifies the Spleen, Liver and Kidneys.
All three herbs basically tonify the Kidney, Liver and Spleen, clearly illustrated above by the single herb actions. Because these herbs have a sticky and cloying nature, the other three herbs; Ze Xie, Fu Ling and Mu Dan Pi balance this out by moving and draining, without injuring Yin.

Zuo Gui Yin is also optional in cases of Kidney-Yin Xu (ingredients: Shu Di Huang, Shan Zhu Yu, Gou Qi Zi, Shan Yao, Fu Ling, Gan Cao).
2. Kidney-Yang Xu

Clinical signs and symptoms:
Hot flashes but accompanied by cold hand- and feet, night sweating in the early morning, chilliness, lower back pain, oedema of the ankles, copious clear urination or scanty urination with edema, loss of sex drive
Tongue: pale body, swollen with white or wet coating
Pulse: Chen-mai (deep), Xi-mai (fine), (slow)

Chinese basic herbal formula:

**You Gui Wan – Restore the Right Kidney Pill**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Composition</th>
<th>dosage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fu Zi</td>
<td>60-180g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rou Gui</td>
<td>60-120g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lu Jiao Jiao</td>
<td>120g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shu Di Huang</td>
<td>240g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shan Zhu Yu</td>
<td>90g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shan Yao</td>
<td>120g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tu Si Zi</td>
<td>120g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gou Qi Zi</td>
<td>120g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Du Zhong</td>
<td>120g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dang Gui</td>
<td>90g</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Formula Analysis
The emperor’s (Jun) in this formula according to Bensky are Fu Zi, Rou Gui and Lu Jiao Jiao; all three are warm in nature and tonify Kidney-Yang. Although regarding the doses (also from Benky’s Formulas and Strategies book) one could argue that Shu di Huang is the real Emperor; based on the fact that it has the biggest amount in this formula. Shu Di Huang is mentioned here as a Deputy/ Minister (Chen) together with Shan Zhu Yu, Shan Yao, Tu Si Zi and Du Zhong. The last two herbs mentioned basically belong to the Yang tonifying category; the other three tonify Kidney-Yin and Blood. Specifically Shu Di Huang with its warm and sweet properties tonifies the Blood very efficiently. Dang Gui also tonifies Blood and nourishes the Liver. Interesting and reveling commentary on the name of this formula You Gui Wan- Restoring the Right Kidney Pill and its so called sister formula Zuo Gui Yin- Restoring the Left Kidney Pill from the book ‘Notes From South Mountain’, page 388: …These [names] derive from a statement in the Classic of Difficulties (Nan Jing): “That on the left is the kidney and that on the right is the life gate (Ming Men).” Since the kidney is related to water the true source of water is on the left and that of fire is on the right. Therefore, Restore the Left Kidney Pill is aimed at restoring water (yin) and Restore the Right Kidney Pill is designed to restore fire (yang).

Jin Gui Shen Qi Wan, could also be chosen; it’s a modification of Liu Wei Di Huang Wan with the addition of Gui Zhi and Fu Zi, both warm natured herbs to aim the formula at Yang deficiency.
In comparison to You Gui Wan, Jin Gui Shen Qi Wan mainly aims at Kidney-Yang Xu with Empty Cold and the first one aims at Kidney-Yang Xu and Jing Xu with Xue Xu.

*Clinical signs and symptoms:*

Basically there is a combination of signs and symptoms of the two previous patterns. The tongue could either be red or pale and the pulse may be Xi-Shou mai or Chen-Xu mai. This will be dependable on which of the two deficiencies predominates. Also signs of Deficiency Fire may be present.

Chinese herbal formula:

**Er Xian Tang – Two Immortal Decoction**

*Composition* dosage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Herb</th>
<th>Dosage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Xian Mao</td>
<td>15g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yin Yang Huo</td>
<td>15g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ba Ji Tian</td>
<td>9g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Huang Bai</td>
<td>9g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zhi Mu</td>
<td>9g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dang Gui</td>
<td>9g</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Formula Analysis*

Xian Mao and Yin Yang Huo are the Imperial (Jun) herbs in this formula. With support of the Minister herb (Chen) Ba Ji Tian, the Emperor’s warm Kidney-Yang and tonify Kidney-Jing. Yin Yang Huo in particular tonifies both Yin and Yang and harnesses ascending Liver-Yang. Huang Bai, Zhi Mu and Dang are the so called Assisting (Zuo) herbs; the first two nourish Kidney-Yin and drain Fire from Deficiency. Dang Gui nourishes the Blood and regulates the Chong- and Renmai. The formula targets both Yin and Yang Deficiency and accompanying Up-Flaring Fire from the Deficiency. It is a well balanced composition; the cold natured herbs Huang Bai and Zhi Mu perfectly counterbalance the hot properties of Xian Mao *(which would otherwise be damaging to the already Deficient Yin)*.

4. Liver- and Kidney Yin Xu with Liver-Yang rising

*Clinical signs and symptoms:*

Hot flashes, night sweats, irritability, dizziness, blurred vision, tinnitus, dry eyes, dry skin, menopausal migraines, possible bitter taste in the mouth, in pre-menopause there could be profuse menstrual flow due to heat in the blood

Tongue: red body, without coating

Pulse: Fu-mai (floating), Xi-mai (fine) or Xu-mai (weak), Shou-mai (fast) and Xian-mai (wiry, especially on the left-Middle position)

Chinese herbal formula:

**Qi Ju Di Huang Wan – Lycium Fruit, Chrysanthemum, and Rehmannia Pill**

*Composition* dosage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Herb</th>
<th>Dosage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shu Di Huang</td>
<td>240g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shan Zhu Yu</td>
<td>120g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shan Yao</td>
<td>120g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ze Xie</td>
<td>90g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fu Ling</td>
<td>90g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mu Dan Pi</td>
<td>90g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gou Qi Zi</td>
<td>9g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ju Hua</td>
<td>6g</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Formula Analysis**

This formula is a variation of Liu Wei Di Huang Wan with the additions of Gou Qi Zi and Ju Hua. The basic part (first 6 ingredients) of the formula targets Kidney- and Liver Yin Xu. Gou Qi Zi also nourishes Kidney- and Liver Yin, Jing and specifically brightens the eyes. Ju Hua subdues Liver-Yang rising and treats headaches. Generally the formula is relatively mild. When severe headache or migraines are present (caused by Liver-Yang Rising) one could consider combining Qi Ju Di Huang Wan with Tian Ma Gou Teng Yin. This formula calms the Liver, extinguishes Wind, clears Heat, moves Xue, and supplements the Liver and Kidney. Mostly it addresses the problems related to Liver-Yang Rising. Ingredients of Tian Ma Gou Tang Yin are: *ye jiao teng, shi jue ming, sang ji sheng, gou teng, fu shen, yi mu cao, chuan niu xi, tian ma, du zhong, shan zhi zi and huang qin.*

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5. **Kidney and Heart not Harmonized**

*Clinical signs and symptoms:*

- Hot flashes, palpitations, night sweats, insomnia, frequent dreams, nervousness and anxiety, leucorrhea or excessive vaginal discharge, backache, dry mouth, poor memory, and dry stools
- **Tongue:** red body without coating, a redder tip
- **Pulse:** Xi- Shou mai (fine and fast) or Fu- Xu mai (floating- empty) or weak and deep on both Rear positions and overflowing on both Front positions.

*Generally speaking this pattern can be classified as Heat above and Cold below. Basically Heart-Fire blazes upward and is not controlled by Kidney-Water, which in turn dribbles downward. This pattern consists of Kidney-Yin Xu and Heart-Vacuity Heat.*

**Chinese herbal formula:**

**Tian Wan Bu Xin Dan – Heavenly Emperor’s Heart-Supplementing Elixir**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Composition</th>
<th>dosage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sheng Di Huang</td>
<td>12g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suan Zao Ren</td>
<td>6g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ren Shen</td>
<td>6g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fu Ling</td>
<td>6g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yuan Zhi</td>
<td>6g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xuan Shen</td>
<td>6g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bai Zi Ren</td>
<td>6g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tian Men Dong</td>
<td>6g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dan Shen</td>
<td>6g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mai Men Dong</td>
<td>6g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dang Gui</td>
<td>6g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wu Wei Zi</td>
<td>6g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jie Geng</td>
<td>3g</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Formula Analysis**

The formula tonifies Kidney-Yin, clears Heart Empty Heat and calms the Shen (Spirit). Therefore this formula is very suitable for menopausal symptoms like palpitations, anxiety, insomnia etc. As can be seen by the amount, Sheng Di Huang is the empirical herb (Jun) in this formula; it enters Kidney-, Heart and Liver Yin and clears Deficiency Heat. Xuan Shen, Mai Men Dong and Tian Men Dong support the Yin enriching and Heat-clearing functions of Sheng Di Huang. Ren Shen tonifies Yuan-Qi (Original Qi). Wu Wei Zi and Suan Zao Ren are sour and contracting medicines that constrain Heart-Qi to prevent it from dissipating, calm the Shen and nourish Jing. Dang Gui and Dan Shen nourish and circulate Heart-Xue, to quiet down- and holt the Shen (Spirit). Bai Zi Ren and Yuan Zhi calm the Shen and nourish the Heart. Fu Ling resolves Dampness, assists the Spleen...
functions and thus counteracts the cloying effects of the Yin tonics. Ren Shen tonifies Yuan-Qi (Original Qi). Fu Ling and Ren Shen act as assistants (Zuo) in the formula. Jie Geng is the so called messenger (Shi) in this formula. With it lifting properties it directs the formula to the Upper Burner.

6. Accumulation of Phlegm and Qi Stagnation

**Clinical sign and symptoms:**
Obesity, feeling chest oppression, lump in the throat (Plum-pit Qi), feeling fullness in the epigastrium, nausea or vomiting, depression, no appetite, moodiness

**Tongue:** greasy sticky coating

**Pulse:** Xian-mai (wiry), Hua-mai (slippery)

This pattern is mainly due to decline of the Spleen-Qi and its disability in processing fluids. In menopause this hardly appears as a single pattern, but it does often complicate and aggravates the previously mentioned patterns.

Chinese herbal formula:

**Yue Yu Wan – Depression-Overcoming Pill**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Composition</th>
<th>dosage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cang Zhu</td>
<td>20g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chuan Xiong</td>
<td>20g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xiang Fu</td>
<td>20g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shan Zhi Zi</td>
<td>20g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shen Qu</td>
<td>20g</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Formula Analysis**

Basically this formula addresses Liver Qi Stagnation that influences the functioning of the Spleen and gives rise to the six depressions (Qi, Blood, Phlegm, Fire, Damp and Food). Xiang Fu treats Qi depression, Cang Zhu deals with Damp and Phlegm, Chuan Xiong removes Blood Stagnation, Shan Zhi Zi resolves Fire depression and Shen Qu dissolves Food Stagnation. Originally the amounts of medicinals in Yue Yu Wan are equal. In this case of Phlegm Accumulation and Qi Stagnation, one could and should consider increasing the dosages of Xiang Fu and Cang Zhu.

7. Stasis of Blood

**Clinical signs and symptoms**
Hot flashes, mental restlessness, in pre-menopause menses are very irregular stopping long period then starting again, dark-clotted Blood, insomnia, high blood pressure, abdominal pain

**Tongue:** purple body

**Pulse:** Xian-mai (wiry) or Se-mai (Choppy)

Chinese herbal formula:

**Xue Fu Zhu Yu Tang – Drive Out Stasis in the Mansion of Blood Decoction**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Composition</th>
<th>dosage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tao Ren</td>
<td>12g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hong Hua</td>
<td>9g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dang Gui</td>
<td>9g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheng Di Huang</td>
<td>9g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chuan Niu Xi</td>
<td>9g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zhi Ke</td>
<td>6g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chi Shao</td>
<td>6g</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Formula Analysis

Tao Ren is the Emperor herb in this formula; it dispels and breaks up Blood Stasis. Hong Hua and Chuan Xiong invigorate and move the Blood and aim the upper part of the body. Dang Gui and Chi Shao do the same, but instead focus more on lower part of the body. Chuan Niu Xi improves Blood circulation by eliminating Blood Stasis and inducing Blood to move downward. Sheng Di Huang has the function of cooling the Blood, tonifying Yin and clearing Heat. Chai Hu promotes the smooth flow of Liver-Qi and Jie Geng and Zhi Ke promote Qi circulation in the chest. Gan Cao is put in to harmonize and regulate the actions of the other herbal medicines in this formula.

Instead of Xue Fu Zhu Yu Tang one could also consider Ge Xia Zhu Yu Tang. The first is mainly aimed at the Upper Burner and the second could be used when Blood Stasis is more prominently present in the Lower Burner. Ingredients of Ge Xia Zhu Yu Tang are: chao wu ling zhi, dang gui, chuan xiong, tao ren, mu dan pi, chi shao, wu yao, yan hu su, gan cao, xiang fu, hong hua, zhi ke.

Beside the formulas presented, I feel another few formulas are word to briefly mention in regard to some common cases presenting during the menopausal period.

⇒ Dang Gui Bu Xue Tang (ingredients: huang qi and dang gui)
Reflecting back on previous discussions on the relative state of Qi and Xue Deficiency presenting in menopause, this formula could be used to modify other formulas when adjusting the standard amounts of the herbs appropriate to the specific situation. Huang Qi tonifies (and lifts) Qi and Dang Gui nourishes Xue.

⇒ Chai Hu Jia Long Gu Mu Li (ingredients: chai hu, ren shen, ban xia, fu ling, gui zhi, huang qin, da zao, long gu, mu li, gan jiang, da huang)
For cases with (more) severe mental-emotional anxiety.

⇒ Jia Wei Xiao Yao San (ingredients: chai hu, bai shao, dang gui, fu ling, bai zhu, sheng jiang, mu dan pi, shan zhi zi, zhi gan cao, bo he)
This formula can be useful in pre-menopausal cases presenting an irregular menstrual cycle or painful menses caused by Liver-Qi Stagnation and Blood Vacuity, with Empty Heat.

⇒ Gan Mai Da Zao Tang (ingredients: fu xiao mai, da zao, gan cao)
A simple yet effective formula that could be added to other formulas (like Liu Wei Di Huang Wan) when in edition to other (core) problems emotional depression, anxiety, palpitations and insomnia are present (a radar common situation in menopause).

⇒ Du Huo Ji Sheng Tang (du huo, sang ji sheng, du zhong, chuan niu xi, xi xin, qin jiao, fu ling, rou gui, fang feng, chuan xiong, ren shen, gan cao, dang gui, bai shao, shu di huang)
This formula could be considered in post-menopausal cases presenting osteoporosis. It treats osteoporosis caused by Liver- and Kidney Yin and Yang Deficiency with Wind, Damp and Cold obstructing the free flow of Qi and Xue in the meridians.
5.1. Possible Modifications according to Symptoms

**Hot Flashes**
Gui Ban 9-25g  
Qing Hao 3-9g  
Di Gu Pi 3-9g

**Sweating/ Night Sweats**
Fu Xiao Mai 9-30g  
Huang Qi 3-10g  
Wu Wei Zi 1.5-9g

**Insomnia**
Zhen Zhu Mu 9-30g  
Suan Zao Ren 3-9g  
Ye Jiao Tang 9-30g

**Palpitations**
Dan shen 9-30g  
Zhi Gan Cao 1-9g

**Irritability and Depression**
Bie Jia 9-15g  
Xiang Fu 3-9g

**Nervousness & Anxiety**
Long Gu 9-15g  
Mu Li 9-30g

**Fatigue**
Ren Shen 1.5-9g  
Dang Shen 3-9g

**Vaginal Dryness**
Nu Zhen Zi 6-9g  
Han Lian Cao 9g  
Niu Xi 2-9g

**Low Libido**
Du Zhong 3-9g  
Yin Yang Huo 3-9g

**Osteoporosis**
Gu Sui Bu 3-9g  
Gou Ji 6-9g

**Breast Tenderness**
Li Zhi He 6-12g  
Gua Lou 6-12g

**Breast Mass**
Qing Pi 3-9g  
Wang Bu Liu Xing 1.5-9g
Thirst
*Mei Men Dong 4.5-9g*
*Tian Men Dong 4.5-9g*

Abnormal or Excessive Bleeding
*Ou Jie 9-15g*
*San Qi 0.6-6g*

High Blood Pressure
*Cao Jue Ming Zi 3-9g*
*Shi Jue Ming 9-45g*

Dosages for the single herbs are adopted from the book of Jiao Shu-De; *Ten Lectures on the Use of Medicinals from the Personal Experience of Jiao Shu-De*. He mentions for some of the herbs listed above that dosages can be increased when necessary.
Conclusion

Initially when one talks about menopause, there’s no talk on disease, because again; it is a natural process. This doesn’t mean though that no problems or so called menopausal complaints will occur. Bearing in mind, an estimated 80% of females will and does experience menopausal complaints. The theories presented show the major importance and impact of (healthy) life-style practices, both during and before the menopausal transitions and how it inevitably influence the way women go through menopause. With this in mind, preventively one should make an effort, when encountering younger females (in their twenties/thirties) in clinical practice to make them aware of this fact.

The basic strategies discussed are to help the body re-balance, re-organize and adjust to a new situation. Presented is this easy where a variety of classical Chinese herbal formula’s which can provide a good fundamental starting point for treating menopausal complaints. Thereby automatically incorporated throughout the essay are appropriate dietary and lifestyle modifications from a Traditional Chinese Medicinal prospective.

Chinese medicine follows the natural way (laws of the universe), and since we are not talking disease, this might be the best resource in menopause to turn to.
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END NOTES

1 Fu Qing Zhu quote from Giovanni Maciocia, Obstetrics & Gynecology in Chinese Medicine, page 11

2 Hormone levels during the menstrual cycle, from Jane Lyttleton’s book; Treatment of Infertility with Chinese Medicine, page 26
3 Renmai and Dumai as the hypothalamus-pituitary-ovarian axis; Giovanni Maciocia, Obstetrics & Gynecology in Chinese Medicine, page 21

4 Interrelationships of the Zang-Fu (Internal Organs), the Vital Substances (Qi, Xue, Jing), the Uterus and the Qi Jing Ba Mai (Extraordinary Vessels)

5 Both pictures show the pathways of the Chongmai, from Giovanni Maciocia, Obstetrics & Gynecology in Chinese Medicine, page 18 and 122

6 Illustration of the pathway of the Renmai; Giovanni Maciocia, Obstetrics & Gynecology in Chinese Medicine, page 18

7 Illustration of the pathway of the Dumai, also from Giovanni Maciocia, Obstetrics & Gynecology, page 19

8 Illustration of the pathway of the Daimai, Giovanni Maciocia, Obstetrics & Gynecology, page 21

9 Nan Jing quote from Elisabeth Rochat, The Eight Extraordinary Meridians, page 163

10 Summation of the Qiao-Mai, Elisabeth Rochat, The Eight Extraordinary Meridians, page 173

11 Nan Jing quote from Elisabeth Rochat, The Eight Extraordinary Meridians, page 225

12 Quote Golden Mirror of Medicine adopted from Giovanni Maciocia, Obstetrics & Gynecology in Chinese Medicine, page 55

13 Fu Qing Zhu quote from Giovanni Maciocia, Obstetrics & Gynecology in Chinese Medicine, page 64

14 Xu Dan-Xi quote from the book of Honora Lee Wolfe, Managing Menopause Naturally with Chinese Medicine, page 43