Yunnan Paiyao (also known as Yunnan Baiyao) is a secret formula of Chinese herbs containing mostly Pseudoginseng and Angelica. Because it is contraindicated during pregnancy, midwives often don’t include this valuable patent Chinese remedy in their medicine bags. It is easily available in Chinese medicinal pharmacies all over the world. It also is relatively inexpensive and is packaged to give it a long shelf life.

The immediate function of Yunnan Paiyao is to arrest hemorrhage, cure wounds, activate blood circulation dispersing blood clots, eliminate inflammation and swelling, as well as expel pus and counteract toxins.

Doctors of Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) will often give Yunnan Paiyao as a first defense against a traumatic hemorrhage (even a deep cut or a gunshot wound), both orally and directly applied to the wound. It comes as a powder, either in capsules or in a small bottle. Included with each package is one small red "safety pill" which should only be administered in the case of serious injury and is best if taken with wine. At Bumi Sehat we give the "safety pill" for deep puncture wounds.

Other indications include arresting internal and external bleeding from trauma and localized bruising. It alleviates pain from trauma to ligaments and tendons. It is an excellent treatment for hemorrhage of gastric and duodenal ulcers and hemorrhoids, as well as hemoptysis due to tracheitis, pneumonia, bronchiectasis, pulmonitis and sore throat. It is also a treatment for pyogenic infections of skin, i.e., red swollen abscess, carbuncle and furuncle.

Specifically for women, this medicine can be used to treat painful dysmenorrhea, menostasis, irregular menstruation, hypermenorrhea, metrorrhagia, leukorrhea and excessive menstrual bleeding. It may be used postoperatively to reduce keloid scarring (e.g., after cesarean birth) and to promote healing.

At Bumi Sehat birth center in Bali and at our tsunami relief and birth center in Aceh, Indonesia, we often use Yunnan Paiyao and consider it a postpartum mother’s best friend.

During the second stage of labor someone on the birth team prepares a solution of warm drinking water, one teaspoon of honey and two opened and dissolved capsules of Yunnan Paiyao. This is given to the mother after the baby has come to facilitate birth of the placenta. We have found that a placenta that is coming slowly will let go and be born within a few minutes of the mother taking Yunnan Paiyao.

Since hemorrhage in the third stage of labor is a leading cause of death in Bali, and we were seeing far too many women with partially released placentas and bleeding behind the yet unborn placenta, we now routinely give our new moms Yunnan Paiyao. Malnutrition in Indonesia leaves birthing mothers with Qi [a kind of life force or spiritual energy] so deficient that they all too often do not easily birth their placentas. Furthermore, the Yunnan Paiyao reduces overall postpartum hemorrhage. Less blood loss means the mother’s milk will flow. This beautiful herbal medicine also enhances mother’s milk, making breastfeeding start-up much easier.

For blood loss leading to sudden drop in blood pressure (BP), give the mother a mix of Yunnan Paiyao with spirulina (or alfalfa juice), water and honey. If the BP drop is critical give her the red "safety pill" and acupuncture to the “spleen 1” point on the outside of the big toes. Be sure to raise her legs and massage her arms and legs toward the heart. Talk to her.

At Bumi Sehat Bali we recently had a third-time mom retain her placenta and develop hemorrhage after having a 4 kg girl. She had a history of acute malnutrition due to poverty. After manual extraction of the placenta, she appeared stable and nursed her baby well. One hour after delivery she began to hemorrhage again. Her BP dropped to 49/30; we were losing her. We went into that life-saving “zone” that blessed midwifery teams go into. Dr. Bobbi instructed us by phone. She had us slap Po Sum Om oil on the mom’s feet, while her legs were raised. Camie, our doula, massaged her; bidan (midwife) Budi put in an IV line; nurse Leman administered oxygen. Robin gave her the red safety pill and mixture of Yunnan Paiyao, spirulina and honey. Bobbi told Robin exactly where to place the acupuncture needles in the big toes, and the BP came right up to 85/50. Once she was stable we were able to transport her for transfusions. The D & C with Dr. Wedagama at the hospital with Robin assisting revealed no retained placenta, no clots, no cervical laceration. Her Qi was just so absent due to hunger that her uterus, even when it felt hard, was incompetent.

Eleven days later the mom bled again. We were called to the hospital because even as transfusions were being administered, her blood pressure would not hold. We flew by motorbike to her side, with jars of Yunnan Paiyao, spirulina and honey. The hospital staff were astonished to watch her pink up and her BP rise as she drank it.

At the Bumi Sehat centers as well as at homebirths we routinely apply Yunnan Paiyao powder on the perineum. For the mother who has torn and was sutured as well as for the mom who has no tear or only a "skid," this herb reduces swelling and pain while speeding the healing process. Moms with very uncomfortable perineae enjoy sitz baths of warm water and Yunnan Paiyao.

This June another woman had a lovely home waterbirth. As her 3 kg son latched on to breastfeed for the first time, minutes after his birth, she experienced acute pain in the vulva. This went on until she asked to be checked. She had no tears, and though her yoni looked perfect, it was very red and inflamed, though not swollen. Dr. Bobbi had only days earlier treated her for

Continued on bottom of next page
Angels and Ancestors

by Sister MorningStar

Excerpted from the upcoming book The Power of Wimyn.

My water broke, MorningStar! My water broke.

Evelyn will call tonight.

Master, we have worked all night and are very tired. Which was perfect except for an episode of extreme anger, when her husband stepped out for a cigarette and came back stinky. A side effect of Depo Provera (one of the most commonly administered methods of birth control in Indonesia) successfully applied the Yunnan Baiyao to her yoni a couple more times during the early postpartum days.

Painful after-contractions, especially in multiparas, are much relieved by taking one to two capsules of Yunnan Baiyao, four times per day for the first two to three days postpartum.

We also have treated hemorrhages that were a side effect of Depo Provera (one of the most commonly administered methods of birth control in Indonesia) successfully using Yunnan Baiyao and acupuncture.

Fungal and bacterial infections of the feet from working in the “sawa” (wet rice fields) often respond to the topical application of Yunnan Baiyao. If you don’t already carry it in your birthkit, please do.

My soul became alert. Inside my head I said, “Evelyn, don’t follow the dead.” And outside I said firmly, “Evelyn, stay with me.” She released her placenta and began to faint and lose more blood. We lifted her up to bed, laid her flat, stopped the bleeding, petals her with cool wash cloths, fed her herbs and fluids while her husband made mighty prayers with great faith. For two hours she wavered between here and there. I watched her come and go as the Angels of Life and Angels of Death did their bargaining.

“Evelyn, you are not replaceable. You have a beautiful daughter. Stay with me. Stay with your beautiful family. They love you so. Evelyn, you are courageous and strong.”

“I am?” she questioned me. “You are me,” I smiled into her pale face. Like the fisherman in my spiritual reading, she and I lowered our nets once again and we caught a nine-pound cherub named Lilly. The Angels of Life won that night for Evelyn the Second.

MorningStar is a Cherokee hermitess living in the Ozark Mountains of Missouri. She has enjoyed a lifetime of preserving instinctual birth among native peoples. You may visit www.sistermorningstar.com or contact sister@sistermorningstar.com.

Yunnan Paiyao: Postpartum Friend

Continued from previous page

kidney deficiency, fire and spleen Qi deficiency, which had caused her to suffer with discomfort in her yoni for eleven years! One acupuncture treatment and she reported that she literally felt 100% relief while still driving home. Yes, the heat was dispelled that quickly. The heat seemed to have been kicked up again by the labor and birth, which was perfect except for an episode of extreme anger, when her husband stepped out for a cigarette and came back stinky. A topical application of Yunnan Paiyao gave immediate relief. Her husband lovingly applied the Yunnan Paiyao to her yoni a couple more times during the early postpartum days.

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Roberta Aqua (Dr. Bobbi) and Robin Lim, along with bidan Budi (who just had a baby boy!), head up the Yayasan Bumi Sehat (Healthy Mother Earth Foundation) medical team in Bali where 389 babies were received in 2005. Most of these children were born to families suffering financially since the terrorist bombings. Please visit the Web site: www.BumiSehatBali.org. Ibu Robin Lim was given the 2006 Alexander Langer International Peace Award to honor her work in Bali and Aceh, Indonesia; for more info see www.alexanderlanger.org.

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