

# Zhang Zhongjing Hosting the Chinese Medical Convention

Written by Professor Xiao Xiangru

*Translated by Allen Tsaur, 10/22/2015*

As Tu Youyou from the China Academy of Chinese Medical Sciences earned the prestigious Nobel Prize, Zhang Zhongjing, the sage of CM, held a CM Convention...



## Zhang Zhong Jing (150-219 AD):

At today's convention, there are two topics of discussion.

The first one is about Tu Youyou earning the prestigious Nobel Prize. Here I represent the CM field to offer our warmest congratulation! The second one is about the clinical practice of CM. I hope everyone can participate with enthusiasm. Do not hold back your opinion!



## Zhang Zihe (1156-1228 AD):

Master Zhang, I will start first to initiate the conversation.

I really like master's Ma Huang Tang, Cheng Qi Tang, and Gua Di San. When I treat, I mostly utilize these three formulas from the master, to sweat, vomit, and purge in treatment. Once the Pathogen Qi is abated, the Zheng Qi will return. I've seen great clinical result from this strategy. This is my rudimentary experience. I welcome criticism and comments.



## Liu Wansu (1100-1180 AD):

Master Zhang, I think all 6 seasonal qi all manifests from Fire. Throughout all transmutation of the six stages, it is always the heat pattern. So I believe master's Ma Huang Tang and Gui Zhi Tang are unsuitable for people. I crafted the formula Shuang Jie San (Fang Feng Tong Sheng San). So whether the patient has Taiyang Stage Cold Damage, Taiyang Stage Wind Strike, internal injury, or external invasion, he can always use it.



Zhang Yuansu (1120-1200 AD):

I say Mr. Liu, you should stop talking right now. Don't you remember you contracted Cold Damage yourself, and you could not resolve it with your Shuang Jie San, like... forever? Wasn't I the one who utilized Master Zhang's formula that's warming acrid and releasing the exterior, and treated your illness successfully? How are you still boasting about your formula?



Lou Tianyi (1220-1290 AD):

I am the apprentice of Master Li Dongyuan. I am the younger generation to Master Liu. But I believe it is entirely impossible to treat all of wind cold, summer heat, dampness, starvation, excessive eating, labor, and lassitude with Master Liu's Shuang Jie San, as you mentioned.

Wind strike has sweating without resolution. Cold damage has no sweat. Summer heat is fever with excessive sweat and Qi deficiency. Dampness is heaviness in the body and joint pain. Starvation injures the Qi. Excessive eating injures the Stomach. Labor exhausts the Qi. Lassitude stagnates the Qi... etc. These are all different patterns, and their treatment strategy should be different. The labored one should be warmed. The injured one should be supplemented. The lazy one should be moved. The ones with internal injury should be reduced and drained. See how complicated this is? Can you treat everything only with Shuang Jie San? I think it is gonna be difficult.



Li Dongyuan (1180-1251 AD):

I think most people are weak and deficient in their Spleen and Stomach. When there is a deficiency in Spleen and Stomach, there will be a deficiency in Yuan Qi and the ascending/descending Qi mechanism will become a mess. When the Yuan Qi is deficient, the Yin Fire™ will occur.

Master Zhang, I have studied thoroughly your Ban Xia Xie Xin Tang to craft my Bu Zhong Yi Qi Tang. I have also come up with the Bu Pi Wei Xie Yin Huo Sheng Yang Tang<sup>1</sup>. Both are quite effective clinically. What do you think?

---

<sup>1</sup> "Supplementing the SP and ST, Draining Yin Fire, and Ascending the Yang Decoction" – Chai Hu 45, Zhi Gan Cao 30, Huang Qi 30, (fried) Cang Zhu 30, Qiang Huo 30, Sheng Ma 24, Ren Sheng 21, Huang Qin 21, (wine fried) Huang Lian 15, Shi Gao some (use some in late summer; remove it after the season; depending on the situation)



Zhu Danxi (1281-1358 AD):

Let me put in my two cents. Most patients I see are Yin Deficient. My understanding is that Yang tends to be excess and Yin tends to be deficient. Those who indulge in excessive sexual activity is especially prone to injure their Yin. Also, I see a great number of stagnation patterns. So I crafted a Yue Ju Wan, which treats all types of stagnation. Both strategies produce decent result. What do you think?



Zhang Jingyue (1563-1640 AD):

I say old friend Mr. Zhu. Although we are both from Zhejiang, I disagree with your point of view. I also disagree Mr. Liu's claim that everything is heat pattern. I see a lot of Yang deficiency. Yang is seldom excess and Yin is usually deficient.



Zhang Zhong Jing (150-219 AD):

Ah, Jingyue thinks people are Yang deficient!

Let the little one, Li Ke, say something about it. I heard you use a massive amount of Fu Zi!



Li Ke (1930-2013 AD):

Master Zhang, and all esteemed teachers. Master Zhang would like me to speak, so let me contribute few words.

I mostly work at the grassroots level, so I usually see patients in poverty. These people do not have the means to see physicians unless they are dangerously close to dying. So the patients I see are mostly with critical fatal illnesses. These people are literally dying when they see me. Of course, for people who are about to die, the main issue is the weakness and desertion of the Yang Qi. To rescue their shattered Yang Qi, I need to utilize your strategy of unobstructing the Yin to rescue the Yang, with formulas such as Tong Mai

Si Ni Tang. When there is not enough power in your formula, I would increase the dosage. But this is still based on your teachings.

I crafted a formula called Po Ge Jiu Xin Tang<sup>2</sup>, which is your formula with a larger dosage of Fu Zi and Gan Jiang, in combination with Zhang Xichun's Lai Fu Tang<sup>3</sup>. I have seen great clinical result on this.



Zhang Zhong Jing (150-219 AD):

I see each of you has something unique to offer. No wonder people call you this school or that school. Do you think you belong to any school of thought?

Does anyone still utilize my principle of *“observe the pulse and signs/patterns, understand how it rebels and transgresses, then treat according to patterns?”*



Together:

None of us thinks we belong to certain school of thought. This is something people forcefully labeled us.

We all adhere to your principle, which Li Ke and his contemporaries call “Pattern Differentiation”



Li Ke (1930-2013 AD):

Master Zhang, I want to make a public statement that I am not in the “Fire Spirit School.” This is a hat some people intentionally put on my head. Although I crafted the Po Ge Jiu Xin Tang, it does not only contain Fu Zi. It also has Shan Zhu Yu, Long Gu, Mu Li, Ci Shi... etc. These are not simply tonifying the Yang.

On the other note, I've also crafted Gong Du Cheng Qi Tang, which is your Cheng Qi Tang<sup>4</sup> with heavy dosage of herbs that clears heat and resolve

<sup>2</sup> **“Break through the Repulsion and Rescue the Heart Decoction”** – Fu Zi 30-200/300, Gan Jiang 60, Zhi Gan Cao 60, Gao Li Shen (Korean ginseng) 10-30, Shan Zhu Yu 60-120, Long Gu 30, Mu Li 30, Ci Shi 30, She Xiang 0.5

<sup>3</sup> **“Coming and Returning Decoction”** – Shan Zhu Yu 60, Long Gu 30, Mu Li 30, Bai Shao 18, Dang Shen 12, Zhi Gan Cao 6.

toxicity. This formula treats various types of acute abdominal illness with great clinical results.

So I have always believed that your “Pattern Differentiation” is the root of Chinese Medicine!



Zhang Zhong Jing (150-219 AD):

This has been a meaningful convention. Every participant has been sharing their thought enthusiastically. I see it as a convention of unity and success.

The mutual understanding we have is that, it is only when we adhere from start to finish to the principle of *“observe the pulse and signs/patterns, understand how it rebels and transgresses, then treat according to patterns,”* we will see CM reaching a new level of clinical efficacy.

---

<sup>4</sup> **“Attacking the Toxins Order the Qi Decoction”** – Jin Yin Hua 90-240, Lian Qiao 30, Fu Rong Ye 30, Da Huang 10-45, Mang Xiao 15-40, Mu Dan Pi 15, Dong Gua Ren 60, Tao Ren 15, Zao Jiao Ci 10, Chuan Shan Jia 10, Bin Lang 30, Yi Yi Ren 30-45, Gan Cao 10.

## Side Note/Comments (from the original email)

From some of their conversations, they actually point out the works/debates/attacks that have been done by these practitioners in the past - such as Zhang Yuansu's attack on Liu Wan Su, Zhang Jingyue's attack on Liu Wansu and Zhu Dan Xi. It is quite something to read through all of it.

Especially in the case of Zhang Jingyue (17th century), after he obliterated Zhang Yuansu (12th century) and Zhu Dan Xi (14th century); Chen Xioyuan (19th century) wrote a comprehensive text (*Criticizing Jingyue's New Formulas*) that criticized and attacked every single formula Zhang Jingyue came up with. In the case of our beloved You Gui Wan and Zuo Gui Wan

These two formulas, gathering medicinal quite in a purist approach (*there is only supplementing and no draining*), but they are simply daily food items. If anyone with Kidney deficiency take them, then they will surely produce symptoms such as phlegm, Qi stagnation, loss of appetite, dizzy Shen, palpitation, vomiting blood... etc. These formulas gather extensively Yin and softening medicinal, which causes the Yin Qi overflows to the above. After which, the Heavenly sun can no longer be seen. Those who study the Classics should all know this.

I've discussed these two formulas with my colleagues. We say, Zhang Jingyue was quite a good chef:

- In the case of Zuo Gui Wan, isn't it the same as dish called "The Eight Immortals" - swallow's nest, Jinlan ham, pork spine, pork knuckles, pigeon eggs, sea cucumber, and mushroom cooked in chicken broth.
- In the case of You Gui Wan, it's simply the addition of spices such as peppers, ginger

Aren't they delicious and benefiting the people's health? But if they are simply served to someone who is ill with the reason of "benefiting the people's health" - never without exception, all will be bloated with accumulated heat inside, and their illness will become worse.

So I say, Zhang Jingyue is a great chef, but he is a horrible physician. For those who offer and charm the rich families with these two formulas. This is a important technique to squeeze and hustle them (i.e. honey pot).

As for the author's description of "to treat the deficiency in True Yin and Kidney Water, one cannot nourish its Ying-Wei, to a degree of declining and weakness" - This is especially illogical and not making any sense.

I hope one day these works will all be available in the English medium. So we see multiple perspectives of these works: in this example, we can see why Zhang Jingyue came up with these formulas (*against Zhu Danxi & his purist approach*), how others criticize them, and what are their flaws.

As I translated this passage, I recalled a emotionally stirring case written by Xu Lingtai in the 18th century (my current favorite guy!), which recorded the death of his close friend due to physicians being dogmatic with Zhang's teachings.

Xu Lingtai was taking care of a friend's chronic illness for years (*seems like some type of cancer - severe Qi/blood stagnation and accumulated heat that cannot be easily cleared away*). To treat it, Xu utilized a clever harmonizing approach to reduce/disperse slightly and supplement stingily (*maybe some type of Chai Hu formulas*) - as the Xie Qi was too strong and Zheng Qi was severely decimated. The illness never went away completely. But the patient was able to take care of himself, and had energy to take on daily tasks.

One time Xu went away for a trip. He made sure his friend had enough herbs to last until his return. But on the way back, the entire Yangtze River froze over and Xu was delayed for nearly two months and not able to make it back in time.

So in the meantime, the friend found 2-3 physicians to diagnose him. The physicians were startled to find the formulas did not nourish Yin, had no ginseng or aconite. They suggested that the reason why the disease never went away was because Xu did not utilize these strategies. The friend started to grow suspicion toward Xu, suspecting that Xu never tried to treat him fully because Xu wanted to retained him as a patient forever.

So he stopped taking Xu's formula and started his new formula from the new physicians.

When Xu came back, he saw what happened. He tired to reason with his friend and begged his friend to listen to him. But the friend would not. He begged for days but was only met with more suspicions and attacks. Seeing how futile it was, Xu left his friend.

Two months later, Xu received a mail telling him that his friend was dying.

Xu raced to see his friend. When he saw his friend, his friend was lying in bed, unable to speak, sleep, or digest anything. His belly was entirely bloated, whole body skin flared up, any movement was severely painful... etc.

Apparently, his new physicians were certain that his illness was due to the Yin-Yang deficiency. So they gave him aconite, ginseng, and rehmannia, *possibly You Gui Wan*, even though his patterns did not call for it. He became increasingly agitated and restless within weeks. He had to drink an excessive amount of water to relieve his discomfort. When his physicians saw that, they forbade him to drink room temperature water as they believed it would be bad for his Yang Qi. One day, out of desperation, he told his servant to bring him well water to wash his feet - when his servants (who were instructed not to give him cool drinking water) brought him the bucket of well water, he drank it all like a mad man. Moments later, he had severe diarrhea and never raised up from bed since.

When Xu finally saw his friend, even he (*the greatest amateur herbalist in CM history*) could not do anything.

His friend died few days later, with much suffering full of regrets.

These are records written by blood. These are lessons learned by mistakes and deaths of many. Like Zhang saw people dying when people abused Zhu Danxi and Liu Wansu's principles or when Xu saw people dying when people abused Zhang's principles. These are things we do not see much in the academic writing

There is a decent textbook in the Chinese TCM national curriculum, called the "The Different Schools of Thoughts in Chinese Medicine" - Maciocia needs and his team need to translate this book asap instead of making the Foundation textbook any bigger (3rd ed just came out, with 160 extra pages). There is an acupuncture version as well, which talks about the historical acupuncture lineages (that no one knows anymore today lol).

Anyway, I can talk about these stuffs forever, hope you enjoy the attached article (which is much shorter than this email it seems... lol)

Regards,

Allen