



## Liu Du-Zhou treats soft **tetany**<sup>a</sup>

Mr Chen, 56 years of age. The presenting complaint was atrophy of the muscles on the upper back just under the neck, with obvious concavity showing a lack of fullness in the muscles.

**W**HAT WAS STRANGE, however, was that the patient had sweating and thirst together with pain in the shoulders and upper back, while both arms and hands had to be held close to his ribs: he could not take them away or lift them up. If he tried to force them to move outward or inward it would cause intense pain in the tendons and bones. His pulse was wiry and thin, his tongue red with a thin tongue coat.

Dr Liu said that the red tongue, thin pulse and thirst were signs of damage to yin and lack of jin-fluids; the pain in the shoulders and back, the withering of the muscles, and the cramping tightness of the tendons with limitation of movement showed long-term unrelieved wind invasion of the *taiyang* channel. The wind, being a yang pathogen, had over this time turned hot and injured the yin and blood.

The *Jin Gui Yao Lue* (Golden Cabinet) states: *Taiyang disease, when the symptoms are severe, the patient's body is stiff and tense, but the pulse is unexpectedly deep and slow, this will lead to tetany: Gua Lou Gui Zhi Tang is the primary formula.*

<b>Gui Zhi</b>	15g	Cinnamomi Ramulus
<b>Bai Shao</b>	15g	Paeoniae Radix alba
<b>Sheng Jiang</b>	10g	Zingiberis Rhizoma recens
<b>Zhi Gan Cao</b>	10g	Glycyrrhizae Radix praeparata
<b>Da Zao</b>	12 pc	Jujubae Fructus
<b>Tian Hua Fen</b>	30g	Trichosanthis Radix

He took 10 or so bags and all symptoms were cured; the muscles of the shoulders and back filled out; and the patient himself shocked and surprised, regarding it as a miracle.

### Comment

The reason for the 30g dosage of *Tian Hua Fen* (Trichosanthis Radix) is to moisten dryness and relieve thirst, providing a substantial augmentation of Lung and Stomach yin. At the same time as rectifying the lack of jin-fluids and ye-fluids, it also controls the heat of the *Gui Zhi* (Cinnamomi Ramulus).

When Zhang Zhong-Jing treats thirst, he prefers to use *Tian Hua Fen* (Trichosanthis Radix) rather than other herbs because of its qualities: for example, in flavour it is sweet, sour and moistening, while in function it transforms yin to generate jin-fluids and quench thirst. These characteristics make it special in his eyes.

■ Translated by Steve Clavey

<sup>a</sup> For more on tetany, refer to the first chapter of the *Jin Gui Yao Lue* (Golden Cabinet), and also to the following lines in the *Shang Han Lun*: clauses 38, 82, 85, 131 and 153 (trans).