

# Gui Zhi jia Da Huang Tang

A case from Cao Ying-Fu



## Dr Huang Huang says this about Cao Ying-Fu:

Cao Ying-Fu (1866-1937, given name Jia-Da) was a native of Jiangyin in Jiangsu Province and a famous modern expert in classical formulas. At a dangerous turning point for Chinese medicine he dared to speak directly and not follow the herd, advocating in no uncertain terms practical research into Zhang Zhong-Jing's works. With an attitude of avidly searching for factual evidence in therapy, he subjected classical formulas to stringent clinical examination. As a proponent of Chinese medicine's scientific nature, he wrote an important page in the history of modern Chinese medicine's development. The following case history and discussion is from the book *Jīng fāng shí yàn lù* (Records of Experiments with Classic Formulas) by Cao Ying-Fu and his students.

**M**R QING'S GRANDSON presented with an illness that started after sudden exposure to wind-cold, with constipation and pain on the vertex of the head. This is a *taiyang-yangming* concurrent illness.

The patient took, on his own, *Jiu Ming Dan* (Rescue Life Special Pill)<sup>a</sup> after which his bowels moved and the headache was slightly improved. The surface pattern was not completely resolved and the interior pattern was also unresolved. The pulse was floating and languid, the body sweaty, and the appropriate formula was *Gui Zhi jia Da Huang Tang* (Cinnamon Decoction with added Da Huang).

Gui Zhi	9g	Cinnamomi Ramulus
Bai Shao	9g	Paeoniae Radix alba
Gan Cao	3g	Glycyrrhizae Radix
Da Huang	9g	Rhei Radix et Rhizoma
Sheng Jiang	3 sl	Zingiberis Rhizoma recens
Hong Zao	3 pc	Jujubae Fructus

**Comment by Zhang Zuo-Jing** [Cao Ying-Fu's student]: In treating an illness, the standard method is to first resolve the exterior and only later attack the interior;<sup>b</sup> this is reaping the benefit of previous generations experience. In clinic I have found that once the surface is resolved the constipation often resolves of itself without the need for help from added herbs. The reason is that while the exterior is bound up with a pathogen, the patient's *yuan qi* is concerned only with dealing with the surface pattern and has no time for the interior situation. After the exterior is resolved, however, the *yuan qi*

a. There are a number of *Jiu Ming Dan* (Rescue Life Special Pill) formulations from different books over the centuries, some of which include purgatives; exactly which is referred to here is unclear.

b. "Attack the interior" (攻里 gōng lǐ) is commonly used to mean purging the bowels in *Shang Han Lun* contexts.

rallies the troops to attend to the inside. Now while no one can actually see with their own eyes the coming and going, to and fro, of the *yuan qi*, this is actually the fact of the situation, make no mistake. So when I run into a situation of bound exterior with internal distention (*biǎo shù lǐ zhāng* 表束里張) pattern, if the constipation has not exceeded three days, I always treat it as a given that it will resolve of itself.

The formula above which releases the exterior while unblocking the interior is both a formula and a method. Because the "release the exterior" aspect is 70 per cent and the "unblock the interior" aspect 30 per cent, we can see that there is a "guest and host" situation, ie. one aspect is more important than the other. In this case, because the patient has already taken a laxative type prescription with the *Jiu Ming Dan* (Rescue Life Special Pill), the interior unblocking aspect is the guest. The patient took no exterior releasing herbs, so the exterior releasing is the host. But it works along both lines, the demon illness is driven into nothingness while the *yuan qi* as supreme commander is sitting pretty.

When you look at it, there are such a wide variety of methods in Zhang Zhong-Jing's books, it is up to you to extract them. In fact, if you are looking for a "method beyond a method," I recommend investigating *Hou Po Qi Wu Tang* (Seven Substance Decoction with Magnolia Bark).<sup>c</sup>

c. *Hou Po Qi Wu Tang* (Seven Substance Decoction with Magnolia Bark) is another of Zhang Zhong-Jing's formulas, but found in the *Jin Gui Yao Lue* (Golden Cabinet) not the *Shang Han Lun*. It is also designed for a concurrent *taiyang-yangming* pattern, but with emphasis on the interior rather than the exterior. Zhang Zuo-Jing is recommending a comparison of the contents and dosages of the two similar methods to foster flexibility and subtlety in clinic. *Hou Po Qi Wu Tang* can be found in *Formulas and Strategies* as an adjunct to the discussion of *Da Chai Hu Tang* (Major Bupleurum Decoction) in the section Formulas that Release the Exterior and Purge the Interior.