A case study on lurking pathogens from the late Qing dynasty
Second of a two-part series

By Jason Blalack & Charles Chace

Introduction to Liu Bao-Yi
(highlights from last issue)

Lü Bao-Yì (柳寶瀅) (1842-1901) is best known for his work in understanding lurking pathogens (伏邪 fú xié), a topic he spent his life studying, and that he treated with great success. A warm disease lurking pathogen refers to a pathogen that is contracted, brews, and lurks in the interior, or can be nothing more than an ongoing accumulation of internal heat. In either case a new warm disease pathogen or disrupting factor can pull out the lurking pathogen, creating a complex and sometimes serious eruption. Many times the initial stages will manifest as interior heat, but there are also many similarities to the initial stages of an exterior warm disease. Lü established important guidelines in treating such diseases.

Much of Lü's thinking can be understood as a development of ideas advanced by Wáng Měng-Yíng whose work was based in turn on Yè Tiān-Shī. Lü made three major contributions to the treatment of lurking pathogens in warm disease.

1) Lü believed that even though cold damage (伤寒 shāng hán) tends to damage a person's yin, and warm disease (温病 wēn bìng) tends to scorch a person's yin, both theories account for the relationship between the body's correct [qi] and the pathogen (邪 xié), and states of deficiency and excess within the body. He was therefore of the opinion that warm disease can be treated in accordance with the methods of the six channels described by cold damage theory even though lurking pathogens in warm disease transmute via different routes than pathogens associated with cold damage. In the case presented here, which began in the last issue of The Lantern and concludes in this issue, both the original physician and Lü Bào-Yì rely on six channel theory as their primary diagnostic paradigm even as they treat in a manner that is entirely consistent with the principles of warm disease. Our commentary on this case draws upon both six channel and four aspect theory as a means for describing the pathodynamics at play.

2) He pioneered the treatment method of assisting the yin to draw out a lodged pathogen when there is warm disease with yin deficiency. This was most likely developed from Wáng Měng-Yíng's idea that if the stomach fluids are not exhausted, the patient will not die, and the concept of "rescuing the fluids of the yàng míng" to treat warm-heat diseases. This all stemmed from the words of Yú Jiān-Yán, "The qi of true heaven that a person is born with are the fluids in the stomach."

3) Lü pointed out that the symptom of "daze" (ie. coma) in warm disease is not from profound excess but from profound deficiency. In patients with purely excess heat, one often purges the bowels to bring someone out of a coma; one cannot do this if the patient's condition is purely deficient.

All of Lü's essential ideas were based on the theories and interpretations of earlier physicians. His own contributions are part of a continuous flow of information linking one theory to the next. Given the current popularity of the concept of lurking pathogens, and the speculation that is often associated with them, we have found it espe-
This balancing act is one of the key lessons in this case. One must include enough yin-nourishing herbs to protect the yin, while not yet attempting to rebuild it. Another key lesson is the opening up of avenues by which a pathogen may be evicted.

Six symptoms were present: a foul breath that repels people, a strong desire for food, red and dry tongue, dry throat, and sunken eyes. Liu Bao-Yi thinks he should have purged.

Visit 6

The patient has foul breath that repels people. This is an expression of extreme Stomach fire. Although the macules and papules are evident, they have not sufficiently erupted. The patient’s eyes are red and his spirit muddled. His pulse is floating and he is thirsty. It is essential to urgently and rapidly transform the macules. The ancient method for transforming macules is to use White Tiger as the guiding [prescription], to which is then added [Xī Jiáo, and] [Shēng Dì] to clear the nutritive and resolve toxins. In addition, to restore and protect the yin it is also appropriate to combine this with the method of using Yū Nū Jiān4 (Jade Woman Decoction). Will this be enough to ensure a response?

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<td>Lù Gēn</td>
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<th>Level: Qi moving into nutritive</th>
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<td>Txp Transform macules Clear nutritive Resolve toxins Restore and protect yin</td>
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Comment: Liu Bao-Yi thinks he should have purged.
Herb glossary:

<table>
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<th>Herb</th>
<th>Latin Name</th>
<th>Category</th>
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<tr>
<td>Paonaeae Lactiflorae, Radix</td>
<td>Albou Bù (白术)</td>
<td>Pinelliae Stratiatiae Radix</td>
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<td>Ban Xi (白及)</td>
<td>Chelidonium majus L.</td>
<td>Fritillariae Thunbergii Bulbus</td>
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Translators interpretation & comments:

Tān Zhū Huāng & Shì Chāng Pú – This combination clears the Heart orifices and prevents the already mulled-up spirit from giving way to unconsciousness.

Xián Dì – Clears heat from the nutritive. Shì Gào – Clears heat from the Stomach and provides some nourishment to fluids. Providing evidence that there is some qi level involvement. Xī Jià – Resolves macules. Zhī Mǎ – Clears heat and nourishes yín. Rèn Zhōng Huāng – Sweet, cold, enters the Heart and Stomach. Clears heat and cools the blood, resolves toxins, treats cold-damp- febrile disease (heat disease), great heat (effusion), vexation, thirst, heat toxin macular-papular eruptions. Mái Dōng, Shān Shēn, & Xī Yáng Shèn – Nourishes yín and qi. Dà Shèng Dì – Clears heat from the nutritive and nourishes yín. Lù Gēn – Clears heat and nourishes fluids. With Zhī Mǎ and Shī Gào, from Bái Hù Tóng (White Tiger Decoction), one would assume that there is some level of qi heat level. Yú Jiān (Jade Woman Decoction) is said to clear internal heat from both the qi and nutritive aspects (with yín deficiency). On purging: During the fifth visit, Wáng added Dà Huáng to vent heat through the bowels. According to Lù Bào-Yì, Wáng erased in moving it on the sixth visit. As mentioned above, purging is appropriate when macules have not fully erupted and constipation is present, however, one should suspend purging once the bowels begin to move. The status of the bowels during the sixth visit of this case is unclear. All we are told is that Dà Huáng was omitted from the prescription, presumably because the bowels had begun to move. Whatever Wáng’s reasons for removing Dà Huáng, Lù Bào-Yí believes that this was a strategic blunder. Had Wáng left the Dà Huáng in the prescription, it would have more completely cleared the lurking pathogen from the qi aspect, significantly expediting the patient’s recovery.

On macules and venetting strategies: Wáng’s removal of the Dà Huáng from this prescription was not the only substantive change he made in his treatment strategy. Another factor that most likely contributed to the subsequent course of the case was Wáng’s removal of most of the venetting medicinals as well, a decision that neither Lù Bào-Yì nor Wáng himself commented on. It may be that Wáng not only failed to continue purging, but he also failed to continue tonifying.

Wáng based his prescription on a combination of Jade Woman Decoction and a common modification of White Tiger Decoction. Jade Woman is indicated for Stomach heat with yín deficiency with vigorous fire and makes use of the technique of directing fire downwards rather than dispersing it, yet, Núi Xì, a key ingredient in the downbearing aspect of this strategy, does not appear in Wáng’s formula.

The modification of White Tiger mentioned above is essentially Hua Bản Tăng (Transform Macules Decoction), which clears heat from the qi and blood aspects. The fact that the macules had not fully erupted may be a clue that rather than decreasing the venetting component in his prescription, Wáng should have increased it by including herbs such as Shēng Mǎ or Gé Gén. Furthermore, when heat is lodged as deeply as the nutritive level it is still essential to vent the heat to the qi using medicinal such as Jǐn Yin Huà, Lián Qióng, Dān Zhī Yè, and Dān Dōu Chì.

Once in the qi level, pathogenic heat is less of a threat and is easier to guide outward.

The inclusion of venetting medicinals like Jǐn Yin Huà and Lián Qióng, when there is intense heat in the qi and blood aspects, is common in modern warm disease practice, providing evidence that some venetting may be appropriate regardless of the aspect involved (Liu Guo-Hui, p. 278). Despite its obvious utility, Wáng nonetheless elected not to include a venetting component into his prescription.

Therefore, Wáng may have committed a fundamental error in removing the venetting herbs Lián Qióng and Núi Bảng Zì that could have provided an avenue outward for the pathogenic heat. These herbs were probably removed because the previous prescription was ineffective.

As already mentioned, Hua Bản Tăng (Transform Macules Decoction) clears heat from the qi and blood aspects. Wáng’s stated treatment principle was to clear heat from the nutritive level leaving open the question of which aspects Wáng believed he was actually treating.

In practical terms, however, it makes little difference. Regardless of whether the pathogen was also lodged in the nutritive or blood aspects, or both, it is likely that Wáng should have further vented to the qi aspect.

A final argument for retaining a venetting component in this prescription is that it is often necessary to expel deeply entrenched pathologies along more of one’s channel.

Similarly, blood stagnation is also central in conditions characterised by heat in the blood. Therefore, blood quickeners such as Chì Shāo or Mǎ Dī Pí are often included in Hua Bản Tăng to enhance its efficacy (Liu Guo-Hui, p. 276). Such an inclusion could have improved the prescription.
Summary: Wáng Xû-Gaosh treatment strategy would have been more effective had he continued to actively clear heat from the qi aspect via purgation, and possibly venting. The apparently premature addition of overly cloying fluid engendering medicinals, and the exclusion of medicinals to establish an adequate outlet for the pathogen, only further constrained the heat, re-activating the qi aspect heat.

Translator’s interpretation & comments: Despite Liú Bào-Yî’s reservations regarding Wáng’s treatment strategy outlined in visit six, he acknowledges that the clearing of the patient’s sensorium represented a positive shift in the patient’s overall condition. Unfortunately, Wáng began nourishing with cloying medicinals prematurely, which only further constrained the heat. Although Xì Jiăo and Shíng [Gân] Câo provide an avenue outward, they were overshadowed by the cloying medicinals. Again, similar to the last visit, Wáng does not provide enough venting, even though he adequately directly attacks the heat in the qi, nutritive and blood aspects with herbs like Shí Gâo, Shìng Dî, Xiăn Dî, Xiăn Hû, Xuan Shên. Why, then, does Liú Bào-Yî comment that in visit six Wáng should have continued purging when there was no constipation? The patient’s sensorium had cleared, and he could now extend his tongue. Given the severity of the patient’s condition, Wáng was most likely writing a new formula on a daily basis. A lurking phlegm heat pathogen is, by definition, very entrenched and difficult to resolve. On the previous day this phlegm heat was all too evident. Could it have been expelled so quickly? Probably not, hence, Liú is of the opinion that Wáng should have continued to purge. Liú’s view is substantiated by the subsequent course of the illness. The pathogen remained there, lurking, sitting in a pressure-cooker fuelled by the cloying herbs, waiting to unleash itself again.

Visit 7

The patient is able to recognise others, and his tongue now can extend out of his mouth, evidence that the circumstances are gradually shifting toward recovery. The [treatment] method is to use a large formula to protect the yin in the hopes of restoring [the patient’s] health.

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<th>Shêng Dî Huang</th>
<th>Yáng Shên</th>
<th>Mài Dông</th>
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<tr>
<td>Xuăn Dî</td>
<td>Xiăn Hû</td>
<td>Xuăn Shên</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bê Shî Shên</td>
<td>Xì Jiăo</td>
<td>Shí Gâo</td>
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<td>Shîng [Gân] Câo</td>
<td>Zhé Zhî</td>
<td>(Sugar cane juice)</td>
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Liú Bào-Yî’s comment: Here we begin to see a shift in the mechanism, but there is still danger!

Visit 8

[The patient now has] a peeled, black tongue coat while the tongue body is a deep red indicating that the yin fluids are severely injured and the dry fire has not abated. The left pulse is fine and small while the right pulse is flooding and rapid. These are his symptoms, which show yin damage and hyperactive fire, an insufficiency [yîn] of the shào yín and a surplus [fire] of the yáng ming. Only Jing-Yû’s Jade Maiden Decoction is appropriate. One facet [of this prescription] drains fire, while another facet protects the yín. [This strategy should be] maintained for more than 15 days so that his yín can be restored.

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<th>Xiăn Shêng Dî</th>
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Liú Bào-Yî’s comment: The substantial filth had already been eliminated, yet the substantial heat remained. In prescribing medications it was still appropriate to attend to both the vacuity and the repletion and one mustn’t dare let down one’s guard.
Translator’s interpretation & comments: Liu believed that Dà Huáng should still be included in the prescription of visits 7 and 8 (and beyond). This purging would have further kept the avenue open to expel the heat, even though there is no form! In the prescription of visit 7, the venting nature of Shèng [Gān] Cāo (via urine) and Xì Jiāo (venting from nutritive to qi level) just was inadequate. Additionally, the prescription had too many cloying medicinals. Even though they were coupled with heat clearing ones like Shí Gāo, and it was formless and insubstantial in nature, we can assume that these cloying medicinals clogged up the already weakened qi mechanism creating more stagnant heat, which in turn led to fire creating form. In visit eight, there was excess, though formless, heat in the yáng ming as evidenced by the flooding pulse. The left pulse was fine and small, which further exemplifies the yin deficiency. As Liu points out, one should simultaneously nourish and reduce. This balancing act is one of the key lessons in this case. One cannot prematurely nourish too much, but must include enough yin-nourishing herbs to protect the yin, while not yet attempting to rebuild it. Another key lesson is the opening up of avenues by which the pathogen may be evicted.

* One can purge formless heat, if it provides a needed outlet, dependent upon the history, and the nature of the pathogen past and present.

* Administering cloying medicinals (too early) can easily disrupt the qi mechanism and can lead to more heat.

Herb analysis: The formula clears heat and protects yin. Wáng reduced the medicinals that purely nourished the yin, yet the prescription is still too rich. Notice that he brought Lián Qióng back into the prescription. He added Zhì Mù and Lù Gèn to clear heat and nourish fluids. He added Zhì Zǐ, Lù Gèn and Lián Qióng to clear heat in all three burners, resolve toxicity, and provide an avenue outward for the heat.

Visit 9

The patient has frequent borborygmos and flatulence, his throat is dry, and because of this dryness, he is unable to make a sound when he attempts to speak. This is a smoking of yáng ming dry fire and a failure of the fluids to ascend. Thus, again rescue the yin while opening the bowels, then plan another treatment.

Dà Shēng Dì one liàng
Xiān Shēng Dì one liàng
Shā Shēn one liàng
Mài Dōng 3 qián
Hái Shēn 2 liàng
Xuán Shēn 5 qián
Dà Huáng wine soaked 3 qián
Xuán Míng Fen 3 qián
Shēng [Gān] Cāo 4 fen

Lù Bào-Yí’s comment: This is Wu Ju-Tong’s strategy from Zēng Ye Chéng Qì Tāng (Increase the Fluids and Order the Qi Decoction). These medicinals were indicated because the filthy heat had once again accumulated in the bowels. If he had previously used Dà Huáng in the sixth and seventh formulas then he would not have had this turn of events.8 Hai Shēn is fishy and rank and patients can’t stand the taste so it should be omitted. Yáng Shēn and Shí Hù should have been added instead.

Translator’s interpretation & comments: Heat decocts the fluids, leading to dry-heat. Form returns here (i.e. filthy heat).

Herb analysis: Shī Gāo and Lù Gèn were removed. Sha Shen and Mài Dōng were added. This is a remarkable modification in that cloying herbs had previously caused a disruption of qi mechanism leading to more intense heat. Either Wáng is grasping at straws in regard to how much and when to use yin nourishing versus heat clearing medicinals, or he assumes that the inclusion of Dà Huáng allows for a more liberal use of cloying herbs because any build up from the cloying medicinals can be eliminated via the bowel. Lù does not question
the inclusion of clorying supplementing medicinals. The type of yin and fluid nourishment one prescribes must match the type and amount of fluid damage that is present. Wáng’s addition of these two medicinals suggests that there is much more fluid damage in this presentation than in previous visits, and he has adjusted his prescription accordingly. Despite a diagnosis of dry-heat, Zhì Mài and Lù Gèn were removed. Nourishing deep fluids appears to be more important than clearing heat with herbs that also nourish fluids.

- There were no outward/upward venting medicinals included.
- Tong Cao remained, venting heat via the urine.

Prescription summary for visits 7-9

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<th>VISIT 7</th>
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**Visit 10**

**TxP**
Nourish yin and awaken Stomach

**Herb analysis:** In restoring the Stomach, Fù Lìng, Gù Yá, and Jú Hóng offset the stagnating nature of the yin nourishing medicinals thereby promoting the qi mechanism. Gù Yá strengthens the Stomach while gently eliminating any food stagnation. All aid in the digestion of the yin nourishing medicinals. Hái Shen is used to nourish yin while sugar cane skin will nourish yin but has less risk of trapping the pathogen.

Visit 11

The patient has become deaf, his tongue is dry and it is difficult to move his tongue. There is major damage to the yin fluids, therefore the method from *Restoring the Pulse [Decoction]* will be used.

**Shèng Di Huáng**

È Jiǎo (mix fried with the tips of Chúān Lìán)

Mǎi Dōng

Yáng Shen

Zhī Gān Cāo

Xuān Shen

Jì Zì Huáng (chicken egg yolks)

**Liǔ Bāo-Yì’s comment:** The heat had, for the most part, been eliminated but the yin was damaged. From here on one can focus on nourishing the yin. Nonetheless the deafness and impairment of acute hearing [show that] there was still a surplus of heat in the yin channels that had not been drained.

**Translator’s interpretation & comments:**

Liú’s comment in this entry concerns the elimination of the previously discussed heat in the yáng ming, then says there is a surplus (余) of heat in the yin channel; the rapid onset of tinnitus and deafness does indeed suggest an excess etiology. Yet, the ingredients of Wáng’s prescription suggest there is nevertheless a significant deficiency component that requires supplementation. Instead it strongly nourishes the yin while clearing deficient heat. Hence, the surplus here refers only to the heat component of the overall presentation.
Visit 12

After taking strong formulas to enrich the yin, the fluids are greatly restored but the fire not strongly enough drained. Fifteen days have passed, the tooth scum abated but has returned. The spirit-complexion is clear. It is not that yin has not recovered, but rather that the dry fire has still not cleared. A sage sees a mistake and knows what to do; wisdom can tell the future from one small clue. It is time to change the approach and so I select a light clearing method.

Yáng Shēn
Chuán Bèi
Záó Rén [fried pig’s bile]
Chuán Lian (fried in salt water)
[with] Xìe Gēng jiàn

Zhī Shì
Jú Hóng [fried in salt water]
Chí [Fú] Líng
Zhù Rù

Liū Bǎo-Yí’s comment: This prescription and the strategy it is based on are inappropriate for the situation. At this time it is still appropriate to be nourishing the yin and draining heat so that both aspects can be addressed concurrently and the prescription is in accord with the pathomechanism.

Translator’s interpretation & comments: Now we have a mention of dry-fire, the exact meaning of which is unclear. It is stated, though, that the yin had returned. Curiously, the prescription also addressed phlegm. Liū objects to Wáng’s switch, and it is indeed difficult to understand Wáng’s thinking.

Visit 13

The illness is calming down. With every sip of porridge there is a moistening sweat. This is not due to vacuity but [a sign] that the fluids have recovered and nutritive qi is [once again] circulating [through the body]. Urine is rough and painful and there is surplus fire that has yet not been cleared. It is appropriate to clear and transform and that should be all.

Dòng Guā Rén
Tiān Xíng Rén
Xiǎn Shí Hù
Hēi Zhī
Gǎn Cāo Shāo (rootlets)
Shēng Mài Yà
Tōng Cāo

Liū Bǎo-Yí’s comment: Due to the rough and painful urination it would have been appropriate to use the Guide Out the Red (formula) strategy, adding Shēng Dì, Mù Tóng, Huáng Lián and Huáng Bì to Wáng’s original prescription.
Translator’s interpretation & comments: Knowing the outcome of this prescription, Liû recommends a more aggressive stance on the heat accumulating in the Bladder (and Small Intestine) with Hûang Liân and Hûang Bái.

Herb analysis: Tông Căo and Hei Zhī promote urination and clear heat. Đông Gâí Ren clears heat and drains damp via the urine. Shî Hu nourishes (protects) fluids and clears heat. Gân Căo Shao serves as an envoy for treating the urination. Shêng Mâi Yà and Tông Căo protect and soothe the Stomach.

Visit 14

The disease has abated, leaving residual symptoms. During the day [the patient] is fine, but at night he develops a fever and becomes muddled indicating that there is remnant heat remaining in the nutritive aspect. His urination is hot and painful indicating that Heart fire has fallen into the Small Intestine. This would seem to be a case of remnant heat in the aftermath of an illness, hence one should use: Bái He Zhî Mû Hùa Shì Tâng (Lîlî Bulk, Anemarrhena and Tâlc Decoction) combined with Dăo Chí San (Powder for Guiding Out The Red).

Xîn Shêng Dî Mù Tông
Gân Căo Zhî Yê Xin
Chuân Bái Hê Zhît Mû
Hù Shî
Decoct the medicinals in spring water

Liû Bào-Yi’s comment: There are always residual complications in the aftermath of [warm] disease; this formula is light and clearing in due measure.

Translator’s interpretation & comments: The patient is substantially improved, but by no means well. Liû appears to agree with the overall execution of the final treatment strategy. It is necessary to continue clearing heat, although excessively bitter medicinals are not indicated. Similarly, some yin enrichment is indicated as well, but not so much that it will again lock in the remaining pathogenic factor.

Conclusion

The foregoing case study demonstrates some of the ideas fundamental to understanding lurking pathogens. It not only exemplifies many of the fundamental principles of warm disease theory, it also presents a number of other concepts less commonly discussed in the literature. These include the ideas that lurking pathogens present as multiple pathogens occurring on multiple layers, and that clearing one layer may uncover a pathogen on a deeper layer, so that the deeper one goes, the more severe the presentation may be. Furthermore, the pathogenic expression of these deeper levels is sensitive to lifestyle factors, particularly dietary indiscretions. We hope that our presentation and analysis has proven interesting and clinically valuable to those readers who have taken the time to follow the line of thought in the case, and perhaps it may provide an illustration of why detailed studies of case histories are considered an essential part of Chinese medicine training.

Bibliography

2. 柳宗治 (简) 柳忠治四家医案.
5. 柳楼, 柳天士 (1667) 温热论.

Endnotes

1. 翻译 (fēn hái) 2. His given name was Wâng Tâi-Lîn (王泰林).
3. Shî Gâô, Shî Di [Hûang], Mût Dông, Zhît Mû, Nù Xi.
4. Formulas and Strategies: p. 94
5. Created by Wu Tâng (1798) – Shî Gâô, Zhît Mû, Gan Căo, Xun Shén, Xi Jût, Gêng Mî.
6. Originally introduced by Ye Gîi in the Discussion of Warm-Heat Disorders.
7. For a slightly different perspective on venting the pathogen from the nutritive aspect by Zhao Shao-Qîn, cf. Liû Guo-Huí’s Warm Diseases: a clinical guide: p. 168.
8. One may assume he is also including Visit 8.
9. This phrase can be “knows what is wrong and what is right” according to Liû Guo-Huí.
10. This phrase can be “knows the prelude before full presentation of a piece of music” according to Liû Guo-Huí. This literary diversion basically means the wise person is always able to see the significances from tiny signs – the point is to justify his method of tonifying yin.
11. This is Snow Soup Decoction made up of four large water chestnuts (大雪姜) and jellyfish (軟鰻) 30g. It has the functioning of draining heat and stopping pain. It is indicated for Liver channel heat reversal with lesser abdominal pain.
12. Shêng Dî, Mù Tông, Dân Zhù Ye, Gân Căo Shão.
13. There is possibly a printing error here, but another possibility is that 参考甘草法 is in reference to using the method of Dăo Chí Gê Bàn [Tâng]. There are a few formulas with this name, but one that makes sense is below. Alternate names are: Dăo Chí Xiê Xíng Tâng, Dăo Chí Xíe Xíng Gê Bàn Tâng. Originally from Shêng Hán Liù Shì (Six Books on Cold Damage) chapter three.


Indications: Cold-damage channel pattern where the region below the heart is not hard, there is no abdominal fullness, urination and bowel movements are normal, there are no chills or fever, but there is heat that has passed to the shaoyîn Heart. Heart fire ascends forcing the Lungs, gradually shifting to produce unconsciousness and loss of speech, or talking in one’s sleep. The eyes are red and burnt looking, the tongue is dry with no desire to drink. The patient is able to swallow only thin gruel but has no appetite, and behaves as if drunk.