



# Silent Night™

**Classic antecedent:** Suan Zao Ren Tang *Ziziphus Decoction.*

**Sheng Di Huang** *Radix Rehmanniae*  
**Dang Gui** *Radix Angelicae sinensis*  
**Bai Shao** *Radix Paeoniae alba*  
**Suan Zao Ren** *Semen Ziziphi spinosae*  
**Ye Jiao Teng** *Caulis Polygoni multiflori*  
**Deng Xin Cao** *Medulla Junci*

**Huang Lian** *Rhizoma Coptidis*  
**Shan Zhi Zi** *Fructus Gardeniae*  
**Lian Zi Xin** *Plumula Nelumbinis nuciferae*  
**Gan Cao** *Radix Glycyrrhizae uralensis*  
**Da Zao** *Fructus Jujubae*

*The remedy Silent Night was formulated to treat insomnia and poor sleep in babies and children. It nourishes Liver- and Kidney-Yin, clears Heart-Heat and Liver-Heat, calms the Mind, and settles the Ethereal Soul (Hun).*

The clinical manifestations corresponding to *Silent Night* include disturbed sleep, difficulty in falling asleep, waking up during the night, crying at night in small children and babies, scary dreams, a tongue without coating and a Floating-Empty pulse.

This remedy promotes sleep by nourishing Liver-Yin and Heart-Blood. Liver-Yin and Heart-Blood house the *Hun* of the Liver and the *Shen* of the Heart. Both of these are responsible for the amount of quality of sleep we get.

The amount and quality of sleep depend of course on the state of the *Shen* of the Heart. The *Shen* is rooted in the Heart and specifically in Heart-Blood and Heart-Yin. If the Heart is healthy and the Blood abundant, the *Shen* is properly rooted and sleep will be sound. If the Heart is deficient or if it is agitated by pathogenic factors such as Fire, the *Shen* is not properly rooted and sleep will be affected.

As always in Chinese medicine, there is an interrelationship between body and Mind. On the one hand, a deficiency of Blood or a pathogenic factor such as Fire may affect the Mind; on the other hand, emotional stress affecting the Mind may cause a disharmony of the Internal Organs. If the disharmony of the Internal Organs, whether it is due to a Deficiency or an Excess, affects Blood and *Jing*, this affects the Mind. Since the *Jing* and *Qi* are the root of the *Shen* (the "Three Treasures"), the *Shen* then has no

residence and insomnia may result. The "Simple Questions" in chapter 46 says: "*When a person lies down and cannot sleep, [it means] the Yin organs are injured [so that] the Jing has no residence and is not quiet and the person cannot sleep.*"<sup>1</sup>

As far as sleep is concerned, the *Shen* is not the only mental-spiritual faculty involved. The *Hun* also plays an important role in the physiology and pathology of sleep and the length and quality of sleep are related to its state. In particular, the *Hun* controls dreaming and therefore dream-disturbed sleep is often due to a disharmony of the *Hun*.

If the *Hun* is well rooted in the Liver (Liver-Blood or Liver-Yin), sleep is normal, sound and without too many dreams. If Liver-Yin or Liver-Blood is deficient, the *Hun* is deprived of its residence and wanders off at night, causing a restless sleep with many tiring dreams. Tang Zong Hai says: "*At night during sleep the Hun returns to the Liver; if the Hun is not peaceful there are a lot of dreams.*"<sup>2</sup>

Another organ and mental-spiritual aspect influencing sleep are the Kidneys and the Will-Power (*Zhi*). I translate *Zhi* as "Will-Power" but *Zhi* encompasses also other aspects of the psyche. The *Zhi* is the root of the *Shen* of the Heart and it controls memory and sleep. Thus, when the Kidneys and the *Zhi* are deficient, the person may sleep badly, in particular he or she may wake up frequently during the night.

<sup>1</sup>1979 The Yellow Emperor's Classic of Internal Medicine-Simple Questions (*Huang Di Nei Jing Su Wen*), People's Health Publishing House, Beijing, p. 256. First published c. 100 BC.

<sup>2</sup>Tang Zong Hai 1892 The Essence of the Convergence between Chinese and Western Medicine (*Zhong Xi Hui Tong Yi Jing Jing Yi*), cited in Wang Ke Qin 1988 Theory of the Mind in Chinese Medicine (*Zhong Yi Shen Zhu Xue Shuo*), Ancient Chinese Medical Texts Publishing House, p. 36.

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