

■ Huang Di, Shennong and Fuxi, surrounded by the Guardian Spirits of the Four Directions, the Sun, the Moon and the 28 Lunar Mansions.



湯液經法

# Tangye jingfa

Classical methods of decoctions explored in the Fuxingxue

By Sharon Weizenbaum

PART 1

The six spirit (六神 *liu shén*) and two dawning (二旦 *èr dàn*) formulas come from a text whose full title is *Secret Tips for Helpful Action: The Key to Using Medicinals on the Zàngfǔ Organs* (輔行訣臟腑用藥法要 *Fǔxíngjué Zàngfǔ Yòngyào Fǎyào*) – “Fuxingjue” from here. I gave the title *Tāngyè jīngfǎ* 湯液經法 to this article because the contents of the *Fuxingjue* are explicitly about classical methods of decoctions (*jīngfǎ*).

**I**N THE *FUXINGJUE* there is a single unequivocal mention of a lost text called the *Tāngyè Jīng* (湯液經 Classic of Decoctions) and its author Yī Yǐn. The *Fuxingjue* states that some of its contents “[reflects] the utterly significant subtlety of the classical methods of decoctions (*tangye jingfa*)”. The fact that the *Tangye Jīng* was mentioned and the phrase *tangye jingfa* (湯液經法) was used should lead no one to conclude that the

*Fuxingjue* represents the *Tangye Jīng* written by Yī Yǐn. As the previous article by the classical Chinese language scholar Sabine Wilms shows, when the character *fǎ* 法 “method” is placed after the character *jīng* 經 “classic/classical” then the character 經 has to function as an adjective modifying the *fǎ* 法 “method”. Therefore, *jīng* “classic” becomes *jīngfǎ* “classical method”, and is referring to a method and not a text.

Without doubt and in the good company of the academic consensus among medical historians in China, Wilms has shown that, though the formulas may have ancient roots, much in the *Fuxingjue* proves it is not an ancient text. At the same time, it is likely that some of the formulas have classical or ancient roots, and it is definitely about classical methods of decoctions.

As one can tell from Wilms’ article, the *Fuxingjue* is a text whose history and content are shrouded in mystery. The origins of its sections are unknown. No one knows when or by whom it was written. Moreover, it is a patchwork of six sections of collected

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What we in English have come to know as the 'six conformations' or 'six levels', but what in Chinese is known as the *liujing*, does not express relative depths in the body from *taiyang* on the outside to *jueyin* at the deepest level as I had been taught.

material that seems to be only loosely related. There is evidence they come from no single place, writer or even era. Wilms demonstrates that this material was put together some time after the death of the hermit Táo Hóngjǐng. Judging by this and the style and language of the writing, and nature of the formulas, whoever collected the material, it is probable that much of it is from the Chinese medieval era. Though we do not know who put it there, it was an anthology of material deemed worth collecting and hiding in the Dunhuang caves.

As a herbal clinician, I find some of its contents fascinating. In this article, I will be discussing section five of the text on the major and minor expressions of six spirit formulas and the two dawning formulas. Given that these formulas' names and ingredients closely match many of the *Shanghan Zabing Lun*, their origin is likely to be more ancient than the material in the rest of the text, perhaps even Han dynasty (206 BC – 220 AD).

A bit of background to explain my interest in these formulas: About the year 2005, after almost 25 years of practice, I became drawn to classical formulas. The architecture and effectiveness of these formulas set them apart from more modern formulas. I diligently read the *Shanghan Zabing Lun*, looking for a thread of meaning or principles but found it mostly impenetrable. I understood the formulas in a this-for-this and that-for-that kind of way but could find no sense of the text's unifying structure. I studied with various classical formula teachers in China and the US. Though I learned a lot about classifying and using the formulas, I was still not seeing the one integrative essence.

In 2007, I finally had an insight that shifted my understanding. I heard a quote from Liu Lihong, who said: "It is all about tracking the yang." In a moment, I understood the text as describing the circular dynamics of yang, or the life-force, in the body. In my imagination, I saw the sun's relative movement around the earth as connected to the circulation of the life force or yang (from here on, the life-force yang) in our bodies. It then made sense that what we in English have come to know as the "six conformations" or "six levels", but what in Chinese is known as the 六經 *liùjīng*, does not express relative depths in the body from *taiyang* on the outside to *jueyin* at the deepest level as I had been taught. Instead, the *liujing*

could be expressing movements of the life-force yang within our bodies as directed by movements of the heavens above. Suddenly the text and its formulas made great sense to me! This was such a revelatory moment. I felt like Helen Keller finally connecting the feeling of water with her teacher's finger spelling. Since that time, I have been working with and teaching classical formulas from this vantage point.

As time went on, I found that others had similar insights and wrote about them in various inspiring ways. I was delighted that *The Lantern* (Vol. 17 No.3) included an article by Péng Zǐyì on the circular dynamics of ancient Chinese medicine.

When I first saw the section of the *Fuxingjue* that talks about the six spirit and two dawning formulas, it made immediate sense to me that this was an expanded expression of the circular dynamics I had come to see as the core of my approach to the *Shānghánlùn* and East Asian medicine in general. For this reason I chose to write an article on this section, which includes a group of formulas and their indications.

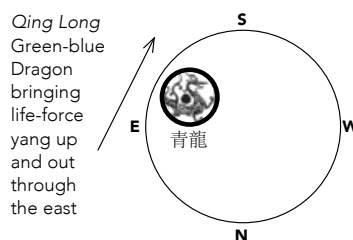
As I do in my work with and teaching of the *Shanghan Zabing Lun*, I am applying my lens to this material, always with a critical awareness that my narrative about it is not the only correct way to look at it. That said, when I interpret texts, especially classical texts, I do make sure that my interpretation is consistent with the text and other related texts and, more importantly, that it adds to clarity and clinical relevance. When my interpretation causes complex information to simplify and fall into place, I always feel I am on to something.

As has been pointed out in Wilms' article in this issue of *The Lantern*, this section of the *Fuxingjue* describes eight formulas, for which there are major and minor expressions. I suggest that we see these formulas as tools to re-establish the patient's right relationship with heaven's movements. The first four of these six spirits represent the traditional Chinese guardian spirits of the four directions (east, south, west and north) as well as groupings of stars in the four quadrants of the sky. These are the green-blue dragon, white tiger, vermilion bird and dark warrior. Of the last two, one represents the central axis around the north star called

the Hooking Array, and one represents the joining of fire and water in the north and is called the Soaring Serpent.

What are the movements of heaven, and how do these movements relate to a human being's physiology and pathology? I invite the reader to consider the image of our life-force yang ascending and descending in a circular pathway within our bodies, just as the sun and moon appear to rise and fall around the earth. Imagine that, when a body is in harmony with the circular rising and falling of the heavens, there is health. Health is a result of being in right relationship with the guardian spirits of the directions. Imagine that ascending in my body is related to the east's dynamic, where the sun, moon and stars ascend continually. Descending in my body is then related to the west's dynamic of celestial orbs setting. Imagine that the proper ascending of the life-force yang in my body is the same as being in alignment with the east's guardian spirit, the green-blue dragon, and descending in my body is the same as being in right relationship with the west's guardian spirit, the white tiger. Failing to be in right relationship with a quadrant's guardian spirit means my body's life-force yang is too slow or too fast in its rising and falling relative to the ascending and descending of the celestial bodies. We could also call this being sick.

I will go over spirit formulas for each of the four quadrants, the centre, and the yin and yang dawnings. My wish is to give an overview of the structure and relevance of this one section of the *Fuxingjue*. The formula is directed at the body to align it with time. Time is kept through the celestial movements. In the *Fuxingjue*, the symptoms of each formula presentation are defined as being caused by “天行 *tiān xíng*”. This term is sometimes translated as “epidemic” or “contagious”, however, Wilms and I have chosen to translate it as “celestial movements” because the context is so obviously about the movement of the celestial bodies. We feel that translating it as epidemic or contagious greatly limits our understanding. We will see that all of the formulas in this section use the flavours and temperatures of medicinals to encourage appropriate movement with time as well as the nature of the herbs, such as their density, lightness, juiciness, hardness or suppleness.



The green-blue dragon is the spirit guardian of the east. Alignment with this quadrant generates our life-force yang's rising toward the upper body, Lungs and Heart, and the body's surface. If a person's life-force is going too slowly relative to the movement of the celestial bodies in this quadrant, its warmth does not fully reach completion in these locations. The Green-Blue Dragon Decoction (青龍湯 *Qīng Lóng Tāng*) formulas re-establish the right relationship with the east, which means that the formulas speed up the east to encourage the body to ascend with the eastern quadrant's timing. The *Fuxingjue* describes the Minor Green-Blue Dragon Decoction (*Xiǎo Qīng Lóng Tāng*) as “a formula to treat heat effusion and aversion to cold due to celestial movements, with sweat failing to emerge and panting, generalised soreness and pain, and a tight pulse”. The life-force yang's failure to ascend and reach the body's surface leaves the surface cold and blocked, resulting in these symptoms. The formula to speed up the body's eastern ascension is Minor Green-Blue Dragon Decoction (*Xiǎo Qīng Lóng Tāng*), which is identical to *Má Huáng Tāng* (Ephedra Decoction) from the *Shanghanlun*. This formula uses the light, warm *Ma Huang* (Ephedrae Herba) to support the eastern function of the body's life-force.

The *Fuxingjue*'s Major Green-Blue Dragon Decoction (*Dà Qīng Lóng Tāng*) is almost identical to the *Shanghanlun*'s Minor Bluegreen Dragon Decoction (*Xiao Qīng Long Tāng*). This formula has the same ascending and warming action as the previous formula. However, its rising action starts more deeply in the middle of the body using *Gān Jiāng* (Zingiberis Rhizoma) and involves pungently warming the Lungs to resolve cold fluids. This intensely warm and pungent method matches the body's pattern of being even slower in the east, causing it

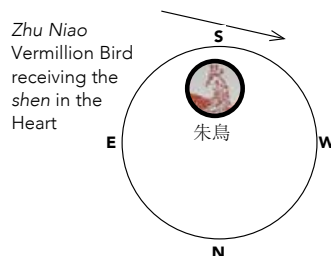
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Failing to be in right relationship with a quadrant's guardian spirit means my body's life-force yang is too slow or too fast in its rising and falling relative to the ascending and descending of the celestial bodies.

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If my life-force yang stalls out in the south, failing to move as it should, towards the west, my body will get very hot, and my fluids will start to dry out.

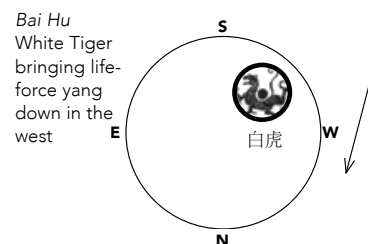
to be unable to bring warmth to the south, in this case, the upper body Lungs and the surface. The *Fuxingjue* says this formula is a “treatment for [diseases due to] celestial movements when the exterior fails to resolve, and there is water qi present below the Heart, with dry retching, heat effusion and panting and cough that will not stop”.



The next formulas, in chronological order, are the major and minor Vermilion Bird Decoctions (朱鳥湯 *Zhū Niǎo Tāng*). These treat conditions in which the patient's body is not in alignment with the guardian spirits of the south. What does it mean for a person to be out of alignment with the south? The southern direction is the peak of heat, and it is also just beginning the turn to the west. The celestial bodies' movements traverse the southern quadrant, whose guardian spirit is the vermilion bird (朱鳥 *zhū niǎo*) but the celestial bodies never stall out. If my life-force yang stalls out in the south, failing to move as it should, towards the west, my body will get very hot, and my fluids will start to dry out. In this way, my body is going too slow for time. Time keeps moving from the south toward the west, but my body is stuck in the south, getting hotter and dryer. The major and minor Vermilion Bird Decoctions treat this heat by restoring the circulation of my body's life-force yang from the south to the west with primarily bitter cold descending herbs and juicy sweet moistening herbs. The *Fuxingjue*'s Minor Vermilion Bird Decoction (*Xiǎo Zhū Niǎo Tāng*) is “a formula to treat heat disease due to celestial movements, with insufficiency of Heart qi, internal generation of vexation and heat, unease whether sitting or lying down, and periodic diarrhoea of pure blood like chicken or duck liver”. This formula is identical to the *Shanghanlun*'s Coptis and Ass-Hide Gelatin Decoction (*Huánglián Ējiāo Tāng*).

Major Vermilion Bird Decoction (*Dà Zhū*

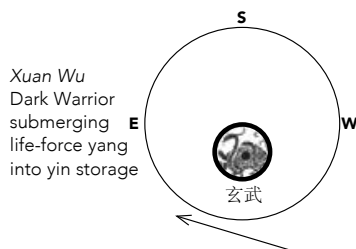
*Niǎo Tāng*) is described as a formula to treat heat disease due to celestial movements, with repeated malign toxic dysentery, dysentery of pure blood with several tens of bowel movements a day, marked emaciation to the point of looking like sticks and bones, inability to find ease in the Heart, and wringing tense pain in the centre of the abdomen as if being stabbed with a knife. The ingredients are the same as in Minor Vermilion Bird Decoction with the addition of *Rén Shēn* (Ginseng Radix) and *Gān Jiāng* (Zingiberis Rhizoma), which restore the yin and yang of the middle. While the blue-green dragon (*qīng lóng*) formulas use light warm and pungent herbs to restore ascension, the vermilion bird (*zhu niao*) formulas restore the body's relationship with the movement from the south to the west using bitter-cold and moistening herbs.



In the west, the guardian spirit is the white tiger. The west's movement is downward, but unlike the southern direction that descends toward the west, the true west descends and dissipates toward the north. To understand the dissipation of the west, consider the characteristics of the autumn season. Autumn, corresponding to the west, comes with the decaying of fruits and the dying of leaves on the trees. Everything in nature descends towards the ground and disintegrates. When a body fails to be in right relationship with the western direction, it fails to descend and dissipate yang's life-force. There is then a great deal of congested heat backing up into the south's upper body. To help the body be right with time, the *Fuxingjue*'s major and minor White Tiger Decoctions (白虎湯 *Bái Hǔ Tāng*) use the heavy, cool and pungent *Shí Gāo* (Gypsum fibrosum). Minor White Tiger Decoction (*Xiǎo Bái Hǔ Tāng*) is “a formula to treat heat and pain due to celestial movements, with great sweating that will not stop,

dryness in the mouth and tongue, drinking large quantities of water without stopping, and a flooding and large pulse”. It is virtually identical to the *Shanghanlun*’s White Tiger Decoction (*Bái Hǔ Tāng*).

The *Fuxingjue*’s Major White Tiger Decoction is similar to its Minor White Tiger Decoction, but deletes the *Zhī Mǔ* (*Anemarrhenae Rhizoma*) and adds *Mài Mén Dōng* (*Ophiopogonis Radix*), *Bàn Xià* (*Pinelliae Rhizoma praeparatum*), *Shēng Jiāng* (*Zingiberis Rhizoma recens*) and *Zhú Yè* (*Lophateri Herba*). It is thus closely related to the *Shanghanlun*’s Lophatherum and Gypsum Decoction (*Zhúyè Shígāo Tāng*). It treats the condition in which the stalling of the body in the west is even more significant, to the point there is difficulty breathing. It is “a formula to treat heat disease due to celestial movements, with vexation and heat in the Heart, periodic spontaneous sweating, a dry tongue, thirst with desire to drink water, and periodic wheezing and coughing, [all of which] have lasted a long time without resolving”.



To complete the four quadrants’ formulas, we go to the north’s spirit guardian, the black turtle, who is imaged as dancing with a snake. However, the formulas are not named after these animals but instead after the dark warrior (玄武 *Xuán Wǔ*). The quality of the north is one of going into the depths and storing. The turtle submerges deep into the water of the north. Our bodies must have the ability to store the life-force yang deeply within the north of our torso, our Cinnabar Field (*dāntián*). When we are not in right relationship with the north, our bodies fail to submerge and store the life-force yang. In this case, our bodies not only become cold due to failure to store yang, but cold fluids are not transformed and so easily accumulate. To restore our relationship with the north’s guardian spirit, we need dense, pungent,

hot herbs like *Fù Zǐ* (*Aconiti Radix Lateralis praeparata*), as well as herbs that help us absorb and store fluids, like *Fú Líng* (*Poria*) and *Bái Zhú* (*Atractylodis macrocephalae Rhizoma*). When this lack of alignment with time is mild, Minor Dark Warrior Decoction (小玄武湯 *Xiǎo Xuán Wǔ Tāng*) is indicated. The ingredients are the same as True Warrior Decoction (*Zhēn Wǔ Tāng*) from the *Shanghanlun*. The *Fuxingjue* says it is “a formula to treat disease due to celestial movements, with insufficiency of Kidney qi, internally generated vacuity cold, inhibited urination, pain in the centre of the abdomen, and cold of the four limbs”.

The *Fuxingjue* recommends Major Dark Warrior Decoction (大玄武湯 *Dà Xuán Wǔ Tāng*) as “a formula to treat Kidney qi vacuity and fatigue, cold in the centre of the lower abdomen, heaviness in the lumbus and back, coolness in the four limbs, inhibited urination, diarrhea that looks like duck droppings with more than 10 bowel movements per day, choppy qi and weak strength”. We can see that for this latter formula, the lack of alignment with the storage of the life-force yang is severe to the point that there is extreme leakage from below. This formula can be viewed as a combination of True Warrior Decoction (*Zhēn Wǔ Tāng*) and Regulate the Middle Decoction (*Lǐ Zhōng Tāng*) as it includes *Fù Zǐ* (*Aconiti Radix Lateralis praeparata*), *Fú Líng* (*Poria*), *Bái Zhú* (*Atractylodis macrocephalae Rhizoma*), *Rén Shēn* (*Ginseng Radix*), *Gān Jiāng* (*Zingiberis Rhizoma*), *Sháo Yào* (*Paeoniae Radix alba*) and *Gān Cǎo* (*Glycyrrhizae Radix*).



After the four directions, there is the centre, which corresponds to the pole star. In heaven, the constellations move through the four quadrants around this central pole. I think it will make sense to the reader that this central area corresponds to the earth’s

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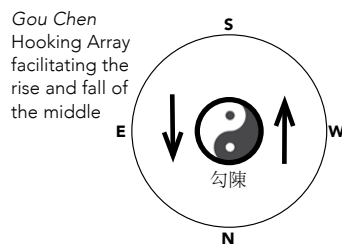
The turtle submerges deep into the water of the north. Our bodies must have the ability to store the life-force yang deeply within the north of our torso.



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The Soaring Serpent formula *Téng Shé Tāng* pulls the whole wheel of the sky together.

Spleen and Stomach. They act as an axis or hub for the up and down of the circular movement of our life-force yang. Without the ability to pivot through this transition area, our bodies' entire cyclic motion gets jammed. In the diagram (above), the yellow emperor sits in the centre, ruling over these movements. He is the yellow emperor because of his association with the central axis. The constellation that includes the group making up Hooking Array (勾陳 *Gōu Chén*) is inside the Three Enclosures (三垣 *Sān Yuán*). It rotates close to and around the north pole star. Because this position is mandrel-like,<sup>1</sup> it is associated with earth, the Spleen's ascending function and the Stomach's descending function.



The formulas Major and Minor Hooking Array, the *Gōu Chén Tāngs*, are named after the hooking array asterisms that move in a circle close to and around the north star. Minor Hooking Array (*Xiǎo Gōu Chén Tāng*) uses the middle warmer pungent warmth of *Gān Jiāng* (Zingiberis Rhizoma) to open the centre and sweet moistening *Gān Cǎo* (Glycyrrhizae Radix), *Rén Shēn* (Ginseng Radix) and *Dà Zǎo* (Jujubae Fructus) to nourish the soil of middle earth. The *Fuxingjue* considers this “a formula to treat heat disease due to celestial movements, with insufficiency of Spleen qi, failure to transform food and drink, lumbar pain and diarrhoea”.

If the earth's weakness is more severe or long lasting, there is an increase of stasis in this rotating wheel in our bodies. Our bodies then fail to match the constellations' turning around the central north star, leading to stasis in the central epigastric area. This, in turn, leads to heat. The body continues to need the pungent warmth and sweetness, and also needs bitter cold yellow herbs to descend and parch stasis in the middle.

1. i.e like a shaft or spindle.

Major Hooking Array Decoction (*Dà Gōu Chén Tāng*) is similar to the *Shanghanlun's* Fresh Ginger Decoction to Drain the Epigastrium (*Shēng Jiāng Xiè Xīn Tāng*). The *Fuxingjue* says it is “a formula to treat heat disease due to celestial movements, with Spleen qi vacuity, evil heat entering the interior, rumbling noise and cutting pain in the centre of the abdomen, and retching and vomiting that will not stop”. Based on the placement of this formula's action in the central area of the sky as well as in our bodies, I find it helpful to think of these types of formulas, that are often very difficult to categorise, including *Wu Mei Wan* (Mume Pill), *Ban Xia Xie Xin Tang* (Pinellia Drain the Epigastrium Decoction), *Gan Cao Xie Xin Tang* (Licorice Decoction to Drain the Epigastrium), *Jiao Mei Tang* (Zanthoxylum and Mume Decoction) and even *Zuo Jin Wan* (Left Metal Pill) as what I call central axis formulas. These are formulas that treat blockage in the middle of the body with heat and cold symptoms.

Given that we've now covered formulas for each of the four directions plus the centre, it would seem that we are complete. However, we have one more spirit formula pair to go. For me, the major and minor versions of this formula are fascinating and speak to some profound concepts in understanding the circular dynamics of Chinese medicine. The Soaring Serpent formula *Téng Shé Tāng* pulls the whole wheel of the sky together.

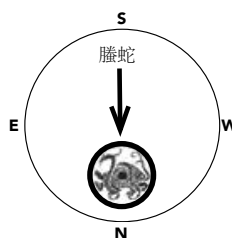
I hope that this article has encouraged the reader to imagine that our body's life-force yang coordinates with the turning of the celestial orbs in the sky around us. Now I will go a step further to explore the mechanism at play in our bodies. It is not just that my life-force yang is cycling within me. My body is a mechanism for taking in influences from heaven and earth into the depths of my body, processing those influences, discarding that which is unnecessary, and turning the rest into myself as a living being. What are these “influences” we are all receiving, processing, and expressing? From heaven, we receive *shén* (神), which, for now, I will also call the life-force yang. We receive this into our Heart from the southern direction. From the south, for the life-force yang to enter me entirely, it must travel downwards, through the west, all the way to the north. As we've seen, the

life-force yang submerges in the north, just as the sun is beneath us during the night. This downward movement of yang from heaven depends on the south's openness, the west's downward movement, and the central axis's free movement. In other words, our discussion above of the movements of the south, west, and centre, we can now see as important, not just for good qi circulation but for the very reception of life into me.

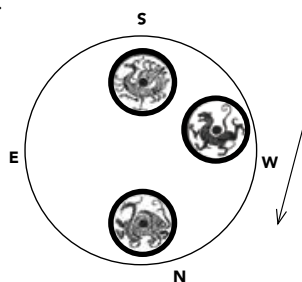
What does this have to do with the Soaring Serpent guardian spirit? What does the Soaring Serpent guard? The major and minor expressions of the Soaring Spirit Decoctions (騰蛇湯 *Téng Shé Tāng*) include herbs that purge the Large Intestine such as *Máng Xiāo* (Natrii Sulfas), *Zhī Shí* (Aurantii Fructus immaturus) and *Dà Huáng* (Rhei Radix et Rhizoma). The *Fuxingjue* says that Minor Soaring Spirit Decoction (*Xiǎo Téng Shé Tāng*) is “a formula to treat heat disease due to celestial movements, with constitutional repletion of Stomach qi, failure to eliminate evil qi, abdominal fullness and panting, and sweating that will not stop”. Major Soaring Spirit Decoction (*Dà Téng Shé Tāng*) is a formula “to treat heat disease due to celestial movements, with failure to eliminate evil heat, constipation in the large *fū* organs, great fullness and repletion in the middle of the abdomen, sweating and panting, and periodic clouded spirit with failure to recognise people”. Of course, these are reflections of the *Chéng Qì* or purgative type formulas of the *Shanghanlun*.

Here is where we revisit the fact that the northern quadrant represents two guardian spirits, the black turtle and the snake. It is essential to point out that the character translated as serpent, 蛇 *shé*, is the character meaning snake. The tracts representing the *shen's* pathway, life-force yang, from the south to the north include the vermilion bird of the south, the Heart, the white tiger of the west, the Lungs, and the hooking array, the centre. The final tract along this pathway is in the Large Intestine, which resides in the lower torso. The Large Intestine is not just the body's mechanism for discharging what is not needed in the body. It is also the end stop on the pathway that allows the life-force yang to come down from heaven into the Cinnabar Field (*dantian*) to become the Life Gate (*mingmen*).

*Teng She*  
Soaring  
Serpent  
bringing yin  
and yang into  
storage



The Large Intestine is an organ associated with dryness. Its job is to steam moisture out of the digestate into the body. In this way, it is also a vital mechanism to receive yin into the body. I see this lower, northern completion of the *yangming*, expressed by the Soaring Serpent formulas, assuring that both yang and yin enter into and achieve storage in *shaoyin*.



The Soaring Serpent group of stars are also found in the north. For me, the placement of this guardian spirit in the north illustrates the critical relationship between the lower tract of *yangming* and the function of *shaoyin* to store yin and yang. In terms of the clinical application, a patient who needs to develop a relationship with the north's Soaring Serpent guardian spirit has a blockage in the Large Intestine. In this case, the treatment principle is to apply the Soaring Serpent to complete the downward movement.

Finally, we get to the major and minor dawning formulas, the *Dàn Tāng* (旦湯). There are the dawning of yang formulas and the dawning of yin formulas. The dawning of yang formulas seem to belong squarely on the eastern horizon, just below the green-blue dragon formulas. The formulas are variations on *Guizhi Tang* (Cinnamon Twig Decoction), a formula whose movement is up and out, reflective of the eastern direction. Of course, the east is also where the sun rises, which is yang's ultimate dawning. Minor Yang Dawning Decoction (*Xiǎo Yáng Dàn*

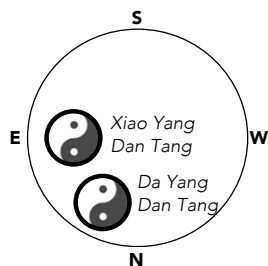
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The Large Intestine is not just the body's mechanism for discharging what is not needed in the body. It is also the end stop on the pathway that allows the life-force yang to come down from heaven into the dantian to become the mingmen.

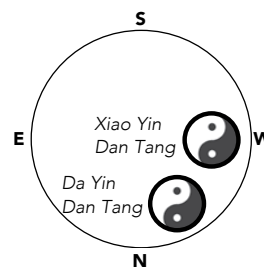
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The more warm,  
light and pungent a  
formula is, the more  
its action is up and  
outward.

*Tāng*) is mentioned in the *Jīngùì Yàolüè* (Golden Cabinet) and is almost identical to *Guizhi Tāng*. The *Fúxíngjue* describes the presentation much like *Guizhi Tāng* is described in the *Shanghanlun*: “For treating heat effusion caused by celestial movements, with spontaneous sweating and aversion to wind, noisy breathing from the nose, and dry retching”. Major Yang Dawning Decoction (*Dà Yáng Dàn Tāng*) is similar to Zhāng Zhòngjīng’s *Xiǎo Jiàn Zhōng Tāng* (Minor Construct the Middle Decoction) which is itself extrapolated from *Guizhi Tāng*. In the *Jīngùì Yaolue*, *Xiao Jian Zhong Tang* is in the section addressing deficiency-taxation. In the *Fúxíngjue* Major Yang Dawning Decoction is described this way: “To treat all cases of suffering from sweating that will not stop, with gasping breathing, generalised taxation, and physical frailness, aversion to wind and coolness, hypertonicity in the abdomen, and no interest in drinking and eating, this formula is always suitable. If the pulse is vacuous and large, it is even more of a closely fitting pattern.” The more warm, light and pungent a formula is, the more its action is up and outward. Unlike the green-blue dragon (*Qīng Lóng*) formulas, along with the pungent, warm herbs *Shēng Jiāng* (Zingiberis Rhizoma recens) and *Guì Zhī* (Cinnamomi Ramulus), the yang dawning formulas’ ingredients are sweet and/or sour, and very juicy. These herbs slow down the formulas’ ascent in the east, keeping close to the transition zone on the horizon rather than further towards the south like the green-blue dragon formulas. Another way to express this is to say that the yang dawning formulas harmonise yin and yang. Major Yang Dawning Decoction (*Dà Yáng Dàn Tāng*) emphasises the enrichment of yin, and infusing that yin with yang. Minor Yang Dawning Decoction (*Xiǎo Yáng Dàn Tāng*) harmonises yin with yang by harmonising *yīng* and *wēi* (nutritive and protective qì).



The dawning of yin, in terms of time, is dusk. Yin dawning formulas represent the western horizon, the transition area from yang time to yin time. I place them in contrast to the yang dawning (*yang dan*) formulas on the eastern horizon. The yin dawning formulas resemble some well-known *shaoyang* formulas. Minor Yin Dawning Decoction (*Xiao Yin Dan Tang*) is almost identical to *Huang Qin Tang* (Scutellaria Decoction) and, according to the *Fúxíngjue*, is “for treating generalised heat and sweating due to celestial movements, with pain in the head and eyes, pain in the abdomen, dry retching, and diarrhoea”. Major Yin Dawning Decoction (*Da Yin Dan Tang*) is very similar to *Xiao Chai Hu Tang* (Minor Bupleurum Decoction) and is “a formula to treat all cases of suffering from dizziness in the head and eyes, dryness in the throat, constant tendency to dry retching, inability to get down food, vexation, and fullness in the Heart, propping pain in the chest and rib-sides, and alternating cold and heat.”



How do these formulas then relate to the western horizon? One way to think of this is to consider the direction of the ministerial fire. This is the fire that resides in the *dantian*, and it must burn upwards. It is like a fire under a cooking pot burning upwards to make soup. Yet the fire, as we have seen, comes downwards into our bodies from above. To become the ministerial fire, it must pivot so the fire can then radiate upward into the body. This pivoting action is from the yang conformations into the yin conformations. The *yangming* is responsible for bringing the life-force yang down from heaven, the *shaoyang*, as a pivot, is responsible for pivoting this life-force yang into position and, once in place, the *shaoyin* is responsible for storing it. When I think of it this way, it makes perfect sense to situate these formulas in the west at yin’s dawning.



I have come to think of *Chai Hu* (Bupleuri Radix) and *Huang Qin* (Scutellariae Radix) as particular herbs for helping the *shaoyang* pivot move smoothly. Symptoms associated with these formulas are due to the heat that should be in its physiological position in the yin conformations stagnating as pathological heat in yang conformations.

### Conclusion

We can see these formulas are named after the animals of the four directions, dawn, and dusk. Interpreting my patients' suffering in the context of their body's relationship with space/time motions has helped me understand the symptoms that arise and apply the appropriate method. I had already been seeing the structure of the *Shanghanlun* as an expression of celestial movements when I first came across these formulas in the *Fuxingjue*. However, this text gives alternative names to already familiar formulas that connect them with space and time coordinates. Given

that the quadrants have been named after these animals for many thousands of years, it seems likely that these formulas are very ancient and do indeed pre-date the *Shanghan Zabinglun*.

Though I do not have concrete evidence, these names feel like the formula's true and ancient names. Given the *Huangdi Neijing's* emphasis on the relationship of the human body's dynamics with celestial body's dynamics, I do not think it is a stretch to see these names as perhaps the true names. They invite an interpretation of the body as an instrument for receiving and working with heaven's influences and the formulas as helpers in keeping this instrument in good working order. I hope the readers might look into the starry skies, at luminous dawn or a beautiful sunset, and be inspired to reflect on these great turnings.

■ Sharon Weizenbaum has practised for 35 years in the Pioneer Valley of Western Massachusetts. As well as being the director of White Pine Institute, she has a small homestead, Ancient Ponies Farm, where she raises goats, chickens, ducks, sheep and, of course, Dales ponies (which are really horses). She teaches a two-year Graduate Mentorship Program, helping practitioners develop clear diagnostic skills and facility with classic and modern herbal formulas. [www.whitepinehealingarts.org](http://www.whitepinehealingarts.org).

## Yamamoto New Scalp Acupuncture

Presented by Emily Teo

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### Details

**Date:** 27th - 28th February 2021

**Time:** 9:30am - 5:30pm

**CPD:** 13 CPD points

**Venue:** Adina Hotel, 2 Lee St, Haymarket NSW 2000

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