



Introduction on *Fu Xing Jue*: Passages from *Tang Ye Jing*

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Abstract

Secrets for Auxiliary Cultivation Life: The Essential Method of Using Herbal Medicine for the Differential Treatment of the Five Zang Organs (Fu Xing Jue Wu Zang Yong Yao Fa Yao) abbr. *Fu Xing Jue* is regarded as a secret script authored by the Taoist hermit Tao Hong Jing. *Fu Xing Jue* had been sealed in Dunhuang Library Cave (Cave 17) since 1006 A.D. and was discovered in 1900 A.D. In 1974, a barefoot doctor Zhang Dachang published the hand-copy of the script. Scholars believe in that the script keeps passages from the first formulae book *i.e. Classic of Decoction (Tang Ye Jing)* which is cited in *Treaties on Febrile Disease (Shang Han Lun)* in large quantities. This paper introduced the history finding of the book and distinguished definitions of deficiency (Xu) and excess (Shi), substance (Ti), function (Yong), transformation (Hua), the subdivision of the five tastes, 25 plant herbs, and 20 formulae which regulate Ti and Yong or organs.

Keywords

Fu Xing Jue, *Shang Han Lun*, Chinese Medicine, Herbal Medicine

Subject Areas: Internal Medicine

1. Introduction

Within the long history of Chinese Medicine (CM), large amount of classics like *Inner Classic of Yellow Emperor (Huang Di Nei Jing)*, *Shan Han Lun*, and *A-B Classic of Acupuncture (Zhen Jiu Jia Yi Jing)* are well inherited and studied by their followers. The existence of these books also maintains the essence of CM. Nowadays the learners and practitioners still use the theories and experiences from the ancient times in their clinic practice. Meanwhile, various schools are gradually established based on the same origin of few books *e.g. Huang Di Nei Jing* and *Zhen Jiu Jia Yi Jing*. Distinguished lineages include “School of Shang Han Lun”, “School of Wen Bing”, and “Four Schools in Jin and Yuan Dynasties” *i.e.* School of Removing Pathogens (Gong Xie Pai, Zhang Congzheng as leader), School of Supplementing Earth (Bu Tu Pai, Li Dongyuan), School of Cooling (Han Liang Pai,

Liu Wansu), and School of Nourishing Yin (Zi Yin Pai, Zhu Danxi), etc., which make CM so diversified, individualized and charming. Every single practitioner may have unique understanding on CM based on personal knowledge structure, interest, clinical experience, and study. In CM, treatment is an individualized activity. Therefore, each school may succeed in treating certain disorders. In ancient China, especially before the paper-making and printing technology are invented, the publish and transmission of a book were usually localized and limited. Years and years of wars and fires have destroyed large amount of medical scripts. Besides, for some personal reasons, scripts from famous doctors may only be known and spread among their families, friends, lineages, and religions communities, meaning the scripts are not published. These scripts are kept as private collection, funerary goods, and religious texts.

In 1974, a barefoot doctor Zhang Dachang (1926-1995) posted a hand-copied version of an ancient script entitled *Fu Xing Jue Wu Zang Yong Yao Fa Yao* to Chinese Academy of Traditional Chinese Medicine, Beijing, the top institute of CM. The authorship was attributed to the Taoist scholar-hermit Tao Hong Jing (451-536 A.D.) in Liang Dynasty (502-560 A.D.). Zhang Dachang believed that the text contains essential passages from the lost Taoist classic *Tang Ye Jing*. *Tang Ye Jing*, authored by Yi Yin is also regarded as the first book on formula whose content has been cited in *Shang Han Lun*, *Book of Han Dynasty (Han Shu)*, *Classic of Pulse Diagnosis (Mai Jing)*, *Fu Xing Jue*, *Prescriptions Worth a Thousand in Gold (Qian Jin Fang)*, etc. Zhang Dachang's grandfather Zhang Wonan (1867-1919) purchased the manuscript in 1918 from the Daoist abbot Wang Yuanlu who discovered the famous Library Cave (Cave 17) at Dunhuang in 1900 A.D. [1]. The building of the cave started in 851 A.D. which was sealed in 1006 A.D. for preventing damage from the war between Islamic Qara Khanid and Bushiest Khotan. From then on, *Fu Xing Jue* remains hidden and unknown. Thanks to the sealing, *Fu Xing Jue* could keep the original content, rather than be modified by its followers. As known to all, *Huang Di Nei Jing* and *Shang Han Lun* have been modified many times by their followers in different dynasties, leading to large amount of controversies and misunderstanding of the classics. After 1970s, *Fu Xing Jue* is gradually known to public. When the professionals studied the hand-copy of the scroll, they found it was complicated, because the original scroll was burnt by the Red Guards (Hong Wei Bing) during the movement of Elimination of the Four Olds (Po Si Jiu) in 1966 during the Culture Revolution. Accordingly, speculation was posted that the hand-copy text might be a fake and created by Zhang Dachang himself or one of his followers. The speculation remains until today. Because of the long history of CM, the authenticity of a book can't be judged by the existence and availability of an original version. Obviously, like the situation of *Fu Xing Jue*, the original versions of some of the ancient milestone CM scripts books like *Huang Di Nei Jing* and *Shang Han Lun* are definitely unavailable. But CM practitioners will never say that *Huang Di Nei Jing* or *Shang Han Lun* is a fake. Contents of an original medical scrip may be rewritten, copied, or cited by their friends or followers.

After carefully textual research, most of the scholars and experts from Chinese Academy of Traditional Chinese Medicine, Beijing University of Traditional Chinese Medicine and other institutions agreed that the *Fu Xing Jue* was written by Tao Hong Jing in his later years (516 A.D.-536 A.D.) and might reflect passages from the lost classic *Tang Ye Jing*. Since 1990s, over 10 monographies and 100 papers have been published. Interestingly, the scholars found that *Fu Xing Jue* even keeps some original contents of *Tang Ye Jing*, which is not cited or has been modified in *Shang Han Lun*. For example, Gui Zhi Tang which is used to name a herbal formula in *Shang Han Lun* is named Xiao Yang Dan Tang in *Fu Xing Jue*. Xiao Yang Dan refers to minor yang of dawn. The name of Xiao Yang Dan Tang may reflect the original meaning of the herbs from *Tang Ye Jing* [2] [3]. As the theory and herbs are attracting more and more attentions in China, it would be interest to introduce *Fu Xing Jue* to westerns. To our knowledge, this is the first all-round introduction of *Fu Xing Jue* written in English, which might expand the attraction of this book in the field of CM internationally.

2. Features of *Fu Xing Jue*

Fu Xing Jue inherits essence from *Tang Ye Jing*, *Huang Di Nei Jing*, *Shen Nong Ben Cao Jing* and other ancient classics. It is intriguingly characterized with Five-Zang differentiation and selecting herbs according to the relationship between its Wei (taste) and the structure of Ti (substance)-Yong (function)-Hua (transformation) of a certain organ. This book employs speculation of Ti and Yong to understand and explain the theory on five-phases-five-tastes. Meanwhile, Hua-transformation is applied to bridge the five phases and Yin-Yang. It also reflects the early philosophic mixture of Confucian, Taoist, and Bushiest in 6th century A.D. in China. Thus a structured, unified and self-contained system is established, which includes Zang Xiang (internal organs and external manifestations), meridians, diagnosis, and composing formulae. *Shang Han Lun* and *Jing Kui Yao Lue*

have already revealed significant and valuable medical content from *Tang Ye Jing*. Besides, more and more international CM practitioners are keen to seek the original essence of CM. Therefore, if more passage is revealed through the translation and introduction of *Fu Xing Jue*, it could be of great interest and benefits in clinical practice not only domestically but internationally.

3. Yong and Ti

Yong or function refers to the appetite or preference of an organ.

Ti or substance refers to the substantial foundation which supports the function of an organ.

For example, the **Yong** of Liver is to free course, to extend, to smooth, while the **Ti** of Liver is blood, sinew, *Hun*, etc. [4].

On the one hand, Ti maintains, controls, and regulates Yong. On the other hand, Yong functions, which must consume the Ti. Therefore, the performance of Yong influences how the Ti works or regulates and restrains Ti. The relationship of Ti and Yong *i.e.* mutual regulating and conditioning maintains the activities of organs, which is so called Qi-transformation. Within the process of Qi-transformation, both Ti and Yong are dynamically changing. With progressing, new functions and new substances appear, which is called Hua or transformation in this book. Hua-transformation presents a new condition of the original organ. Life is the demonstration of on-going Qi-dynamics. Once Qi-transformation stops, life ends.

4. Xu and Shi

The terms of Xu (deficiency) and Shi (excess) come from Wu (nothing) and You (something), a basic concept in Taoist. If there are some symptoms, it is Shi. If there is no symptom, it is Xu. Tao Hong Jing emphasizes on the regulating and balancing of the Ti and Yong of the five-organs other than the battlements between Zheng Qi (right qi) and Xie Qi (pathogenic factors), which is conventionally understood as the reason for Xu and Shi. Usually, Xu refers to deficient Zheng Qi and Shi to existence of pathogenic factors e.g. external wind, blood stasis, etc. Symptom results from the battlement between Zheng Qi and Xie Qi. According to *Fu Xing Jue*, all disorders are caused by the deficiency of Zheng Qi, either Ti deficiency or Yong deficiency. In order to distinguish the Ti deficiency and Yong deficiency, Shi Zheng (excess pattern) is attributed to Ti deficiency and Xu Zheng (deficiency pattern) is attributed to Yong deficiency.

According to the unique understanding on Xu and Shi, a philosophy to compose formula is established in this book. It's nothing to do with Bu (supplement) or Xie (reduce), but to supplement the Ti or Yong, indicating using herbs to support Ti or Yong, to activate the interaction between Ti and Yong, and to ensure the normal performance of an organ's function. For instance, **Xiao Bu Fang** (Smaller Formula of Supplementing, SFS) is comprised of two herbs with the taste of Yong and one with the taste of Ti. **Xiao Xie Fang** (Smaller Formula of Reducing, SFR) is comprised of two herbs with the taste of Ti and one with the taste of Yong.

5. Subdivision of the Five Tastes and 25 Plant Herbs

In Chinese Herbal Medicine (CHM), a therapeutic function of an herb is attributed to growth surroundings, position (root, fruits, seed, leaf, or flower), shape, color, tongue-taste, collecting time, preparation, etc. The Wei (taste) of an herb is defined according to not only the tongue-taste but also its functions. According to the original text in this book, Tao Hong Jing uses references from *Tong's Record of Collecting Herbs* (*Tong Jun Cai Yao Lu*, around 100 B.C.), which is the first book that records functions of herbs. For example, the function of *Da Huang* (*Rheum rhabarbarum*) resolves hardness, so its Wei is salty. But in *Sheng Nong Ben Cao Jing* its function is to soften but it tastes bitter. In CHM, it's common for an herbal to have more than one Wei in different herbal monographies. In the 44 formulae which supplements and reduces the five-zang organs, 25 major plant herbs and 25 minerals were selected. Every herb is used according to the relationship of the Wei of a herb and the Ku and Yu of an organ based on the record from *Huang Di Nei Jing*. Ku means disliking, *i.e.* Wei an organ dislikes. Yu means liking, *i.e.* Wei an organ likes. For example, the liver is related to spring and likes to disperse and free course, aromatic herbs promotes this action. Therefore, Yu of the liver is dispersing, or all aromatic herbs which have the function of dispersing. On the other hand, liver dislikes sour and astringing herbs which disturb the free course of Qi. Therefore, the Ku of liver is sour and astringing herbs. Based on the function of an herb from Tao Hong Jing's herbal monographies, Annotation of *Sheng Nong Ben Cao Jing* and *Ming Yi Bie Lu*,

a Wei of an organ is further divided. For instance, Gui Zhi is called Wood in Wood, Sheng Jiang is called Fire in Wood, etc. Altogether 25 plant herbs are selected according to the subdivision of five *Wei* theory (Table 1).

6. Principles of Composing Formulae

The formulae are classified in to 4 groups, *i.e.* smaller supplementing/reducing, and larger supplementing/reducing formulae.

Smaller Formulae (Xiao Fang)

A *Jun* (King) herb refers to treat the disease *i.e.* to supplement or to reduce; a *Chen* (Ministry) herb to monitor (*Jian*) and assist (*Zuo*) the King herb, whose dosage is as same as the King herb; a *Shi* herb (Obedience) refers to obey the *Chen* herb or service or assist *Chen* herb.

Therefore the hierarchical structure and selecting of herbs of the Smaller Formulae in *Fu Xing Jue* is illustrated in Figure 1 and Table 2. The 10 formulae of Smaller Formulae are listed in Table 3.

Larger Formulae (Da Fang)

Larger Formulae of Reducing (LFR, Da Xie Fang)

A LFR is comprised of SFR and modification from the SFR of the child organ/phase, *i.e.* the *Zuo Chen* as *Zuo Shi* of *Zuo Chen* and *Jian Chen* as *Zuo Shi* of *Jian Chen* from child-organ SFR and the subdivision with *Wei* which overcomes me of the phase which I overcome as *Zuo Shi* of *Zuo Chen* and *Jian Chen* (Table 4).

Larger Formulae of Supplementing (LFS, Da Xie Fang)

A LFS is comprised of SFS and modification from the SFS of the child-organ without *Zuo Shi* (Table 5).

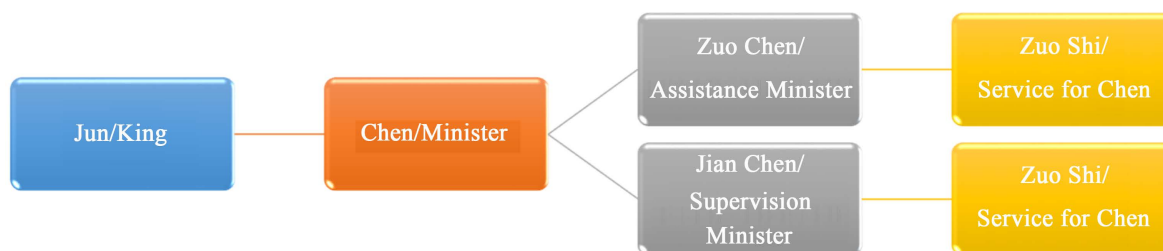


Figure 1. Hierarchical structure of the smaller formulae.

Table 1. 25 plant herbs of subdivision of five *Wei* theory.

Five Phases	Liver Wood Aromatic (Xin)	Heart Fire Salty (Xian)	Spleen Earth Sweat (Gan)	Lung Metal Sour (Suan)	Kidney Water Bitter (Ku)
Wood	Gui Zhi	Xuan Fu Hua	Shan Yao	Shao Yao	Huang Qin
Fire	Sheng Jiang	Mu Dan Pi	Zhi Gan Cao	Shan Zhu Yu	Huang Lian
Earth	Fu Zi	Da Huang	Ren Shen	Wu Wei Zi	Bai Zhu
Metal	Xi Xin	Ting Li Zi	Sheng Gan Cao	Mai Men Dong	Zhu Ye
Water	Gan Jiang	Ze Xie	Fu Ling	Zhi Shi	Di Huang

Table 2. General principles of composing Xiao Xie Fang and Xiao Bu Fang (XBF).

Formula	Jun King	Zuo Chen Assistance Minister	Jian Chen Supervision Minister	Zuo Shi Service for Chen
Xiao Xie Fang (smaller formula of reducing, SFR)	The same Wei of the phase which overcomes (Ke) me	Wei which generates (Sheng) me of the phase which overcomes (Ke) me	Wei which I generates (Sheng) of the same phase	None
Xiao Bu Fang (smaller formula of supplementing, SFS)	The dominant Wei of the same phase	Wei which generates (Sheng) me of the same phase	Wei which I overcomes (Ke) of the phase which overcomes (Ke) me	The same Wei of the phase which I overcomes (Ke)

Table 3. SFR and SFS of the five-organs (liver, heart, spleen, lung and kidney).

Organ	Formula	Pattern and Patho-Mechanism	Jun King	Zuo Chen Assistance Minister	Jian Chen Supervision Minister	Zuo Shi Service for Chen
Liver	Xiao Xie Fang (<i>Ti Xu</i>)	<i>Ti</i> refers to blood. Liver blood fails to warm the residual cold from winter, leading to the depressing of warming function of blood <i>i.e.</i> blood stasis	Shao Yao (Wood in Metal)	Zhi Shi (Water in Metal)	Sheng Jiang (Fire in Wood)	
	Xiao Bu Fang (<i>Yong Xu</i>)	<i>Yong</i> refers to the warm function of the liver. Liver yang fails to warm cold/ice from winter, leading to water and blood retention <i>i.e.</i> phlegm and blood stasis, and dryness transformation, wind	Gui Zhi (Wood in Wood)	Gan Jiang (Water in Wood)	Wu Wei Zi (Earth in Metal)	Shan Yao (Wood in Earth)
Heart (Pericardium)	Xiao Xie Fang (<i>Ti Xu</i>)	<i>Ti</i> refers to blood vessel. Exuberant fire in summer forces blood circulation and makes vessel hard. If vessel is not soft and flexible, blood cannot be distributed.	Huang Lian (Fire in Water)	Huang Qin (Wood in Water)	Da Huang (Earth in Fire)	
	Xiao Bu Fang (<i>Yong Xu</i>)	<i>Yong</i> refers to warming and promoting heart circulation. Heart yang fails to circulate blood, resulting in blood stasis.	Mu Dan Pi (Fire in Fire)	Xuan Fu Hua (Wood in Fire)	Zhu Ye (Metal in Water)	Shan Zhu Yu (Fire in Metal)
Spleen	Xiao Xie Fang (<i>Ti Xu</i>)	<i>Ti</i> refers to <i>Ying Qi</i> (nutritive Qi). <i>Ti Xu</i> generates internal cold. <i>Ti Xu</i> also causes <i>Wei Qi</i> (defensive Qi) deficiency leading to external heat.	Fu Zi (Earth in Wood)	Sheng Jiang (Fire in Wood)	Sheng Gan Cao (Metal in Earth)	
	Xiao Bu Fang (<i>Yong Xu</i>)	<i>Yong</i> refers to transformation and transportation. Stomach fails to receive food, Spleen fails to hold and transform and transport food and water.	Ren Shen (Earth in Earth)	Zhi Gan Cao (Fire in Earth)	Gan Jiang (Water in Wood)	Bai Zhu (Earth in Water)
Lung	Xiao Xie Fang (<i>Ti Xu</i>)	<i>Ti</i> refers Qi stored in the lungs. <i>Ti Xu</i> causes invasion of <i>Xie Qi</i> (evils) esp. water retention and phlegm.	Ting Li Zi (Metal in Fire)	Da Huang (Earth in Water)	Zhi Shi (Water in Metal)	
	Xiao Bu Fang (<i>Yong Xu</i>)	<i>Yong</i> refers receiving yang Qi from heaven and yin Qi from earth and descending. <i>Yong Xu</i> refers the upward and outward delivering of fluids and Qi, resulting in lung Qi deficiency, sweating, dryness, and phlegm.	Mai MenDong (Metal in Metal)	Wu Wei Zi (Earth in Metal)	Xuan Fu Hua (Wood in Metal)	Xi Xin (Metal in Wood)
Kidney	Xiao Xie Fang (<i>Ti Xu</i>)	<i>Ti</i> refers kidney essence <i>i.e.</i> primary water and fire. <i>Ti Xu</i> results in kidney yin deficiency and kidney yang deficiency, dysfunction of fire transforming water resulting damp-heat.	Fu Ling (Water in Earth)	Sheng Gan Cao (Earth in Water)	Huang Qin (Wood in Water)	
	Xiao Bu Fang (<i>Yong Xu</i>)	<i>Yong</i> refers to consolidating. <i>Yong Xu</i> results in discharge of essence (Yin, Yang, Qi, and Xue).	Di Huang (Water in Water)	Zhu Ye (Metal in Water)	Zhi Gan Cao (Fire in Earth)	Ze Xie (Water in Fire)

Table 4. LFR the five-organs (liver, heart, spleen, lung and kidney).

Organ	Pattern and Patho-Mechanism	SFR of Me	Zuo Chen of Child Organ SFR	Jian Chen of Child Organ SFR	Zuo Shi of Zuo Chen and Jian Chen
Liver	Blood stasis creates fire with the heart involved	Shao Yao, Zhi Shi, Sheng Jiang	Huang Qin	Da Huang	Sheng Gan Cao Metal in Earth
Heart (Pericardium)	Hardness of blood vessel cause bleeding with the spleen involved	Huang Lian, Huang Qin, Da Huang	Sheng Jiang	Sheng Gan Cao	Zhi Shi Water in Metal
Spleen	Internal cold transforms to heat and cause Pi Zheng (epi-gastric distention), with the lungs involved	Fu Zi, Sheng Jiang, Sheng Gan Cao,	Da Huang	Zhi Shi	Huang Qin Wood in Water
Lung	Xie Qi retains in the lungs and blocks Qi movement resulting in phlegm, which the kidney involved	Ting Li Zi, Da Huang, Zhi Shi	Sheng Gan Cao	Huang Qin	Sheng Jiang Fire in Wood
Kidney	Worse damp-heat and blockage induces heat, bleeding, with the liver involved	Fu Ling, Sheng Gan Cao, Huang Qin	Zhi Shi	Sheng Jiang	Da Huang Earth in Fire

7. Secret of Herbal Usage from *Tang Ye Jing* [4] [5]

In *Fu Xing Jue*, the secret of understanding the organs and composing formulae from *Tang Ye Jing* are summarized in **Figure 2**.

In summary, each organ has *Wei* of *Ti*, *Yong*, and *Hua*, which is conducted according to the connection between organs and seasons. The effect of an organ is closely related to its season. *Wei* is not just the taste sensed by tongue but also results from *Qi* transformation of an herb. Combination of the herbs of *Ti*-*Yong*-*Hua* is the strategy in *Fu Xing Jue* to regulate the imbalance of an organ. Thus the lost secret from *Tang Ye Jing* of understanding disorder of organs and using herbs is presented, which differs from the existent successor of *Tang Ye Jing* i.e. *Shang Han Lun* and opens a new door to ancient (Han Dynasty and before) classic Chinese Medicine.

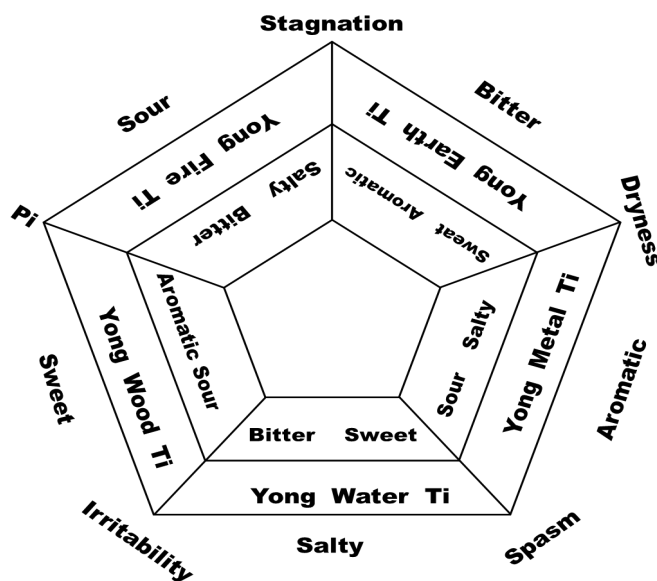


Figure 2. Secrets of *Tang Ye Jing*. *Wei* of *Ti*/*Ku* refers to herbs which reduces the organ while *Wei* of *Yong*/*Yu* to herbs which supplement the organ. This understanding is in accordance with the text in *Su Wen*, *Zang Qi Fa Shi Lun*. For example, bitter herbs belong to the *Yong Wei* of the kidneys and supplement the kidneys. Sweet herbs belong to the *Ti Wei* of the kidneys and reduce the kidneys. The outer layer (e.g. Salty below Water) means *Wei* of *Hua* of an organ. *Hua* results from the movement of previous five-phase, which is also the beginning of new transformation and development to new substance. For example, sweet is the *Wei* of *Hua* of Wood, neither *Wei* of *Ti* nor *Yong*, but new *Wei* of wood. Sweet is the *Ti* of the kidneys and *Yong* of the spleen, which could be the underlying interaction of Water, Wood and Earth. Outside each angle, a disorder is listed, which can be treated with *Weis* of *Ti* and *Yong* on the two sides. For example, spasm can be treated with sweet and sour herbs. In *Shang Han Lun*, Shao Yao Gan Cao decoction which is comprised of Shao Yao and Gan Cao is used to release spasm [6].

Table 5. LFS the five-organs (liver, heart, spleen, lung and kidney).

Organ	Pattern and Patho-mechanism	SFS of Me	SFS of Child-organ without Zuo Shi
Liver	Worse blockage with heart deficiency, with the heart involved	Gui Zhi, Gan Jiang, Wu Wei Zi, Shan Yao	Mu Dan Pi, Xuan Fu Hua, Zhu Ye
Heart (Pericardium)	Worse blockage and mental disorders, with spleen deficiency	Mu Dan Pi, Xuan Fu Hua, Zhu Ye, Shan Zhu Yu	Ren Shen, Zhi Gan Cao, Gan Jiang,
Spleen	Serious dysfunction of transformation and transportation, resulting in <i>Wei</i> -syndrome (atrophy), and Gu Zhang (tympanites), with lung deficiency	Ren Shen, Zhi Gan Cao, Gan Jiang, Bai Zhu	Mai Men Dong, Wu Wei Zi, Xuan Fu Hua
Lung	Dysfunction of the lung to descend, with kidney deficiency	Mai Men Dong, Wu Wei Zi, Xuan Fu Hua, Xi Xin	Di Huang, Zhu Ye, Zhi Gan Cao
Kidney	Liver essence deficiency involving liver deficiency	Di Huang, Zhu Ye, Zhi Gan Cao, Ze Xie	Gui Zhi, Gan Jiang, Wu Wei Zi

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Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

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