

By Sharon Weizenbaum
with help from Sabine Wilms

This article is the second in a three-part series on the fertility chapter of *Fù Qīng-Zhǔ Nǚ Kē* (傳青主女科 Fu Qingzhu's Women's Disorders). In this series, the chapter is translated into English¹ for the first time and includes a small commentary based on my clinical observations. The chapter has 10 sections, each describing a distinct pattern of infertility. I have broken these into three parts, adjusting the order of the sections to facilitate comparison of the patterns. In the first part (*The Lantern*, Vol 16-2) we looked at the four sections that involved abdominal distention or fullness. This article looks at three of the remaining six sections. These divide rather nicely into three pairs. Two of the pairs are opposite so it helps us to see them in contrast. Infertility due to emaciated body is opposed to infertility due to corpulence, and infertility due to ice cold is opposite to infertility due to steaming bone and night heat. The third pair is simply the sections left over. This explains the order in which I present these sections. Sections 4-6 will appear in Part 3, in the next issue of *The Lantern*.

1. Infertility due to Emaciated Body
2. Infertility due to Corpulence
3. Infertility due to Icy Cold in the Lower Body
4. Infertility due to Steaming Bone and Night Heat
5. Infertility due to Lower Abdominal Tightness
6. Infertility due to Jealousy and Envy

1. Thanks for the extensive and cheerful help of Sabine Wilms. I bow to her wisdom!



Fu Qingzhu's missing chapter on **infertility**

Part 2

身瘦不孕 (二十九)

1. Infertility due to emaciated body

婦人有瘦怯身軀，久不孕育，一交男子，即卧病终朝。人以为气虚之故，谁知是血虚之故乎。

When a woman with a frail body and infertility has sexual intercourse with a man, she will become sick and she may even be laid up in bed all day. People consider this to be due to qi deficiency. Who would guess it is actually due to blood deficiency?

或谓血藏于肝，精涵于肾，交感乃泄肾之精，与血虚何与？殊不知肝气不开，则精不能泄，肾精既泄，则肝气亦不能舒。

It is said that blood is stored in the Liver and the essence is contained in the Kidneys. Sexual intercourse leads to discharge of the Kidney essence. How is this affected by the blood deficiency? Who would know that, when Liver qi does not open, the essence is unable to discharge and when the Kidney essence discharges, the Liver qi is unable to unfurl?

Sharon's commentary

Discharging essence is inherent in the healthy act of sexual intercourse for men and women. It is also a necessary component for

conception. Yet, at the same time, discharging too much or discharging when the fluids are already diminished can make conception fail. Here Fu is emphasising the inter-dependence between the Kidney and Liver. He is saying that the rigidity that comes from Liver blood deficiency, like the brittleness of wood when the sap is insufficient, will lead to an inability of essence to discharge. In my clinic this can be seen as vaginal dryness or insufficient fertile mucous.

At the same time, he is turning this around to say that when there is too much discharge, this negatively affects the fluid of the Liver blood. Like a tree with insufficient water, there is an inability to unfurl. I see this in my own clinic as blood deficiency leading to stasis such that the womb is undernourished and dry. Fu is telling us that regardless of whether there is too much discharge or not enough, the result is the same in relation to the blood and fertility.

In clinic, we may see abundant discharge and think all is well. If this sign comes with clear signs of emaciation, Kidney deficiency and/or blood deficiency, we must consider this discharge to be pathological rather than physiological. The function of the Kidney qi is to absorb and store so discharge can be a sign of severe Kidney qi deficiency, which leads to yin, yang and *jing* deficiency of the Kidneys as well as Liver blood deficiency. I have seen clear, egg-white discharge age a woman noticeably in the space of just several months, so it is important not to mistake this discharge for healthy fertile mucous.

以肾为肝之母，母既泄精，不能分润以养其子，则木燥乏水，而火且暗动以铄精，则肾愈虚矣。

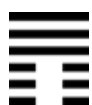
Given that the Kidneys are the mother of the Liver, when the mother discharges essence and is unable to share in the nourishment of the fetus, the result is that wood is dry from lack of water. Furthermore, fire secretly stirs and thereby consumes essence. This further weakens the Kidneys.

况瘦人多火，而又泄其精，则水益少而火益炽，水虽制火，而肾精空乏，无力以济，成火在水上之卦，所以倦怠而卧也。

In the present case where you have an emaciated patient with a predominance of fire, the situation is even more pronounced

when this is compounded by a discharge of essence. This results in a further diminishment of water, and the fire then blazes even more strongly. Even though water controls fire, in this case the Kidney essence is exhausted and lacks the strength to rescue. This situation is represented by the fire over water hexagram. Therefore, she is worn out and bedridden.

Sharon's commentary



The fire over water hexagram puts three yang lines over three yin lines.

This is the hexagram 否 *Pǐ*, which represents disorder. Since yang tends to rise and yin tends to sink, if yang is on top, they lose relationship with each other. Fire is rising and yin, here in the form of discharge, is dripping away below.

此等之妇偏易动火。然此火因贪欲而出于肝木之中，又是偏燥之火，绝非真火也。

This type of woman has an abnormally strong tendency to stirring fire. This being so, the fire is rapacious and emerges from within Liver wood. Furthermore, this is a fire of abnormal dryness and absolutely is not true fire.

且不交合则已，交合又偏易走泄，此阴虚火旺不能受孕。即偶尔受孕，必致逼干男子之精，随种而随消者有之。

Moreover, if the patient has no sexual intercourse, that's all there is to it. But, if she does have intercourse, it leads to the abnormal tendency toward discharging. This is an inability to conceive due to yin deficiency with exuberance of fire. Even if she does become pregnant, her condition will cause a fight with the man's essences so that as soon as the seed is planted, it scatters.

治法必须大补肾水而平肝木，水旺则血旺，血旺则火消，便成水在火之上卦。

The treatment method absolutely must greatly supplement the Kidney water and level the Liver wood. When water flourishes, blood flourishes. When blood flourishes, the fire will disperse. When this happens it is like the water over fire hexagram.

方用养精种玉汤。

The formula is *Yǎng Jīng Zhòng Yù Tāng* Nourish the Essence, Plant the Jade Decoction.

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When the blood is sufficient, it is easy for the uterus to contain things. This is the Dao of having children.

Da Shu Di 30g Rehmanniae Radix (nine steamings)
Dang Gui 15g Angelicae Sinensis (washed in wine)
Bai Shao 15g Paeoniae Radix alba (washed in wine)
Shan Zhu Yu 15g Corni Fructus (steam cooked)

水煎服。三月便可身健受孕，断可种子。此方之用，不特补血而纯于填精，精满则子宫易于摄精，血足则子宫易于容物，皆有子之道也。

Decoct in water and take. In three months she can have a healthy body and conceive. The application of this formula not only supplements the blood, it also skilfully fills the *jing*. When the *jing* is complete, it is easy for the uterus to absorb the *jing*. When the blood is sufficient, it is easy for the uterus to contain things. This is the Dao of having children.

Sharon's commentary

In TCM we learn to use *Ba Zhen Tang* (Eight Treasures Decoction) to nourish the blood. However, in this case the root of the blood is the Kidney yin essence. *Shu Di Huang* and *Shan Zhu Yu* both enrich Kidney yin essence. In addition, *Shan Zhu Yu* is sour and so it astringes the Kidney qi so that the loss of yin essence in the form of discharge is arrested.

惟是贪欲者多，节欲者少，往往不验。服此者果能节欲三月，心静神清，自无不孕之理。否则不过身体健壮而已，勿咎方之不灵也。If she indulges her desires excessively and does not moderate them, the formula will not be effective. If the one who takes this formula can moderate her desires for three months, keeping her Heart still and spirit clear, naturally there will be no reason for infertility. Otherwise, it does not matter how healthy and robust the body is. In this case, do not blame the formula for being ineffective!

Margin notes

服药三月后不受孕，仍照原方加杜仲二钱(炒断丝)，续断二钱，白术五钱上(土炒焦)，云苓三钱，服数剂后必受孕。

If, after three months, there is still no pregnancy, add 9g of *Du Zhong* (*Eucommiae Cortex*, stir-fried to break the silk threads), 6g of *Xu Duan* (*Dipsaci Radix*), 15g of *Bai Zhu* (*Atractylodis macrocephalae Rhizoma*, stir-fried with earth until scorched), and 9g of *Fu Ling*

(*Poria*). After several packages, there will certainly be a pregnancy.

Sharon's commentary

The addition of *Xu Duan* and *Du Zhong* strengthens the *dantian*. We think of them as herbs to strengthen the lower back to treat back pain, yet it is important to see that the reason for this type of back pain is weakness of the *dantian*. This weakness allows the organs to sink and this pulls on the lower back. When the *dantian* is strengthened, the pressure is off the low back. Fu also considers *Bai Zhu* to open and strengthen the pelvic area. These are all slightly warming herbs. From my clinical experience, simply adding moist blood enriching herbs without some activating warming herbs never does a lot. My students know that I am fond of saying that physiological yin is yin that has been transformed by heat. In other words, just filling the cooking pot with water and vegetables is not enough to make soup. One has to cook it, too! Because of this, I would suggest adding these herbs from the start.

It may be difficult to understand the use of *Fu Ling* in a case of emaciation and discharge. Are we not trying to consolidate and stop fluids? What is the logic of adding a damp-draining herb here? The first thing to consider is that fluids can be lost in two ways. One way is that they drain out too much. But another way is that they accumulate pathologically, which means that they are no longer in a physiological relationship with the body. Hence, it is common to see fluid accumulation in patterns of Kidney yin deficiency. Another thing my students know I am fond of saying is "pathological substances cannot perform physiological functions". The next, and to me more important, consideration is the nature of *Fu Ling* itself. Giving *Fu Ling* to the body is like adding peat moss to soil. Peat moss helps soil to both absorb and drain more effectively. One can tell by the chalky nature of *Fu Ling* that it has this function. It is important to not see *Fu Ling* as a damp-draining herb but rather as a fluid-benefiting herb.

肥胖不孕 (三十五)

2. Infertility due to corpulence

妇人有身体肥胖，痰涎甚多，不能受孕者，人以为气虚之故，谁知是湿盛之故乎。

When a woman has a corpulent body, there is a great plethora of phlegm-drool and she is unable to become pregnant, people assume this to be due to qi deficiency. Who would know that it is actually due to an exuberance of dampness?

夫湿从下受,乃言外邪之湿也,而肥胖之湿,实非外邪,乃脾土之内病也。

Now, damp that is received from below is said to be damp as an external evil. And yet, the damp of a corpulent body is actually not an external evil but is rather an internal illness of the Spleen earth.

然脾土既病,不能分化水谷以养四肢,宜其身軀瘦弱,何以能肥胖乎? 不知湿盛者多肥胖,肥胖者多气虚,气虚者多痰涎,外似健壮而内实虚损也。

This being so, when Spleen earth is ill and unable to separate and transform water and grain in order to nourish the four limbs, this person's body should be emaciated. How can it be corpulent? People are unaware that people with exuberant dampness tend to be corpulent, and corpulent people tend to suffer from qi deficiency. People with qi deficiency tend to have more phlegm-drool. On the outside it seems like they are healthy and robust but on the inside there is actually deficiency harm.

内虚则气必衰,气衰则不能行水,而湿停于肠胃之间,不能化精而化涎矣。

Internal deficiency inevitably leads to qi debilitation, and qi debilitation leads to an inability to move water. The dampness lodges in the area of the Intestines and Stomach, unable to transform into essence and consequently transforms into drool!

Sharon's commentary

In this section, Fu is discussing the patho-mechanism of damp accumulation in relation to the Spleen. He sees the corpulent form as a result of this mechanism. It is important to remember that though this pathology can lead to corpulent form, not all pathological corpulence is due to this patho-mechanism. It would be a grave error to transform damp through supplementing the Spleen in all large women who are suffering from infertility. In my experience, many of these women suffer from blood and yin deficiency, and blood

stasis in the interior, while their exterior flesh appears damp. This is an important principle whether treating infertility or not. I also see patients who are not corpulent and yet have pelvic areas soaked with dampness. Hence we should be aware of signs such as a large wet tongue and water sounds in the abdomen, and symptoms such as unregulated or inhibited urination or profuse vaginal discharge etc. in order to confirm the diagnosis.

夫脾本湿土,又因痰多愈加其湿,脾不能受,必浸润于胞胎,日积月累,则胞胎竟变为汪洋之水窟矣。

Now, the Spleen is originally characterised by damp earth, and if an additional profusion of dampness increases its damp even more, and the Spleen is unable to receive [fluids], they will inevitably soak into the *Bao Tai*,² accumulating over time until the entire *Bao Tai* is a vast flooded waterhole!

且肥胖之妇,内肉必满,遮隔子宫,不能受精,此必然之势也。

Furthermore, corpulent women invariably have fullness of the flesh inside and this blocks the uterus so it is unable to receive essence. This is the way it will inevitably trend.

况又加以水湿之盛,即男子甚健,阳精直达子宫,而其水势滔滔,泛滥可畏,亦遂化精成水矣,又何能成妊哉。治法必须以泄水化痰为主。

Now if in addition you add to this the exuberance of water and damp, even if the man is extremely robust and his yang essence directly reaches the uterus, the force of water in the uterus is torrential and inundates terribly. This transforms the [male] essence into water! How could there be a pregnancy?! The treatment method must employ discharging water and transforming phlegm as its key principle.

然徒泄水化痰,而不急补脾胃之气,则阳气不旺,湿痰不去,人先病矣。乌望其茹而不吐乎! 方用加味补中益气汤。

2. Regarding Fu's use of the term *Bao Tai*: this term could be translated as "uterus" and often is. However, I chose to leave the term as *Bao Tai* because, as we will see as we explore this chapter, *Bao Tai* expresses a concept that is bigger than just the uterus. It includes the connection between the womb, the Heart, the Kidneys, the Pericardium network, the ministerial fire and the extraordinary vessels.

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If an additional profusion of dampness increases, and the Spleen is unable to receive [fluids], they will inevitably soak into the Bao Tai, accumulating over time until the entire Bao Tai is a vast flooded waterhole.

However, if you merely discharge water and transform phlegm without urgently supplementing the qi of the Spleen and Stomach, then before the yang qi has flourished and the damp phlegm has been dispelled the patient will already have become sick. What hope is there that she will not expel the essence as soon as it has been taken in?

The formula to use is *Jiā Wèi Bǔ Zhōng Yì Qì Tāng* (Supplement the Middle and Boost the Qi Decoction with Added Flavours).

Ren Shen	9g	Ginseng Radix
Huang Qi	9g	Astragali Radix
Chai Hu	3g	Bupleuri Radix
Dang Gui	9g	Angelicae Sinensis (wine washed)
Bai Zhu	30	Atractylodis macrocephalae Rhizoma (earth fried)
Sheng Ma	1.4g	Cimicifugae Rhizoma
Chen Pi	1.5g	Citri reticulatae Pericarpium
Fu Ling	15g	Poria
Ban Xia	9g	Pinelliae Rhizoma praeparatum

八剂痰涎尽消,再十剂水湿利,子宫润出,易受精而成孕矣。

After eight packages the phlegm will be completely dispersed. After taking 10 more packages, the water damp will be disinhibited so that the uterus dries up and easily receives the essence and forms a pregnancy.

其在于昔,则如望洋观海;而在于今,则是马到成功也。

Her previous situation was like looking at the ocean and gazing at the sea while her present state is instant success!

快哉! 此方之妙,妙在提脾气而升于上,作云作雨,则水湿反利于下行。

How fast! This formula's subtlety lies in its ability to lift the Spleen qi so it rises, making clouds that in turn make rain. In this way, contrary to expectation, water damp becomes disinhibited so it can move out downwards [unimpeded].

Sharon's commentary

Of course, we see Li Dong-Yuan's *Bu Zhong Yi Qi Tang* almost completely mirrored in this formula, with the larger dose of *Huang Qi* and small doses of *Chai Hu* and *Sheng Ma*.

The herb with the biggest dose is *Bai Zhu*,

fried in earth. *Bai Zhu*, especially when prepared this way, has the result of separating out the water from the flesh and organs. Imagine that there is soil inundated and made muddy by water. *Bai Zhu* will dry the soil and allow the clear water to go where it needs to go. We also know that Fu loves to use *Bai Zhu* to open and regulate the pelvic area.

助胃气而消于下,为津为液,则痰涎转易于上化。

In helping the Stomach qi to disperse in the lower body, and produce *jin* and *ye* fluids, there is the result that phlegm and spittle are easily transformed above.

不必用消化之品以损其肥,而肥自无碍;不必用浚决之味以开其窍,而窍自能通。阳气充足,自能摄精,湿邪散除,自可受种。何肥胖不孕之足虑乎!

You do not have to use dispersing and transforming ingredients to decrease her corpulence and yet the corpulence will naturally be unfettered. You do not have to use harsh dredging ingredients to open her orifices and yet the orifices will naturally be able to open-through. Yang qi will be full and sufficient so she will naturally be able to absorb the [man's] essence, damp evil will be dispersed and dispelled, and the woman can naturally receive the seed.

Margin notes

再十剂后方加杜仲一钱半(炒断丝),续断钱半〔炒〕,必受孕矣。

After 10 additional packages, add 4.5g of *Du Zhong* (*Eucommiae Cortex*, fried to break the silken threads) and 1.5g of *Xu Duan* (*Dipsaci Radix*, fried) and pregnancy will be inevitable!

下部冰冷不孕 (三十一) 3. Infertility due to icy cold in the lower body

妇人有下身冰冷,非火不暖,交感之际,阴中绝无温热之气。人以为天分之薄也,谁知是胞胎寒之极乎!

When a woman has icy cold in the lower body with neither fire nor warmth, and there is absolutely no warm qi within her reproductive organs/genitals, even at the moment of sexual intercourse, then people take this to be weakness of heaven's



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endowment. Who would know that it is extreme cold in the *Bao Tai*!?

夫寒冰之地,不生草木; 重阴之渊,不长鱼龙。今胞胎既寒,何能受孕。

Now, earth that is icy with winter cold cannot generate grasses and trees. No fish or dragon can grow in the deepest abyss of extreme yin. So, if the *Bao Tai* is already cold, how could there be a pregnancy?

虽男子鼓勇力战,其精甚热,直射于子宫之内,而寒冰之气相逼,亦不过茹之于暂而不能不吐之于久也。

Even if a man gathers up all of his strength and his qi is extremely hot, and even if the sperm essence goes straight into the uterus, it encounters the qi of cold ice. In this case, though the sperm may endure briefly, sooner or later it will be ejected.

夫犹是人也,此妇之胞胎,何以寒凉至此,岂非天分之薄乎?非也。

Now, this woman with this *Bao Tai*, how did it get icy cold to this extent? Is it due to weakness of heaven's endowment? It is not.

盖胞胎居于心肾之间,上系于心而下系于肾。

The *Bao Tai* resides in the space between the Heart and Kidneys. Above it is linked to the Heart and below it is linked to the Kidneys.

胞胎之寒凉,乃心肾二火之衰微也。故治胞胎者,必须补心肾二火而后。方用温胞饮。The cold of the *Bao Tai* means that there is waning diminishment of the two fires of the Heart and Kidneys. Therefore, when one treats the *Bao Tai*, one must supplement the two fires of the Heart and Kidneys. Then afterwards there is the potential for a pregnancy. The formula to use is *Wēn Bāo Yǐn* (Warm the Bao Drink).

Bai Zhu	30g	<i>Atractylodis macrocephalae</i> Rhizoma (earth fried)
Ba Ji Tian	30g	<i>Morindae officinalis</i> Radix (soaked in brine)
Tu Si Zi	9g	<i>Cuscutae</i> Semen (wine soaked and dry-fried)
Qian Shi	9g	<i>Euryales</i> Semen (dry-fried)
Ren Shen	6g	<i>Ginseng</i> Radix
Fu Zi	1g	<i>Aconiti Radix Lateralis</i> praeparata
Du Zhong	9g	<i>Eucommiae</i> Cortex (dry-fried til black)

Shan Yao	9g	<i>Dioscoreae</i> Rhizoma (dry-fried)
Rou Gui	9g	<i>Cinnamomi</i> Cortex (coarse part removed; ground)
Bu Gu Zhi	6g	<i>Psoraleae</i> Fructus (soaked in brine then dry-fried)

水煎服。一月而胞胎热。

Decoct in water and take. In one month, the *Bao Tai* will be heated.

Sharon's commentary

I always feel a sense of relief when a patient's diagnosis is primarily due to cold. The reason is that, though the symptoms can be extreme with cold, the treatment is simply to warm the yang. I like to think of a child with purple lips from swimming in cold water. Purple lips is an extreme sign! And yet, all it takes is 10 minutes lying in the sun for the blood to flow again. Notice that in cases of emaciation and fluid deficiency, Dr Fu says it will take many packages or several months. Here it just takes a month.

此方之妙,补心而即补肾,温肾而即温心。

The subtlety of this formula lies in its ability to supplement the Heart and thereby immediately supplement the Kidneys, and to warm the Kidneys and thereby immediately warms the Heart.

Sharon's commentary

Here Fu is using the reciprocal relationship between the Heart and Kidneys. He urges us to think of both and their relationship. After all, the yang that is the life force comes down from heaven through the Heart to reach the Kidneys. I love that Fu helps us to see this dynamic relationship. We have to help Kidney water with herbs such as *Tu Si Zi* and *Shan Zhu Yu* so that the fire from the Heart can be contained within water. *Ba Ji Tian*, though a yang tonic, is also sweet and moistening, helping fire stay within water. *Fu Zi*, especially when combined with *Rou Gui*, *Ba Ji Tian* and *Bu Gu Zhi*, warms and stokes Kidney fire. *Fu Zi* with *Rou Gui* also warms the Heart yang and induces it to connect between the Heart and Kidneys.

The biggest doses are those of *Bai Zhu* and *Ba Ji Tian*, favourite herbs of Fu. *Bai Zhu* clarifies earth and water while *Ba Ji Tian* enriches the fluids while stoking the yang. Nice pair!

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No fish or dragon can grow in the deepest abyss of extreme yin. So, if the *Bao Tai* is already cold, how could there be a pregnancy?

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Seeds hold and consolidate concentrated potential for the future.

Keep in mind that *Tu Si Zi*, *Qian Shi* and *Bu Gu Zhi* are seeds. Seeds hold and consolidate concentrated potential for the future, and so are often used for fertility in men and women.

心肾之气旺, 则心肾之火自生. 心肾之火生, 则胞胎之寒自散.

When the qi of the Heart and Kidney is effulgent, the fire of the Heart and Kidneys is spontaneously generated. When the fire of the Heart and Kidneys is generated, cold is spontaneously scattered from the *Bao Tai*.

原因胞胎之寒, 以至茹而即吐, 而今胞胎既热矣, 尚有施而不受者乎?

Originally, because the *Bao Tai* is cold, the sperm is ejected immediately after intake. But now the *Bao Tai* has become hot, so how could there be bestowal with no reception?

若改汤为丸, 朝夕吞服, 尤能摄精, 断不至有伯道无儿之叹也.

If you change [the formula] from a decoction

into pills, [and have the woman] swallow them in the morning and evening, this is even better to be able to absorb the *jing*, and there will be no need to experience Bo Dao's sorrow of childlessness.³

Margin notes

今之种子者多喜服热药, 不知此方特为胞胎寒者设. 若胞胎有热则不宜服. 审之.

Nowadays, many like to drink hot herbs when they want to plant a seed, [regardless of the diagnosis]. They don't know that this formula is especially constructed for cold in the *Bao Tai*. If there is heat in the *Bao Tai*, it is not suitable. Be cautious about this!

3. A proverb from a story in the Jin Shū (晋书). Deng You (邓攸, whose zi-name was 伯道 Bó Dào) was fleeing war with his son and his brother's son, but when confronted with danger he protected his nephew and sacrificed his own son. He never had more children, though he tried. People sympathised, saying "The Path of Heaven is senseless to leave Bo Dao without a son." Bó Dào wú ér (伯道无儿) became a phrase lamenting childlessness.

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