



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

## Part 3

By Sharon Weizenbaum

This article is the last in a three-part series on the fertility chapter of *Fù Qīng-Zhǔ Nǚ Kē* (傅青主女科 Fu Qingzhu's Women's Disorders). In this series, the chapter is translated into English 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. The final three sections are presented here.

### 骨蒸夜热不孕 (三十六) 4. Infertility due to steaming bone and night heat

妇人有骨蒸夜热,遍体火焦,口干舌燥,咳嗽吐沫,难于生子者,

When a woman suffering from bone steaming and night heat, with fire scorching all over her whole body, a dry mouth and parched tongue, and coughing and vomiting of spittle, has difficulty bearing a child, people assume this to be yin deficiency fire stirring. Who would know that this is interior heat of the bone marrow?

#### Sharon's commentary

Exactly how do we tell the difference between

infertility as described in section one of this article, infertility due to emaciated body, in which there is fluid depletion with empty heat, and this heat of the bone marrow? From the list of symptoms, we can see that heat is a strong sign here. Scorching heat over the whole body is quite a strong sign! Fu makes it clear that it is a common error to consider this simply yin deficiency with empty heat. Different measures are needed when the heat is in the bone marrow.

夫寒阴之地固不生物,而干旱之田岂能长养?

Let us consider the question: Given that a winter-cold and shady ground will certainly not sprout things, similarly how could an arid field in a drought be able to grow and nurture [living things]?

然而骨髓与胞胎何相关切,而骨髓之热,即能使人不嗣,此前贤之所未言者也。

This being so, there is a close relationship between the bone marrow and the *Bao Tai*, and heat in the bone marrow is thus able to cause infertility. This is something that our worthy predecessors have not yet spoken about!

山一旦创言之,不几为世俗所骇乎.而要知不必骇也,此中实有其理焉。

The concept might be my own creation, but you needn't be shocked, because there is a

clear rationale behind it, which is this:

盖胞胎为五脏外之一脏耳,以其不阴不阳,所以不列于五脏之中。

The *Bao Tai* is a *zang* organ beyond the five *zang* and, because it is neither yin nor yang, it is not listed among the five *zang*.

所谓不阴不阳者,以胞胎上系于心包,下系于命门。

It is called neither yin nor yang because above the *Bao Tai* is tied to the Heart wrapper, while below it is tied to the Life Gate (*Mingmen*).

系心包者通于心,心者阳也;系命门者通于肾,肾者阴也。

The tie to the Heart wrapper connects it to the Heart and the Heart is yang. The tie to the *Mingmen* connects it to the Kidneys and the Kidneys are yin.

是阴之中有阳,阳之中有阴,所以通于变化。This is a case of there being “yang within yin and yin within yang” and for this reason it connects to change and transformation.

#### Sharon's commentary

Fu is encouraging us to see the uterus as an organ that is made up of the interaction of yin and yang together. Furthermore, he is showing us that it is through the interaction of the Heart yang and Kidney yin that the uterus obtains the balance of yin and yang. Again he is talking about a dynamic physiology. Though in this case one might be tempted to simply clear empty heat, Fu is advocating to restore the connection between the Heart and Kidney as the way to do this.

或生男或生女,俱从此出,然必阴阳协和,不偏不枯,始能变化生人。否则否矣。

Whether it gives birth to a male child or a female child, both emerge from the *Bao Tai*. Of course, yin and yang must harmonise and assist each other, and they cannot be partial and they cannot be withered, to begin being able to transform and create a person. Otherwise, there will be nothing!

况胞胎既通于肾,而骨髓亦肾之所化也,骨髓热由于肾之热,肾热而胞胎亦不能不热。Moreover, since the *Bao Tai* is connected to the Kidneys, the bone marrow is also a product of transformation in/by the Kidneys.

Bone marrow heat is due to Kidney heat; if the Kidney has heat, this cannot but then make the *Bao Tai* hot as well.

且胞胎非骨髓之养,则婴儿无以生骨。骨髓过热,则骨中空虚,惟存火烈之气,又何能成胎?治法必须清骨中之热。

Furthermore, if the *Bao Tai* does not receive nourishment from the bone marrow, the baby lacks that by which it generates its bones. If the bone marrow is too hot, this will lead to emptiness inside the bones and only the qi of scorching fire is present. How could [the woman] be able to complete a pregnancy like this? The treatment method must be to clear the heat inside the bones.

#### Sharon's commentary

I am struck by this passage, the only one in this chapter that talks about the effects of the pathology on the baby itself. It's worth considering that this kind of heat is not an uncommon side effect of fertility drugs like clomiphene. This means that we can use Fu's methods to clear this heat from the marrow in these patients as a way to protect the child.

然骨热由于水亏,必补肾之阴则骨热除,珠露有滴濡之喜矣。

Of course, since bone heat is due to depleted water, so one must supplement the Kidney's yin. As a result, the bone heat is dispelled, and the pearlescent dew has the delight of moistening!

壮水之主,以制阳光,此之谓也。方用清骨滋肾汤。

“Strengthen the dominance of water, to thereby control the glare of yang”<sup>1</sup> is what this [treatment strategy] is called. The formula to use is *Qing Gu Zi Shen Tang* (Clear the Bone Enrich the Kidney Decoction).

<b>Di Gu Pi</b>	30g	Lycii Cortex (wine washed)
<b>Mu Dan Pi</b>	15g	Moutan Cortex
<b>Sha Shen</b>	15g	Glehniae/Adenophorae Radix
<b>Mai Dong</b>	15g	Ophiopogonis Radix (heart removed)
<b>Xuan Shen</b>	15g	Scrophulariae Radix (wine washed)
<b>Wu Wei Zi</b>	1.5g	Schisandrae Fructus (dry-fried, ground)
<b>Bai Zhu</b>	9	Atractylodis macrocephalae (earth fried)
<b>Shi Hu</b>	6g	Dendrobii Herba

1. This is a famous Wang Bing commentary quote.

■ 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: [whitepinehealingarts.org](http://whitepinehealingarts.org).

水煎. 连服三十剂而骨热解, 再服六十剂自受孕.

Decoct in water. If she continuously takes 30 packages, the bone heat will be resolved. After another 60 packages she will naturally receive a pregnancy.

此方之妙, 补肾中之精, 凉骨中之热, 不清胞胎而胞胎自无太热之患.

The subtlety of this formula lies in its ability to supplement the essence in the Kidneys and cool the heat in the bones. It does not clear [heat from] the *Bao Tai*, and yet the *Bao Tai* will naturally have no excessive heat.

#### Sharon's commentary

This formula uses a large dose of *Di Gu Pi* which is specific for clearing heat from the marrow and treating steaming bone disorder. With *Mu Dan Pi* and *Xuan Shen*, it also clears heat from the blood. I have found it important to know that when heat cooks the fluids, whether it be the marrow or the blood, these fluids thicken and become more viscous. This becomes a state of blood stasis due to heat. *Mu Dan Pi* and *Xuan Shen* help to cool the heat in blood and re-liquify it. Thus when we replenish fluids with *Mai Men Dong*, *Sha Shen* and *Shi Hu*, these fluids can easily become fresh blood. In addition, because of the relationship between the Heart fire and Kidney water, this renewed spring of water itself counters the fire.

然阴虚内热之人, 原易受妊, 今因骨髓过热, 所以受精而变燥, 以致难于育子, 本非胞胎之不能受精.

This being so, a yin deficient person with inner heat initially finds it easy to receive a pregnancy. In the present case, because of the excessive heat in the bone marrow, when she receives the essence it transforms into dryness, and therefore leads to difficulty in nurturing the child (in the womb, to the point where she can give birth). It's not that the *Bao Tai* is unable to receive the essence.

所以稍补其肾, 以杀其火之有余, 而益其水之不足, 便易种子耳.

Therefore, we want to slightly supplement the patient's Kidney to thereby abate the excess amount of fire, and boost the water that's been lacking, in order to make it easy to plant a child!

#### Margin notes

治骨髓热所以不用熟地, 方极善. 用者万勿加減. 凡峻药病去七分即止, 不必拘泥三十剂、六十剂之数. 三元生人不一, 余类推. 三元

Because this formula for treating bone marrow heat does not use *Shu Di*, it is extremely good! In its application, absolutely do not make any additions or subtractions! In all cases, stop when the illness has disappeared 70 per cent from these drastic medicinals. You do not need to be a stickler about the stated number of exactly 30 or 60 preparations. People are all different because of their astrology<sup>2</sup> and so on and so forth.

#### Sharon's commentary

Many of us would be tempted to use *Di Huang* (*Rehmannia*) in a case like this. *Fu* warns that it is too sticky and will trap the heat. The use of lighter herbs and ones that liquefy while cooling and enriching is key to treating this deep heat. *Shu Di* does not liquefy but rather thickens.

#### 少腹急迫不孕 (三十三)

#### 5. Infertility due to lower abdominal tightness

妇人有少腹之间自觉有紧迫之状. 急而不舒, 不能生育. 此人人之所不识也, 谁知是带脉之拘急乎.

When a woman has the symptom of a subjective feeling of urgent tightness of her lower abdominal area, with uncomfortable tension and an inability to become pregnant, everyone fails to recognise why this occurs. Who would guess that this is spastic restriction of the *Dai Mai*?

#### Sharon's commentary

We are generally taught to treat lower abdominal pain in women, as in dysmenorrhea, as blood and qi stasis. I've learned that it is very important to ask a woman suffering from this kind of pain whether or not the pain feels spastic or like pulling pain. If it does, then we will need to integrate some of these methods!

夫带脉系于腰脐之间, 宜弛而不宜急. 今带脉之急者, 由于腰脐之气不利也.

2. 三元 sān yuán.



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The *Dai Mai* is tied to the space between the lumbar area and navel. It is meant to be relaxed and not tight. Now, in this case, the *Dai Mai* is spasming and the reason is that the qi between the lumbar area and navel is inhibited.

而腰脐之气不利者，由于脾胃之气不足也。Moreover, when the qi of the lower back and navel is inhibited, this is due to insufficiency of the qi of the Spleen and Stomach.

脾胃气虚，则腰脐之气闭，腰脐之气闭，则带脉拘急。Spleen and Stomach qi deficiency leads to blockage of the qi of the lumbar area and navel. The blockage of the qi of the lumbar area and navel leads to tightness of the *Dai Mai*.

#### Sharon's commentary

Throughout Fu's text on gynaecology, he discusses the relationship between the Spleen and Stomach qi and the *Dai Mai*. I imagine a sort of hammock strung between two trees that are the *Ren* and *Du* channels. Of course, in order for trees to support a hammock, they must have strong roots in stable soil. If the soil is too weak, the trees might bend strangely and cause tension in the strings of the hammock. With this image we can see what needs to happen more clearly. We need to strengthen the earth so that the trees are stable. Then the hammock can hang between them in a balanced way.

遂致牵动胞胎，精即直射于胞胎，胞胎亦暂能茹纳。而力难负载，必不能免小产之虞。Consequently, the *Bao Tai* is affected. Even if the man's essence is fired directly to the *Bao Tai* and it is able for the moment to swallow and receive it, still its strength will not be up to supporting [a pregnancy] and there is a risk of premature birth.

况人多不能节欲，安得保其不坠乎？此带脉之急，所以不能生子也。Moreover, people are often unable to curb their sexual desire. How then can there be a guarantee against dropping? If the *Dai Mai* is tight, a child cannot be born and that's all there is to it.

治法宜宽其带脉之急。而带脉之急，不能遽

宽也，宜利其腰脐之气。

As for the treatment method, the right thing is to relax the tension in the *Dai Mai*. However, the *Dai Mai* tension cannot be hastily expanded. It is appropriate to [first] disinhibit the qi of the low back and navel.

而腰脐之气，不能遽利也，必须大补其脾胃之气与血，而腰脐可利，带脉可宽，自不难于孕育矣。方用宽带汤。

However, the qi of the low back cannot be hastily disinhibited. One must [first] greatly supplement the qi and the blood of the Spleen and Stomach. In this way the low back and navel can benefit and the *Dai Mai* can relax. Then, naturally, pregnancy is not difficult. The formula to use is *Kuān Dài Tāng* (Relax the Dai Decoction).

<b>Bai Zhu</b>	30g	Atractylodis macrocephalae Rhizoma (earth fried)
<b>Bu Gu Zhi</b>	3g	Psoraleae Fructus (soaked in brine and dry-fried)
<b>Mai Dong</b>	9g	Ophiopogonis Radix (heart removed)
<b>Du Zhong</b>	9g	Eucommiae Cortex (dry-fried to black)
<b>Ba Ji Tian</b>	15g	Morindae officinalis Radix (soaked in brine)
<b>Ren Shen</b>	9g	Ginseng Radix
<b>Shu Di</b>	15g	Rehmanniae Radix preparata (steamed 9 times)
<b>Rou Cong Rong</b>	9g	Cistanches Herba (washed clean)
<b>Bai Shao</b>	9g	Paeoniae Radix alba (dry-fried)
<b>Dang Gui</b>	6g	Angelicae Sinensis (wine washed)
<b>Wu Wei Zi</b>	1g	Schisandrae Fructus (dry-fried)
<b>Lian Zi</b>	12 pc	Nelumbinis Semen (heart not removed)

水煎服。四剂少腹无紧迫之状，服一月即受胎。

Decoct in water and take. After four packages, the abdomen will be without the symptom of tension. If she takes it for one month there will be pregnancy.

此方之妙，脾胃两补，而又利其腰脐之气，自然带脉宽舒，可以载物而胜任矣。

The subtlety of this formula [lies in its ability to] supplement the Spleen and Stomach and also to benefit the low back and navel qi. The *Dai Mai* is then spontaneously relaxed so it can carry things and have a victorious pregnancy.

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When a woman has the symptom of a subjective feeling of urgent tightness of her lower abdominal area, with uncomfortable tension and an inability to become pregnant, everyone fails to recognise why this occurs.

## FU QINGZHU'S FORMULA FOR VAGINAL PAIN

RETURNING TO normal activity too soon after giving birth with exposure to wind can cause pain such that even the pressure from clothing has to be kept away from the body. The formula is Expel Wind Settle Pain Decoction (祛風定痛湯 *Qù Fēng Dìng Tòng Tāng*):

Chuan Xiong .....3g  
Dang Gui .....9g  
Du Huo .....1.5g  
Fang Feng .....1.5g  
Rou Gui .....1.5g  
Jing Jie (charred) ...1.5g  
Fu Ling .....3g  
Di Huang ..... 6g  
Da Zao ..... 2 pcs

There is also pain due to vaginal erosion (陰瘡 *yīn gān*)<sup>1</sup> and severe vaginal erosion (陰蝕 *yīn shí*).<sup>2</sup> When sores occur in the vagina they are termed "hidden sores" (匿瘡 *nì chuāng*), they may be painful or itchy as if bugs are crawling inside, and there may be thick discharge. Almost all vaginal erosion is due to irritable constraint of the Heart and Kidneys along with weak Stomach qi leading to blockage of qi and blood. The Classic says *All painful sores and itching are related to the Heart*.<sup>3</sup> The treatment should be to tonify the Heart and nourish the Kidneys, while steaming and washing the area with a formula like *Shí Quán Yīn Gān Sǎn* (十全陰瘡散 All-Inclusive Vaginal Erosion Powder, comprised of *Chuan Xiong*, *Dang Gui*, *Bai*

1. Sores like boils in the vagina, usually due to Liver channel damp-heat. If they persist, itch and odorous discharge develop.  
2. Vaginal ulceration severe enough to have sores that weep yellow fluid continuously, and appear as if insects have eaten away the tissue.  
3. *Su Wen* chapter 74.

### feature

#### Sharon's commentary

With the image of the hammock in mind, we can see the sense of using this large dose of *Bai Zhu*. What better way to bank up earth! In addition, fire is used to supplement earth and wood is generated so as to strengthen the roots of those trees. Describing this as supplementing the *Ren* and *Du* is just as accurate.

或疑方中用五味、白芍之酸收，不增带脉之急，而反得带脉之宽，殊不可解。

Perhaps one doubts the formula's use of the sour contracting *Wu Wei Zi* and *Bai Shao*, thinking they might increase the contracting of the *Dai Mai* and do the opposite of relaxing the *Dai Mai* tension. This is truly difficult to understand.

岂知带脉之急，由于气血之虚，盖血虚则缩而不伸，气虚则挛而不达。

How could one know that tension of the *Dai Mai* is due to deficiency of the qi and blood? Blood deficiency has a contracting effect that prevents stretching out. Qi deficiency leads to spasming so there is no reaching out.

用芍药之酸以平肝木，则肝不克脾。

Using the sourness of *Bai Shao* levels the Liver wood so that the Liver cannot dominate the Spleen.

用五味之酸以生肾水，则肾能益带。似相妨而实相济也，何疑之有。

The sour *Wu Wei Zi* is used in order to generate Kidney water so that the Kidney is able to benefit the *Dai*. That which seemed as though it might hinder will actually relieve. How can there be any doubt?

#### Sharon's commentary

Fu is helping us here in case we feel reticent to give sour herbs in a tight situation. I think of this tightness as the kind of tightness that comes from drying out. I think of oiling the leather bridle for my horse and how this helps it bend and stretch. *Wu Wei Zi* and *Bai Shao* are sweet and enriching. It is said that sweet combined with sour enriches yin. Sour protects fluids so that these fluids and soften and emolliate the tendons and sinews, thereby relaxing them.

#### Margin notes

凡种子治法，不出带脉胞胎二经。数言已泄造化之秘矣。

Ordinary methods for fertility do not expound on the two channels, *Dai Mai* and *Bao Tai*. With these several words, the secret blessing is now released.

#### Sharon's commentary

Indeed! This pattern of infertility is so important and yet I have never seen it written about elsewhere.

#### 嫉妒不孕（三十四）

#### 6. Infertility due to jealousy and envy

妇人有怀抱素恶不能生子者，人以为天心厌之也，谁知是肝气郁结乎。

When a woman habitually harbours misery, and she is unable to have a child, people consider this to be a punishment from heaven. Who would know that this is knotting constraint of Liver qi!?

夫妇人之有子也，必然心脉流利而滑，脾脉舒徐而和，肾脉旺大而鼓指，始称喜脉。

Now, for a woman to bear a child, it is necessary that the Heart pulse be free-flowing and slippery, the Spleen pulse be relaxed and harmonious and the Kidney pulse be vigorous, big and drumming against the finger. Only then can this be called a happiness pulse.<sup>3</sup>

未有三部脉郁而能生子者也。

It has never happened that the pulses of the three positions are constrained and a woman is able to have a child.

#### Sharon's commentary

Here I diverge from Fu's certainty. I have seen many miserable, negative women achieve and complete healthy pregnancies. I've also seen many women persevere unnecessarily over whether a bad thought could be preventing them from becoming pregnant. As a clinician, I cannot diagnose based on how a woman works with her mind. Instead, I must see the signs of constraint in the pulses, abdomen, signs and symptoms. If the signs of constraint are there, then I might help a woman work

3. This 喜脉 happiness pulse is in contrast to the 恶 misery in the previous line. It could also be translated as the pregnancy pulse.



with her mind as one support for opening the constraint. If there are no other physical signs of constraint, then I can know that, though she is miserable, this is not why she is not achieving pregnancy.

若三部脉郁, 肝气必因之而更郁, 肝气郁则心肾之脉必致郁之极而莫解。

If the pulses in the three positions are constrained, the Liver qi is invariably even more constrained. As the result of Liver qi constraint, the Heart and Kidney pulse invariably reach an extreme state of constraint and none of them resolve.

#### Sharon's commentary

Here is where Dr Fu and I agree. He encourages us to feel the constraint on the pulses, obtaining some physical conformation of constraint.

盖子母相依, 郁必不喜, 喜必不郁也。

Mother and child depend on each other. Constraint invariably leads to unhappiness and happiness invariably leads to a lack of constraint.

其郁而不能成胎者, 以肝木不舒, 必下克脾土而致塞。脾土之气塞, 则腰脐之气必不利。The reason why this constraint causes an inability to complete a fetus is that when Liver wood does not unfurl, this inevitably overwhelms Spleen earth below, which results in blockage. When the Spleen earth qi is blocked up, the qi of the lumbar area and navel will inevitably be inhibited.

腰脐之气不利, 必不能通任脉而达带脉, 则带脉之气亦塞矣。

When the qi of the lumbar area and navel is inhibited, this will inevitably cause the *Ren Mai* to be unable to open and the *Dai Mai* to be unable spread out. Then the *Dai Mai* qi will also get blocked up!

带脉之气既塞, 则胞胎之门必闭。精即到门, When the qi of the *Dai Mai* is blocked up then the gate of the *Bao Tai* is invariably closed. And when the *jing* arrives at this gate,

亦不得其门而入矣。其奈之何哉?

it is unable to enter! What on earth can we do about this?

治法必解四经之郁, 以开胞胎之门则几矣。

The treatment method must resolve constraint of the four channels in order to make it possible to open the gate of the *Bao Tai*!

方用开郁种玉汤。

The formula to use is *Kāi Yù Zhòng Yù Tāng* (Open Constraint Plant the Jade Decoction):

<b>Bai Shao</b>	30g	Paeoniae Radix alba (wine fried)
<b>Xiang Fu</b>	9g	Cyperi Rhizoma (wine fried)
<b>Dang Gui</b>	15g	Angelicae Sinensis (wine washed)
<b>Bai Zhu</b>	15g	Atractylodis macrocephalae Rhizoma (earth fried)
<b>Dan Pi</b>	9g	Moutan Cortex (wine washed)
<b>Fu Ling</b>	9g	Poria
<b>Tian Hua Fen</b>	6g	Trichosanthis Radix

水煎服。一月则郁结之气开, 郁开则无非喜气之盈腹, 而嫉妒之心亦可以一易, 自然两相合好, 结胎于顷刻之间矣。

Decoct in water and take. In one month the constrained and knotted qi will open. When the constraint is opened, the belly will be full of happy qi and the jealous Heart can also be changed completely. Naturally there is a mutual reconciliation and this will result in the conception of a baby in no time at all!

#### Sharon's commentary

Here is Fu's version of *Xiao Yao San*. He uses a good dose of wine-fried *Bai Shao*, which as we have seen relaxes the muscles. I often use the combination of *Bai Shao* with *Tian Hua Fen* to further nourish and relax the muscles to unfurl the Liver. In place of *Chai Hu*, he uses *Xiang Fu* which is black and so goes more to the blood.

此方之妙。解肝气之郁, 宣脾气之困, 而心肾之气亦因之俱舒, 所以腰脐利而任带通达, 不必启胞胎之门, 而胞胎自启。

The subtle miracle of this formula lies in its ability to resolve constraint of the Liver qi and spread out the encumbered Spleen qi. As a result of this the qi of the Heart and Kidneys are also able to unfurl, the lumbar area and navel become free-flowing and the *Ren* and *Dai* are open to flow. One need not open the door of the *Bao Tai* and yet the *Bao Tai* door opens by itself.

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When the constraint is opened, the belly will be full of happy qi and the jealous Heart can also be changed completely.

**Sharon's commentary**

Though, as I wrote above, we don't want to overestimate the power of the mind to influence the functions in our bodies, including reproductive functions, I've also used *Xiao Yao San* modifications successfully to treat idiopathic infertility in otherwise healthy patients.

There is no need to specifically treat the jealousy.

How lovely that Chinese herbal medicine has the insight to stop this kind of suffering. I love the Resolve Envy Drink mentioned below to add to the efficacy.

**Margin notes**

方似平平无奇, 然却能解妒种子, 不可忽视. 若怀娠而仍然嫉妒, 必致血郁堕胎. 即幸不堕胎, 生子多不能成. 方加解妒饮合煎之, 可保无虞, 必须变其性情始效. 解妒饮: 黍、谷各九十粒, 麦(生用)、小黑豆各四十九粒〔豆炒熟〕, 高粱五十粒.

This formula seems to be very common

with nothing special about it. And yet, it can resolve envy and bring fertility. This cannot be regarded lightly! If pregnancy is suspected and yet there is still jealousy, this inevitably leads to constrained blood and miscarriage. Even if she is lucky enough to not miscarry, the children born [under these circumstances] will often not be able to reach adulthood.

By adding *Jiě Dù Yīn* (解妒饮 Resolving Envy Drink) to this formula and brewing them together, you can protect the pregnancy and be free from worry. Invariably, this is bound to transform her disposition and emotions and bring efficacy.

**Jie Du Yin (Resolve Envy Drink)**

90 grains broomcorn millet  
90 grains millet  
49 grains fresh wheat  
49 small black beans (dry-fried til cooked)  
50 grains sorghum

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