

第十六問

婦人多因風冷而生諸疾者，何也？

答曰：風乃陽邪也，冷乃寒氣也。風隨虛入，冷由勞傷。夫人將攝順理，則血氣調和，風寒暑濕不能為害。若勞傷血氣，便致虛損，則風冷乘虛而干之。

或客於經絡，則氣血凝滯，不能溫養於肌膚；或入於腹內，則沖氣虧虛，不能消化於飲食。大腸虛則多利，子臟寒則不生。或為斷絕，或為不通者，隨所傷而成病，皆不逃乎風冷之氣也。

QUESTION SIXTEEN

What is the Reason for Women's Propensity to Generate All Sorts of Conditions as the Result of Wind Cold?

ANSWER: Wind is surely a Yáng evil, and cold is surely the Qì of winter-cold. Wind follows vacuity to enter, while cold is caused by taxation damage. If people rest and nurture their health in accordance with cosmic principles, the blood and Qì are harmonious, and wind, winter-cold, summer-heat, and dampness are not able to cause harm. If taxation damages the blood and Qì and then causes vacuity detriment, however, wind and cold exploit this vacuity and interfere.

Perhaps they intrude into the channels and network vessels, congealing and impeding the smooth flow of Qì and blood so that they are unable to warm and nourish the skin. Or they enter the inside of the abdomen, resulting in depletion of the Chōng Qì and inability to digest food and drink. Vacuity in the large intestine results in propensity to diarrhea. Cold in the uterus results in failure to bear children. Whether it is a matter of interrupted flow or of a failure to flow through, illness is formed in response to the nature of the damage, which in all of these cases does not deviate from the Qì of wind and cold.

DISCUSSION

The expression 沖氣 *chōng qì* has a number of connotations that are all relevant in the present context. First, we can read it literally as “thrusting Qì,” not negatively but rather as Qì that moves dynamically and forcefully, instead of stagnating and congealing. In addition, since the Chōngmài is the Sea of Blood (see Question Seven above), it makes sense to read 沖 here as implying the Chōngmài or “Thoroughfare Vessel,” since 沖 is often used interchangeably with 衝, and both characters are used to refer to the Chōngmài in medical texts. However, to complicate matters further, we must not ignore a third dimension: Even though when dealing with a medical text we should always prioritize the technical meaning, the expression 沖氣 has another, non-medical meaning that is based on a famous line from the *Dàodéjīng* 《道德經》 (Classic of the Way and its Virtue-Power):

道生一，一生二，二生三，三生萬物。萬物負陰而抱陽，沖氣以為和。

The *Dào* engenders the One, the One engenders the Two, the Two engender the Three, and the Three engender the Ten Thousand Things. The Ten Thousand Things carry *Yīn* on their shoulders and wrap their arms around *Yáng*. Through this process, thrusting Qì becomes harmonized.

This literary significance would not have been lost on any educated member of *Sòng* society. In this passage, 沖 describes the ideal of dynamic yet harmonious movement of Qì that facilitates the generative flow between the poles of *Yīn* and *Yáng*, heaven and earth, with humanity in the middle. Lastly, the character 沖 can also be used as a substitute for the character 中 *zhōng* (“middle”), so 沖氣 also implies the notion of “central Qì.” To summarize, this expression 沖氣 here should be understood to have implications of dynamically moving Qì, of Qì in the Chōngmài, and of the Qì that flows in the center of the body like a “thoroughfare.” It is impossible to express all these connotations in a single English term, so we must step back, on encountering polysemous expressions like this, and explore their significance in the original language rather than choosing a single English translation for the sake of elegance and ease of reading.

The last sentence of the essay on women's propensity to wind-cold pathologies above contains two words for flow that might strike an English reader as more or less identical. The intentional specificity in the original source, though, is emphasized clearly here by the repetition of the sentence particle 或 *huò*, meaning "whether... or...," indicating that the text is describing two alternative scenarios, rather than just giving rhetorical alternatives. As such, the author emphasizes here that an "interruption" (斷絕 *duànjué*) is not the same as a "failure to flow through" (不通 *bù tōng*), but that in both cases, the grave consequence of developing pathologies related to wind-cold is unavoidable. What exactly the substance is whose flow is either impeded temporarily or prevented from flowing through remains unsaid. While we ordinarily assume that a medical author speaks of Qì when discussing flow, the gynecological context suggests that Qì Zhòngfū meant both Qì and blood, if not primarily blood. This short sentence here shows that gynecological authors in the Sòng period did indeed place importance not just on the symptom of a stopped menstrual flow but on the precise timing, nature, and duration of this stoppage, and viewed a temporary disruption differently from the much more serious situation of "failure to flow through." While this latter expression might strike the modern English reader as awkward, I translate it consistently as not just "stopped" or "blocked" menstruation. Similarly, I render its counterpart 通 ("to flow through" or "promote through-flow"), which frequently occurs in formula names and descriptions of formula effects or healthy physiology, not just as "free flow" or "restoring flow" or "opening up," but always incorporate the notion of flowing THROUGH, of penetrating all the way to the end. Admittedly this makes for less elegant passages in English, but it is essential to me to preserve the seriousness of the condition, and the implication that something that should be getting discharged and reaching an important target is getting blocked and consequently forced to either exit elsewhere from the body or bind into masses. The dire long-term consequences of this pathology should be obvious to anybody who has seen floodwaters break through a dam or an avalanche roll down a mountain.

補陰丸

治婦人百疾，或經不調，或崩中漏不止，腰腿沉重，臍腹作痛，潮熱往來，虛煩自汗，中滿氣短，嘔噦不時，肢體煩疼，不思飲食，日漸瘦弱。

此藥順肌體，悅顏色，調營衛，逐風寒，進飲食，化痰涎。

熟地	各七兩
生地	
白朮	五兩
蒼朮(泔浸一宿)	五兩半
藁本(去土)	四味各十兩
牡丹皮	
當歸	
秦艽	
細辛	七兩
肉桂(去皮)	八兩
甘草(炙)	六兩半
蠶蛻布(燒存性)	七兩
大豆黃卷(炒煙去)	六兩半
枳殼(麩炒)	六兩
陳皮(去白)	六兩
乾薑(炮)	各五兩
羌活	
白芷	六兩
白茯苓	六兩
糯米(炒黑色，火煙出)	三升

上為細末，蜜丸，每一兩作十九。每服一九，溫酒化下，醋湯亦得，食前。

Bǔ Yīn Wán (Yīn-Supplementing Pill)

Treats the hundred illnesses of women, perhaps with unatuned menses or with Landslide Collapse of the center and spotting that will not stop, heaviness in the lumbus and legs, pain in the navel and abdomen, intermittent tidal heat, vacuity vexation and spontaneous sweating, fullness in the center and shortness of breath, randomly occurring retching, vexing aches in the limbs, no interest in food and drink, and daily progressing frailty.

This medicine smooths out the flesh, makes the complexion pleasing, attunes *yíng* Provisioning and *wèi* Defense, expels wind cold, promotes eating and drinking, and transforms phlegm and drool.

shúdi	7 liǎng each
shēngdì	
báizhú	5 liǎng
cāngzhú (steep in rice rinsing water overnight)	5.5 liǎng
gǎoběn (remove soil)	10 liǎng for each of these four ingredients
mǔdānpí	
dāngguī	
qínjiāo	
xìxīn	7 liǎng
ròuguì (remove the skin)	8 liǎng
gāncǎo (mix-fry)	6.5 liǎng
cántuìbù (i.e. cántuìzhǐ. Burn [carefully] to preserve its nature)	7 liǎng
dàdòuhuángjuǎn (stir-fry until the smoke is gone)	6.5 liǎng



zhǐké (bran-fry)	6 liǎng
chénpí (remove the white parts)	6 liǎng
gānjiāng (blast-fry)	5 liǎng each
qiānghuó	
báizhǐ	6 liǎng
báifúlíng	6 liǎng
nuòmǐ (stir-fry until black and smoking)	3 shēng

Process the ingredients above into a fine powder and form into honey pills, making 10 pills with every 1 *liǎng*. Take 1 pill per dose, downing it dissolved into warm rice wine, or possibly also in vinegar or hot water, before meals.

丹鉛丹

治一切虛寒冷病。

鹿茸	
靈砂	
白龍骨	
川椒	
陽起石	
牡蠣粉	
肉桂	
肉蓯蓉	
石斛	
川巴戟	
木賊	
澤瀉	
天雄(酒浸,炮)	
沉香	
菟絲子(酒浸)	
脛肭臍	各一兩
磁石(醋淬)	
麝香	各半兩

上為細末，煉蜜為丸，梧桐子大。每服一百丸，溫酒或鹽湯下。

Dān Qiān Dān (Cinnabar and Lead Elixir)

Treats all conditions of vacuity cold.

lùróng	
língshā	
báilónggǔ	
chuānjiāo	
yángqǐshí	
mǔlǐfěn	
ròuguì	
ròucōngróng	
shíhú	
chuānbāji	
mùzéi	
zéxiè	
tiānxióng (steep in rice wine and blast-fry)	
chénxiāng	
tùsīzǐ (steep in rice wine)	
wànàqí	1 liǎng each
císhí (quench in vinegar)	
shèxiāng	1.5 liǎng each

Process the ingredients above into a fine powder and mix with refined honey into pills the size of *Wútóng* seeds. Take 100 pills per dose by downing them in warm rice wine or hot salty water.

FORMULA NOTE

It is easy to read through this formula quickly and overlook a curious ingredient that is just innocently tucked in among all the others: 膾肭臍 wànnàqí, a.k.a. seal penis and testicles. The reader only interested in directly clinically applicable information is invited to skip over the following discussion. Nevertheless, my love of seals, based on my interactions with these curious, personable, graceful creatures when I swim in the Puget Sound north of Seattle, induces me to indulge in a small detour. What is the significance of this rarely-used ingredient in a formula for vacuity cold in a book that otherwise almost exclusively contains herbal medicinals with only a few minerals in alchemically oriented formulas here and there? Obviously, lùróng (velvet deerhorn), báilónggǔ (dragon bone), mǔlì (oyster shell), and shèxiāng (musk) are also substances derived from animals, albeit much more commonly used ones.

So what is this mysterious ingredient, wànnàqí, which, I have to admit, I had never before come across? Also called 海狗腎 hǎigǒushèn (“sea dog kidney”), it is clear that its historical meaning and continued traditional use refers to the penis and testes of male seals, and not to the kidney. Of course the kidney is closely related to the reproductive organs in Chinese medicine, the original character in the Chinese name (膾 qí) actually means “navel,” and the penis and testes are sometimes referred to as the external kidney anyway. According to the *Zhōngyào dàcídiǎn* 中藥大辭典 (Great Dictionary of Chinese Materia Medica), the substance is salty and hot, enters the liver and kidney channels, and is used to “warm the kidney, strengthen Yáng, boost Essence, and supplement the marrow. It treats vacuity detriment and taxation damage, Yáng wilting and debilitation of Essence, and weakness in the lumbus and kidney.” In Volume Fifty-One of the *Běncǎo gāngmù* from 1596, it is described as follows:

“Its Qì and flavor are salty, greatly hot, and non-toxic. It is indicated for demonic Qì and corpse influx, dreams of intercourse with ghosts, demons, goblins and fox spirits, heart and abdominal pain, malignancy strike with evil Qì, abiding blood binding into clots, Strings and Aggregations, and marked emaciation. In men, it treats abiding Concretions and Qì lumps, accumulating cold and taxation Qì, kidney Essence weakness, taxation caused by too much sexual activity, and haggard emaciation. It supplements the center and boosts kidney Qì, warms the lumbus and knees, assists Yáng Qì, breaks Concretions and bindings, and cures panic, *kuáng* mania, and seizures. It is most excellent for the five taxations and seven damages, Yīn wilting and lack of strength, kidney vacuity, taxation oppression in the back and shoulders, and black face and cold Essence.

One of the most outstanding characteristics of seals, which as an avid open-water swimmer myself in the cold Pacific Northwest I envy them greatly for, is that they frolic comfortably in very cold water because of their large amount of insulating blubber. It thus makes intuitive sense that they would be a good substance for the treatment of cold. The spectacular mating behavior of male seals, from the powerful and aggressive establishment of their rookeries to the subsequent defense of their large harems, is easily observed since it occurs on land. Additionally, penises in general are a potent Yáng-supplementing medicinal in Chinese medicine, whether derived from dogs, stallions, or seals, since they combine the concentrated power of the male “jade stalk” with the inherently Yīn nature of all reproductive organs as associated with the kidney and the innermost aspect of the body. Seal testicles are thus a widely used tonic for sexual functions. Even though they are not a common medicinal in gynecological formulas, we can see how their greatly heating and Yáng-supplementing quality makes them a perfect ingredient for a condition of vacuity cold. It is even possible that this formula was originally not gendered but used for male cases of vacuity cold as well. Unfortunately, I have not been able to trace it back to an earlier source.