

第四十二問

陰崩陽崩，何以別之？

答曰：夫血氣之行，外行經絡，內榮腑臟，皆衝任二脈之所主也。

倘若勞傷過度，致腑臟俱傷，衝任經虛，不能約制其血，故忽然暴下，謂之崩下。

經云：三焦絕經，名曰血崩。受熱而赤者，謂之陽崩；受冷而白者，謂之陰崩。

其白者形如涕，赤者形如絳，黃者形如爛瓜，青者形如藍色，黑者形如衄血。是謂五崩也。（當與第六問兼看）

QUESTION FORTY-TWO

How Do We Differentiate Between Yīn Landslide Collapse and Yáng Landslide Collapse?

ANSWER: Regarding the movement of blood and Qì, externally it flows in the channels and network vessels, and internally it supplies *yíng* Provisioning to the *fǔ* and *zàng* organs. It is always [a function] that is ruled by the two vessels Chōngmài and Rènmai.

Whenever a person suffers taxation damage that is excessive, this leads to damage to both the *fǔ* and the *zàng* organs and to vacuity in the Chōng and Rèn channels, so that they are unable to restrain the person's blood. For this reason, suddenly there is a Landslide Collapse downward. This is what is called "Landslide Collapse downward."

The Classic says: "When the channels are interrupted in the Sānjiāo, this is called 'blood Landslide Collapse.'" In cases where the patient contracted heat and it is red, it is called Yáng Landslide Collapse; in cases where the patient contracted cold and it is white, it is called Yīn Landslide Collapse.

If it is white, it looks like nasal mucus; if it is red, it looks like the color of crimson; if it is yellow, it looks like overripe melon; if it is green-blue, it looks like the color of indigo; and if it is black, it looks like a nosebleed. These are what we call the "Five [Forms of] Landslide Collapse." (Also see Question Six.)

DISCUSSION

Given the importance of discharge “below the belt” in classical Chinese gynecology and the life-threatening nature of the condition here, it is worth unpacking and contextualizing this answer on the basis of its historical predecessors. Here is the parallel passage from the *Zhūbīng yuánhòu lùn*, which once again is clearly at least a partial source for Qí Zhòngfǔ’s answer and at the same time presents some additional information. The essay on the “Sign of Landslide Collapse of the Center in All of the Five Colors” is found in the second of the four volumes on women’s miscellaneous conditions towards the end of this text:

崩中之病，是傷損衝任之脈。衝任之脈皆起受於胞內，為經脈之海。勞傷過度，衝任氣虛，不能統制經血，故忽然崩下，謂之崩中。

五臟皆稟血氣，五臟之色，隨臟不同。傷損之人，五臟皆虛者，故五色隨崩俱下。其狀：白崩形如涕，赤崩形如紅汁，黃崩形如爛瓜汁，青崩形如藍色，黑崩形如乾血色。

The disease of Landslide Collapse of the center means damage to the Chōngmài and Rènmai. The Chōngmài and Rènmai all begin inside the womb and constitute the sea of the channels. Taxation damage that is excessive means that the Qì in the Chōngmài and Rènmai is vacuous and that they are unable to restrain the blood in the channels. For this reason, suddenly there is a movement like a landslide downward. This is what is called “Landslide Collapse of the center.”

The five zàng organs are all endowed with blood and Qì, and the color of the five zàng organs differs from one organ to the next. If the person who has been injured suffers from vacuity in all the five zàng organs, the five colors consequently are all discharged along with the Landslide Collapse. Their appearance is as follows: White Landslide Collapse resembles nasal mucus, red Landslide Collapse resembles red juice, yellow Landslide Collapse resembles overripe melon juice, green-blue

Landslide Collapse resembles indigo in color, and black Landslide Collapse resembles the color of dry blood.

We must note here that the condition 崩中 *bēngzhōng* “Landslide Collapse of the center,” does not exist in isolation, but as the most severe and critical variety among other types of women’s pathological discharge from the vagina. Most importantly, it is related to, and sometimes accompanied by, the more chronic form known as 漏下 *lòuxià* “spotting (or literally “leaking”) below.” Both of these conditions are seen as varieties of vaginal discharge, which is referred to in Chinese medical literature as 帶下 *dàixià*, literally “below the belt,” and introduced by Cháo Yuánfāng in the beginning of the same volume.

It is important to keep in mind that for the authors of classical gynecological literature, discharge “below the belt” did not just include the white or colorless variety emitted from the vagina that we tend to think of today, but also discharge in the other four colors, depending on the *zàng* organ involved. In addition to the connection of the color to the *zàng* organ, red and white discharge in particular are not just seen as stemming from vacuity in the heart and lung respectively, but also from a preponderance of either heat or cold. Both of these diagnostic models also appear in Qí Zhòngfǔ’s answer above, with the added piece that drastic voluminous red discharge is now called Yáng Landslide Collapse, and white discharge Yīn Landslide Collapse.

As the *Zhūbīng yuánhòu lùn* explains in the section immediately preceding the quote on Landslide Collapse above, the condition of *lòuxià* also manifests in discharge in the five colors depending on the *zàng* organ that is affected by vacuity, i.e., green-blue for the liver, yellow for the spleen, red for the heart, white for the lung, and black for the kidney. While clearly related to Landslide Collapse, the more chronic pathology of spotting below is explained in slightly different terms from the condition of Landslide Collapse, adding an important etiological piece to the puzzle:

漏下者，由勞傷血氣，衝任之脈虛損故也。衝脈、任脈為十二經脈之海，皆起受於胞內。而手太陽小腸之經也，手少陰心之經也，此二經主上為乳汁，下為月水。

婦人經脈調適，則月水以時，若勞傷者，以衝任之氣虛損，不能制其經脈，故血非時而下，淋瀝不斷，謂之漏。

Spotting below is caused by taxation damage to the blood and Qi and vacuity detriment in the Chōngmài and Rènmai. The Chōngmài and Rènmai are the sea of the twelve channels and both arise inside the womb. In addition, the Hand Tàiyáng Small Intestine Channel and the Hand Shàoyīn Heart Channel, these two channels rule what constitutes breast milk above and menstrual fluids below.

When women's channels are well-attuned, the menstrual fluids flow in their proper time, but if there is taxation damage, which has caused vacuity detriment to the Qi of the Chōngmài and Rènmai, so that they are unable to control the channels, the blood consequently descends when it is not its proper time, dribbling and dripping uninterruptedly. This is called spotting.

Thus we can see that any discharge “below the belt,” whether as chronic “spotting below” or as critical “landslide collapse,” is strictly a gynecological condition and has an important dimension through its connection to female bleeding and menstrual flow, even if not mentioned explicitly in Qí Zhòngfǔ's answer above. Some of the following formulas make this connection explicit in the indications.



*What is the difference between heavy bleeding and
Landslide Collapse?*

What is the difference between heavy uterine bleeding and bēng, Landslide Collapse? Women know the difference and can tell you if you ask the right questions. A heavy menstruation can feel exhausting and messy, but when there is Landslide Collapse, a woman will feel that all ability to consolidate her lower body is gone. It's a feeling as if a plug of control has been removed. It is an out-of-control feeling and it's scary! Ask your patients if they feel that the bottom has fallen out or if it feels as if there is absolutely no restraint. Ask if it feels alarming. If they say yes, then this is Landslide Collapse.

A word about the color of the blood in relation to diagnosis.

We learn that when there is bleeding, if the blood is bright red, this means that the bleeding is due to heat. This always confused me since blood itself is bright red! In this passage, Qí Zhòngfǔ clarifies by saying "if it is red, it looks like crimson." Yes, crimson is more accurate. What happens to the blood if it gets heated up? It actually gets cooked and thickens just like a soup will thicken if it is exposed to heat over time. The color becomes a deep red or crimson. In addition, the "bright" of the bright red actually means shiny. Normal blood is bright red but of a rather matte finish. If the blood gets cooked with heat, it not only becomes deep red and thicker, it also develops more of a reflective sheen. If we see bright red blood as heat, we will misdiagnose in many cases. To diagnose heat, from looking at the blood, look for the deep crimson with a sheen and you won't make an error.

As for white-colored blood, again Qí Zhòngfǔ clarifies by saying “If it is white, it looks like nasal mucus.” Now, what do we do with this diagnostically? I learned that pale-colored menstruate means blood deficiency. I would like to challenge this idea as it does not play out in the clinic. This also relates to the idea of white-colored blood. If we see pale-colored blood, this means that the blood is diluted with fluid. In turn, this means that there is both blood and there is leukorrhea mixing with the blood. This is true if we are seeing something that looks like nasal mucus as well. This is leukorrhea mixing with the blood. If the blood is pale-colored, then the leukorrhea is watery. If you see a mucus-like substance with the blood, then the leukorrhea is a bit thicker. Either way, it is very important to recognize that both of these are pathological fluids flowing out. The cause will either be deficiency, which means that the body’s physiological fluids are not being stored properly, or excess, which means that there is an abundance of dampness in the lower body. If it is deficiency, it is important to determine where the deficiency lies. If there is excessive dampness, the root of the dampness must be determined. One mustn’t jump to conclusions about the cause of the damp as it can be due to blood stasis, in which case the fluids of the blood leave the blood because of stasis, deficiency of the spleen, or deficiency of the kidney.

One may think that you would never see something like “white-colored blood.” It sounds strange. I hope this discussion shows that it actually shows up in clinic quite regularly.



