
CHAPTER ONE
REGULATING MENSTRUATION
调经门

1.1 SUMMARY OF GYNECOLOGY 妇科总括

男妇两科同一治，所异调经崩带癥，
嗣育胎前并产后，前阴乳疾不相同。

*Nán fù liǎng kē tóng yī zhì, suǒ yì tiáo jīng bēng dài zhēng,
sì yù tāi qián bìng chǎn hòu, qián yīn rǔ jí bù xiāng tóng.*

Men and women both need the same medical treatments.
The only differences are: regulating menstruation;
[Treating] flooding; vaginal discharge; concretions;
Fertility; child bearing, pregnancy, and postpartum; and
Disorders of the anterior yīn and breasts. [These] are not the same.

[注]妇人诸病，本与男子无异，故同其治也。其异于男子者，惟调经、经闭、带
浊、崩漏、癥瘕、生育子嗣、胎前、产后诸病，及乳疾、前阴诸证不相同耳。故立
妇人一科，以分门而详治焉。业是科者，必先读方脉、心法诸书，然后读此，自有
豁然贯通之妙。

Annotation: Women's diseases are generally not different from men's,¹ so the treatments are the same. Yet the following diseases are unique to women: irregular menstruation; menstrual block; turbid vaginal discharge,² flooding and spotting;³ concretions and conglomerations;⁴ disorders of child bearing, including all pregnancy and postpartum issues; breast disorders; and anterior yīn⁵ symptoms. These diseases are not the same.

Thus, gynecology was established to classify and thoroughly treat these illnesses. Those who aspire to specialize in gynecology must first study the classical books on formulas, pulse diagnosis, and other essentials. Then, when they later study this book, they will automatically be able to master the subtleties.⁶

1. This means that, in general, the treatment of a woman with a non-gynecological disorder, such as cough or common cold, is not different from the treatment of a man with the same disorder.
2. Discharge (帶 *dài*): An abbreviation for vaginal discharge (帶下 *dài xià*). The emission of a viscid fluid via the vagina. Scant white vaginal discharge often occurs in healthy women. Only discharge that is profuse, bears an unnatural odor, or gives off a malign odor is pathological.
3. Flooding and spotting (崩漏 *bēng lòu*): Flooding is heavy menstrual flow or abnormal bleeding via the vagina (uterine bleeding). Spotting (literally “leaking” in Chinese), is a slight, often continual discharge of blood via the vagina. Flooding and spotting are often referred to together because either may give way to the other.
4. Concretions and conglomerations (癥瘕 *zhēng jiǎ*): Two of the four kinds of abdominal masses associated with pain and distention. Concretions are masses of definite form and fixed location that are associated with pain of fixed location. Conglomerations are masses of indefinite form that gather and dissipate at irregular intervals and are associated with pain of unfixed location.
5. Anterior yīn (前阴 *qián yīn*): Also known as “lower yīn.” The exterior genitals (of men or women).
6. Understanding the specific knowledge of gynecology presented herein depends on having a general mastery of medicine.

1.2 TIĀN-GUǐ, THE SOURCE OF MENSTRUATION 天癸月经之原

先天天癸始父母，后天精血水谷生。

女子二七天癸至，任通冲盛月事行。

Xiān tiān tiān guǐ shǐ fù mǔ, hòu tiān jīng xuè shuǐ gǔ shēng.

Nǚ zǐ èr qī tiān guǐ zhì, rèn tōng chōng chéng yuè shì xíng.

Earlier heaven tiān-guǐ originates from [a woman’s] father and mother.

Later heaven essence-blood is engendered from water and grains.

[When a] female [is at] two sevens,¹ tiān-guǐ arrives;

[Her] controlling [vessel] is free [and her] thoroughfare [vessel is in] plenitude, [so she] menstruates.

[注]先天天癸，谓肾间之动气，乃禀自父母，资其始也；后天精血，谓水谷之所化，得之形成之后，资其生也。经曰：女子一七而肾气盛，谓肾间动气盛也。二七而天癸至，谓先天癸水中之动气，至于女子胞中也。冲为血海，任主胞胎。冲任皆起于胞中，所以任脉通，太冲脉盛，月事以时下，故能有子也。

Annotation: Earlier heavén tiān-guǐ³ is said to be the stirring qì of the kidney; it is inherited from the parents and nourishes the origin of life. Later-heavèn essence-blood is said to be formed from the transformation of water and grains; after the body has physical form, later-heaven essence nourishes life. The *Nèi Jīng* says that when a female reaches age seven, her kidney qì is in plenitude, which means the stirring qì between the kidneys is in plenitude. At age 14, tiān-guǐ arrives, which means the stirring qì of earlier-heaven tiān-guǐ water⁵ arrives in the woman's uterus. The thoroughfare vessel is the sea of blood, and the controlling vessel governs the uterus and fetus. Because both the thoroughfare and controlling vessels originate in the uterus, when the controlling vessel is free and the greater thoroughfare vessel is in plenitude, the monthly matter⁶ descends regularly and the woman is thus able to bear children.

1. “Two sevens” is 14 years of age in the context of the seven-year cycles of a woman's physical development that are described in “Plain Questions 1; Treatise of Heavenly Truth from Remote Antiquity” (*Sù Wèn, Shàng Gǔ Tiān Zhēn Lùn*).
2. Earlier heaven (先天 *xiān tiān*): The congenital constitution or what an individual receives from his parents at conception. The kidney governs the earlier heaven.
3. Tiān-guǐ (天癸 *tiān guǐ*). An aspect of the body that is essential to development of the human body and sexual function; in women, the ability to produce offspring also depends on tiān-guǐ. “Plain Questions 1” states, “[In the female] at the age of two sevens, tiān-guǐ arrives, the controlling vessel flows, the thoroughfare vessel fills, the menses come according to their times, and [the woman] can bear offspring.” Note that 天 *tiān* means heaven, and 癸 *guǐ* is the tenth heavenly stem, so sometimes this term is translated as “heavenly tenth.” According to Chén Zì-Míng (陈自明, 1190–1270 C.E.), 癸 *guǐ* is a term for water qì that is ascribed to the kidney in five phase theory.
4. Later heaven (后天 *hòu tiān*): The acquired constitution or those aspects of an individual's health that result from influences after conception. The spleen and stomach govern later heaven.
5. Tiān-guǐ water (癸水): Another name for tiān-guǐ. Note that in this term water is emphasized because of the flow of menses.
6. Monthly matter (月事 *yuè shì*): A synonym for menses.

1.3 CAUSES OF INFERTILITY IN WOMEN 妇人不孕之故

不子之故伤任冲，不调带下经漏崩，
或因积血胞寒热，痰饮脂膜病子宫。

*Bù zǐ zhī gù shāng rèn chōng, bù tiáo dài xià jīng lòu bēng,
huò yīn jī xuè bāo hán rè, tán yǐn zhī mó bìng zǐ gōng.*

[A] cause of childlessness is damage to the controlling and thoroughfare [vessels],
[Which is indicated by] irregularities, vaginal discharge, and menstrual spotting and
flooding.

Other causes [of childlessness] are: blood accumulation; uterine cold or heat;
And phlegm-rheum¹ and fatty membrane [that] sicken the womb.

[注]女子不孕之故，由伤其任、冲也。经曰：女子二七而天癸至，任脉通，太冲脉盛，月事以时下，故能有子。若为三因之邪伤其冲任之脉，则有月经不调、赤白带下、经漏、经崩等病生焉。或因宿血积于胞中，新血不能成孕；或因胞寒胞热，不能摄精成孕；或因体盛痰多，脂膜壅塞胞中而不孕。皆当细审其因，按证调治，自能有子也。

Annotation: The reason certain women do not become pregnant is damage to the controlling and thoroughfare vessels. The *Nèi Jīng* says that in a woman at age 14, *tiān-guǐ* arrives, the controlling vessel *qì* is free, and the greater thoroughfare vessel² *qì* is in plentitude; the monthly matter descends regularly, so the woman is able to have children. If the controlling and thoroughfare vessels are damaged by evils from one of the three causes,³ the disorders that ensue include menstrual irregularities, red or white vaginal discharge, and postmenstrual spotting or flooding. Infertility may also be due to: abiding blood that accumulates in the womb and prevents new blood from forming the fetus in pregnancy; uterine cold or uterine heat, such that the uterus is unable to hold essence and form the fetus in pregnancy; or obesity, copious phlegm, or fatty membrane congesting the womb.⁴ When these factors are thoroughly comprehended and treatment is decided according to the patient's pattern(s), she will be able to have children.

1. Phlegm-rheum (痰饮 *tán yǐn*): Any form of rheum (i.e., thin fluid) or phlegm (i.e. thick fluid) that arises as a result of lung, spleen, or kidney disturbances which prevent the normal transportation and transformation of fluid.
2. Greater thoroughfare vessel (太冲脉 *tài chōng mài*): A synonym for the thoroughfare vessel (冲脉 *chōng mài*) that appears in "Plain Questions."
3. Three causes (三因 *sān yīn*): External, internal, and neutral causes of disease. External causes are the six excesses. Internal causes are the seven affects. Neutral causes (literally "non-external-internal") include eating too much or too little, taxation fatigue, knocks and falls, and injuries or bites from animals or insects.
4. Fatty membrane congesting the womb (脂膜壅塞胞中 *zhī mó yōng sè bāo zhōng*): A phrase used to describe a woman with exuberant phlegm-rheum (usually marked by obesity) and inability to conceive. It is not necessarily true that phlegm-rheum is physically occupying the uterus.

1.4 NORMAL MENSTRUATION 月经之常

月经三旬时一下，两月并月三居经，
一年一至为避年，一生不至孕暗经。

*Yuè jīng sān xún shí yī xià, liǎng yuè bìng yuè sān jū jīng,
yī nián yī zhì wéi bì nián, yī shēng bù zhì yùn àn jīng.*

Menstruation descends once every thirty days.

[Menstruation once in] two months [is] "bimonthly [menstruation]" [and once in] three months [is] "residing menstruation."

Once a year is "escaping year."

[A woman with] no menses throughout life [who becomes] pregnant [is said to have] “surreptitious menstruation.”

[注]女子阴类也，以血为主。其血上应太阴，下应海潮。月有盈亏，潮有朝夕。月经三旬一下与之相符，故又谓之月水、月信也。女子月经一月一行者，其常也。或先或后，乃其病也。然亦有两月一行，谓之并月者；有三月一行，谓之居经者；有一年一行，谓之避年者；有一生不行而依然能孕育，谓之暗经者。此所禀之不同，而亦非病，不须治也。

Annotation: Women are of the yīn type and are governed by their blood. Blood corresponds to greater yīn (i.e., the moon) above and to ocean tides below. The moon waxes and wanes, and the tides appear morning and night. Menstruation that descends once every thirty days is in accordance with the cycles of the moon and the tides. Thus, menstruation is also called “moon water” or “moon news.”¹ Menstruation once a month is normal. Early or late menstruation indicates disease. But some women menstruate once every two months (known as “bimonthly menstruation”), others once every three months (known as “residing menstruation”), others once a year (known as “escaping year”), and some women do not menstruate throughout life, but are still able to conceive and give birth (known as “surreptitious menstruation”). As these forms of menstruation result from different constitutions, they are not diseases and do not need to be treated.

1. Moon water (月水 *yuè shuǐ*) and moon news (月信 *yuè xìn*): Note that “moon water” and “moon news” could also be rendered as “monthly water” and “monthly news,” because the character 月 (*yuè*) means both “moon” and “month” in Chinese. In medical literature, however, both terms refer to menstruation.

In Chinese, a more commonly used term for menstruation, which also appears in this text, is 月经 *yuè jīng*. Zhāng Jiè-Bīn (张介宾 1563–1640 C.E.) wrote in “Jīng-Yuè’s Complete Compendium” (景岳全书 *Jīng Yuè Quán Shū*, 1624 C.E.):

Tiān-guǐ refers to earlier heaven yīn-qì. If yīn-qì is sufficient, the monthly matter [i.e., menstruation] flows freely. Because women are ascribed to yīn, qì in a woman corresponds to the moon, [which also belongs to yīn]. The moon wanes every thirty days, and menstruation (*jīng* 经) arrives every thirty days. Every month it comes on time. Often it does not change. Thus, [menstruation] is called “the monthly routine” (*yuè jīng* 月经), and is also called “moon news” (月信 *yuè xìn*). Because 经 *jīng* [also] means “routine”, if [the cycle of menstruation] is irregular, which means it loses its routine, all kinds of disorders ensue.

1.5 ABNORMAL MENSTRUATION 月经异常

经期吐血或衄血，上溢妄行曰逆经，
受孕行经曰垢胎，受孕下血漏胎名。

Jīng qī tù xuè huò nù xuè, shàng yì wàng xíng yuē nì jīng,

shòu yùn xíng jīng yuē gòu tāi, shòu yùn xià xuè lòu tāi míng.

Vomiting blood or spontaneous external bleeding during menstruation, [In which] upward spillage [results from] frenetic movement, is called “counterflow menstruation.”

Menstruation during pregnancy is called “grimy fetus.”

Blood descent¹ during pregnancy has the name “fetal spotting.”

[注]妇女月经一月一下，此其常也。若经行而吐血、衄血，上溢妄行者，是谓逆经。有受孕之后，月月行经而产子者，是谓垢胎。有受孕数月，其血忽下而胎不陨者，是谓漏胎。此皆月经之异乎常者也。

Annotation: It is normal for a woman to menstruate once a month. If during menstruation the woman vomits blood or has spontaneous external bleeding,² in which blood spills up due to frenetic movement, she is said to have “counterflow menstruation.”³ Women who menstruate every month after becoming pregnant and then give birth are said to have “grimy fetus.”⁴ Women who after several months of pregnancy bleed suddenly yet the fetus is not injured (or spontaneously aborted) are said to have “fetal spotting.”⁵ These are abnormal forms of menstruation.

1. Blood descent (下血 *xià xuè*): In most Chinese medical literature this pair of characters usually refers to blood precipitation, or bloody stool, and that is the only definition of this term provided in many dictionaries. However, in this work 下血 usually refers to vaginal bleeding. Note that it also had this usage in the works of Zhāng Zhòng-Jīng.
2. Spontaneous external bleeding (衄血 *nù xuè*): Bleeding not attributed to external injury, and especially bleeding from the sensory orifices within the head or from the fleshy exterior. “Spontaneous external bleeding” usually means nosebleed. However, counterflow menstruation includes any abnormal spontaneous bleeding that occurs when menstruation is expected.
3. Counterflow menstruation (逆经 *nì jīng*): Passing of blood through the mouth or nose during or around menstruation; includes menstrual spontaneous external bleeding (经行衄血 *jīng xíng nù xuè*) and menstrual blood ejection (经行吐血 *jīng xíng tù xuè*).
4. Grimy fetus (垢胎 *gòu tāi*): This term describes menstruation that continues to flow after conception, when there is an absence of other symptoms and when no harm comes to the fetus as a result; as the fetus gradually increases in size, the menses stops spontaneously.
5. Fetal spotting (漏胎 *lòu tāi*): In this context (because the text is discussing abnormal menstruation), fetal spotting specifically means menstruation that ceases at the beginning of pregnancy but then resumes several months later. When it is a manifestation of surplus blood in the mother, it is not pathological. In other contexts, fetal spotting refers to passing of blood via the vagina during pregnancy at irregular times and in small amounts.

1.6 EXTERNAL CAUSES OF MENSTRUAL DISORDERS 外因经病

天地温和经水安，寒凝热沸风荡然，
邪入胞中任冲损，妇人经病本同参。

*Tiān dì wēn hé jīng shuǐ ān, hán níng rè fèi fēng dàng rán,
xié rù bāo zhòng rèn chōng sǔn, fù rén jīng bìng běn tóng cān.*

When heaven and earth are temperate, channel water is calm;
Cold freezes, heat boils, and wind [makes] ripples.
Evils enter the womb [and] damage the controlling [and] thoroughfare vessels.
Women's menstrual disorders are at root the same.

[注]经曰，天地温和，则经水安静；天寒地冻，则经水凝泣；天暑地热，则经水沸溢；卒风暴起，则经水波涌而陇起。六淫之邪入于胞中，则损伤冲任，故妇人经病本此同参也。如寒则血凝，热则血沸，风则血荡然波涌而大下，亦犹经水之被寒、热、风而不得安澜也。

Annotation: The *Nèi Jīng* says that when heaven and earth (i.e., climatic conditions) are temperate, then channel water is calm. When heaven is cold and the earth is frozen, channel water freezes and congeals. When heaven has summerheat and the earth is hot, channel water boils. When a sudden violent wind appears, the channel water has waves and surges.² Similarly, when the six excessive evils enter the womb, they result in damage to the controlling and thoroughfare vessels. Women's menstrual disorders are at root the same as these illustrations. Cold congeals blood; heat boils blood; wind makes waves and surges in the blood and leads to descent and flood. These examples are similar to channel water that is not calm because of the disturbances by cold, heat, or wind.

1. Channel water (经水 *jīng shuǐ*): The characters for this term are the same as the characters used for "menses." This passage explains that the effects of nature on a body of water are similar to the effects of external and internal evils on a woman's menses.
2. This analogy is from "Plain Questions 27; Treatise on the Departure and Union of True and Evil [Qi]" (*Sù Wèn, Lǐ Hé Zhēn Xié Lùn*).

1.7 INTERNAL CAUSES OF MENSTRUAL DISORDERS 内因经病

妇人从人不专主，病多忧忿郁伤情，
血之行止与顺逆，皆由一气率而行。

*Fù rén cōng rén bù zhuān zhǔ, bìng duō yōu fèn yù shāng qíng,
xuè zhī xíng zhǐ yǔ shùn nì, jiē yóu yī qì shuài ér xíng.*

Women follow others and do not control [their own lives].

[Their] illnesses are mostly [due to] emotional damage from anxiety, rage, and depression.

[Whether] blood moves or stops [or flows] normally or counterflows,

The movement of all [blood] follows the qì.

[注]妇人从人，凡事不得专主，忧思、忿怒、郁气所伤，故经病因于七情者居多。盖以血之行、止、顺、逆，皆由一气率之而行也。

Annotation: Women must follow others and do not control all aspects of their own lives.¹ The resulting anxiety, thought, rage, anger, and depressed qì can all cause damage. Thus, most menstrual disorders are due to damage from the seven affects.² The reason is that no matter whether blood moves, stops, flows, or counterflows, it follows the lead of a unified qì.³

1. In ancient China a widely accepted social ideal for females was that as girls they should follow their father, as women they should follow their husband, and as widows (if they outlived their husband) they should follow their eldest son. While there were undoubtedly women who thrived in that social role and others who did not really follow that role, nevertheless Chinese medical texts frequently mention lack of personal choice as a cause of negative emotions that elicited disease among many women.
2. Seven affects (七情 *qī qíng*): The seven affects are joy, anger, anxiety, thought, sorrow, fear, and fright. When they occur in excess, they can be a cause of disease.
3. Viewed from the perspective of yīn and yáng, the yīn aspect of blood is the liquid blood and the yáng aspect of blood is the dynamic qì. According to traditional Chinese physiology, the nature of blood flow is entirely dependent on the status of qì. It is said, “When qì moves, blood moves; when qì stops, blood stops.” Moreover, it is because of their affect on qì that emotional disturbances can give rise to menstrual disorders. “Plain Questions 39; Treatise on Pain” (*Sù Wèn, Jǔ Tòng Lùn*) states: “Anger causes qì to rise; joy causes qì to slacken; sorrow causes qì to disperse; fear causes qì to precipitate; ... fright causes derangement of qì; ... thought causes qì to bind.”

1.8 NEUTRAL CAUSES OF MENSTRUAL DISORDERS 不内外因经病

血者水谷之精气，若伤脾胃何以生，

不调液竭血枯病，合之非道损伤成。

*Xuè zhě shuǐ gǔ zhī jīng qì, ruò shāng pí wèi hé yǐ shēng,
bù tiáo yè jié xuè kū bìng, hé zhī fēi dào sǔn shāng chéng.*

Blood is the essence-qì of water and grains.

If spleen-stomach is damaged, how is [blood] engendered?

Irregular [menstruation], humor exhaustion, and blood desiccation disorders—
Improperly uniting causes [these] injuries.

[注]血者，水谷之精气也。在男子则化为精；在妇人则化为血，上为乳汁，下为月水。若内伤脾胃，健运失职，饮食减少，血无以生，则经必不调。亦有女子天癸既至，逾期不得与男子合，末期思与男子合，与夫经正行时而合，此皆合之非道，亦致不调。或过淫，合多则液竭；产多，乳众则血枯，亦皆能损伤阴血致成经病也。

Annotation: Blood is the essence-qi of water and grains. In men, this essence qi transforms into semen. In women, it transforms into blood; above it is breast milk and below it is menses. If there is internal damage to the spleen-stomach and impaired movement, the patient eats less and the engenderment of blood is absent, so menstruation must become irregular.¹ Also, if a woman in whom *tiān-guǐ* has arrived passes the right time without having intercourse with a man, or before the right time thinks of having intercourse with a man,² or has intercourse with a man while menstruating, then menstrual irregularities can result from these improper ways of uniting.³ In addition, sexual excess and frequent intercourse can lead to humor exhaustion, while giving birth too much and nursing many babies causes blood desiccation. These can also damage *yīn*-blood and lead to menstrual diseases.⁴

1. In women, *yīn*-blood transforms from the essence of water and grains, and it manifests as breast milk and menses. If the spleen and stomach are damaged and fail to absorb the essence of water and grain for upward transport to the lung and heart, insufficient blood is engendered; consequently, menstrual irregularities occur.
2. This specifically means that if a woman does not have sexual intercourse close enough to ovulation, she will tend to have menstrual irregularity. This idea does not conform to the modern understanding, but in traditional China it was held to be true.
3. Improperly uniting (合之非道 *hé zhī fēi dào*): This term refers to sexual intercourse in circumstances that make it unhealthy. Note that the last character is the *Dào* that is central to Daoism. One meaning of this phrase is that having sex at the right time is following the *Dào*, while having sex at the wrong time is going against the *Dào*.
4. As *yīn*-blood and humor are both ascribed to *yīn*, damage to one leads to damage to the other. Therefore, overly frequent intercourse, which damages humor, also damages blood. As the developing fetus requires nourishment from blood that the mother must supply during gestation, conceiving and carrying a child to term requires a significant contribution of blood. Also, as normal labor and delivery require nourishment by blood and invariably involve some loss of blood, and furthermore as a nursing mother's breast milk derives from blood, giving birth to and nursing too many babies can lead to humor exhaustion, blood desiccation, and menstrual disorders.

1.9 CAUSES OF ABNORMAL BLOOD COLOR 血色不正病因

血从阳化色正红，色变紫黑热之征，
黄泔淡红湿虚化，更审瘀块黯与明。

*Xuè cóng yáng huà sè zhèng hóng, sè biàn zǐ hēi rè zhī zhēng,
huáng gān dàn hóng shī xū huà, gèng shěn yū kuài àn yǔ míng.*

Blood that undergoes *yáng* transformation [is] right red in color.
[If the] color changes to purple-black, [it is a] sign of heat.
Yellow as rice water [or] light red [blood is due to] damp-vacuity transformation.
Also ascertain stasis [and] clots [and if they are] dark or bright [in color].

[注]血属阴，从阳化，故其色以正红为正，虽有经病，亦易为治也。若色变深红、紫黑，乃热之征也。或黄如米泔，乃湿化也。浅淡红白，乃虚象也。更当审其有瘀、有块、色黯、色明以治之。若黯而紫黑，兼见冷证，多属寒凝；若明而紫黑，兼见热证，多属热结也。

Annotation: Blood is ascribed to *yīn*, and owing to *yáng* transformation, its redness is the right color;¹ although a woman who has red blood may have menstrual disorders, such problems are easy to treat. If the color turns to deep red or purple-black, that is a sign of heat. Or, if the color of the blood is yellow, like rice water,² that is because of transformation of dampness. Blood that is light red or pale is a sign of vacuity. Also, one must ascertain if the patient has stasis or clots and if the clots are dark or bright in color to treat appropriately. If there are dark purple-black clots and one also sees cold symptoms, the disease is usually ascribed to cold congealing. If there are bright purple-black clots and one also sees heat symptoms, the disease is usually ascribed to heat bind.³

1. This is a reference to the heart's role in engendering blood and to its role in endowing blood with the red color that is ascribed to the fire phase. This *yáng* transformation is accomplished by virtue of the fact that the heart is ascribed to sovereign fire.
2. Rice water (米泔 *mǐ gān*): The light yellowish liquid yielded from washing rice in water.
3. Heat bind (热结 *rè jié*): Heat gathering and binding in a particular location.

1.10 CAUSES OF DISORDERS WITH FOUL SMELLS AND CLEAR OR TURBID DISCHARGE 气秽清浊病因

热化稠粘臭必秽，寒化清彻臭则腥，
内溃五色有脏气，时下而多命必倾。

Rè huà chóu nián chòu bì huì, hán huà qīng chè chòu zé xīng,

nèi kuì wǔ sè yǒu zàng qì, shí xià ér duō mìng bì qīng.

[Blood] transformed [by] heat [is] thick and sticky [and its] smell must be foul.

[Blood] transformed [by] cold [is] transparent [and its] smell is fish-like.

Internal ulceration discharge has five colors and is odorous.

[When blood] descends constantly and profusely, life must end soon.

[注]凡血为热所化，则必稠粘臭秽；为寒所化，则必清彻臭腥。若是内溃，则所下之物杂见五色，似乎脓血。若更有脏腐败气，且时下不止而多者，是危证也，其命必倾矣！

Annotation: Whenever the blood is transformed by heat, it becomes thick, sticky, and foul-smelling. Blood transformed by cold becomes clear and transparent and has a fish-like smell. If the discharge is due to internal ulceration, the five colors can be seen in the bloody and puslike matter that descends. If the discharge has a rotting and putrid smell and furthermore is unceasing and profuse, it is a critical sign that the life must end soon.

1. According to traditional five phase theory, the color of the discharge depends on which of the five viscera has internal ulceration. However, modern clinicians rarely use this method of diagnosis.

1.11 IRREGULAR PERIODS: EARLY, LATE, SCANT, OR EXCESSIVE 愆期前后多少

经来前后为愆期，前热后滞有虚实，
淡少为虚不胀痛；紫多胀痛属有余。

*Jīng lái qián hòu wéi qián qī, qián rè hòu zhì yǒu xū shí,
dàn shǎo wéi xū bù zhàng tòng; zǐ duō zhàng tòng shǔ yǒu yú.*

Menstruation arriving [too] early or late is said [to be at] irregular intervals;

Early [menstruation means there is] heat and late [menstruation means] stagnation; [both heat and stagnation] have vacuity and repletion [forms].

Pale and scant [bleeding] are considered vacuity [which presents] without [abdominal] pain and distention;

Profuse and purple [menses] with [abdominal] distention and pain is ascribed to superabundance.

[注]经来或前或后，谓之愆期，皆属经病。经来往前赶，日不足三旬者，属血热。若下血多，色深红而浊，则为有余之热；若下血少，色浅淡而清，则为不足之热也。经来往后退，日过三旬后者，属血滞。若色浅淡、血少，不胀痛者，则属气虚，血少涩滞，不足之病；若色紫、血多，腹胀痛者，则属气实，血多瘀滞，有余之病也。

Annotation: Menstruation that occurs either early or late, in what is referred to as irregular intervals, is considered a menstrual disorder. Menstruation that arrives early (less than 30 days between cycles), is ascribed to blood heat.¹ If copious blood descends and the color is deep red and turbid, the heat is from superabundance. If scant blood descends and the color is light and clear, the heat is from insufficiency. Menstruation that is delayed (more than 30 days between cycles), is ascribed to blood stagnation. If the blood is light-colored and scant, and if there is no abdominal distention and pain, the disease is ascribed to qì vacuity; scant blood with rough flow and stagnation is due to insufficiency. If the blood is purple in color, copious, and associated with abdominal distention and pain, then the disease is ascribed to qì repletion with copious blood stasis and stagnation; such stagnation is due to superabundance.

1. In modern clinical practice, the definition of normal menstruation in a woman who menstruates monthly is 21–35 days. Also, other patterns associated with early menstruation include qì vacuity and blood stasis.

1.12 HEAT EFFUSION (FEVER) AND SEASONAL HEAT [EFFUSION] DURING MENSTRUATION 经行发热时热

经行发热时潮热，经前血热经后虚，
发热无时察客热，潮热午后审阴虚。

*Jīng xíng fā rè shí cháo rè, jīng qián xuè rè jīng hòu xū,
fā rè wú shí chá kè rè, cháo rè wǔ hòu shěn yīn xū.*

During menstruation [there can be] heat effusion, seasonal [heat effusion], [or] tidal heat [effusion].

Before menstruation [it is due to] blood heat; after menstruation [it is due to] vacuity.

If heat effusion has no time [pattern], consider visiting heat.

For afternoon tidal heat [effusion], assess yīn vacuity.

[注]经行发热，时热潮热之病，若在经前则为血热之热；经后则为血虚之热。发热时热，多是外感，须察客邪之热。午后潮热，多属里热，当审阴虚之热也。

Annotation: In the course of menstruation, a woman could have heat effusion (fever),¹ seasonal heat effusion, or tidal heat effusion. Heat effusion before menstruation is due to blood heat, while heat effusion after menstruation is due to blood vacuity. When heat effusion is a seasonal heat effusion,² it is usually due to external contraction, so consider heat from visiting evils. Postmeridian tidal heat effusion³ is usually ascribed to interior heat; ascertain whether the heat is from yīn vacuity

1. Heat effusion (发热 *fā rè*): There were no thermometers for measuring body temperature in pre-modern China. Thus, the term “heat effusion” implies a subjective

sensation of heat that the patient feels or that the doctor detects by palpation. Other signs of heat effusion include a flushed face, labored breathing, dislike for warm covering, and a rapid pulse.

2. Seasonal heat effusion (时热 *shí rè*): Heat effusion that occurs during changes in weather or as a result of attack by seasonal external evil qi. In such cases, the heat effusion is severe.
3. Postmeridian tidal heat effusion (午后潮热 *wǔ hòu cháo rè*): This refers to heat effusion that recurs at regular intervals, usually every afternoon. In most cases, this is due to internal heat from yīn vacuity.

1.13 AVERSION TO COLD, HEAT EFFUSION, AND GENERALIZED PAIN DURING MENSTRUATION 经期寒热身痛

经来寒热身体痛，当分荣卫与虚实：

有汗不胀卫不足，无汗而胀荣有余。

Jīng lái hán rè shēn tǐ tòng, dāng fēn róng wèi yǔ xū shí:
yǒu hàn bù zhàng wèi bù zú, wú hàn ér zhàng róng yǒu yú.

[Aversion to] cold, heat [effusion], and generalized pain [that occur] during menstruation Should be differentiated [into] construction [or] defense [patterns] or vacuity [or] repletion [patterns].

Sweating without distention [is from] insufficient defense;

No sweating yet distention [is from] construction superabundance.

[注]经来之时，恶寒、发热，身体疼痛者，当分荣卫虚实：若发热、恶寒，身痛不胀而有汗者，属卫虚荣不足；若发热、恶寒，身胀痛而无汗者，属荣实卫有余也。

Annotation: During menstruation, a patient with aversion to cold, heat effusion, and generalized ache should be differentiated on the basis of construction,¹ defense,² vacuity, and repletion patterns. Those who have heat effusion, aversion to cold, and generalized aching with absence of distention but with sweating are ascribed to defense-aspect vacuity and construction-aspect insufficiency.³ Those who have heat effusion, aversion to cold, generalized distention and aches with absence of perspiration are ascribed to construction-aspect repletion and defense-aspect superabundance.⁴

1. Construction (荣 *róng*): An essential qi (精气 *jīng qì*) that is a component of ancestral qi (宗气 *zōng qì*). It derives from a combination of clear qi (清气 *qīng qì*), which is inhaled by the lung, and the clear aspect of the essence of water and grains, which is absorbed by the spleen. Construction is considered to be an aspect of the blood, and it flows cyclically through the vessels and channels. Construction is more commonly known by this character: 营 (*yíng*).
2. Defense (卫 *wèi*): Defense qi is also a component of ancestral qi, but it derives from a combination of clear qi (see the preceding note) and the turbid aspect of the essence of water and grains that is absorbed by the spleen. It is described as being

“fierce, bold, and uninhibited.” As the vessels cannot contain defense qì, it therefore flows outside them. In the chest and abdomen it warms the viscera and bowels, and in the exterior it flows through the skin and flesh, regulates the opening and closing of the interstices (i.e., the sweat glands), and keeps the skin lustrous and healthy, thereby protecting the fleshy exterior and preventing the invasion of external evils.

3. Defense-aspect vacuity and construction-aspect insufficiency (卫虚荣不足 *wèi xū róng bù zú*): This appears to be an allusion to greater yáng wind strike patterns (太阳中风证 *tài yáng zhōng fēng zhèng*).
4. Construction-aspect repletion and defense-aspect superabundance (荣实卫有余 *róng shí wèi yǒu yú*): This appears to be an allusion to greater yáng cold damage patterns (太阳伤寒证 *tài yáng shāng hán zhèng*).

1.14 ABDOMINAL PAIN DURING MENSTRUATION 经行腹痛

腹痛经后气血弱，痛在经前气血凝。
气滞腹胀血滞痛，更审虚实寒热情。

Fù tòng jīng hòu qì xuè ruò, tòng zài jīng qián qì xuè níng.
Qì zhì fù zhàng xuè zhì tòng, gèng shěn xū shí hán rè qíng.

Abdominal pain after menstruation [is from] weakness of qì and blood.
[Abdominal] pain before menstruation [is from] congealing qì and blood.
Qì stagnation [results in] abdominal distention; blood stagnation [results in] pain.
Clearly ascertain the circumstances of vacuity, repletion, cold, and heat.

[注]凡经来腹痛，在经后痛，则为气血虚弱；经前痛，则为气血凝滞。若因气滞血者，则多胀满。因血滞气者，则多疼痛。更当审其凝滞作胀痛之故，或因虚、因实、因寒、因热而分治之也。

Annotation: When there is abdominal pain during menstruation, pain that occurs after menstruation is due to qì-blood vacuity; pain that occurs before menstruation is due to qì-blood congealing and stagnating. If the cause of the pain is qì stagnating blood, there is more distention and fullness. If the cause of the pain is blood stagnating qì, there is more pain. One must ascertain the reason for congealing and stagnation that causes the distention and pain in order to properly differentiate and correctly treat this problem. The cause could be vacuity, repletion, cold, or heat.

1.15 VOMITING AND DIARRHEA DURING MENSTRUATION 经行泻吐

经行泄泻是脾虚，鸭溏清痛乃寒湿，
胃弱饮伤多呕饮，食伤必痛吐其食。

*Jīng xíng xiè xiè shì pí xū, yā táng qīng tòng nǎi hán shī,
wèi ruò yǐn shāng duō ōu yǐn, shí shāng bì tòng tù qí shí.*

Diarrhea during menstruation is [from] spleen vacuity.

Duck's slop¹ with clear [stool² and] pain is from cold-damp.

A weak stomach [with] rheum damage often [results in] retching [of] rheum;

[With] food damage there must be pain and vomiting of food.

[注]经行泄泻，乃脾虚也。若鸭溏、冷痛，是寒湿也。经行呕吐，是胃弱也。若呕出涎饮，则是伤饮。若吐出食物，则是伤食。然伤食者多痛而吐食，伤饮者不痛而呕饮也。

Annotation: Diarrhea during menstruation is due to spleen vacuity. Stool like duck's slop with cold pain is due to damp-cold. Vomiting during menstruation is due to weak stomach. If there is retching of rheum³ and drool, it is due to rheum damage. If there is vomiting of food substances, it is due to food damage. Food damage patients usually have pain and vomit up food; rheum damage patients do not have pain but have retching of rheum.

1. Duck's slop (鸭溏 *yā táng*): Diarrhea with sloppy stool that resembles duck droppings. This generally forms part of a cold-damp pattern that results from spleen yang vacuity and cold in the large intestine and that includes other signs such as clear urine and a slow sunken pulse.
2. Both "Plain Questions" and "The Gateway to Medicine" (医学入门 *Yī Xué Rù Mén*, 1515 C.E.) describe duck's slop as clear and watery.
3. Retching of rheum (呕饮 *ōu yǐn*): Vomiting of clear mucus or fluid. In the context of this passage, it occurs when a patient with weak stomach qi consumes too much water or other beverages.

1.16 VOMITING BLOOD, SPONTANEOUS BLEEDING, AND [MENSTRUAL] FLOODING DUE TO CROSSED MENSTRUATION AND FRENETIC MOVEMENT 错经妄行成吐衄崩

逆行吐血错行崩，热伤阴阳络妄行，
血多热去当用补，血少虽虚须主清。

*Nì xíng tù xuè cuò xíng bēng, rè shāng yīn yáng luò wàng xíng,
xuè duō rè qù dāng yòng bǔ, xuè shǎo suī xū zhǔ qīng.*

Counterflow movement [results in] vomiting blood; crossed movement¹ [results in menstrual] flooding.

Heat damages [both] yīn [and] yáng network vessels, and frenetic movement² ensues.

[If] excessive bleeding eliminates heat, apply supplementation.

[If] the blood is scant, despite vacuity, clearing [the heat] must govern [the treatment].

[注]妇女经血逆行，上为吐血、衄血，及错行下为崩血者，皆因热盛也。伤阴络则下行为崩，伤阳络则上行为吐衄也。若去血过多，则热随血去，当以补为主。如血少热尚未减，虽虚仍当以清为主也。

Annotation: When a woman's menstrual blood moves counterflow, the upper body symptoms are vomiting of blood or spontaneous bleeding and the lower body symptom is flooding due to crossed movement of blood. The cause of all of these symptoms is exuberant heat. When yīn network vessels³ are damaged, the blood moves down, such as in flooding. When yáng network vessels are damaged, the blood moves up, such as in vomiting or spontaneous bleeding. When the blood loss is excessive, the heat is eliminated with the blood, and supplementation should be the primary treatment. If there is scant bleeding and the heat is not reduced, then despite the vacuous condition of the patient the treatment should primarily clear heat.

1. Crossed movement: This refers to crossed menstruation (错经 *cuò jīng*), which means menstrual blood that either counterflows upward and results in bleeding from the nose or mouth, or counterflows downward and results in menstrual bloody stool.
2. Frenetic movement (妄行 *wàng xíng*): Pathological movement or activity of the blood that manifests in the form of bleeding or maculopapular eruptions; when due to blood heat, as is usually the case, it is also referred to as frenetic blood heat.
3. Network vessels (络脉 *luò mài*): Branches of the channels that enmesh the body. Although this term may be used in different contexts, in this passage it appears to be referring to those network vessels that carry blood. In Chinese medicine, bleeding can be due to heat evil forcing the blood out, blood stasis obstructing the vessels and causing extravasation of blood, or vacuous qì not controlling the blood. Here, heat evil causes the crossed movement of blood and uncontrolled bleeding. Moreover, since excessive bleeding will provide a route through which heat may leave, such cases do not require additional heat-clearing treatment; the treatment should emphasize supplementing qì-blood. If the bleeding is scant and thus does not drain the heat, the treatment should focus on clearing heat.

1.17 EXCESSIVE MENSES SIMULTANEOUS WITH WHITE VAGINAL DISCHARGE 经水过多兼时下白带

多清浅淡虚不摄，稠粘深红热有余，
兼带时下湿热秽，形清腥秽冷湿虚。

*Duō qīng qiǎn dàn xū bù shè, chóu nián shēn hóng rè yǒu yú,
jiān dài shí xià shī rè huì, xíng qīng xīng huì lěng shī xū.*

Excessive [menses that is] clear and light [-colored] is not contained [due to] vacuity.
Thick, sticky, and deep red [menses] is [due to] heat in superabundance.
Concurrent vaginal discharge that occasionally descends is [from] damp-heat foulness.
Clear discharge with fishy, foul [smell] is from damp-cold and vacuity.

[注]经水过多，清稀浅红，乃气虚不能摄血也。若稠粘深红，则为热盛有余。或经之前后兼赤白带，而时下臭秽，乃湿热腐化也。若形清腥秽，乃湿瘀寒虚所化也。

Annotation: Excessive menstruation that is clear, watery, and light red is due to qì vacuity in which blood is not contained. If the menses is thick, sticky, and dark red, then it is due to heat exuberance and superabundance. Or, if before, after, or concurrently with menstruation there is malodorous red and white vaginal discharge that occasionally drips out, it is from putrefaction of damp-heat. If the discharge is clear and has a foul, fishy smell, it is transformed from dampness, stasis, cold, or vacuity.

1.18 TREATMENTS FOR REGULATING MENSTRUATION 调经证治

补养元气四君子，参苓术草枣生姜。
 异功加陈兼理气，虚痰橘半六君汤。
 呕吐香砂六君子，渴泻七味藿葛香。
 脾泻参苓白术散，薏桔山莲砂扁方。
 思虑伤脾损心血，归脾归芪枣远香，
 减参加柴归芍薄，逍遥调肝理脾方。
 合物八珍兼补血，芪桂十全大补汤，
 去参苓术双和饮，去芍加陈养荣汤。
 脾胃虚寒吐且泻，理中减苓加干姜。

Bǔ yǎng yuán qì sì jūn zǐ, shēn líng zhú cǎo zǎo shēng jiāng.

Yì gōng jiā chén jiān lǐ qì, xū tán jú bàn liù jūn tāng.

Ōu tù xiāng shā liù jūn zǐ, kě xiè qī wèi huò gě xiāng.

Pí xiè shēn líng bái zhú sǎn, yì jié shān lián shā biǎn fāng.

Sī lǜ shāng pí sǔn xīn xuè, guī pí guī qí zǎo yuǎn xiāng,

jiǎn shēn jiā chái guī sháo bò, xiāo yáo tiáo gān lǐ pí fāng.

Hé wù bā zhēn jiān bǔ xuè, qí guì shí quán dà bǔ tāng,

qù shēn líng zhú shuāng hé yǐn, qù xiōng jiā chén yǎng róng tāng.

Pí wèi xū hán tù qiě xiè, lǐ zhōng jiǎn líng jiā gān jiāng.

Supplementation of original qì [requires] Four Gentlemen [Decoction];

[Use] ginseng, poria, atractylodes, licorice, jujube, and fresh ginger.

For Special Achievement, add tangerine peel; this also rectifies qì.

For vacuity phlegm [add] red tangerine peel and pinellia; [that is, use] Six Gentlemen Decoction.

[Treat] vomiting with Patchouli and Amomum Six Gentlemen.¹

[Treat] thirst and diarrhea with Seven Ingredients—[add] patchouli, pueraria, and costus-root.

Spleen diarrhea [calls for] Ginseng, Poria, and White Atractylodes Powder;

Add coix, platycodon, dioscorea, lotus seed, amomum, and lablab.

[Excessive] thought and preoccupation damage the spleen and injure heart blood;

[Treat this with] Spleen-Returning [Decoction], made from Chinese angelica, astragalus, spiny jujube, polygala, and costusroot.

Remove ginseng [from Four Gentlemen] and add bupleurum, Chinese angelica, white peony, and mint;

Free Wanderer [Powder] is a liver-regulating and spleen-rectifying formula.

[Four Gentlemen] combined with [Four] Agents is Eight-Gem [Decoction], which simultaneously supplements blood.

[Further add] astragalus and cinnamon [to form] Perfect Major Supplementation Decoction.

Remove ginseng, poria, and white atractylodes [from Perfect Major to form] Double Harmony Beverage.

Remove chuanxiong and add tangerine peel [to Perfect Major to form] Construction-Nourishing Decoction.

[For] spleen-stomach vacuity cold [that causes] vomiting and diarrhea,

[Use] Center-Rectifying [Decoction]; remove poria [from Four Gentlemen] and add dried ginger.

[注]四君子汤，补养元气虚弱通用之方，即人参、茯苓、白术、炙草，引用枣姜也。异功散是于补气中兼理其气，即四君子汤加陈皮也。六君子汤治脾虚痰饮，即四君子汤加橘红、半夏也。香砂六君子汤治胃虚呕吐，即六君子汤加藿香、砂仁也。七味白术散治脾虚渴泻，即四君子汤加藿香、葛根、木香也。参苓白术散治脾胃虚泻，即四君子汤加薏苡、桔梗、山药、莲肉、砂仁、扁豆也。归脾汤治思虑损伤心脾气血，即四君子加当归、黄芪、枣仁、远志、木香也。逍遥散调肝理脾，即四君子汤减人参，加柴胡、当归、白芍、薄荷也。八珍汤于补气中兼补其血，即四君子汤合四物汤也。十全大补汤大补气血，即八珍汤加黄芪、肉桂也。双和饮平补气血，即十全大补汤减人参、茯苓、白术也。人参养荣汤于补气中专养荣血，即十全大补汤减川芎加陈皮也：理中汤治脾胃虚寒吐泻，即四君子汤去茯苓加干姜也。

Annotation: Four Gentlemen Decoction (*sì jūn zǐ tāng*) is the general formula for supplementing and nourishing vacuity and weakness of original qì; it comprises ginseng (*rén shēn*), poria (*fú líng*), white atractylodes (*bái zhú*), and mix-fried licorice (*zhì gān cǎo*); use fresh ginger (*shēng jiāng*) and jujube (*dà zǎo*) as conductors.

Special Achievement Powder (*yì gōng sǎn*) rectifies qì in addition to supplementing qì; it comprises Four Gentlemen Decoction plus tangerine peel (*chén pí*). Six Gentlemen Decoction (*liù jūn zǐ tāng*) treats spleen vacuity with phlegm-rheum; it comprises Four Gentlemen Decoction plus red tangerine peel (*jú hóng*) and pinellia (*bàn xià*). Patchouli and Amomum Six Gentlemen Decoction (*xiāng shā liù jūn zǐ tāng*) treats stomach-vacuity vomiting; it comprises Six Gentlemen Decoction plus patchouli (*huò xiāng*) and amomum (*shā rén*).