

‘ Dreaming Sex with Demons’ :  
The Pathological Interpretations in Ancient Chinese Medicine

「夢與鬼交」：古代中醫病理的幾個詮釋

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# ‘Dreaming Sex with Demons’ : The Pathological Interpretations in Ancient Chinese Medicine<sup>\*</sup>

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## I Introduction

It goes without saying that interpreting dream is one of the approaches to understand human being. Most of the current studies of dreams, to be sure, can be attributed to Freudian psychoanalysis. Nevertheless, interpreting dream as theories and practices is varied in different cultures. Even in the same culture there must have been differentiated traditions and conventions of looking into them.

In ancient China,<sup>1</sup> apart from the divination, religions, and folklore, medical writers as well as practitioners did provide specific outlooks to survey dreams over millennia. Unlike non-medical perspectives that often focused on the link of thoughts to dream images, early Chinese medical works rather regarded them as an indicator of pathological bodies caused by ‘pathogenic *qi*’. However, such a perspective did not remain unchanged, for more diversified explanations, ranging from ‘demonic invasion’, ‘parasitic worms’ to ‘emotional pollution’, were introduced later on. For the sake of exploring the different characteristics of dreams in medical views, this paper thus is set up to seek the pluralistic aspects of ‘dreaming sex with demons’ (meng yu gui jiao 夢與鬼交),<sup>2</sup> in terms of the interrelationship between dreams, sex

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<sup>1</sup> That is, China before 1911 A.D..

<sup>2</sup> Generally ‘*gui*’ 鬼 in Chinese refers to the spirits or souls of a dead person (e.g. deceased ancestors), which seems to be closer to the term ‘ghost’ in English. However, as the ‘*gui*’ of ‘*meng yu gui jiao*’ in

and demons. By exploring this frequently mentioned illness in medical works, this paper aims to research the related questions: what the primarily medical perceptions of dreams were; how the dream images were represented by ancient medical writers; and which meanings they were thought to refer to, and so forth. In doing so, not only etiology, diagnostics and treatments of dreams will be taken into account, but also the implications of sex and ‘demons’ in medical thoughts will be revealed.

Generally, the proceeding of this paper will be based on the textual analysis of medical canonical works throughout ages. First of all, it will trace back to *Huangdi neijing* 黃帝內經 and *Jinkui yaolue* 金匱要略 for their classic modes of explaining dreams and sexual dreams as pathogenic ailments. Afterwards, the light will shed on some medieval medical works such as *Zhouhou fang* 肘後方, *Zhubing yuanhou lun* 諸病源候論, *Qianjin fang* 千金方 and *Waitai miyao* 外台秘要, in which the newly emerging etiology of ‘demons’ and of ‘worms’ had been introduced. Since Song dynasty onwards, corresponding to the increasing number of medical publications, the medical views of ‘sexual dreams with demons’ had become more complicated than ever. In addition to somatic pathology, emotional factors and moralistic reasons were more frequently emphasized while discussing this illness. Furthermore, Ming Qing medical physicians stressed their tones on the association of ‘sexual dream with demon’ with women’s illnesses of reproduction---‘demonic fetuses’ or sterility. Some of the contemporary medical cases even showed the possibility of this illness leading to death. By examining varied medical works and medical cases these questions will be discussed at length. In the conclusion, in contrast to the medical opinions some non-medical attitudes towards ‘sexual dreams (with demons)’ will be explored, too. All answers to these questions will be revealed step by step in the next sections.

## II Medical Interpretations of Dreams: Etiology, Diagnostics, and Treatments

### 2.1 Dreams and dreaming sex

In the earlier stage of its development, Chinese physicians tended to interpret dreams in terms of bodily pathology. The etiology of dreams as ailments illuminated by the theories of *qi* 氣 at least reveals three-fold of meanings. First of all, it presumes that human body as a dynamic being is accessible by varied atmospheric

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Chinese medical texts has more complicated connotations, usually relevant to ghost, evil spirit, devil, a malignant supernatural being, etc., I thus translate it as ‘demons’, if not specify otherwise.

factors, namely *qi*, in natural environments. Secondly, outer *qi*, whether healthy or pathogenic, may enter human body within which there exist too many sorts of inner *qi*. Finally, sleeping is a particular moment at which human body is less defensive to resist heteropathic *qi*. A dream therefore arises within sleep while a sleeper's inner *qi* 'fighting' with outer *qi* in the body that serves as a 'battlefield'. This idea can be traced back as early as *Huangdi neijing* 黃帝內經 [Inner Canon of the Yellow Lord, hereafter *Neijing* or *Inner Canon*], the earliest received medical classics in ancient time.<sup>3</sup>

In *Lingshu* 靈樞 [Spiritual Pivot] of *Neijing*, the chapter 'dreams evoked by excess of heteropathic *qi*' (*yinxie fa meng* 淫邪發夢) explains that when 'orthopathic atmosphere and heteropathic *qi*' (*zhengxie* 正邪)<sup>4</sup> act into a human body, it is 'restless, in turn disturbing the sleeper's *zangfu* 臟腑 [viscera and bowels], circulating with his *yingwei* 營衛 [nourishing *qi* and defensive *qi*], ascending with his *hunpo* 魂魄,<sup>5</sup> making him rest uneasily and have dreams'.<sup>6</sup> In short, dream is originated during the confrontation of outer *qi* with inner *qi*, which makes *hunpo* out of the bound of *zangfu*.

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<sup>3</sup> The time of *Huangdi neijing* is dated between late Warring States and early Eastern-Han dynasty. Nowadays it is widely accepted that this canon was not written by a single person, nor was it shaped at certain time. Rather, it is regarded as the result of the ongoing process of editing medical theories, or furthermore, as the represented work of different schools since the antiquities. See Yamada, Keiji 山田慶兒 (1996), 'Huangdi neijing de chengli' 黃帝內經的成立 [The formation of Inner Canon of Yellow Lord], in *Gudai dongya zhexue yu keji wenhua* 古代東亞哲學與科技文化 [Ancient Philosophy and Scientific Culture in East Asia], trans. by Liao Yuqun 廖育群 (Shenyang: Liaoning jiaoyu chubanshe) pp.234-235; Keegan, David J. (1988), 'The "Huang-ti nei-jing": The structure of the compilation; the significance of the structure', Ph.D. Dissertation of UC, Berkeley (Ann Arbor: UMI).

<sup>4</sup> The Ming physician Ma Shi 馬蒔 (16<sup>th</sup> century) equated *yinxie* 淫邪 to *zhengxie* 正邪, implying both normal and pathogenic connotations. In other words, normally the 'six factors', ranging from Dry, Damp, Cold, Summer-heat, Wind to Rain, are harmless. When they are excessive, however, they may become harmful to human bodies. But Ma's contemporary Zhang Jiebin 張介賓 (Ca. 1563-1640) excluded *zhengfeng* 正風 from the category of *zhengxie*, apparently viewed the latter in a merely pathogenic sense. I simply follow Ma Shi's interpretation to see *zhengxie* as 'orthopathic atmosphere' (*zhengfeng* 正風) and 'heteropathic *qi*' (*xieqi* 邪氣), for both of them can intrude human body. See *Huangdi neijing lingshu zhuzheng fawei* 黃帝內經靈樞注證發微 (1580) annotated by [Ming] Ma Shi 馬蒔 (Beijing: Renmin weisheng chubanshe, 1994 reprinted) p.250; Liu Wenying 劉文英 (1989), *Meng de mixin yu meng de tansuo* 夢的迷信與夢的探索 [The Superstitions and Explorations of Dreams] (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe) p.188.

<sup>5</sup> According to the medical theories, 'that which follows Spirit (*shen* 神) to and fro is *hun*; that which combines with Essence (*jing* 精) in and out is *po*. Moreover, 'lung stores *hun* and liver stores *po*'. *Huangdi neijing lingshu* 黃帝內經靈樞 (Beijing: Zhongyi guji chubanshe, 1997) p.19; *Huangdi neijing suwen* 黃帝內經素問 (Beijing: Renmin weisheng chubanshe, 1996 reprinted) p.41. For more details discussed by a recent research, see He Yumin 何裕民 (1995) *Zhongguo chuantong jingshen binglixue* 中國傳統精神病理學 [Chinese Traditional Psychopathology] (Shanghai: Shanghai kexue puji chubanshe) pp.31-35.

<sup>6</sup> *Huangdi neijing lingshu* 黃帝內經靈樞 (Beijing: Zhongyi guji chubanshe, 1997) p.68.

Furthermore, the excess or deficiency of *qi* manifests itself in the different 'shapes' (xing 形) of dream. *Huangdi neijing* shows us at least twelve sorts of dream caused by excess of *qi*. For example, 'excessive *yinqi* 陰(氣) gives rise to a dream of going through deep water with terror; excessive *yangqi* 陽(氣) gives rise to a dream of great fire burning; both excessive *yinqi* and *yangqi* give rise to a dream of mutual fighting; excessive *qi* at upper body leads to a dream of flying; excessive *qi* at lower body leads to a dream of falling; extreme hunger leads to a dream of fetching; extreme fullness leads to a dream of giving', and so forth.<sup>7</sup> Generally, the principles employed to explain these dream images are of analogy and of balance: *yin* is always analogous to water while *yang* is to fire. And, image of flying and falling is parallel to up-and-down movement of *qi*. In addition, dreams of fetching and giving certainly reflect bodies of imbalance in complimentary dreams: to supply while being deficient, and to remove while being excessive.<sup>8</sup>

As the annotators of *Neijing* had indicated, nourishing *qi* is *yinqi* 陰氣 while defensive *qi* is *yangqi* 陽氣.<sup>9</sup> Also, 'liver masters blood and stores *hun*; lung masters *qi* and stores *po*; heart masters fire that is *yang* and kidney masters water that is *yin*'.<sup>10</sup> It is therefore plausible to perceive the association of dream images with *yinyang*, nourishing *qi* and defensive *qi*. Besides, while discussing dreams not only the factor of *zangfu* [viscera and bowels] but also of *wuxing* 五行 [five phases] are taken into account.<sup>11</sup> As such, the more comprehensive map of dreams inspired by the theory of systematic correspondence in Chinese medicine can be illustrated as follows:

Viscera, Bowels, and other Organs	Five phases	Dream images (caused by excessive <i>qi</i> )	Dream images (caused by deficient <i>qi</i> )
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<sup>7</sup> *Huangdi neijing lingshu*, p.68; c.f. 'Mai yao jingwei lun 脈要精微論' [the treatise on the quintessence of pulses] in *Huangdi neijing suwen* 黃帝內經素問, annotated by [Tang] Wang Bing, (Beijing: Renmin weisheng chubanshe, 1996 reprinted) p.102; *Huangdi neijing suwen jizhu* 黃帝內經素問集注, annotated by [Qing] Zhang Zhicong 張志聰 (ca.1619-1674), first published in 1670 (Tainan: Wangjia chubanshe, 1983 reprinted) p.65.

<sup>8</sup> *Huangdi neijing suwen* 黃帝內經素問 (Beijing: Renmin weisheng chubanshe, 1996 reprinted) p.102. Regarding the theories of *yinyang*, see 'Yinyang yingxiang dalun 陰陽應象大論' [the grand treatise on the correspondence of *yinyang* to its phenomena] in *ibid.* pp.31-48.

<sup>9</sup> *Huangdi neijing lingshu zhuzheng fawei* 黃帝內經靈樞注證發微, annotated by [Ming] Ma Shi 馬蒔 (Beijing: Renmin weisheng chubanshe, 1994 reprinted) p.250.

<sup>10</sup> *Huangdi neijing suwen jizhu* 黃帝內經素問集注, annotated by [Qing] Zhang Zhicong 張志聰 (ca.1619-1674), first published in 1670 (Tainan: Taiwan: Wangjia chubanshe, 1983 reprinted) p.65.

<sup>11</sup> As many scholars try to point out, *zangfu* in Chinese medicine are not the anatomical entities of modern bio-medicine. Those organs have more functional and complicated interrelationship one another, according to the theory of systematic correspondence. Sivin, Nathan (1997) *Traditional Medicine in Contemporary China* (Ann Arbor: The university of Michigan) pp.124-133; Bray, Francesca (1997) *Technology and Gender: Fabrics of Power in Late Imperial China* (Taipei: SMC Publishing Inc.) pp.302-303.

Liver	Wood	Anger	Woodlands and trees; mushrooms and grasses
Heart	Fire	Fondness of laugh; fear and fright	Fire on hills and mountains; saving from fire
Spleen	Earth	Joyful singing; too heavy body to be lifted	Mounds & marshes; damage houses in rain and wind; insufficient foods and drinks
Lungs	Metal	Terror; cry; fly	Flying and see strange things of iron; white stuffs, bloody mess
Kidneys	Water	Split of waist from spine	Facing abyss and sinking in water; being drowned from boats
Gall bladder			Fighting and self-cutting
Small intestine			Villages and hamlets
Stomach			Eating & drinking
Large intestine			Wild field
Urinary bladder			Wandering
Genital organs			Sexual intercourse
Nape			Beheading
Shinbone			Walking yet cannot go further; lodging in vault & cellar
Legs & arms			Kowtow in rituals
Womb			Urinating

Figure 2.1 Dream images and their correspondent relations to *qi*, five phases, viscera, bowels, and other organs.<sup>12</sup>

From this figure, obviously, all phenomena of dream, either implying emotional or physical meanings, can be attributed at least to a specific cause, i.e. excessive *qi* or deficient *qi* that lodges in a certain organ or portion of human body. Moreover, some of the dreams may represent respective characteristic (e.g. phase, color and emotion) corresponding to the organs. For instance, one who dreams either ‘anger’ or ‘woodland’ is thought to have dysfunction of *qi* in his liver, simply because ‘anger’ and ‘wood’ are traditionally regarded as symbols closely linked to liver. Also, dreams of ‘crying’ or of ‘seeing ironic things, white stuffs and even war’ are usually attributed to imbalance of *qi* in lung, since ‘white’ and ‘iron’ ----the metaphor of

<sup>12</sup> *Huangdi neijing lingshu* 黃帝內經靈樞, pp.68-69; *Huangdi neijing lingshu zhuzheng fawei* 黃帝內經靈樞注證發微, p.250; *Huangdi neijing suwen* 黃帝內經素問, p.102, 569; *Huangdi neijing suwen jizhu* 黃帝內經素問集注, p.65, 375-376. For further discussions of their respective meanings, see Liu Wenying 劉文英 (1989), *Meng de mixin yu meng de tansuo* 夢的迷信與夢的探索 [The Superstitions and Explorations of Dreams] (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe) pp.193-201.

weapon in war which may lead to terror and sorrow----are seen as manifestations of lung. Such an explanatory mode, however, is not always self-consistent, as some of the categories above can be mutually overlapped (e.g. fear and fright in heart and terror in lung; joy in both heart and spleen). Moreover, some cases (e.g. the connection between shinbone and lodging in cellar) appear to be not very comprehensible. Due to the limited scope of this paper, I would rather like to leave these questions behind, and concentrate my discussion on ‘dreaming sex’ as problematic. As shown above, ‘dreaming sexual intercourse’ or ‘dreaming sex’ (meng jienei 夢接內) was thought to be a result of deficient *qi* dwelling in genital organs. As *Neijing* merely interpreted dreams as responses to physical stimuli, say, dysfunction of *qi* circulating in human body, accordingly, a complementary way of treatments was proposed here: ‘to purge while being replete; to replenish while being deplete’.<sup>13</sup>

## 2.2 Women’s sexual dreams

Given by the thread of *Neijing*, later medical works went a step further, representing ‘dreaming sex’ as a symptom in the context of diseases caused by ‘deficiency’ (xu 虛). For example, Zhang Ji’s 張機 (the 2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> century A.D.) *Jinkui yaolue* 金匱要略 [Medical Treasure of the Golden Chamber] continued to discuss the relation of ‘dreaming sex’ and deficient *qi*. Rather than highlighting on dream images themselves, however, *Jinkui yaolue* shifts its focus to the disease caused by deficient *qi*, and defined it in a more specific range, namely, ‘deficiency and tiredness’ (xulao 虛勞). In doing so, ‘dreaming sex’ was therefore no longer one of dream images indicating deficient *qi*, but one of symptoms belonging to a certain disease.

According to *Jinkui yaolue*, a man who suffers from the disease of ‘tiredness’ (lao 勞) can be diagnosed by the following syndrome: ‘floating and big pulse’ (mai fu da 脈浮大), ‘restless limbs’ (shouzu fan 手足煩), ‘spontaneous semen emission due to coldness of *yin*; lassitude [in loins and knees] that impedes walking’ (yinhan jingzhichu suanxiao bunengxing 陰寒精自出 痠削不能行). In some cases a sufferer’s ‘cold *qi* of semen’ (jingqi qingleng 精氣清冷) can lead to his ‘sterility’ (wuzi 無子). Other symptoms such as ‘strain and tension in abdomen’ (shaofu xianji 少腹弦急), ‘coldness in genital organs’ (yintouhan 陰頭寒), ‘dizziness and hair-dropping’ (muxuan faruo 目眩髮落), are included as well. More importantly, for one whose pulses appear to be ‘hollow and slightly tense’ (koudong weijin 孔動微緊), ‘a man may lose semen and a woman may dream sex’ (nanzi shijing, nuzi

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<sup>13</sup> .Huangdi neijing lingshu 黃帝內經靈樞, p.68, p.69.

mengjiao 男子失精, 女子夢交). In order to cure such a disease, *Jinkui yaolue* thus recommends the 'decoction of cassia twig, fossil fragments and oyster shell' (guizhi longgu muli tang 桂枝龍骨牡蠣湯) as the pharmaceutical remedy.<sup>14</sup>

Comparing with *Huangdi neijing*, the aforementioned disease of 'deficiency and tiredness' in *Jinkui yaolue* is more clearly defined in terms of recognizable symptoms, diagnosis and drug-therapy. More than solely regarding 'dreaming sex' as a response to a physical stimulus of *qi* in genital organs, *Jinkui yaolue* situates it in a more complicated sphere, with concern to 'coldness', 'losing semen' and implicit anxiety of sterility. As such, the discussion of 'deficiency and tiredness' as a newly emerging category of disease in medical taxonomy not only reinforces 'dreaming sex' as one of the pathological syndrome, but also sexualizes it as a woman's symptom in contrast to a man's 'losing semen'. Both of them as a correlative medical concept had been widely discussed by later medical physicians throughout ages.

### 2.3 Women's sexual dreams with Demons

Neither *Huangdi neijing* nor *Jinkui yaolue* points out 'objects' of 'sexual dreams'. The gap was not bridged until the appearance of *Zouhou fang* 肘後方 [Prescriptions Behind Elbows], the editors of which were said to be many, including Ge Hong 葛宏 (281-341), Tao Hongjing 陶弘景 (456-536), and Yang Yongdao 楊用道 (12<sup>th</sup> century). Being a medical manual served for emergency, *Zhouhou fang* pays little attention to explain medical theories, but rather provides a number of easily accessible treatments for laymen. While mentioning 'dreaming sex' as an illness, it reveals two kinds of dreaming object: human being and 'demons' (gui 鬼). On the one hand, 'man and woman dreaming sex with human being' (nan nu meng yu ren jiao 男女夢與人交) may be 'evoked by inner deficiency and heteropathic *qi*' (nexus xieqi ganfa 內虛邪氣感發). On the other, it proposes a simple recipe for 'those men and women who often dream sex with demon then look ecstatic (nan nu xi meng yu gui tong zhi huanghu zhe 男女喜夢與鬼通致恍惚者). In short, *Zhouhou fang* suggests that both men and women may dream sex with either human being or 'demons', which can be healed by herbal prescription, acupuncture and moxibustion.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>14</sup> In fact, Zhang Ji's analysis of 'deficiency and tiredness' based on several aspects of meanings. Due to the limited range of my work, I merely focus on the text related to 'dreaming sex'. [Qing] Xu Bin 徐彬 (commented and annotated), *Jinkui yaolue lunzhu* 金匱要略論註 [The Commentaries and Annotations on *Medical Treasures of the Golden Chamber*, 1671] (Beijing: Renmin weisheng chubanshe, 1993) pp.90-91.

<sup>15</sup> *Buji zouhou fang* 補輯肘後方 [Supplementary Edition of Prescriptions Behind Elbows], supplemented and rearranged by Shang Zhijun 尚志鈞 (1996) (Hefei: Anhui kexue jishu chubanshe) p.95, 183.



A great number of ideas of diseases in *Zhouhou fang* are echoed by *Zhubing yuanhou lun* 諸病源候論 [Treatise on Etiology and Symptomatology of Varied Diseases, 610], the officially compiled medical work directed by Chao Yuanfang 巢元方 (the 7<sup>th</sup> century). Similar to *Huangdi neijing*, *Zhubing yuanhou lun* is not a work that represents a single perspective of one author and/or school, but instead demonstrates fruitful knowledge of a wide-range of diseases prevalent before the 7<sup>th</sup> century China. Unlike *Jinkui yaolue* in which many prescriptions are recorded, however, the current survived editions of *Zhubing yuanhou lun* record no other pharmacological information than ‘recipes for nourishing life’ (yangshengfang 養生方) and ‘physical and breathing exercises’ (daoyinfa 導引法), that is closely linked to religious traditions, especially Daoism.

Generally *Zhubing yuanhou lun* provides two observations in the etiology of ‘sexual dreams’: one is naturalistic, the other is supernatural.

When discussing the naturalistic causes, both disease of ‘deficiency and tiredness’ (xulao 虛勞) and of ‘cold damage’ (shanghan 傷寒) are taken into account for their impact upon deficient Kidney. In Chinese medical thoughts, it is well known that Kidney is the place where ‘semen/vital energy’ (jing 精) is preserved. As argued in *Zhubing yuanhou lun*, at the onset of ‘deficiency and tiredness’ and ‘cold damage’, both Kidney and genital organs are deficient and may be invaded by heteropathic *qi* or heat, then ‘dreaming sex’ and ‘losing semen in dreams’ occur.<sup>16</sup>

The supernatural cause, on the contrary, is usually linked to ‘demonic illnesses’.<sup>17</sup> For example, ‘demonic possession’ is thought to be one of the illnesses, which has ‘sexual dreams’ as its symptom:

The one obsessed by demonic things often feels grieved and spontaneously moved in his heart. [He is] either mentally disordered as if he was drunken, speaking frantically in fright and fear, facing walls and mourning sadly, frequently having nightmare within sleep, or having sex with demons and deities. [The] illness [causes his] suffering from periodic cold and fever, fullness of heart and abdomen, short breath, [so he is] unable to take any food and drink. This is because of

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<sup>16</sup> [Sui] Yuanfang 巢元方 et al, *Zhubing yuanhou lun jiaozhu* 諸病源候論校注, annotated by Ding Guangdi 丁光迪 (Beijing: Renmin weisheng chubanshe, 1996 reprinted) p.129, p. 272.

<sup>17</sup> *Zhubing yuanhou lun* lists varied types illness related to ‘demons’, at least including *xiewu* 邪物, *shesui* 社祟, *tusui* 土祟, *fengxie* 風邪, *guixie* 鬼邪, *guimei* 鬼魅, *gui* 鬼, and so forth. Basically I regard all of them as ‘demonic illnesses/diseases’ in a general sense. See *ibid.*, pp.66-67, p.70, p.1149-1150.

demonic possession.<sup>18</sup>

In addition, women's 'sex with demon', whether within or without dreams, is discussed elsewhere and categorized as one of 'miscellaneous diseases of women' (furen zabing 婦人雜病). The concept of deficiency, again, is employed to explain their etiology:

The one whose visceral organs are deficient often dreams. A woman's sexual dream with demons is also caused by her deficient *qi* of viscera and bowels, deplete and weak defense of Spirit, which may be used [by evil] then leads to [her] sex with demons in dream.<sup>19</sup>

Interestingly, the symptoms of 'women's dreaming sex' appear to be emotional disturbance. In addition to the symptom of 'detestation for people', a sufferer from this illness may 'speak and laugh alone, or burst into tears'. Her pulses are usually diagnosed as 'tardy and deep-sited' or even like 'bird pecking'. Sometimes her pulses are too 'continuous to be measured' and 'the color of her face does not change'. All these indications, as claimed by *Zhubing yuanhou lun*, refer to kind of 'demonic illnesses'. As 'human being is born of delicate *qi* of the five phases, nurtured and sustained by spiritual *qi* of the five viscera', thus the treatment used to be against demonic illnesses gives some weight to the idea of preventive medicine that emphasizes the necessity of self-cultivation and self-regulation. Thus *Zhubing yuanhou lun* states: 'once *yin* and *yang* are regular and harmonious, then viscera and bowels will be flourishing, and *fengxie guimei* 風邪鬼魅 cannot harm them at all'.<sup>20</sup>

In terms of the multiple aspects of an illness, such as causes, symptoms, pulse diagnosis and the principle of treatment, obviously, 'having sex with demons' as a naturalistic as well as supernatural illness in *Zhubing yuanhou lun* are fully articulated and elucidated. 'Women's dreaming sex with demons' plays not only a part of a pathological disease, but also manifests as an ecstatic experience. By the evidence of exorcist rituals recorded in *Zhubing yuanhou lun*, it may be plausible to say that this is a medical work illuminated in the light of magico-religious heritage, e.g. shamanism and Daoism.<sup>21</sup> Certainly *Zhubing yuanhou lun* is not an exception, for a number of

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<sup>18</sup> '凡人有為鬼物所魅, 則好悲而心自動, 或心亂如醉, 狂言驚怖, 向壁悲啼, 夢魅喜魘, 或與鬼神交通. 病苦乍寒乍熱, 心腹滿, 短氣, 不能飲食. 此魅之所持也'. Ibid., p.70.

<sup>19</sup> '夫臟虛者喜夢. 婦人夢與鬼交, 亦由臟腑氣弱, 神守虛衰, 故乘虛因夢與鬼交通也'. Ibid., p.1150.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., p.1149-1150.

<sup>21</sup> Lin Fu-shih 林富士 (1999) has indicated that some explanations of demonology in *Zhouhou fang* and *Zhubing yuanhou lun*, such as 'women's sex with demons', 'women's demonic fetuses', 'shibing 尸病', 'zhubing 注病', and so on, are more likely related to shamanism. See his 'zhongguo liuchao

medical works written down in the Sui and Tang official histories are listed together with the ones of religion, divination and destiny in the same category of bibliography.<sup>22</sup> The blurred boundary between these canonic works to a degree explains their mutually complementary connections at that time.

Not long after *Zhubing yuanhou lun*, for example, Sun Simiao 孫思邈 (ca. 581-682) revealed that ‘dreaming sex with demon’ as one of the symptoms of ‘deficiency and impairment’ (xusun 虛損) could be evoked by an inner cause, say, ‘restraint of sexual desire’ beside outer causes. In other words, as ‘men cannot live without women, and vice versa’, any dissatisfaction with sex may lead to the problem of ‘losing semen’, or worse, of ‘dreaming sex with demon’. In addition to drug-therapy, therefore, ‘the art of bedchamber’ (fangzhongshu 房中術) is employed as the key treatment for the sake of ‘replenishment’ (buyi 補益).<sup>23</sup>

Some decades later, *Waitai miyao* 外台秘要 [Essential Secrets of the Palace Library, 752] compiled Wang Tao 王燾 simply followed the traces of its predecessors, especially *Zhubing yuanhou lun* in medical theories and *Qianjin yaofang* in prescriptions. On the one hand, it argues that a sufferer from ‘deficiency and tiredness’ (xulao 虛勞) and ‘heteropathic wind’ (fongxie 風邪) may have the symptom of ‘sexual dreams with man/woman’; on the other, ‘dreaming sex with demons and deities’ as an illness is also closely associated with the causes of ‘demonic obsession and spiritual obsession’ (guimei jingmei 鬼魅精魅) or of ‘spiritual obsession of foxes’ (huli jingmei 狐狸精魅).<sup>24</sup> In other words, when the object of sexual dreams is human being, it is merely a symptom of a naturalistic disease, otherwise it is more likely seen as a demonic illness itself.

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shiqi de wuxi yu yiliao 中國六朝時期的巫覡與醫療’ [Shamans and healing in China during the Six dynasties period (3<sup>rd</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> century A.D.)], *Zhongyang yanjiuyuan lishi yuyan yanjiusuo jikan* 中央研究院歷史語言研究所集刊 [The bulletin of the Institute of History and Philology, Academia Sinica] 70.1, p.32.

<sup>22</sup> Yoshimoto Shouji 吉元昭治 (1992), ‘Daojiao de yixue’ 道教的醫學 [Daoist Medicines], in *Daojiao* 道教 [Daoism], volume II, edited by Fukui Koujun 福井康順 et al., trans. by Zhu Yueli 朱越利 etc. (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe) pp.207-209.

<sup>23</sup> [Tang] Sun Simiao 孫思邈, *Qianjin yaofang* 千金要方 [Essential Prescriptions Worth of a Thousand, 651] p.389; *Qianjin yifang* 千金翼方 [Supplementary Prescriptions Worth a Thousand, 682] p.130. Both of them are included in *Qianjin fang* 千金方 (Beijing: Huaxia chubanshe, 1993/1996). In fact, amongst the pre-Tang Daoist works, *Yufang mijue* 玉房秘訣 [The Secret Instructions of the Jade Bedchamber] had proclaimed that sex and correct sexual techniques are helpful in healing ‘dreaming sex with demons’. Lin Fu-shih 林富士 (1999), ‘zhongguo liuchao shiqi de wuxi yu yiliao 中國六朝時期的巫覡與醫療’, pp.34-35.

<sup>24</sup> [Tang] Wang Tao 王燾, *Waitai miyao* 外台秘要 [Essential Secrets of the Palace Library] (Beijing: Renmin weisheng chubanshe, 1955) volume I, p. 367, 369, 404, 455.

In fact, many paradigmatic interpretations of ‘dreaming sex with demon’ established before the medieval China had not been changed drastically since then, and the theoretical framework of this medical phenomenon perceived by the post-Tang medical successors are rather homogenous. While discussing ‘sexual dreams with demon’ as an illness, for example, *Taiping sheng hui fang* 太平聖惠方 [Imperial Grace Formulary, 992] and *Furen daquan liangfang* 婦人大全良方 [All-inclusive Good Prescriptions for Women, 1237] merely follow *Zhubing yuanhou lun* 諸病源候論, interpreting this problem in terms of ‘deficiency of Blood and *qi*’ and ‘demonic evil’.<sup>25</sup> Similar opinions can be figured out in the Ming medical works, such as *Pu ji fang* 普濟方, *Qixiao liangfang* 奇效良方, *Chisui xuanzhu* 赤水玄珠,<sup>26</sup> and *Shuoshi baoyuan* 壽世保元.<sup>27</sup> Another example is *Maiyin zhengzhi* 脈因證治<sup>28</sup> that simply quotes the opinion of *Jinkui yaolue* 金匱要略 while talking about ‘tiredness’ (or ‘deficiency and tiredness’) and ‘sexual dreams’.

## 2.4 Sexual dreams, ghosts, and worms

Despite the seemingly similar arguments as noted above, however, the differentiated perspectives of looking into ‘dreaming sex’ from time to time should not be ignored. For instance, the ramification of ‘deficiency and tiredness’ (*xulao* 虛勞) as a disease into *shizhu* 尸疰, *chuanshi* 傳尸, *guzheng* 骨蒸, and *laozhai* 勞瘵 had complicated the meanings of ‘dreaming sex with demon’ as a medical issue. As Dai Yuanli 戴原禮 (1324-1405) claimed, although *Huangdi Neijing* mentions nothing about *laozhai* 勞瘵 while discussing ‘deficiency’ (*xu* 虛), it does imply the causes of this disease. Later than Zhang Ji’s categorizing ‘deficiency and tiredness’ (*xulao* 虛勞) as a medical disease in his *Jinkui yaolue* 金匱要略, the usage of this term became diversified into *xulao* 虛勞, *zhengbing* 蒸病, and *zhubing* 注(疰)病.<sup>29</sup> Moreover, as *Zhubing yuanhou lun* 諸病源候論 attributes the causes of ‘deficiency and tiredness’ to ‘five tiredness’ (*wulao* 五勞), ‘six extremes’ (*liuji* 六極), and

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<sup>25</sup> [Song] Wang Huaiyin 王懷隱 et al. compiled, *Taiping sheng hui fang* 太平聖惠方 [Imperial Grace Formulary, 992] (Beijing: Renmin weisheng chubanshe, 1958) p.857, 2225; [Song] Chen Ziming 陳自明 comp.; [Ming] Xue Ji 薛己 annotated., *Jiaozhu Furen liangfang* 校註婦人良方 [Annotations on Good Prescriptions for Women, 1237] (Taipei: Xuanfeng chubanshe) juan 卷 6, p.16.

<sup>26</sup> Cai Wenju 柴文舉, Cai Binxin 蔡濱新 (ed.) (1991) *Zhongyi shimeng bianzhi* 中醫釋夢辨治 [Interpretations, Diagnosis and Treatments of dreams in Chinese Medicine] (Beijing: Xueyuan chubanshe) pp.263-265.

<sup>27</sup> [Ming] Gong Tingxian 龔廷賢 (the 16-17<sup>th</sup> century), *Shuoshi baoyuan* 壽世保元 [Longevity and preserving vital energy, 1615] (Shanghai: Shanghai kexue jishu chubanshe, 1993 reprinted) p.523.

<sup>28</sup> [Yuan] Zhu Zhenheng 朱震亨 (1282-1358), *Mai yin zheng zhi* 脈因證治 [Pulses, causes, symptoms and therapy, 1358] (Taipei: Qiye shuju, 1988 reprinted) p.32.

<sup>29</sup> [Ming] Dai Yuanli 戴原禮 (1324-1405), *Tuiqiu shiyi* 推求師意 [In Search for the Thought of the Master], *Siku quanshu* 四庫全書 vol.765, p.8.

'seven damages' (qishang 七傷), not only physical dysfunction but emotional imbalance and dietary problems are taken into account.<sup>30</sup> This like of apparently contagious diseases initially stated in *Zhouhou fang* 肘後方 and elaborated by *Zhubing yuanhou lun* and *Qianjin yaofang* 千金要方, despite their etiological relations to 'ghost of corpus' (shi gui 尸鬼), 'ghostly evil' (guixie 鬼邪) or 'worms' (chong 蟲),<sup>31</sup> actually has nothing to do with 'sexual dreams with demon'.<sup>32</sup> *Waitai miyao* 外台秘要 thus is notable for its contribution to establishing the link between 'dreaming sex with demon' and 'transmission by corpus' (chuanshi 傳尸).<sup>33</sup> Likewise, the Song physician Chen Zhiming 陳自明 (ca. 1190-1270) also demonstrates 'sexual dreams with demon' in connection to his arguments of 'laozhai' 勞瘵, 'zhu' 疰 and 'gu zhenglao' 骨蒸勞.<sup>34</sup> Even in the Ming medical works, such as *Gujin yitong daquan* 古今醫統大全 [All-inclusive of the Past and Present Medical Traditions], *Yixue jinliang* 醫學津梁 [The Fords and Bridges of Medicine], and *Yizong bidu* 醫宗必讀 [Essential Reading for the Medical Principles], and *Shenrou wushu* 慎柔五書 [Five Works by Mr. Hu], 'dreaming sex with demon' is usually categorized into the disease of *laozhai* 勞瘵, *zhengbing* 蒸病, *chuanshi* 傳尸, or *xulao* 虛癆.<sup>35</sup> By the evidence of Hu Shenrou's 胡慎柔 (1572-1636) medical

<sup>30</sup> [Sui] Yuanfang 巢元方 et al, *Zhubing yuanhou lun jiaozhu* 諸病源候論校注, annotated by Ding Guangdi 丁光迪 (Beijing: Renmin weisheng chubanshe, 1996 reprinted) pp.86-88.

<sup>31</sup> While discussing dreams, in fact, *Huangdi neijing* mentions 'long worm', 'short worm' as dream images and their corresponding meanings. However, these worms were not related to any image of 'sexual dreams' at all, nor were they regarded as 'parasites' at that time. Not until the Six dynasties did the Daoist thinkers start to emphasize the harm of 'demons' and 'worms' dwelling in human body. For the sake of attaining immortality, therefore, people were required to do some effort to strengthen their Spirit that guard their viscera, bowels and other organs, so that they could resist those pathogenic factors. See *Huangdi neijing suwen* 黃帝內經素問, annotated by [Tang] Wang Bing (Beijing: Renmin weisheng chubanshe reprinted, 1996 reprinted) pp.102-3; Miyakawa Hisayuki 宮川尚志 (1995), 'Medical aspects of the Daoist doctrine of the three cadavers (*sanshi* 三尸)', in *East Asian Science: Tradition and Beyond* ed. By K. Hashimoto et al. (Osaka: Kansai University Press) pp.345-349.

<sup>32</sup> *Buji zhouhou fang* 補輯肘後方 [Supplementary Edition of Prescriptions Behind Elbows], supplemented and rearranged by Shang Zhijun 尚志鈞 (1996), (Hefei: Anhui kexue jishu chubanshe) pp.21-25; [Sui] Yuanfang 巢元方 et al, *Zhubing yuanhou lun jiaozhu* 諸病源候論校注, annotated by Ding Guangdi 丁光迪 (Beijing: Renmin weisheng chubanshe, 1996 reprinted) pp.682-715. [Tang] Sun Simiao 孫思邈, *Qianjin yaofang* 千金要方 [Essential prescriptions worth of a thousand, 651], in *Qianjin fang* 千金方 (Beijing: Hoax chubanshe, 1993/1996) pp.248-252.

<sup>33</sup> [Tang] Wang Tao 王勣, *Waitai miyao* 外台秘要 [Essential secrets of the palace library] (Beijing: Renmin weisheng chubanshe, 1955) volume I, p. 355.

<sup>34</sup> *Jiaozhu Furen liangfang* 校註婦人良方 [Annotations on good prescriptions for women, 1237] (Taipei: Xuanfeng chubanshe) juan 卷 5, pp.1-2, 9-10.

<sup>35</sup> [Ming] Xu Chunfu 徐春甫 (the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century), *Gujin yitong daquan* 古今醫統大全 [All-inclusive of the Past and Present Medical Traditions, 1556] (Beijing: Renmin weisheng chubanshe, 1996 reprinted) p.1322, 1325, 1327; [Ming] Wang Kentang 王肯堂 (1549-1613), *Yixue jinliang* 醫學津梁 [The Fords and Bridges of Medicine, 1641] (Taipei: Lixing shuju, 1986 reprinted) pp.36-37; [Ming] 胡慎柔 (1572-1636), *Shenrou wushu* 慎柔五書 [Five Works by Mr. Hu, 1636] (Jiangsu: Jiangsu kexue jishu chubanshe, 1985) pp.49-51; [Ming] Li Zhongzhi 李中梓 (1588-1655), *Yizong bidu* 醫宗必讀 [Essential Reading for the Medical Principles] (Beijing: Renmin weisheng chubanshe,

case, it is evident to see the relation between 'dreaming sex with demon' as a symptom of 'laozhai' 癆瘵 and 'worms' in lung.<sup>36</sup>

Although the demonological etiology of 'dreaming sex with demon' illuminated by religious traditions did not give its way to the naturalistic explanations, it was no longer prevalent and increasingly questioned by some late Imperial Chinese physicians. While discussing 'women's dreaming sex with demon', for instance, Xu Chunfu 徐春甫 showed his disagreement with the prescriptions recommended by *Furen daquan liangfang* 婦人大全良方, for Xu thought that this illness is not related to 'demonic possession' but 'deficiency of Blood and *qi*, viscera and bowels, original Spirit'.<sup>37</sup>

Besides, Xu had another interesting observation: the illness of 'dreaming sex with demon' often comes to women rather than to men.<sup>38</sup> His emphasis on the gender aspect of this illness was not occasional, for some of his medical predecessors had noted the interrelations between women and their ailments of sex, which might have influenced medical interpretations of 'dreaming sex' in late Imperial China.

## 2.5 Women's ailments of sexual frustration

As early as Han dynasty, the famous physician Chunyu Yi 淳于意 once diagnosed a maid's ailments, such as pain in loins and back, periodic fever and irregular menstruation, as being caused by her 'wanting a man yet cannot get one' (yuananzhi er bu ke de 欲男子而不可得).<sup>39</sup> It might be the first medical case of woman's ailments due to sexual frustration in medical history. Chu Cheng 褚澄 in Southern dynasties elaborated this opinion further and indicated that 'religious masters, nuns and widows' (shi ni guafu 師尼寡婦) often have ailments like 'pyrexial malaria' (wennue 溫瘧) or 'tiredness' (lao 勞) simply because of their unsatisfied desire of sex, to which the prescription applied is different from the one to cure married women including wives and concubines. Afterwards, the idea to connect physical dysfunction of unmarried women ---- usually nuns, widows and maids ----

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1996) p.337. Wang Kentang's another work, *Zhengzhi zhunsheng* 證治準繩 [Standards of Diagnosis and Treatments, 1602] (Taipei: Xinwenfeng chubanshe, 1979 reprinted) also records 'dreaming sex with demon' as a symptom of *chuanshilao* 傳尸勞. See p.52.

<sup>36</sup> [Qing] Yu Zhen 俞震 (the 18<sup>th</sup> century) comp., *Gujin yi'an an* 古今醫案按 [Compilation of the Past and Present Medical Cases] (Beijing: Zhongguo zhongyiyao chubanshe, 1988) p.151.

<sup>37</sup> I will come back to discuss the point at length in my conclusion.

<sup>38</sup> [Ming] Xu Chunfu 徐春甫 (the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century), *Gujin yitong daquan* 古今醫統大全 [All-inclusive of the past and present medical traditions, 1556] (Beijing: Renmin weisheng chubanshe, 1996 reprinted) p.692.

with their unfulfilled sex was often mentioned. It was widely accepted and discussed by post-Song medical practitioners.<sup>40</sup> In his medical cases, for example, Xue Ji’s 薛己 (1486-1558) recorded that a maid having suffered from the ailment of periodic fever recovered automatically after marriage. Another medical case in his work shows that a young woman, whose husband frequently traveled around, finally died of ‘ailment of lack of sexual intercourse’ (nannu shihe zhi zheng 男女失合之症).<sup>41</sup> Regarding ‘women’s dreaming sex with demon’, Xue explained the causes in terms of either ‘Blood of heart damaged by seven emotions’ (qiqing kuisun xinxie 七情虧損心血)<sup>42</sup> or ‘ghosts and demons’ (gui sui 鬼祟).<sup>43</sup> In addition to reveal the interrelation between mental status, bodily ailments, and demonic affliction, his emphasis on women as an emotionally influenced being regulated by Blood actually had paved the way for the emergence of a late Ming medical view, that regarded ‘dreaming sex with demons’ as being evoked by excessive desire and sexual thought. For instance, Zhang Jiebin 張介賓 (1563-1640) distinguished ailments of ‘women’s dreaming sex with demon’ into two types:

One is due to erotic ideas and evil thoughts that disturb will and lead to dreams. This ghost is derived from mind and irrelevant to outer circumstances. One is due to impure natural disposition to which evil can access, thus apparitions and demons dare to attack. This evil sometimes comes from outside.<sup>44</sup>

As the causes are divided into inner cause and outer cause, the corresponding symptoms and principles of treatment are different, too. For the one derived from heart, to calm a patient’s mind is prior to prescribe drug-therapies. In contrast, for the one caused by demonic invasion, to regulate and replenish a patient’s inner ‘healthy *qi*’ is as important as to expel ‘evil *qi*’.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> [Han] Sima Qian 司馬遷, *Shiji* 史記 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1962) juan 105, pp.2808-2809.

<sup>40</sup> [Yuan] Lo Tianyi 羅天益, *Weisheng baojian* 衛生寶鑑 [Treasure Mirror of Hygiene, 1281] (Beijing: Renmin weisheng chubanshe, 1963) p.293; [Ming] Xu Yongcheng 徐用誠, *Yuji weiyi* 玉機微義 [Subtle Meanings of Jade Secrets, 1396], in *Siku quanshu*, v.762, p.500; [Qing] Zhang Lu 張璐 (1617-1700), *Zhangshi yi tong* 張氏醫通 [Complete Medicine of Mr. Zhang, 1695] (Shanghai: Shanghai keji chubanshe, 1963) p.524.

<sup>41</sup> [Ming] Xue Ji 薛己 (1486-1558), *Xueshi yi’an* 薛氏醫案 [The medical case records of Mr. Xue], in *Siku quanshu*, v.763, pp.69-70

<sup>42</sup> ‘Seven emotions’ in ancient Chinese medical thought usually refer to joy, anger, sorrow, worry, grief, fear, and fright.

<sup>43</sup> See Xue’s notes in *Jiaozhu Furen liangfang* 校註婦人良方 [Annotations on good prescriptions for women, 1237] (Taipei: Xuanfeng chubanshe) juan 卷 6, p.16.

<sup>44</sup> ‘一則由慾念邪思，牽擾意志而為夢者，此鬼生於心，而無所外干也。一則由稟賦非純，邪得以入，故妖魅敢於相犯，此邪之自外至者亦有之矣。’ [Ming] Zhang Jiebin 張介賓, *Jingyue quanshu* 景岳全書 [Complete Collections of Mr. Zhang] (Beijing: Renmin weisheng chubanshe, 1991/1997) p.871.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, p.872.

At the first glance, the dualistic etiology of defining 'dreaming sex with demon' as either naturalistic or supernatural phenomenon remained unchallenged in late Imperial period. Medical practitioners' attitudes towards these illnesses can be easily found in Ming Qing medical cases. Yu Tuan 虞搏 (1438-1517) once was called in to see a thirty-aged beautiful lady who had dreamt sleeping with the same man in white for a period. The lady's symptoms, such as blue face with red cheek, tidal heat, loss of appetite, were diagnosed by Yu as a sort of 'demonic illnesses', and more interestingly, he thought the white dog in that lady's house as the metamorphosis of the white-dressed man sleeping with her. Then Yu asked someone to kill the dog, blending its heart blood and bile with some herbs to calm the patient's mind.<sup>46</sup> Sun Yikui's 孫一奎 (the 16<sup>th</sup> century) provided another case about a female sufferer of plague had her disease become worse after having sexual dream with her deceased husband. Later she was cured by herbal remedy blended with the ashes of her husband's burnt trousers.<sup>47</sup> In addition to normal medical remedy, obviously, the likely shamanistic demonstrations (e.g. killing dog, burning trouser) sometimes were required in order to heal such demonic afflictions.

As noted earlier, however, Ming medical gaze on 'dreaming sex' had shifted from physical/somatic disorder to mental/emotional disturbance. As such, 'dreaming sex (with demon)' in medical view turned to be a kind of women's mental illness often along with their sense of shame. Just like Zhang Jiebin stated, 'dreaming sex', if aroused internally, was difficult to be diagnosed as most women were unwilling to talk about it.<sup>48</sup>

Women's shameful feeling of their 'dreaming sex' in medical cases more or less reflected Ming Qing social attitudes towards sex and desire. In the face value of moralistic opinions, women's lust has to be controlled, and the object of sex has to be chose. Needless to say, only sex in marriages was sanctioned and safe. Although the medical view regarded (sex in) marriage one of the solutions to cure 'sexual dreams', however, over indulgence in sexual activities was not encouraged and could be

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<sup>46</sup> [Ming] Jiang Guan 江瓘 (1503-1565) comp., Jiang Yingsu 江應宿 suppl., *Mingyi lei'an* 名醫類案 [Famous physicians' Analogous Medical Cases, 1591] (Taipei: Hongye shuju, 1971/1994) p.243; Yao Ruoqin 姚若琴 & Xu Hengzhi 徐衡之 (eds.), *Song yuan ming qing mingyi lei'an* 宋元明清名醫類案 [Famous Physicians' Analogous Medical Cases between Song and Qing] (Taipei: Xuanfeng chubanshe, 1933/1971) 'Yu Tianmin's 虞天民 medical cases', pp.11-12.

<sup>47</sup> Cited from Cai Wenju 柴文舉, Cai Binxin 蔡濱新 (ed.) (1991) *Zhongyi shimeng bianzhi* 中醫釋夢辨治 [Interpretations, diagnosis and treatments of dreams in Chinese medicine] (Beijing: Xueyuan chubanshe) p.247.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., p.872.



dangerous. *Jinpingmei* 金瓶梅 [Golden Lotus] is a good example. In this late Ming fiction, indeed, many roles had enjoyed much their indulgence of appetite. But the fact that the Ximen Qing's household often suffered from sexual diseases and reproductive dysfunction has explained the miserable results of their gratification of pleasure: either illnesses, or death.<sup>49</sup>

## 2.6 Demonic fetuses and sterility

In some cases a result of 'dreaming sex with demon' could be worse, for it might give rise to 'demonic fetuses' (guitai 鬼胎)----a pregnant-like disease that enables women to produce misshapen bloody lumps or noxious creatures, usually described as 'worms' or 'snakes'.<sup>50</sup> *Qixiao liangfang* 奇效良方 [Good Prescriptions of Amazing Effects, 1449], for example, denoted that 'sexual dreams' of women, in particular widows and nuns, may lead to their ailments of 'concretions and conglomerations' (zhengjia 癥瘕) or of 'demonic fetuses'.<sup>51</sup> Hua Shou 滑壽 (ca.1304-1386) once cured a young lady, who had dreamt sex with a 'deity/demon' after visiting a temple, which brought about her 'demonic fetus'.<sup>52</sup> Similar example is available in Lu Fu's 呂復 medical case record, in which a young maid was very ashamed of telling the (male) physician the details of her sexual dream with a 'man' (i.e. a demon or a deity) whom she had seen in a temple. Finally her 'demonic fetus' diagnosed as 'demon' (sui 祟) was cured by the purgative medicine prescribed by Doctor Lu.<sup>53</sup>

In contrast to 'demonic fetuses', 'dreaming sex with demons' may lead to sterility as well. As early as Tang dynasty, Sun Simiao 孫思邈 had indicated that 'dreaming sex with demons' is one of the twelve diseases leading to 'sterility' (jue chan 絕產).<sup>54</sup> In his medical case, Zhang Zhihe 張子和 (ca.1156-1228) found a woman who had been dreaming 'sex with "ghost and deities"' and 'scenes of temple

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<sup>49</sup> Cullen, Christopher (1993), 'Patients and Healer in Late Imperial China: Evidence from the *Jinpingmei*' *History of Science* 31, pp.107-108.

<sup>50</sup> As I know, Wu Yili 吳一立 is working on the topic of 'demonic fetuses'. See her 'Medicalizing the monstrous: ghost fetuses (guitai) in traditional Chinese medical thought', a paper presented in the Symposium on the History of Health and Beauty, Institute of History and Philology, Academia Sinica, Taipei, 11-12 June, 1999.

<sup>51</sup> [Qing] Chen Menglei 陳夢雷 et al (comp.), *Gujin tushu jicheng yibu quanlu* 古今圖書集成醫部全錄 [Complete Collection of Books, Past and Present: All Records of Medical Division, 1723] (Taipei: Xinwenfeng chubanshe, 1978 printed) v.15, pp.26-27.

<sup>52</sup> [Qing] Wei Zhixiu 魏之琇, *Xu mingyi lei'an* 續名醫類案 [Supplement to Famous Physicians' Analogous Medical Cases] (Taipei: Hongye chubanshe, 1971) p.604.

<sup>53</sup> Yao Ruogin 姚若琴 & Xu Hengzhi 徐衡之 (eds.), *Song yuan ming qing mingyi lei'an* 宋元明清名醫類案, 'Lu Cangzhou's 呂滄洲 medical cases', pp.5-6.

<sup>54</sup> [Tang] Sun Simiao 孫思邈, *Qianjin yaofang* 千金要方 [Essential prescriptions worth of a thousand, 651], in *Qianjin fang* 千金方 (Beijing: Huaxia chubanshe, 1993/1996) p.53.

and underworld' for fifteen years could not be pregnant during this period, until her malady was correctly judged as 'an ailment of phlegm' and properly healed by phlegm-expelling treatment.<sup>55</sup> Although its naturalistic view of looking into 'demonic fetuses' seemed to rival the given medical explanations, this newly rising etiology of phlegm in Jin Yuan dynasties continued to influence a number of later medical works. For example, the Ming physician Qian Guobin 錢國賓 once diagnosed a woman's 'demonic fetus' as resulting from phlegm, and accordingly, he treated her by using the prescription of purging phlegm.<sup>56</sup> To be sure, all these cases of 'demonic illnesses' are very much related to their 'locations', as one scholar has indicated.<sup>57</sup> Furthermore, the second case shows us women's mental stress and sense of shame when they had suffered from 'sexual dreams' and 'demonic fetuses'.

## 2.7 Dreaming sex in popular literature

Interestingly, medical opinions of 'sexual dreams (with demon)' in some way had been echoed by their counterpart in popular literature. For example, a great deal of Ming 'note novels' (biji xiaosuo 筆記小說), such as *Gengsi pian* 庚巳篇 and *Kezuo zhuiyu* 客座贅語, had provided fruitful contemporary observations on 'men's sex with fox spirits, chicken fairies and snake deities' that usually brought to dreamers either fortune (e.g. longevity) or misfortune (e.g. 'demonic fetuses').<sup>58</sup> In contrast, *Jinpingmei* 金瓶梅 [Golden Lotus], the famous late Ming fiction of depicting the daily life of a local gentry in the 16<sup>th</sup> century Chinese society, contributes a fantastic story about a widow's sexual dream. In this fiction, Li Pinger 李瓶兒 as one of the leading figures was described to dream sex with Ximen Qing 西門慶, of whom she was suffering from love-sickness. As this lady was so absent-minded, a fox spirit in the guise of her lover then appeared in her sexual dreams and sucked her vital essence every night. Gradually, she became weary, lost appetite, and kept lying in her bed all the time. Later on a literate physician was called in and diagnosed the lady's symptoms ---- mutual struggle between *yin* and *yang*; periodic cold and fever; melancholy, etc. ---- as the illness of 'dreaming sex with demon'. By reading her

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<sup>55</sup> [Jin] Zhang Zhihe (c.1156-1228), *Rumen shiqin* 儒門事親 [Serving Parents in the Confucian Way], in [Qing] Chen Menglei 陳夢雷 et al compiled, *Gujin tushu jicheng yibu quanlu* 古今圖書集成醫部全錄 (Taipei: Xinwenfeng chubun gongsi, 1978 printed) v.15, p.30.

<sup>56</sup> [Qing] Wei Zhixiu 魏之琇, *Xu mingyi lei'an* 續名醫類案 [Supplement to the analogous medical cases of the famous physicians], p.605.

<sup>57</sup> Li Chien-min 李建民 (1994) 'Suibing yu "changsuo": chuantong yixue dui suibing de yizhong jieshi' 祟病與「場所」: 傳統醫學對祟病的一種解釋 [Demonic illnesses and 'location': one explanation of demonic illnesses in traditional Chinese medicine], *Hanxue yanjiu* 漢學研究 [Chinese studies], 12.1, pp.101-148.

<sup>58</sup> [Ming] Lu Can 陸粲 (1494-1551), *Gengsi pian* 庚巳篇; [Ming] 顧啟元 (1565-1628), *Kezuo*

pulses, moreover, the healer thought that her ailments were caused by 'six desires and seven emotions' (liuyu qiqing 六慾七情). To prevent her illness from developing into the disease of 'bone steaming' (guzheng 骨蒸), a medical remedy was prescribed to cure her illness finally.<sup>59</sup>

Similar evidences are also given in Qing novels. For instance, *Liaozhai zhiyi* 聊齋誌異 [Liaozhai's Records of the Strange] is a renown novel of 'record of strange' (zhigui 志怪), in which a number of stories about dreams, foxes and sex were portrayed. Another early Qing fiction *Hongloumeng* 紅樓夢 [The Dream of the Red Chamber] also demonstrated in its story one of the characters, Jia Rui 賈瑞, suddenly died of 'dreaming sex with demon'.<sup>60</sup>

In these aforementioned literary fictions, obviously, not only the idea of that dreams are closely linked to emotions, but also of that dreaming sex with demons can lead to dangers, have been displayed. In short, sex, dreams, emotions, illnesses, even death are interrelated, and this point of view seemed to have shared by both medical and non-medical people in late Imperial societies. In the Ming time, for example, with the increased prominence of the concept of *qing* (sentiment), greater weight seems to have been placed on the purely affective dimensions of the dream. As a result, the causal relationship between thinking and illness was frequently discussed by different people and could appear in a non-medical book.<sup>61</sup>

In late Imperial China, generally both men and women were thought to be vulnerable to invasion of pathogenic *qi* or 'evil spirit' while dreaming. Unlike literary works in which stories of men's 'sexual dreams' are as many as women's, however, medical works solely written by male scholarly healers tended to indicate that female bodies regulated by Blood<sup>62</sup> and emotion are more susceptible to demonic invasions. With their polluted thoughts and corrupted behaviors women were seen to be able to summon evil influences easily and having sex with 'demons', which might bring about their unwanted 'conception'. For a woman, to create a 'demonic fetus' as a kind

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zhuiyu 客座贅語 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1987) pp.24-25, 36, 46-47, 66, 90, 233.

<sup>59</sup> [Ming] Anonymous, *Quanben jinpingmei cihua* 全本金瓶梅詞話 [The Criticism of Poetry of *Jinpingmei* in the Complete Edition] (Hong Kong: Taiping shuju, 1982/1991) pp.442-443.

<sup>60</sup> He Yumin 何裕民 (1995) *Zhongguo chuantong jingshen binglixue* 中國傳統精神病理學 [Chinese Traditional Psychopathology] (Shanghai: Shanghai kexue puji chubanshe) p.190.

<sup>61</sup> [Ming] Chen Shiyuan 陳士元 (16<sup>th</sup> century), *Mengzhan yizhi* 夢占逸旨 [A Treatise on Dream Interpretation]; Zeitlin, Judith T. (1993), *Historian of the Strange: Pu Songling and the Chinese Classic Tale* (Stanford: Stanford University Press) pp.154-155.

<sup>62</sup> Regarding the medical symbolization of female blood and female biology, on which the social roles were based, please see Furth, Charlotte (1986), 'Medical images of the female condition in China, 1600-1850', *Chinese Science*, 7:43-66.

of false pregnancy seemed to be 'productive', yet in most cases it was 'dangerous' and could be 'fatal' in the end.

### III Conclusion

From an overall view, this paper initially introduces the medical understanding of dreams and sexual dreams in the time of *Huangdi neijing*, then the idea of 'women's sexual dreams' in contrast to 'men's losing semen/vital essence' deployed in the theory of '*xulao*' in Latter-Han dynasty. Later, its focus shifts to the demonological interpretations of 'having sex with demons (in dreams)' appearing in the medieval medicine. In addition to the dualistic etiology of this illness----either in relation to the naturalistic view of '*xulao*' and 'cold damage', or to supernatural outlook of 'demonic invasion', 'dreaming sex with demons' had become one of women's 'miscellaneous illnesses' because of the (re)definition of *Zhubing yuanhou lun*. On the other hand, the worm-based etiology of new epidemics, such as '*shibing*' and '*zhubing*', had been emerging since Six dynasties, yet not until Tang dynasty was the disease '*chuanshi*' (transmission from dead bodies) thought to be closely linked to 'dreaming sex with demons'. Meanwhile, another Tang medical work *Qianjin yaofang* was notable for its attempt to recommend 'the art of bedchamber' as one of the remedies to cure this illness.<sup>63</sup>

Corresponding to the diversifying etiology of diseases since Song times, 'inner courses' became no less important than 'outer courses' and 'neither inner nor outer causes' while being used to explain diseases/illnesses.<sup>64</sup> Consequently, medical interpretations of 'sexual dreams with demons' as an illness had gradually turned to be internally oriented. The causes of 'demons' and 'worms' did not disappear in medical configuration, however, the factors of emotion and mentality increasingly dominated the explanation of this illness. As such, imbalance of emotion, such as

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<sup>63</sup> Furth denotes that '[f]rom the very beginning in medieval times, bedchamber arts had been embedded in medical and religious discourses which were not "about" pleasure or women simply as objects of desire, but about what medieval Chinese understood as serious goals of life and death, linking health, spirituality, and social purpose'. In this sense, therefore, 'the art of bedchamber' advocated by *Qianjin yaofang* certainly had nothing to do with 'erotic manipulation' except 'visual meditation techniques of inner alchemy'. Furth, Charlotte (1994), 'Rethinking Van Gulik: sexuality and reproduction in traditional Chinese medicine', in *Engendering China: Women, Culture, and the State* ed. By C. Gilmartin et al (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press) p.130, 138.

<sup>64</sup> In particular, Chen Yan 陳言, the Song medical writer, had devoted himself to the related discussions in his *Sanyin jiyi bing zheng fang lun* 三因極一病證方論. See Wei Zixiao 魏子孝 & Nie Lifang 聶莉芳 (1994), *Zhongyi zhongyao shi* 中醫中藥史 [History of Chinese Medicine and Chinese Pharmacology] (Taipei: Wenjin chubanshe) pp.212-214.

lovesickness, erotic thoughts and sexual frustration, had become the new perspective of looking into 'dreaming sex with demons'. Furthermore, owing to the emerging gynecological theories 'dreaming sex with demon' was engendered as a likely female illness caused by women's emotional derangement. Not surprisingly, the illness of 'sexual dreams with demons' later was connected to women's ailments of reproduction. With the new medical interest especially after Jin Yuan dynasties, 'women's dreaming sex with demons' was thought to possibly lead to either women's sterility or fertility, i.e. 'demonic fetuses'. In other words, 'sexual dreams' as a female illness in contrast to male 'losing semen/energy'<sup>65</sup> demonstrated a general anxiety towards problems of sex and reproduction in the late Imperial China. Some cases of 'dreaming sex (with demons)' were further stigmatized as being resulted from the 'patients' behaviors and thought, which could be morally judged as improper.

Another interesting issue addressed in this paper is the relationship between medical and religious perceptions of dreams. As some scholars have pointed out, Buddhist 'frequently used the dream as a metaphor to point out the false, deceptive quality of the phenomenal world'. By contrast, dreams in Daoist tradition 'not only provided contact with the external spirit world; they could also focus inwardly, permitting access to the spirits and demons of the microcosm'.<sup>66</sup> Likewise, dreams that appear in fiction and drama most commonly 'serve as a means of communication between the dreamer's waking world and other levels of existence in other places'.<sup>67</sup> All these outlooks to some extent seem to be coordinated to the medical theories of dreams, for they all agree with that dreams reveal boundaries between parallel worlds.

Nevertheless, this similarity by no means suggests that their discrepancy should be overlooked. As we know, dreams implying moralistic doctrines in Buddhism can be one of the pathways leading to the 'awakening' as 'truly ultimate reality'. But Daoists may regard dreams as a medium of self-cultivation wherein body as microcosm merges with macrocosm. Both of their ultimate concerns stress on sacred worlds yet with the respective purposes of 'enlightenment' and 'longevity'. In contrast, Chinese medical theories usually define dreams as sorts of pathological indications, whether in somatic or psychic sense. In this sense, its emphasis on the

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<sup>65</sup> According to Idema, many popular Chinese novels reveal men's 'obsessional fear of losing one's vital powers through the loss of one's semen'. See Idema, Wilt (1973) 'Diseases and Doctors, Drugs and Cures: A very Preliminary List of Passage of Medical Interest in a Number of Traditional Chinese Novels and Related Plays', *Chinese Science* 2, pp.37-63, esp. p.42.

<sup>66</sup> Strickmann, Michel (1988) 'Dreamwork of Psychologists: Doctors, Taoists, Monks' in *Psycho-sinology: the Universe of Dreams in Chinese Culture* ed. By Carolyn T. Brown (Lanham: University Press of America, Inc.) p.35, 37.

<sup>67</sup> Hegel, Robert (1988) 'Heavens and Hells in Chinese Fictional Dreams' in Carolyn T. Brown (ed.) p.1.

ideal of 'no dream' apparently did not go far from its Daoist counterpart.<sup>68</sup> However, no evidence shows us that ancient Chinese medical physicians would regard dreams as either 'a medium of self-cultivation' or 'a way towards Awakening', not to mention 'dreaming sex with demon' always represented as harmful and dangerous in medical writings.

In medical observations, to be sure, the bounds between naturalistic and supernatural categories were not always clear but usually shifted. Indeed, it may be improper to underestimate the influences of supernatural explanations in ancient Chinese medical discourses as well as practices, partly because that the definitions of medical 'professions' remained controversial due to the competition between different styles of healers, ranging from literate physicians, religious healers, shamans, and so on. Up until late Imperial period, therefore, the triumph of an 'iconoclastic' medical view over a 'superstitious' one did not happen, but rather, an explanation integrated with both naturalistic and supernatural ideas continued to prevail the medical theories. For example, despite of his clear distinction between 'diseases of phlegm' (tanbing 痰病) and 'evils and demons' (xiesui 邪祟), Zhu Zhengheng 朱震亨 (1282-1358) never denied the existence of 'evils'.<sup>69</sup> While arguing 'demonic diseases', the early Qing medical writer Xu Dachun 徐大椿 (1693-1771) neither claimed that 'demons and deities are harmful', nor did he deny their existence. Rather, he defined 'demons and deities' in terms of the idea of evil *qi*, such as Wind, Cold, Summer-heat and Damp, which could be cured by remedy. Besides, he suggested that a prayer might be used to treat the disease of 'violating demons and deities'.<sup>70</sup> In doing so, on the one hand, Xu attempted to medicalize the given opinion of 'demons and deities' in a naturalistic way; on the other, he did not try to neglect talking about ideas of ghosts, demons and deities in his theories, like other Confucians often did. Such an eclectic point of view might have represented many physicians' attitudes towards 'sexual dreams with demons' in late Imperial China.

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<sup>68</sup> In some Daoist context 'not to dream' (bu meng 不夢) was regarded as a symbol of having reached the highest stage of Daoist self-cultivation, for dreaming and thinking too much would disturb one's spirit. See Lin Fu-shih (1995), 'Religious Taoism and dreams: an analysis of the dream-data collected in the *Yun-chi ch' i-chien*', *Cahiers d'Extreme-Asie*, 8: 101.

<sup>69</sup> [Yuan] Zhu Zhenheng 朱震亨 (1282-1358), *Danxi yiji* 丹溪醫集 [Medical Collections of Mr. Zhu] (Beijing: Renmin weisheng chubanshe, 1993/1995) p.23, 361.

<sup>70</sup> [Qing] Xu Dachun 徐大椿 (1693-1771), *Xu lingtai yishu chuanji* 徐靈胎醫書全集 [Complete Collection of Mr. Xu's Medical Works], supplemented by Jiang Renan 江忍庵 (Taipei: Wuzhou chubanshe, 1998) p.71-72.