

“By Culture”, the Annual Meeting of Cultural Studies Association

Taipei, 3-4 January 2004

**Dreams, sex, and the monstrous body:  
on the cases of ‘dreaming sex with demons’  
in the history of Chinese medicine\***

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## **Introduction**

This paper will be the first attempt to discuss the relationship between dreams, sex, and the body in terms of a specific case, namely, ‘dreaming sex with demons’ (meng yu gui jiao 夢與鬼交)<sup>1</sup> in the history of Chinese medicine.

In China, there had existed a long history of interpreting dreams. A classical view of dreams prevalent from the Warring States (475-221 B.C.E.) to the Han periods (206 B.C.E. – 220 C.E.) suggested that ‘dreams represented visitations in

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\* This paper is drafted on the basis of the Chapter 4 of my thesis. See: Hsiu-fen Chen (2003), ‘Medicine, society, and the making and madness in imperial China’, Ph.D. Thesis, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, U.K..

<sup>1</sup> In Chinese, ‘*gui*’ 鬼 generally refers to ‘the spirits or souls of a dead person’ (e.g. deceased ancestors), which seems to be equivalent to ‘ghost’ in English. However, the ‘*gui*’ in ‘*meng yu gui jiao*’ as recorded in Chinese medical texts actually has more ambiguous connotations. It could possibly refer to ghosts, evil spirits, devils, fox fairies, or a malignant supernatural being. I thus tend to comprehend it as ‘demons’, unless specify otherwise.

which some external entity intruded upon a person's sleep. It was probably in dreams that people had their closest encounters with the denizens of the other world, for a dream constituted a spirit-sighting'.<sup>2</sup> A later yet no less interesting view of dreams came from the doctrines of Buddhism, which 'frequently used the dream as a metaphor to point out the false, deceptive quality of the phenomenal world'.<sup>3</sup> By contrast, dreams in Daoist perspectives '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>4</sup> Likewise, dreams that appear in Chinese fictions and dramas commonly 'serve as a means of communication between the dreamer's waking world and other levels of existence in other places'.<sup>5</sup>

Apart from divination, religion and folklore, medical writers and practitioners also provide specific outlooks to survey dreams over millennia. In contrast to non-medical views that often focused on the association of human thoughts with dreams, some major medical writers and physicians in early China tended to regard dreams as an indicator of the body attacked by an environmental factor, '(heteropathic) *qi* 氣'. In terms of the primary medical concepts, such as *yinyang* 陰陽, the five phases (*wuxing* 五行), the viscera and bowels (*zangfu* 臟腑), the *qi* and blood (*qixie* 氣血), etc., images of dream were likely comprehended as the metaphors of different *qi* function at certain parts of the body. Similar explanatory modes applied to 'dreaming sex (with demons)' in the same periods. However, such a

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<sup>2</sup> This idea could be traced back to the *Zuozhuan* 左傳, in which the majority of dreams are recorded as spirit visitations. Quoted from Harper, Donald (1987), 'Wang Yen-shou's nightmare poem', *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, 47: 239-283, esp. p. 254.

<sup>3</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>4</sup> *Ibid.*.

<sup>5</sup> Hegel, Robert (1988), 'Heavens and Hells in Chinese Fictional Dreams', in *Psycho-sinology: the Universe of Dreams in Chinese Culture*, ed. by Carolyn T. Brown, Lanham: University Press of America, Inc., p.1.

medical/naturalistic view did not remain unchanged. Other explanatory modes, ranging from ‘demonic invasion’ and ‘parasitic worms’ to ‘emotional pollution’, challenged and complicated people’s understanding of the related phenomena from times to times. ‘Dreaming sex with demons’ was diagnosed either as an illness or as a symptom possibly caused by ‘(demonic) possession’, consumptive diseases, sexual frustration or sexual madness. In certain cases it was engendered as a female disorder which could possibly lead to women’s infertility, or false pregnancy, namely, ‘demonic foetuses’ (guitai 鬼胎). Sometimes it was even thought to be fatal to the afflicted. All these explanations have served as fruitful perspectives to look into the relationship between dreams, sex and the body in the historical contexts of Chinese medicine and demonology.

This paper will be mainly divided into three parts. The first part will trace the classic modes of explaining dreams, in particular ‘sexual dreams’, closely linked to the ailments of ‘*qi* depletion’ and other related diseases. Secondly, the light will shed on some mediaeval Chinese medical texts, in which the aetiology of ‘demons’ and of ‘worms’ became prevalent owing to the religious influences largely from Daoism. This paper will finally discuss ‘dreaming sex with demons’ in the regard of the emerging genealogy in which women’s emotions regulated by ‘blood’ was often emphasized especially in the late imperial period.

## **Chinese Medical Interpretations of Dreams**

### **Dreams and Sexual Dreams**

In the earlier stage of its development, Chinese physicians tended to interpret dreams in terms of bodily pathology. The aetiology of dreams as ailments illuminated by the theories of *qi* 氣 reveals at least three meanings. First of all, it presumes that

the human body as a dynamic being is accessible by varied atmospheric factors, namely *qi*, in natural environments. Secondly, outer *qi*, whether healthy or pathogenic, may enter the human body within which there also exist some sorts of inner *qi*. Finally, sleeping is a peculiar moment when human body is less defensive to resist heteropathic *qi*. This idea can be traced back as early as the *Huangdi neijing* 黃帝內經 (Inner Canon of the Yellow Lord, hereafter the *Neijing* or the *Inner Canon*), the earliest received medical corpus in China.

In the *Lingshu* 靈樞 (Divine Pivot) of the *Neijing*, the treatise ‘dreams evoked by excess of pathogen’ (*yinxie fa meng* 淫邪發夢) explains that when ‘health and pathogen’ (*zhengxie* 正邪)<sup>6</sup> act on a human body, it is ‘restless, disturbing the sleepers’ ‘viscera and bowels’ (*zangfu* 臟腑),<sup>7</sup> circulating with their ‘nourishing *qi* and defensive *qi*’ (*yingwei* 營衛), ascending with their ‘*hun*-soul and *po*-soul’ (*hunpo* 魂魄),<sup>8</sup> making them rest uneasily and induce their dreams’.<sup>9</sup> That is to say, dreams originate in the confrontation of outer *qi* with inner *qi*, which drives one’s *hun*-soul and *po*-soul out of the bound of his viscera and bowels and wandering.

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<sup>6</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, and 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 ‘pathogenic *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, firstly published in 1586, reprinted in 1994, Beijing: Renmin weisheng chubanshe, *pian* 43, p.250; Liu Wenying 劉文英 (1989/2000), *Meng de mixin yu meng de tansuo* 夢的迷信與夢的探索 (Superstitions and Explorations of Dreams), Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, pp.191-192.

<sup>7</sup> In a holistic conception of the body, ancient Chinese medical theories related all organs to each other and rarely discussed them separately.

<sup>8</sup> According to Chinese medical doctrines, ‘that which follows Spirit (*shen* 神) to and fro is *hun*; that which combines with Essence (*jing* 精) in and out is *po*. Moreover, ‘the lung stores *hun* and the liver stores *po*’. See: *Huangdi neijing lingshu* 黃帝內經靈樞, the Ming edition, reprinted in 1997, Beijing: Zhongyi guji chubanshe, *juan* 2(8), p.19; *Huangdi neijing suwen* 黃帝內經素問, Ming edition, reprinted in 1996, Beijing: Renmin weisheng chubanshe, *juan* 7(23), p.153. For more detail, 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>9</sup> *Huangdi neijing lingshu* 黃帝內經靈樞, *juan* 7(43), p.68.

Furthermore, the ‘excess’ (you yu 有餘) and ‘deficiency’ (bu zu 不足) of *qi* manifest themselves in different ‘forms’ (xing 形) of dreams. The *Huangdi neijing* shows us at least twelve kinds of dream caused by excessive *qi*. For example, ‘excessive *yin*(*qi*) 陰(氣) induces a dream of going through deep water with terror; excessive *yang*(*qi*) 陽(氣) induces a dream of great fire burning; the integration of excessive *yinqi* and *yangqi* induces a dream of mutual fighting; excessive *qi* at the upper body results in a dream of flying; excessive *qi* at the lower body results in a dream of falling; extreme hunger results in a dream of fetching; extreme fullness results in a dream of giving’, and so forth.<sup>10</sup> In general, the principle employed to explain these dream images is appealed to the thought of analogy or of balance. On the one hand, *yin* is always analogous to water while *yang* is to fire, and images of flying and falling are parallel to up-and-down movements of *qi*. On the other hand, dreams of fetching and giving certainly reflect bodies of imbalance in complementary dreams: dreaming supplies while being deficient, and dreaming removal while being excessive.<sup>11</sup>

As the annotators of the *Neijing* indicated, the nourishing *qi* (*yingqi* 營氣) is *yinqi* 陰氣 while the defensive *qi* (*weiqi* 衛氣) is *yangqi* 陽氣.<sup>12</sup> Also, ‘the Liver masters Blood and stores *hun* 魂; the Lung masters *qi* and stores *po* 魄; the Heart masters fire that is *yang* and the Kidney masters water that is *yin*’.<sup>13</sup> It is therefore plausible to assert the association of dream images with *yinyang*, nourishing *qi* and

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<sup>10</sup> *Huangdi neijing lingshu*, p.68; c.f. ‘Mai yao jingwei lun 脈要精微論’ in *Huangdi neijing suwen* 黃帝內經素問, annotated by [Tang] Wang Bing, reprinted in 1996, Beijing: Renmin weisheng chubanshe, *juan* 5(17), 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, reprinted in 1983, Tainan, Taiwan: Wangjia chubanshe, *juan* 3(17), p.65.

<sup>11</sup> *Huangdi neijing suwen* 黃帝內經素問, 1996 reprinted, Beijing: Renmin weisheng chubanshe, 5(17), p.102. Regarding the theories of *yinyang*, see ‘Yinyang yingxiang dalun 陰陽應象大論’, *ibid.*, 2(5), pp.31-48.

<sup>12</sup> *Huangdi neijing lingshu zhuzheng fawei* 黃帝內經靈樞注證發微, *pian* 43, p.250.

<sup>13</sup> *Huangdi neijing suwen jizhu* 黃帝內經素問集注, 3(17), p.65.

defensive *qi*. Besides, in the discussion of dreams not only the theory of viscera and bowels but also of the five phases are taken into account.<sup>14</sup> As such, a more comprehensive map of dreams in Chinese medicine can be illustrated as follows:

Viscera, bowels, and other organs	The five phases	Dream images caused by excessive or abundant <i>qi</i> ( <i>qi sheng</i> 氣盛)	Dream images caused by deficient or reversal <i>qi</i> ( <i>jue qi</i> 厥氣)
Liver	Wood	Anger	Woodlands and trees; grasses
Heart	Fire	Fondness of laugh; fear and fright	Fire on hills and mountains; fire fighting
Spleen	Earth	Singing with joy; too heavy body to be lifted	Mounds & marshes; damage houses in rain and wind; insufficient foods and drinks
Lungs	Metal	Terror; cry; fly	Flying, seeing strange things of iron; white stuffs, bloody mess
Kidneys	Water	Split of waist from spine	Facing abyss and sinking in water; being drowned out of 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			<i>Kowtow</i> in rituals
Womb			Urinating

Figure 1. Dream images and their correspondent relations to *qi*, five phases, viscera, bowels, and other organs<sup>15</sup>

<sup>14</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. See: Sivin, Nathan (1997), *Traditional Medicine in Contemporary China*, Ann Arbor: The university of Michigan, pp.124-133.

<sup>15</sup> *Huangdi neijing lingshu* 黃帝內經靈樞, *juan* 7(43), pp.68-69. *Huangdi neijing lingshu zhuzheng fawei* 黃帝內經靈樞注證發微, *juan* 7(43), p.250. *Huangdi neijing suwen* 黃帝內經素問, *juan* 5(17), p.102; *juan* 24(80), p.569. *Huangdi neijing suwen jizhu* 黃帝內經素問集注, *juan* 3(17), p.65; *juan* 9(80), pp.375-376. For further discussions of their respective meanings, see: Liu Wenying (1989/2000), *Meng de mixin yu meng de tansuo*, pp.196-205.

From this figure, it is clear to see that all phenomena of dreams, 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 a portion of a human body. Moreover, some of the dreams may represent distinctive characteristics (e.g. phase, colour and emotion) corresponding to the organs. For instance, those who dream either ‘anger’ or ‘woodland’ are thought to have dysfunction of *qi* in their Liver, simply because ‘anger’ and ‘wood’ are traditionally regarded as phenomena closely linked to the Liver. Also, dreams of ‘crying’ or of ‘seeing things of iron, white stuffs and even war’ are usually attributed to imbalance of *qi* in the Lung, since ‘white’ and ‘metal’ – the metaphor of weapon in wars which usually induce the feelings of terror and sorrow – are seen as manifestations of the Lung. Such an explanatory mode, however, is not always self-consistent, because some of the categories above are apparently overlapped (e.g. fear and fright in the Heart and terror in the Lung; joy in both the Heart and the Spleen). Moreover, the meanings of some cases (e.g. the connection between shinbone and lodging in cellar) seem to be not very comprehensible. Due to the limited scope of this paper, I would rather like to leave these questions behind, and concentrate on the discussion of ‘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’ (yinqi 陰器). As the *Neijing* merely interprets dreams as responses to physical stimuli, i.e., dysfunction of *qi* circulating in the body, accordingly, a complementary way of treatments was proposed here as ‘to purge while being replete; to replenish while

being depleted'.<sup>16</sup>

## Sexual Dreams and Losing Semen

Given the thread of the *Neijing*, later medical works also contribute interesting ideas to the related topics, representing 'dreaming sex' as a symptom in the context of diseases caused by 'depletion' (xu 虛). For example, *Jinkui yaolue* 金匱要略 (Medical Treasure of the Golden Casket, 219 C.E.) by Zhang Ji 張機 (the 2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> century) continued to explore the relationship between 'dreaming of having sex' and deficient *qi*. Rather than highlighting on dream images themselves, however, *Jinkui yaolue* shifts its focus to the disease caused by deficient *qi*, defining it in a more specific range, namely, *xulao* 虛勞. In so doing, 'dreaming sex' became not only one of the dream images indicating deficient *qi*, but also one of the symptoms belonging to a certain disease called 'deficiency'.

According to *Jinkui yaolue*, those who suffer from the disease of *lao* 勞 (tiredness, exhaustion, consumption) can be diagnosed in terms of the following syndrome: 'floating and large pulse' (mai fu da 脈浮大), 'restless limbs' (shouzu fan 手足煩), 'spontaneously seminal emission due to coldness of *yin*; lassitude (in loins and knees) that impedes walking' (yinhan jing zi chu suanxiao bu neng xing 陰寒精自出 瘦削不能行). Sometimes the sufferers' 'cold *qi* of semen' (jingqi qingleng 精氣清冷) may lead to their 'sterility' (wuzi 無子, lit. trans., 'no son'). Other symptoms such as 'strain and tension in the abdomen' (shaofu xianji 少腹弦急), 'coldness in the genital organs' (yintouhan 陰頭寒), 'dizziness and hair loss' (muxuan faluo 目眩髮落), may appear as well. For one whose pulses appear to be 'hollow and slightly

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<sup>16</sup> *Huangdi neijing lingshu* 黃帝內經靈樞, 7(43), p.68, p.69.

tense’ (koudong weijin 孔動微緊), ‘a man loses semen and a woman dreams sexual intercourse’ (nanzi shijing, nuzi mengjiao 男子失精, 女子夢交). All these symptoms, according to the annotations of *Jinkui yaolue*, are very much related to ‘yin depletion’ (yinxu 陰虛) of the Kidney. In order to cure such a disease, *Jinkui yaolue* recommends *guizhi longgu muli tang* 桂枝龍骨牡蠣湯 (decoction of cassia twig, fossil fragments and oyster shell) as the pharmaceutical remedy.<sup>17</sup>

With comparison to the *Huangdi neijing*, the *xulao* disease as described 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 physical stimuli of *qi* in the genital organs, *Jinkui yaolue* situates it in a more complicated sphere, with wider concern to ‘coldness’, ‘losing semen’ and infertility. The discourse of *xulao* as a newly emerging category of disease in Chinese medical traditions not only reinforces ‘dreaming sex’ as one of the pathological syndromes. It is also characterized as a woman’s symptom in contrast to a man’s ‘losing semen’ in relation to the diseases of *xulao* or *lao*. Both ‘dreaming sex’ and ‘losing semen’ as a correlative medical concept had been widely discussed by later medical physicians throughout the ages.<sup>18</sup>

## Sexual Dreams and Demonic Influences

Interestingly, neither the *Huangdi neijing* nor *Jinkui yaolue* indicates clearly

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<sup>17</sup> As Xu Bin pointed out, all these symptoms happen because of ‘yin depletion’ (yinxu 陰虛). *Jinkui yaolue lunzhu* 金匱要略論註 (The Commentaries and Annotations on Medical Treasures of the Golden Casket, commentated and annotated by [Qing] Xu Bin 徐彬, firstly published in 1671, reprinted in 1993, Beijing: Renmin weisheng chubanshe, *juan* 6, pp.90-91.

<sup>18</sup> Apart from ‘dreaming sex’, ‘losing semen’ (shijing 失精 or yijing 遺精) later on had become an individual medical problem explained by very different causes, largely based on emotional ones, not always related to ‘dreaming sex’ itself. See Shapiro, Hugh (1998), ‘The puzzle of Spermatorrhea in Republican China’, *Positions*, 6(3): 551-596.

the ‘objects’ of ‘sexual dreams’. The gap was not bridged until the appearance of *Zhouhou fang* 肘後方 (Prescriptions to Keep Up Your Sleeve, 315 C.E.), of which the authorship is attributed to Ge Hong 葛洪 (281-341), edited and added by Tao Hongjing 陶弘景 (456-536), and much later, by Yang Yongdao 楊用道 (12<sup>th</sup> century). As a medical manual that served for emergency needs, *Zhouhou fang* contributes less to medical theory than to a number of easily accessible remedies (mainly pharmaceutical) for commoners. When mentioning ‘dreaming sex’ as an illness, it reveals two kinds of dreaming object: people and ‘demons’ (gui 鬼). On the one hand, ‘men and women’s dreaming to have sex with man kind’ (nan nu meng yu ren jiao 男女夢與人交) may be ‘evoked by pathogenic *qi* due to inner depletion’ (neixu xieqi ganfa 內虛邪氣感發). Meanwhile, it proposes a simple recipe for ‘those who incline to have sexual intercourse with demons in dreams and look ecstatic (nan nu xi meng yu gui tong zhi huanghu zhe 男女喜夢與鬼通致恍惚者)’ without indicating its aetiology. Unlike *Jinkui yaolue* regarding ‘sexual dreams’ as a symptom of women’s only, *Zhouhou fang* suggests that both men and women may dream of sex with either human being or ‘demons’. These problems can be solved by herbal formulas, acupuncture or moxibustion.<sup>19</sup>

Some ideas regarding diseases in *Zhouhou fang* are echoed by *Zhubing yuanhou lun* 諸病源候論 (Treatise on Causes and Symptoms of Varied Diseases, 610), an officially compiled medical work by Chao Yuanfang 巢元方 and others. Similar to the *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 circulated before 7<sup>th</sup> century China. Unlike

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<sup>19</sup> *Buji zhouhou fang* 補輯肘後方 (Supplementary Collection of Prescriptions to Kept up Your Sleeve), originally compiled by Ge Hong 葛洪 (281-341), Tao Hongjing 陶弘景 (456-536) and Yang Yongdao 楊用道 in 1144, supplemented and rearranged by Shang Zhijun 尙志鈞 (1996), Hefei:

*Jinkui yaolue* in which many prescriptions are recorded, however, the currently survived editions of *Zhubing yuanhou lun* record no other pharmacological information than ‘remedies for nourishing life’ (yangsheng fang 養生方) and ‘methods for guiding and pulling’ (daoyin fa 導引法), which are evidently influenced by Daoism.<sup>20</sup>

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

When discussing naturalistic causes, the diseases of both *xulao* and ‘Cold Damage’ (shanghan 傷寒) are underlined for their close relationship to the depletion of the Kidney. It is well known that in Chinese medical thought the Kidney is the place in which ‘semen/vital energy’ (jing 精) is preserved. When one suffers from *xulao* or Cold Damage, as *Zhubing yuanhou lun* argues, his/her Kidney is deficient and invaded by pathogen or pathogenic heat, hence ‘dreaming sexual intercourse’ (meng jiaojie 夢交接) and ‘losing semen in dreams’ (meng xiejing 夢泄精, nocturnal emission).<sup>21</sup>

The supernatural cause, on the contrary, is usually linked to ‘demonic afflictions’.<sup>22</sup> For example, ‘demonic possession’ is thought to be one of the illnesses along with the symptom of ‘sexual dreams’:

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Anhui kexue jishu chubanshe, *juan* 3(18), p.95; *juan* 4(25), p.183.

<sup>20</sup> As for the term ‘Daoism’, unlike Nathan Sivin’s clear distinction between its ‘philosophical’ and ‘religious’ meanings, my usage of this term in this paper, unless specified otherwise, is rather flexible and loose. I mainly follow a popular formulation proposed by Holmes Welch, referring it to ‘all those groups that have taken immortality as their goal – alchemists, hygienists, magicians, eclectics, and in particular, the members of the Taoist church’. See: Sivin, Nathan (1978), ‘On the word “Taoist” as a source of perplexity. With special reference to the relations of science and religion in traditional China’, now in Sivin (1995), *Medicine, Philosophy and Religion in Ancient China: Researches and Reflections*, Hampshire and Vermont: Variorum, part VI, pp.303-330, the quotation above is from p.305.

<sup>21</sup> *Zhubing yuanhou lun jiaozhu* 諸病源候論校注, compiled by [Sui] Chao Yuanfang 巢元方 et al, dated 610, annotated by Ding Guangdi 丁光迪, reprinted in 1996, Beijing: Renmin weisheng chubanshe, *juan* 4(62), p.129; *juan* 8(71), p. 272.

<sup>22</sup> *Zhubing yuanhou lun* lists varied types of illness related to ‘demons’, ranging from *xiewu* 邪物, *shesui* 社崇, *tusui* 土崇, *fengxie* 風邪, *guixie* 鬼邪, and *guimei* 鬼魅, to *gui* 鬼, and so forth. For the convenience of discussion, I view all of them as ‘demonic illnesses/diseases’ as a whole. See:

As for people possessed by demonic creatures, they have a propensity to be grieved, and their hearts are spontaneously moved. [They are] mentally deranged as if being drunk, speaking frantically with fright and fear, facing walls and crying with sorrow, frequently having nightmares, or having sex with demons and deities. [The reason why they] suffer from periodic cold and fever, full heart and abdomen, short breath, being unable to take foods and drinks is because they are possessed by demons.<sup>23</sup>

Importantly, women's 'sex with demons', whether within or without dreams, is discussed elsewhere and categorized as one of 'female miscellaneous diseases' (*furen zhabing* 婦人雜病). The concept of depletion, again, is employed to explain their aetiology:

The one whose visceral organs are deficient has an inclination towards dreaming. A woman's dreaming of intercourse with demons is also caused by the deficient *qi* of her viscera and bowels, depletion and weakness of her guarding Spirit, which may be taken advantage of [by evil] then induces sexual dreams with demons.<sup>24</sup>

It is noteworthy that 'women's dreaming sex' appears to be a merely emotional

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*Zhubing yuanhou lun*, *ibid.*, juan 2(47), pp.66-67; juan 2 (48), p.70; juan 40(95), p.1149-1150.

<sup>23</sup> The original text is: '凡人有爲鬼物所魅, 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'. See: *ibid.*, p.70.

<sup>24</sup> The original text is: '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'. See: *Ibid.*, p.1150.

disorder. In addition to the symptom of social retreat, such as ‘detestation for people’ (bu yu jian ren 不欲見人), a female sufferer from this illness may ‘speak and laugh alone, or sometimes burst into tears’ (du yan xiao huo shi bei qi 獨言笑或時悲泣). Her pulses usually ‘appear tardy and deep-sited like a bird pecking’ (mai lai chi fu huo ru niao zhao 脈來遲伏或如鳥啄). Sometimes her pulses are ‘too continuous to be measured’ (mianmian bu zhi dushu 綿綿不知度數) and her ‘expression does not change’ (yanse bu bian 顏色不變). All these indications, as claimed by *Zhubing yuanhou lun*, refer to an illness caused by ‘demonic qi’ (gui qi 鬼氣). Based on the assertion that ‘a human being is born of delicate qi bestowed by the Five Phases, and nurtured by the spiritual qi of the Five Viscera’, the principle for treatments to resist demonic illnesses naturally sheds some light on the prototype of preventive medicine, which emphasizes the necessity of self-cultivation and self-regulation for the sake of health. *Zhubing yuanhou lun* therefore states: ‘once yin and yang are regular and harmonious, the Viscera and Bowels are strong and flourishing; hence *fengxie guimei* 風邪鬼魅 (wind evil and demons) cannot bring any harm at all’.<sup>25</sup>

By a survey of the multiple aspects of an illness – causes, symptoms, pulse diagnosis, and the principle of treatment – the illness of ‘having sex with demons’ is fully elucidated in *Zhubing yuanhou lun*. ‘Women’s dreaming of sex with demons’ seems regarded not only as a pathological disease but also manifests itself as an ecstatic experience. Nevertheless, these two explanatory modes of the illness, i.e., naturalistic explanations and supernatural ones, are not necessarily contradictory to each other. Rather, they are actually based on the same presupposition about perceiving the body in mediaeval Chinese medicine. That is, diseases only occur in a deficient body where external influences, whether natural factors or demonic creatures,

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid., pp.1149-1150.

take advantage. In other words, the boundary between natural environmental factors and supernatural agencies are not always clear yet somehow obscure especially in religious medical works in mediaeval China.

By examining the exorcist rituals recorded in *Zhubing yuanhou lun*, for example, they seem being largely illuminated by magico-religious heritage, namely, shamanism and Daoism.<sup>26</sup> Certainly this is not an exclusive case, because a number of Sui and Tang medical works are recorded together with those relating to religion, divination and destiny in the same category of bibliography in contemporary official histories.<sup>27</sup> This deliberate categorization of medical and religious works together in a degree explains their ambiguous bounds.

In addition to the demonological aetiology of diseases, another characteristic of Daoist medicine would be the method of therapy by ‘the art of bedchamber’ (fangzhong shu 房中術).<sup>28</sup> For instance, Sun Simiao 孫思邈 (ca. 581-682), the renowned Daoist physician and medical writer, discussed ‘dreaming sex with demons’

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<sup>26</sup> Lin Fu-shih 林富士 indicates that some explanations of demonology in *Zhouhou fang* and *Zhubing yuanhou lun*, such as ‘women’s sex with demons’, ‘women’s demonic foetuses’, ‘shibing 尸病’, ‘zhubing 注病’, and so on, are more likely related to the views of shamanism. See Lin Fu-shih (1999), ‘zhongguo liuchao 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 C.E.]), *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>27</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>28</sup> In a strict sense, of course the techniques of ‘the art of bedchamber’ had been widely used in the ages much earlier than that of institutional Daoism, probably dated back to the Warring States. The unearthed manuscript ‘He yinyang’ 合陰陽 (Harmonizing *yin* and *yang*) from the Mawangdui Han Tombs is just an example. See: Wei Qipeng 魏啓鵬 and Hu Xianghua 胡翔驊 eds. (1992), *Mawangdui hanmu yishu jiaoshi* 馬王堆漢墓醫書校釋 (Annotation on Medical Manuscripts of the Han Tombs in Mawangdui), Chengdu: Chengdu chubanshe, v.2. Besides, some Daoist works during the Six Dynasties, such as *Yufang mijue* 玉房秘訣 (Secret Incantations for the Jade Bedchamber), also proclaim that sex and correct sexual techniques are helpful in healing ‘dreaming sex with demons’. See: 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. As ‘the art of bedchamber’ in early China played an important in the culture of ‘nourishing life’ (yangsheng 養生), for thorough discussions of the related issues, please see: Lo, Vivienne (1998), ‘The influences of *yangsheng* culture on early Chinese medical theory’, Ph.D. thesis in History, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London.

in terms of the disease of *xusun* 虛損 (depletion and impairment) as below:

Men cannot live without women, and women cannot live without men. The lack of a woman leads to [his] ‘intention’; [his] ‘moved intention’ leads to [his] ‘spiritual exhaustion’; [his] ‘spiritual exhaustion’ hence is ‘to damage life’ (*sun shou* 損壽). If the mind dwells in perfect and true condition and nothing to be concerned about, it will be extremely great to ensure longevity. However, if there is one thing to be thought about, and one forces oneself to be close to it, then it is hard for one to maintain therefore easy to lose control. This may cause one’s losing semen, turbid urine, and the illness of having sex with demons. Such a damage is equivalent to hundreds of other damage.<sup>29</sup>

Generally, Sun’s definition of *xusun* is very similar as that of *xulao* 虛勞 in *Zhubing yuanhou lun*. This disease was thought to be caused by different reasons, ranging from *wulao* 五勞 (five types of exhaustion) and *liuji* 六極 (six extremes) to *qishang* 七傷 (seven damages).<sup>30</sup> Not only physical dysfunction but also emotional imbalance and dietary problems are taken into account in the related treatises. On the one hand, we see the continuity of medical transmission from the Han to the Tang, since ‘dreaming sex (with demons)’ as one of the symptoms of *xulao* or *xusun* had been advocated in *Jinkui yaolue*, *Zhubing yuanhou lun* and *Qianjin fang*. On the other hand,

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<sup>29</sup> The original text is: ‘男不可無女, 女不可無男. 無女則意動, 意動則神勞, 神勞則損壽. 若念真正無可思者, 則大佳, 長生也. 然而萬無一有, 強抑鬱閉之, 難持易失, 使然漏精尿濁, 以致鬼交之病, 損一而當百也. See: *Beiji qianjin yaofang* 備急千金要方 (Essential Prescriptions Worth of a Thousand for Emergency, 651), by Sun Simiao, reprinted in 1993/1996 in *Qianjin fang* 千金方, Beijing: Huaxia chubanshe, juan 27(8), p.389.

<sup>30</sup> Please compare *Zhubing yuanhou lun* juan 3, pp.86-88 to *Qianjin yifang* 千金翼方 (Supplementary Prescriptions Worth a Thousand, 682), by Sun Simiao, reprinted in 1993/1996 in *Qianjin fang* 千金方, Beijing: Huaxia chubanshe, juan 15(1), p.130.

however, the demonological explanations of diseases and the employment of ‘the art of bedchamber’ for the sake of ‘replenishment’ (buyi 補益)<sup>31</sup> became widely accepted in the mediaeval Chinese medicine. This method of treatment was sometimes referred to as ‘healing human being with human being’ (yi ren liao ren 以人療人).<sup>32</sup>

Some decades after Sun Simiao, *Waitai miyao* 外臺秘要 (Essential Secrets of the Palace Library, 752) compiled by Wang Tao 王燾 apparently followed the steps of its predecessors, e.g. *Zhubing yuanhou lun* in medical theories, and *Qianjin yaofang* in prescriptions. It argues that a sufferer from *xulao* and *fengxie* 風邪 may have the symptom of ‘sexual dreams with men/women’. Meanwhile, it also indicates that ‘dreaming sex with demons and deities’ as an illness could originate in ‘demonic possession and spiritual possession’ (guimei jingmei 鬼魅精魅) or in ‘spiritual possession of foxes’ (huli jingmei 狐狸精魅).<sup>33</sup> In other words, when the object of sexual dreams is a human being, it is merely a symptom of a naturalistic disease, otherwise it is more likely viewed as a demonic illness.

It seems that the paradigmatic interpretations of ‘dreaming sex with demons’ established during the mediaeval times had not changed drastically in the Song, Yuan and Ming. Their theoretical frameworks indebted to Tang and pre-Tang medical works look rather homogenous. When discussing ‘sexual dreams with demons’ as an illness, for example, *Taiping sheng hui fang* 太平聖惠方 (Imperial Grace Formulary of the Great Peace Reign, 992) and *Furen daquan liangfang* 婦人大全良方 (All-inclusive Good Prescriptions for Women, 1237) simply follow *Zhubing yuanhou lun* 諸病源候

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<sup>31</sup> *Qianjin yifang* 千金翼方 (Supplementary Prescriptions Worth a Thousand, 682), by Sun Simiao, reprinted in 1993/1996 in *Qianjin fang* 千金方, Beijing: Huaxia chubanshe, juan 15(1), p.130.

<sup>32</sup> *Qianjin yaofang*, juan 27(8), p.388.

<sup>33</sup> *Waitai miyao* 外臺秘要 (Essential Secrets of the Palace Library), by [Tang] Wang Tao 王燾 in 752, reprinted in 1955, Beijing: Renmin weisheng chubanshe, volume I, p. 367, 369, 404, 455.

論, interpreting this disorder in terms of ‘depletion of Blood and *qi*’ and ‘demonic evil’.<sup>34</sup> Similar opinions are found in the Ming works, such as *Pu ji fang* 普濟方, *Qixiao liangfang* 奇效良方, *Chishui xuanzhu* 赤水玄珠,<sup>35</sup> and *Shoushi baoyuan* 壽世保元.<sup>36</sup> Another example is *Maiyin zhengzhi* 脈因證治<sup>37</sup>, which simply quotes the opinion of *Jinkui yaolue* 金匱要略 in discussion of the relationship between *lao* or *xulao* and ‘sexual dreams’.

### Dreams, Demons, and Worms: Daoist Views

Despite the similar arguments noted above, however, the differentiated perspectives of looking into ‘dreaming sex’ in different periods should not be ignored, either. In fact, the ramification of the disease *xulao* into *shizhu* 尸疰 (transfusion into corpses), *chuanshi* 傳尸 (transmission from corpses), *guzheng* 骨蒸 (bone steaming) and *laozhai* 勞瘵 (consumptive diseases) have complicated the connotations of ‘dreaming sex with demons’ as a medical term. Just as Dai Yuanli 戴原禮 (1324-1405) claimed, although the *Huangdi Neijing* mentions nothing about *laozhai* 勞瘵 when discussing ‘depletion’ (*xu* 虛), it does imply the causes of this disease. Later than Zhang Ji’s categorization of *xulao* as a medical disease in his *Jinkui yaolue*

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<sup>34</sup> *Taiping sheng hui fang* 太平聖惠方 (Imperial Grace Formulary of the Great Peace Reign), compiled by [Song] Wang Huaiyin 王懷隱 et al., dated in 992, reprinted in 1958, Beijing: Renmin weisheng chubanshe, p.857, 2225; *Jiaozhu Furen liangfang* 校註婦人良方 (Annotations on Good Prescriptions for Women), written by [Song] Chen Ziming 陳自明 in 1237, annotated by [Ming] Xue Ji 薛己, reprinted by Taipei: Xuanfeng chubanshe, juan 6, p.16.

<sup>35</sup> Cai Wenju 柴文舉, Cai Binxin 蔡濱新 eds. (1991), *Zhongyi shimeng bianzhi* 中醫釋夢辨治 (Interpretations, Diagnoses and Treatments of Dreams in Chinese Medicine), Beijing: Xueyuan chubanshe, pp.263-265.

<sup>36</sup> *Shoushi baoyuan* 壽世保元 (Longevity and Preserving Vital Energy), by [Ming] Gong Tingxian 龔廷賢 (the 16-17<sup>th</sup> century), firstly published in 1615, reprinted in 1993, Shanghai: Shanghai kexue jishu chubanshe, p.523.

<sup>37</sup> *Mai yin zheng zhi* 脈因證治 (Pulses, Causes, Symptoms and Therapy), by [Yuan] Zhu Zhenheng 朱震亨 (1282-1358), firstly published in 1358, reprinted in 1988, Taipei: Qiye shuju, p.32.

金匱要略, this disease evolved into different forms, also being labelled as *zhengbing* 蒸病 (diseases of steaming) or *zhubing* 注(疰)病 (diseases of transfusion).<sup>38</sup> Moreover, as *Zhubing yuanhou lun* 諸病源候論 attributes the causes of *xulao* to *wulao* 五勞, *liuji* 六極 and *qishang* 七傷, as mentioned before,<sup>39</sup> this kind of seemingly ‘contagious’ diseases recorded in *Zhouhou fang* 肘後方 and elaborated by *Zhubing yuanhou lun* and *Qianjin yaofang* 千金要方 are closely associated with the aetiology of *shigui* 尸鬼 (ghostly corpse), *guixie* 鬼邪 (ghosts and evils), and ‘worms’ (*chong* 蟲), etc..<sup>40</sup> All these changes to a great extent could be attributed to the influence of Daoist cosmology. It is therefore hard to understand these ideas and their relationship to medical disorders without explaining Daoist conceptions of diseases first.

Let me return once more to the earliest received Chinese medical canon. Although the *Huangdi neijing* records ‘long worm’, ‘short worm’ as dream images and their corresponding meanings in the discussion of dreams, no clue in the work suggests that they act as agents to evoke ‘sexual dreams’. Nor were these worms regarded as ‘parasites’ by the time of the texts. Not until the Six Dynasties did Daoist masters start to emphasize the harm caused by ‘demons’ and ‘worms’ dwelling in human body. The Daoist pathology from that period onwards was partly characterized by the concept of *sanshi* (*chong*) 三尸(蟲) ([worms of] three corpses). In Ge Hong’s *Baopuzi* 抱朴子, *sanshi* are said to live in human body from one’s birth. After one’s death, the *sanshi* in one’s body become ‘gui’ 鬼 or ‘shigui’ 尸鬼, freely wondering around and being worshipped by live people. *Sanshi* were thought to be harmful to

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<sup>38</sup> *Tuiqiu shiyi* 推求師意 (In Search for the Thought of the Master), by [Ming] Dai Yuanli 戴原禮 (1324-1405), firstly published in 1443, reprinted in *Siku quanshu* 四庫全書, vol.765, p.8.

<sup>39</sup> *Zhubing yuanhou lun jiaozhu* 諸病源候論校注, Beijing: Renmin weisheng chubanshe, juan 3, pp.86-88.

<sup>40</sup> *Buji zhouhou fang* 補輯肘後方, pp.21-25; *Zhubing yuanhou lun jiaozhu* 諸病源候論校注, juan 23 and 24, pp.682-715; *Qianjin yaofang* 千金要方, in *Qianjin fang* 千金方, pp.248-252.

human being, especially when the body is weak and vulnerable. The imagination of *sanshi* was further elaborated in a late Tang Daoist scripture that synthesizes the related views prevalent in the Six, Sui and Tang Dynasties. According to it, *sanshi* – ‘shangshi’ 上尸, ‘zhongshi’ 中尸 and ‘xiashi’ 下尸 – lodge at three different parts of the body, hence bring diseases sometimes to the portions of body where they dwell in. For instance, ‘shangshi’ was said to lodge in the head; ‘zhongshi’ lodges in the Heart and abdomen; and ‘xiashi’ lodges in the Stomach. Accordingly, ‘zhongshi’ would possibly be the agent to result in various diseases including ‘having sex with demons and nocturnal emission’; ‘xiashi’, in contrast, would drive a man to indulge in lust, etc..<sup>41</sup> The Daoist idea that *sanshi* play an important role to induce bad dreams and nightmares is also recorded in a Tang *biji* 筆記, *Youyang zazu* 酉陽雜俎.<sup>42</sup>

The influences of Daoist views of diseases in terms of *sanshi* and worms are particularly distinctive in mediaeval Chinese medicine. For example, *Zhubing yuanhou lun* notes that *sanshi* live along with/in human body. As they are able to contact with ‘ghosts and spirits’ (guiling 鬼靈), they often summon and guide ‘outer evils’ (waixie 外邪) to harm the body. For the purpose of attaining immortality, people – in particular the afflicted – are therefore required to make an effort to strengthen their Spirit that guards their Viscera, Bowels and other organs in order to resist the pathogenic factors.<sup>43</sup> Daoists also regarded worms as a sort of obstruction to ‘immortality’. Hence, to kill or expel worms out of the body became a major task for

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<sup>41</sup> Lin Fu-shih (2001), *Jibing zhongjie zhe: zhongguo zaoqi de dao jiao yixue* 疾病終結者: 中國早期的道教醫學 (Terminators of Diseases: Daoist Medicine in Early China), Taipei: Sanmin shuju, pp.72-74.

<sup>42</sup> *Youyang zazu* 酉陽雜俎, by Duan Chengshi 段成式 (ca. 803-863), completed by 860, Wanli 萬曆 edition in Ming times, reprinted in 1981, Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, former part, juan 8, p.84.

<sup>43</sup> See *Huangdi neijing suwen* 黃帝內經素問, juan 5(17), pp.102-3; *Zhubing yuanhou lun jiaozhu* 諸病源候論校注, juan 23, p.682; 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.

cultivation and body nourishment in Daoism.<sup>44</sup>

According to the *Zhengao* 真誥 by the famous Daoist Tao Hongjing 陶弘景, there are at least three causes of bad dreams: *poyao* 魄妖 (prodigies of the sedimentary spirits), *xinshi* 心試 (testing the heart [by demons]), and *shizei* 尸賊 (corpse depredations; the dead plaguing the living).<sup>45</sup> In general, the methods for Daoists to treat bad dreams and nightmares were not very different from that for them to heal diseases. Corresponding to their demonological explanations of the causes of these occasions, what the Six Dynasties Daoist Masters often did was aimed to appease the anger of deities and spirits and appeal for their forgiveness. On the one hand, they normally required sufferers to make confession of all the sins and misdemeanors that they might have committed. On the other hand, they performed ritual purification for these people by means of observance, incantations, and talisman. If necessary, they might also suggest the employment of acupuncture, moxibustion, drug therapy, or other alternative ways including the art of bedchamber, etc..<sup>46</sup> As a result, not surprisingly, there had been created a number of incantations for the sake of appealing for good dreams and expelling bad dreams.<sup>47</sup> Similarly, in Buddhism there had existed incantations aimed to cease horrible nightmares.<sup>48</sup>

In addition to Daoist and Buddhist traditions, there were alternative methods to expel bad dreams in early China. In his related research Donald Harper states that ‘the conception of language in Han literary culture was strongly influenced by the belief in word magic and the power of speech to enchant those who heard it; and that

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<sup>44</sup> Lin Fu-shih (2001), *Jibing zhongjiezhe: zhongguo zaoqi de daojiao yixue*, p.74; Davis, Edward L. (2001), *Society and the Supernatural in Song China*, Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, p.40.

<sup>45</sup> Harper, Donald (1987), ‘Wang Yen-shou’s nightmare poem’, *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, 47: 239-283, esp. p.272.

<sup>46</sup> Lin Fu-shih (2002), *Jibing zhongjiezhe: zhongguo zaoqi de daojiao yixue*, pp.87-113.

<sup>47</sup> Liu Wenyong (1989/2000), *Meng de mixin yu meng de tansuo*, pp.139-142.

<sup>48</sup> One of the kind of incantations, as recorded in *Youyang zazu*, is ‘po shan po yan di’ 婆珊婆演底, which might be originally derived from Sanskrit. See: *Youyang zazu*, by Duan Chengshi, juan 5, p.57.

this aspect of enchantment was important in *fu* poetics'. Followed by careful cross-examination of other sources, Harper goes further to argue that the 'Meng fu' 夢賦 (Dream *fu*) by Wang Yen-shou 王延壽 (fl. mid-2<sup>nd</sup> century C.E.) was probably read as 'a poem about a nightmare' as well as 'an incantation to expel nightmare demons'.<sup>49</sup> This interesting survey at least shows one way to demonstrate word magic and its efficacy in the rites of expelling demons and demonic dreams. But it is hard to tell whether a treatment of this kind was somehow related to Daoist ritual incantations.

Turn back to the subject of 'dreaming sex with demons'. Of the Sui and Tang medical texts, *Waitai miyao* 外台秘要 is notable for its contribution to establishing the link between 'dreaming sex with demons' and *chuanshi* 傳尸 (transmission by means of corpses).<sup>50</sup> Likewise, the Song physician Chen Ziming 陳自明 (ca. 1190-1270) also demonstrates 'sexual dreams with demons' in terms of his arguments of *laozhai* 勞瘵 (consumptive diseases), *zhu* 疰 (diseases of transfusion) and *gu zhenglao* 骨蒸勞 (consumption of bone steaming).<sup>51</sup> Even in the Ming medical works, such as *Gujin yitong daquan* 古今醫統大全 (Great Completion of Medical Traditions, Past and Present), *Yixue jinliang* 醫學津梁 (The Fords and Bridges of Medicine), *Yizong bidu* 醫宗必讀 (Essential Reading of Medical Lineage), and *Shenrou wushu* 慎柔五書 (Five Works by Mr. Hu), 'dreaming sex with demons' as a symptom is frequently categorized into the disease of *laozhai*, *zhengbing*, *chuanshi*, or *xulao* 虛癆.<sup>52</sup> Given one of Hu Shenrou's 胡慎柔 (1572-1636) medical cases, it is

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<sup>49</sup> Harper, Donald (1987), 'Wang Yen-shou's nightmare poem', p.240, 242.

<sup>50</sup> *Waitai miyao* 外台秘要, volume I, p. 355.

<sup>51</sup> *Jiaozhu Furen liangfang* 校註婦人良方, juan 5, pp.1-2, 9-10.

<sup>52</sup> *Gujin yitong daquan* 古今醫統大全 (Great Completion of Medical Traditions, Past and Present), by [Ming] Xu Chunfu 徐春甫 (the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century), firstly published in 1556, reprinted in 1996, Beijing: Renmin weisheng chubanshe, p.1322, 1325, 1327; *Yixue jinliang* 醫學津梁 (The Fords and Bridges of Medicine), by [Ming] Wang Kentang 王肯堂 (1549-1613), firstly published in 1641, reprinted in 1986, Taipei: Lixing shuju, pp.36-37; *Shenrou wushu* 慎柔五書 (Five Works by Mr. Hu),

interesting that the cause of ‘dreaming sex with demons’ and *laozhai* was attributed to that ‘worms slowly eat the Lungs away (chong shi fei ye 蟲蝕肺也)’.<sup>53</sup>

Though the demonological aetiology of ‘dreaming of having sex with demons’ illuminated by religious thought did not totally give way to the naturalistic explanations, undeniably, it became no longer dominant and increasingly questioned by some of the late imperial Chinese physicians. In his treatise on ‘women’s dreaming sex with demons’, for instance, Xu Chunfu 徐春甫 showed his disagreement with the prescriptions of ‘expelling evil’ (pixie 辟邪) recommended by *Furen daquan liangfang* 婦人大全良方. Xu explained that this illness is actually not caused by ‘demonic possession’ (xiemei 邪魅) but instead caused by ‘depletion of all Blood and *qi*, viscera and bowels, original Spirit’ (qixie zangfu yuanshen ju xu 氣血臟腑元神俱虛).<sup>54</sup>

Besides, Xu provided no less interesting observation regarding the illness of ‘dreaming sex with demons’: it often occurs to women rather than to men, and female sufferers incline not to talk about it directly.<sup>55</sup> His emphasis on the gender aspect of this illness was not occasional, because some of his medical predecessors had already remarked on the interrelationship between women and their ailments of sex, which should not be distinguished from the medical interpretations of ‘dreaming sex’ in late

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by [Ming] 胡慎柔 (1572-1636), firstly published in 1636, reprinted in 1985, Jiangsu: Jiangsu kexue jishu chubanshe, pp.49-51; *Yizong bidu* 醫宗必讀 (Essential Reading of Medical Lineage), by [Ming] Li Zhongzi 李中梓 (1588-1655), firstly published in 1637, reprinted in 1996, Beijing: Renmin weisheng chubanshe, p.337. Wang Kentang’s another work, *Zhengzhi zhunsheng* 證治準繩 (Standards for Diagnosis and Treatment, firstly published in 1602, reprinted in 1979 by Taipei: Xinwenfeng chuban gongsi) also records ‘dreaming sex with demons’ as a symptom of *chuanshilao* 傳尸勞. See: v.1, p.52.

<sup>53</sup> *Gujin yi'an an* 古今醫案按 (Compilation of the Past and Present Medical Cases), by [Qing] Yu Zhen 俞震 (the 18<sup>th</sup> century), published in 1778, reprinted in 1988, Beijing: Zhongguo zhongyiyao chubanshe, p.151.

<sup>54</sup> *Gujin yitong daquan* 古今醫統大全 (Great Completion of Medical Traditions, Past and Present), by [Ming] Xu Chunfu 徐春甫 (the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century), published in 1556, reprinted in 1996, Beijing: Renmin weisheng chubanshe, *juan* 82.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*

imperial China.

## **Female Disorders of Sex, Reproduction, and Emotion**

### **Women's Sexual Frustration and Love Madness**

As for women's 'sexual madness', a recent research has told us that in western history entertaining and yielding to illicit or excessive sexual urges were long thought to precipitate insanity. In this way of thinking, 'Masturbation would lead to uncontrollable fantasizing and a world of delusions. Gratification of lust would produce satyriasis or nymphomania, bringing on premature senile debility; it would also risk syphilis, the long-term consequence of which – general paresis of the insane – was popularly known as the softening of the brain'.<sup>56</sup> By examining the medical case histories in a German asylum in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, another study also suggests that 'it was nymphomania, not hysteria, that predominated in medical representations of female sexual maladies'.<sup>57</sup> Given numerous cases regarding *incubi* and *succubi* as recorded in mediaeval and early modern European documents, it seems not difficult for one to claim the close links between sexual madness, dreams and demons.<sup>58</sup>

In the following discussions I will concentrate on how pre-modern Chinese people, in particular physicians, came to perceive and deal with the problems of women's sexual madness in both medical and demonological senses.

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<sup>56</sup> Porter, Roy ed. (1991), *The Faber Book of Madness*, London and Boston: Faber and Faber, p.462.

<sup>57</sup> Goldberg, Ann (1999), *Sex, Religion, and the Making of Modern Madness: The Eberbach Asylum and German Society, 1815-1849*, New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, p.85.

<sup>58</sup> See the analyses in, for example, Elliott, Dyan (1999), *Fallen Bodies: Pollution, Sexuality, and Demonology in the Middle Ages*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

By the second century B.C.E., Chunyu Yi 淳于意, a famous Chinese physician, once encountered with a female patient who served as a maid in the house of King Jibei 濟北. She had been suffering from ‘loin and back loin pain’, and ‘coldness and heat’ (hanre 寒熱). Various doctors diagnosed her ailment as a typical disease of ‘coldness and heat’. By reading her pulse of the Kidney, however, Chunyu found that her ‘menstrual blockage’ (yueshi bu xia 月事不下) was owing to her ‘inner coldness’ (nei han 內寒). He then suggested that it is her ‘wanting a man yet cannot get one’ (yu nanzi er bu ke de 欲男子而不可得) inducing her ailment, since her ‘pulse of the Liver manifested itself over the top of her left wrist’ (ganmai xian chu zuo kou 肝脈弦出左口).<sup>59</sup> Chunyu prescribed drug medicine for her. Her menstruation finally came then she recovered.<sup>60</sup>

This source is worthy noted not only because it is probably the first medical case record regarding woman’s ailments of sexual frustration in Chinese history. In addition to his characterization of this kind of illness by its ‘standard’ pulse phenomena, which were widely followed by later physicians, this case also reveals two significant facets of an early Chinese physician’s clinical experiences. The first facet is solely related to diagnoses and treatments. Despite Chunyu’s acknowledgment of the physical ailments oriented in love sickness and/or sexual frustration, interestingly, none of the counselling techniques in modern sense (e.g. talk therapy) except a drug recipe was recommended. In so doing, obviously, Chunyu did not turn to an orientation of psychology or psychoanalysis to deal with such a problem. Instead, his treatment by means of pharmaceutical formula did not go beyond early Chinese

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<sup>59</sup> *Kou* 口 in here refers to *cunkou* 寸口. It is an anatomical position located on the ‘pulsing part of the radial artery at the head of the radius on both wrists’. See: *Han ying shangjie zhongyi da cidian* 漢英雙解中醫大辭典 (Chinese-English Dictionary of Traditional Chinese Medicine), ed. by Yuan Yixiang 原一祥, et al., Beijing: Renmin weisheng chubanshe, p.56.

<sup>60</sup> *Shiji* 史記 (Records of the Great Historian), by [Han] Sima Qian 司馬遷 (2<sup>nd</sup> century B.C.E.), dated in 90 B.C.E., reprinted in 1962 C.E., Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, *juan* 105, pp.2808-2809.

primary belief in what nowadays is commonly called ‘mind-body holism’, in which the boundary between the mind and the body had not been clearly delineated. In this regard, a somatic malady, despite its origin in ‘emotional disorder’, was thought possibly cured by the usage of medical remedies.

Another aspect related to this medical case is the interaction between Chunyu as a male practitioner and his female patient. By analysing Chunyu’s casebook Lisa Raphals indicates that seven amongst his twenty-five cases are sex-related ailments. We are also told that his descriptions of those ailments seem to contain an element of reproach on males’ losing control of their emotions or sexuality due to ‘moral shortcomings’, while there may be a further element of indirect reproach of the women who provoked such a behaviour.<sup>61</sup> Despite that, Chunyu did not reveal any moral condemnation when he diagnosed women’s ailments closely related to emotions and sexual desires.

Later, a famous saying that clearly asserts the necessity of sex for women originates in the Southern Dynasties. Chu Cheng 褚澄, the Liu Song medical writer, claimed that ‘a woman’s [health] won’t be regulated if having no sex with a man ten years after her first menstruation; [her health] won’t be regulated, either, if longing for having sex with a man in ten years after her first menstruation’.<sup>62</sup> Chu suggested that women’s sexual activities require a ‘right time’. To engage in marriage and sex ten years after women’s first menstruation would be better for their health. Either too early or too late would be harmful to them. Besides, Chu also argued that ‘nuns and widows’ (shi ni guafu 師尼寡婦) often suffer from ‘struggling between *yin* and *yang*,

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<sup>61</sup> Raphals, Lisa (1998), ‘The treatment of women in a second-century medical casebook’, *Chinese Science* 15, pp.7-28, esp. pp.14-15, 24-28.

<sup>62</sup> ‘女人天癸既至，踰十年無男子合，則不調；未踰十年，思男子合，亦不調.’ *Chushi yishu* 褚氏遺書 (Chu Cheng’s Posthumous Work), by Chu Cheng 褚澄, dated in 483, reprinted in *Siku Quanshu* 四庫全書, v.734, p.546.

periodic cold and fever’ as if the symptoms of ‘*nue*-illness of warmth’ (wennue 溫瘧), which may turn to become the diseases of *lao* 勞 if not having been cured earlier. This is simply because they as *yin* live without *yang*, hence their sexual desire are hardly satisfied. Chu thus suggested that the remedies that aim to heal the sexual diseases of these women should be distinguished from that applicable to married women including wives and concubines.<sup>63</sup> As a result, women of this kind – including nuns, widows and spinsters – were often specified as peculiar patients in the medical arena afterwards. Following Chu Cheng’s doctrines, some physicians in the later ages, in particular after the Song when ‘genecology’ (fuke 婦科 or nüke 女科) had emerged, frequently stressed these women’s physical dysfunction in relation to their unfulfilled sex. Sex, naturally referring to marriage sex, became a popular method suggested by doctors to solve problems of this kind.

Moreover, the later physicians explained further Chunyu Yi’s pulse diagnosis of the woman of sexual frustration in terms of the biological difference between men and women:

Men are dominated by *jing* 精 (vitality; semen), and women are dominated by Blood. When a man’s *jing* is abundant, he will think of marriage/sex; when a woman’s Blood is abundant, she will be ready to conceive. The Liver is the organ that governs Blood. By the phenomenon that the pulse of the Liver appears taut and exceed the *cunkou* 寸口 upwards until the [acu-point] *yuji* 魚際, we may judge

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<sup>63</sup> These words are recorded in *Weisheng baojian* 衛生寶鑑 (Treasure Mirror for Hygiene), by [Yuan] Luo Tianyi 羅天益, published in 1281, reprinted in 1963, Beijing: Renmin weisheng chubanshe, juan 18, p.293. Similar record can be found in *Yuji weiyi* 玉機微義 (Esoteric Meanings of the Jade Secrets, originally by [Ming] Xu Yongcheng 徐用誠 and supplemented by [Ming] Liu Chun 劉純, published in 1396, in *Siku quanshu*, v.762, p.500

that [her] *yin* is abundant.<sup>64</sup>

In this view of biological determinism, not only sex as essential physical need for both sexes, but the necessity of marriage as a social system in which sex is sanctioned, are assured. The medical declaration is in accordance to the major social value. They seem to have mutually defined and inspired.

In the inclination to specify ‘female adults out of marriage’ as problematic, for instance, Xue Ji 薛己 (1486-1558) stated that a maiden may suffer from ‘coldness and heat’ and the pulses of her left hand may appear taut and exceeding the *cunkou* 寸口. Her ailments of this kind could be similar to nuns and widows’ once her marriage is delayed. To treat these ailment, Xue recommended remedies such as the ‘Small [decoction of] *chaihu*’ (xiao chaihu [tang] 小柴胡[湯]) plus *shengdi* 生地 and *wumei* 烏梅, etc..<sup>65</sup> In another medical case Xue recorded that a thirty-something woman had suffered from ‘pain in thighs with unchanged colour’, ‘urinating and passing stool with pain’, and so on. This woman had served in the palace for long time. After retiring she became a man’s concubine. Unfortunately, her husband frequently travelled around. Due to a long term of melancholy and lacking of sex her ‘Seven Emotions, *qi* and Blood were injured’ (qiqing qixie sunshang 七情氣血損傷).<sup>66</sup> Her physical ailments became worse and could be fatal. Xue described this case as dying of ‘ailments of lack of sexual intercourse’ (nannu shihe zhi zheng 男女失合之症).<sup>67</sup>

The association of women’s sexual frustration and their madness could also be

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<sup>64</sup> *Weisheng baojian* 衛生寶鑑, juan 18, p.293.

<sup>65</sup> *Xueshi yi'an* 薛氏醫案 (Dr. Xue’s Medical Case Records), by [Ming] Xue Ji 薛己 (1486-1558), published in 1529, reprinted in *Siku Quanshu*, v.763, juan 3, p.69a.

<sup>66</sup> ‘Seven emotions’ in ancient Chinese medical thought usually refer to joy, anger, sorrow, worry, grief, fear, and fright (xi nu yu si bei kong jing 喜怒哀思悲恐驚).

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.69b-70a.

found in Zhu Zhenheng's 朱震亨 (1282-1358) case history. Once he was sent in to see a married female patient. Since her husband had stayed far from home for two years due to business, she lost appetite, frequently lying in the bed, facing the wall, looking as 'arrested' (chi 癡). To cure her love sickness and *qi* blockage due to over yearning, significantly, Zhu did not suggest drug therapy as his predecessors often did. Rather, he recommended a method of what nowadays calls 'emotional counter-therapy'.<sup>68</sup> According to the correspondence relationship between the Five Emotions, Zhu suggested that drive her in fury then her 'anger' (nu 怒) can overcome her 'worry' (si 思). Her condition was improved by this way, but Zhu told her father that the best way to cure her completely would be to bring her 'joy' (xi 喜). Hence they called her husband back. As the doctor predicted, she recovered eventually.<sup>69</sup> In his treatise on 'nuns and widow's coldness and heat', similarly, Zhang Lu 張璐 (1617-1700) stated that if a woman was trapped in certain thoughts and did not receive proper medication, it might generate her *dian* 癲 madness.<sup>70</sup>

The relationship between women's superfluous emotions, sexual desires, and love madness was best represented in the case of *huadian* 花癲 – a sort of *dian*-madness exclusively attributed to women. As the early Qing physician Chen Shiduo 陳士鐸 (ca. 1621-1711) argued, when women's madness is resulted from 'yearning' (simu 思慕) for men whom they cannot attain, they may suddenly go mad

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<sup>68</sup> This term is used by Nathan Sivin. By examining Wu Kun's 吳崑 *Yifang kao* 醫方考 (Research into Medical Formulas), Sivin shows us the usage of 'emotional manipulation' as a kind of 'emotional counter-therapy' to cure illnesses in some medical cases of this text. In the medical view of holism, nevertheless, he states that these examples indeed left no need for a special classification of mental or emotional illness in pre-modern China. There is still no split between mind and body or between what modern would call somatic and psychological symptoms. See: Sivin, Nathan (1995), 'Emotional counter-therapy', in his *Medicine, Philosophy, and Religion in Ancient China*, Hampshire: Variorum, Part II, pp.1-19, esp. p.17.

<sup>69</sup> This case is recorded in *Yifang kao* 醫方考 (Research into Medical Formulas), by [Ming] Wu Kun 吳崑 (1552-1620?), firstly published in 1584, reprinted in 1985, Jiangsu: Jiangsu kexue jishu chubanshe, pp.202-3.

<sup>70</sup> *Zhangshi yi tong* 張氏醫通 (Dr. Zhang's Comprehensive Medicine), by [Qing] Zhang Lu 張璐 (1617-1700), published in 1695, reprinted in 1963/1990, Shanghai: Shanghai keji chubanshe, p.524.

and hug any man they meet ‘regardless the sense of shame’ (wang shi xiuchi 罔識羞恥).<sup>71</sup> In the occurrence of this disorder, these women are ‘joyful when meeting men and angry when seeing women’. Some of them will even ‘take off clothes and stay naked’.<sup>72</sup> As Chen suggested, love madness as such could only happen to women. The reason is simple: when ‘a woman desires a man, it will induce her evil thought’ (nuzi sixiang qi ren er xin xie 女子思想其人而心邪). Her ‘Liver fire’ (gan huo 肝火) will be driven to burn prosperously and her pulse of the Liver may appear exceeding the *cunkou* 寸口.<sup>73</sup> Although Chen did not explain why men do not have madness of this kind, it is not hard to configure the presuppositions in his thought in two ways. Firstly, women are more emotional than men hence more easily go mad. Secondly, it is more difficult for women to satisfy their sexual desires due to the restriction of social conditions. In a society deeply influenced by neo-Confucian ideology (particularly the Cheng Yi and Zhu Xi’s school) from the Song, one’s bodily dispositions, personal conduct, and social behaviours are always required to conform to ritual propriety. Sexual behaviours were not exceptions. This is one of the reasons why marriage often became a solution to sexual satisfaction recommended by scholarly physicians, since the latter had played a part in the dissemination of Confucian doctrines. As male body was regarded as a ‘salvation’ for female sexual dysfunction, not surprisingly, ‘nuns, widows, and spinsters’ became unique in medical views simply because of their sexual deprivation. Due to their unsatisfied sexual appetite, these women could possibly suffer from ‘sexual dreams at nights’ (ye meng jiatong 夜夢交通) and ‘mutual affection with demonic *qi*’ (xieqi jiaogan 邪氣交

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<sup>71</sup> *Shishi milu* 石室秘錄 (Secret Records of the Stone Chamber), by Chen Shiduo 陳士鐸 (ca. 1621-1711), preface 1689, 1730 edition, reprinted in 1991/1998, Beijing: Zhongguo zhongyiyao chubanshe, juan 1, p.38.

<sup>72</sup> *Bianzheng qiwen* 辨證奇聞 (Strange Records of Diagnoses), by Chen Shiduo, originally dated in 1687, 1763 edition, reprinted in 1995, Beijing: Zhongguo zhongyiyao chubanshe, juan 4, p.138.

<sup>73</sup> *Shishi milu* 石室秘錄, juan 6, p.38, 295.

感).<sup>74</sup> To be sure, the suggestion of marriage was positive for spinsters. For nuns and widows, however, it would be more difficult for them to marry and remarry – unless they neglected their religious belief or ignored crucial social criticism.<sup>75</sup> Therefore, some physicians recommended herbal remedies, such as the ‘pill for abstaining from desire’ (duan yu wan 斷欲丸), to help them solve the related problem.<sup>76</sup> In cases ‘concretions and conglomerations’ or ‘demonic foetuses’ resulted from ‘sexual dreams’ of a long term, then the ‘powder of *fushen*’ (fushen san 茯神散) and the ‘pill of peach seed’ (taoren wan 桃仁丸) were suggested.<sup>77</sup>

### Women’s Sexual and Emotional ‘Pollution’

According to a modern survey, the writers of the *Huangdi neijing* regarded emotions as undesirable yet unavoidable. Emotions should be regulated since they may harm human being in certain ways.<sup>78</sup> By the discussions above, I have tried to show how the late imperial Chinese physicians viewed women’s irregular emotions to be closely associated with their disorders in both emotional and physical sense. We

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<sup>74</sup> *Qixiao liangfang* 奇效良方 (Good Prescriptions with Amazing Efficacy), by Fang Xian 方賢, quoted from *Gujin tushu jicheng yibu quanlu* 古今圖書集成醫部全錄 (Synthesis of Books and Illustration, Past and Present: Medical Section, Complete Transcriptions), compiled by Chen Menglei 陳夢雷 et al., completed by 1723, reprinted in 1979, Taipei: Xinwenfeng chuban gongsi, reprinted in 1979, Taipei: Xinwenfeng chuban gongsi, v.15, pp.26-27.

<sup>75</sup> Both the governmental and popular praises to chastity explain one of the reasons why widows could hardly get married again in pre-modern China. In Ming and Qing, particularly, a number of women were either to commit to suicide soon after their husbands’ death, or remained their status of widows for several ten years due to social influence and pressure. See: T’ien, Ju-k’ang (1988), *Male Anxiety and Female Chastity: A Comparative Study of Chinese Ethical Values in Ming-Ch’ing Times*, Leiden: E.J. Brill; Carlitz, Katherine (1994), ‘Desire, danger, and the body: stories of women’s virtue in late Ming China’, in *Engendering China: Women, Culture, and the State*, ed. by C. Gilmartin et al., Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, pp.101-146.

<sup>76</sup> *Shoushi baoyuan* 壽世保元 (Longevity and Preserving Vital Energy), by [Ming] Gong Tingxian 龔廷賢 (the 16-17<sup>th</sup> century), firstly published in 1615, reprinted in 1993, Shanghai: Shanghai kexue jishu chubanshe, p.523.

<sup>77</sup> *Qixiao liangfang*, *ibid.*

<sup>78</sup> Chiu, Martha Li (1986), ‘Mind, Body, and Illness in a Chinese Medical Tradition’, Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University, Ann Arbor: UMI, pp.121-122.

also see that Xue Ji regarded ‘women’s dreaming sex with demons’ as being caused by ‘the Heart Blood diminished by the Seven Emotions’ (qiqing kuisun xinxie 七情虧損心血) despite the fact that he did not totally eliminate the more traditional aetiological explanation of ‘demonic affliction’ (gui sui 鬼祟).<sup>79</sup> Xue’s focus on the relationship between mental states, bodily ailments, and demonic affliction, and his emphasis on women as an emotion-dominated being regulated by Blood, were broadly echoed by many late Ming physicians. They all tended to regard ‘dreaming sex with demons’ as being evoked by excessive desire and sexual thoughts. One of the famous examples is Zhang Jiebin 張介賓 (1563-1640), who distinguished the causes of ‘women’s dreaming sex with demons’ into two types:

One [type] is derived from erotic ideas and evil thoughts that disturb the will and lead to dreams. The demon is derived from the heart and irrelevant to outer circumstances. The other is derived from polluted natural disposition that is accessible to evil, hence apparitions and demons dare to attack. The evil often comes from outside.<sup>80</sup>

Due to the difference between the inner cause and the outer cause, their symptoms are also different:

For the illness derived from the heart, it is hard to trace by [a patient’s]

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<sup>79</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 6, p.16.

<sup>80</sup> The original text is as below: ‘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。’ See: *Jingyue quanshu* 景岳全書 (Mr. Zhang’s Complete Medical Work), by [Ming] Zhang Jiebin 張介賓 (1563-1640), published in 1624, reprinted in 1991/1997, Beijing: Renmin weisheng chubanshe, juan 39, p.871.

appearance. [What she suffers is] no more than meeting [demons] in dreams that will lead to [her] lost mind, or ecstasy ‘with pollution’ (dai zhuo 帶濁) parallel to the symptom of men’s nocturnal emission. Both of them are caused by the same reason, but [it will become worse because] women may rarely talk to people about their illness of this kind. By contrast, if it results from outer demonic invasion, a female patient’s symptoms will appear different. She may speak and laugh with unusual manners. If people like to meet her, she may prefer staying alone and try to avoid them. She may burst into tears with sorrow due to no reason. Her facial colour may look unchanged, or appear in pink colour. Her pulses will appear suddenly scattered and suddenly intensive, irregular as either three or five times in one breath, or bottomless and deep-sited, or hasty and knotted, or taut and fine, or intermittent and changed unusually. All these refer to the symptoms of ‘demons and devils’ (yaoxie 妖邪).<sup>81</sup>

In response to these two different causes and symptoms were different treatment prescribed. In the first case calming a patient’s mind would be prior to prescribing drug-therapies. In the second case, by contrast, to regulate and replenish a patient’s inner ‘proper *qi*’ is as important as to expel ‘evil *qi*’.

At a glance, the dualistic aetiology of defining ‘dreaming sex with demons’ as either naturalistic or supernatural phenomenon remained unchallenged in late imperial China. Apart from the medical case records as mentioned before, a medical case of the physician Yu Tuan’s 虞搏 (1438-1517) was rather unusual. Once Yu was asked to

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<sup>81</sup> Ibid., p.872.

see a beautiful lady at the age by thirty. The lady was recorded to have dreamt of sleeping with a young man in white clothes every night. She looked as if drunk and unable to do anything; her face was bluish with red cheeks, and her pulses were suddenly scattered and suddenly intensive. She also suffered from tidal fever and loss of appetite. As these symptoms were likely to indicate an illness of ‘evil influences’ (xiesui 邪祟), Yu’s treatment was somewhat distinctive. When he saw a white dog in the patient’s house lying on the pillow or by the door, Yu asserted that the white dog should be blamed for what she had suffered from. In other words, Yu implied that this white dog must have transformed itself into the white-dressed man every night and slept with its mistress. Hence, Yu asked someone to kill the dog, blending its heart, blood and bile with the herbs for pacifying the patient’s mind.<sup>82</sup>

There is another parallel yet somehow different case in the work of Sun Yikui’s 孫一奎 (the 16<sup>th</sup> century). The condition of a woman afflicted of plague became critical after having had dreamt sex with her deceased husband. She was finally cured by a herbal remedy blended with the ashes of her husband’s burnt trousers.<sup>83</sup> Both of these cases show that magical treatments (e.g. killing a dog, burning trousers) seem to remain employed in late imperial China particularly in the cases of the patients of ‘demonic afflictions’.

By these detailed examination I may summarize that the focus of the medical perspectives of ‘dreaming sex’ seems to have shifted gradually from physical/somatic

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<sup>82</sup> *Mingyi lei’an* 名醫類案 (Famous Physicians’ Classified Medical Cases), compiled by [Ming] Jiang Guan 江瓘 (1503-1565), supplemented by Jiang Yingsu 江應宿, firstly published in 1591, reprinted in 1971/1994, Taipei: Hongye shuju, p.243; *Song yuan ming qing mingyi lei’an* 宋元明清名醫類案 (Famous Physicians’ Classified Medical Cases from the Song to the Qing), ed. by Yao Ruoqin 姚若琴 & Xu Hengzhi 徐衡之 (1933/1971), Taipei: Xuanfeng chubanshe, ‘Yu Tianmin’s 虞天民 medical cases’, pp.11-12.

<sup>83</sup> Cited from Cai Wenju 柴文學, Cai Binxin 蔡濱新 ed. (1991), *Zhongyi shimeng bianzhi* 中醫釋夢辨治 (Interpretations, diagnoses and treatments of Dreams in Chinese medicine), Beijing: Xueyuan chubanshe, p.247.

disorders to mental/emotional disturbance in late imperial China.<sup>84</sup> Meanwhile, ‘dreaming sex (with demon)’ in the medical view was seen as a kind of women’s mental derangement often coming alongside their sense of shame. Just as Zhang Jiebin pointed out, ‘dreaming sex’, if aroused internally, was hard to be found since most women were unwilling to speak out.<sup>85</sup> This explains one of the difficulties in clinical experiences when a male physician encountered with a female patient who had suffered from this kind of affliction. No wonder many physicians in late imperial China did complain that communication with female patients is difficult.<sup>86</sup>

Though scholarly medical practitioners often regarded sexual activity in marriage as one of the solutions for curing ‘sexual dreams with demons’, over indulgence in sex and lust was also seen as dangerous and even fatal. The story of *Jinpingmei* 金瓶梅 (Golden Lotus) is a good example. In this late Ming fiction renowned for its spectacle of a local gentry’s life in 16<sup>th</sup> century China, many characters are depicted to have greatly indulged in sensual pleasures in their daily activities. Ironically, however, the plots that the central household often suffered from sexual diseases and reproductive dysfunction<sup>87</sup> also show that unrestrained desires often give rise to misery: either illnesses, or death.

The implicit affinity of medical attitudes with social values towards sex and marriage in late imperial China has a parallel to mediaeval Europe. Some physicians in the Middle Ages inclined to think that abstinence of sex was unhealthy because

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<sup>84</sup> When discussing the problem of ‘losing semen’, coincidentally, Hugh Shapiro also noted a growing emphasis on the emotions as a source of illness during the late twelfth and early thirteenth century. See his ‘The puzzle of Spermatorrhoea in Republican China’, *Positions*, 6(3): 558.

<sup>85</sup> *Jingyue quanshu* 景岳全書 (Dr. Zhang’s Comprehensive Work), by [Ming] Zhang Jiebin 張介賓 (1563-1640), firstly published in 1624, reprinted in 1991/1997, Beijing: Renmin weisheng chubanshe, p.872.

<sup>86</sup> Bray, Francesca (1995), ‘A deathly disorder: understanding women’s health in late imperial China’, in *Knowledge and the Scholarly Medical Traditions*, ed. by Don Bates, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp.239-240.

<sup>87</sup> Please see the detailed analyses in Cullen, Christopher (1993), ‘Patients and healer in late imperial China: evidence from the *Jinpingmei*’, *History of Science*, 31, pp.107-108.

‘seed retention’ as ‘humoural imbalance’ could harm the body. Masturbation therefore was recommended for celibate men to avoid the detrimental effects of seed retention. For a widow or a virgin suffering from ‘seed retention’, they would suggest a midwife to rub the genitals until her seed is ejected.<sup>88</sup> Despite this seemingly flexible attitude, however, medical practitioners and writers in mediaeval Europe actually presented very limited challenges to prevalent family interest and social value. On the one hand, they offered special means, such as prescribing herbal recipes for continence, for treating particular sexual disorders and preventing a woman from committing adultery. On the other hand, midwives usually played the roles of testing female virginity by visual inspection. By providing certification of a (unmarried) woman’s purity medical practitioners not only assisted in the elevation of female virginity but also helped in guaranteeing the legitimacy of marriage arrangement.<sup>89</sup> Similarly, pre-modern Chinese physicians also inclined to support the secular value of marriage as a solution for sexual dysfunction in addition to medical prescriptions. There exists no evidence indicating their opinions about masturbation, though.

### **Women’s ‘Demonic Foetuses’ and Infertility**

In some medical cases, the result of ‘dreaming sex with demons’ could be dangerous because it may give rise to ‘demonic foetuses’ (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>90</sup> Just as Frank Dikötter

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<sup>88</sup> Cadden, Joan (1993), *Meanings of Sexual Difference in the Middle Ages: Medicine, Science, and Culture*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p.267, 275.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, p.263.

<sup>90</sup> A recent survey of this topic is Wu Yili (2002), ‘Ghost fetuses, false pregnancies, and the parameters of medical uncertainty in classical Chinese gynecology’, *Nan Ni*, 4.2: 170-206.

suggests, in the perspective of a holistic universe ‘the belief in spontaneous generation was closely linked to the power of analogy, as inanimate matter was metamorphosed into animate creatures and organic disorders could mutate into an infestation.’<sup>91</sup> There had existed similar medical cases that exemplify the relationship between ‘spontaneous generation’ and ‘analogous power’ in Chinese history.

*Qixiao liangfang* 奇效良方 (Good Prescriptions with Amazing Efficacy, 1449), for instance, denotes that ‘sexual dreams’ of widows and nuns may result in their ailments of ‘concretions and conglomerations’ (zhengjia 癥瘕) or ‘demonic foetuses’.<sup>92</sup> It is also recorded that in the Yuan dynasty a young lady who had visited a temple dreamed about sexual intercourse with a ‘spirit/demon’, which later brought about her ‘demonic foetus’. The famous physician Hua Shou 滑壽 (ca.1304-1386) finally cured her illness.<sup>93</sup>

A remarkable case of both ‘sexual dreams’ and ‘demonic foetuses’ is found in the case book of Lu Fu 呂復 in the Ming times. It says:

A young unmarried woman had been suffering from ‘no menstruation’ (bu yue 不月). Various physicians were sent in, yet none of them could tell what had happened to her. [Mr. Lu] checked and found that her belly was as large as if pregnancy. [He] examined her face, reading her pulses, finding them quite unusual. Hence he told her: ‘if your ailment is not caused by strange dreams, then it must be caused by demonic possession.’ The lady did not reply promptly. She entered her

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<sup>91</sup> Quoted from Dikötter, Frank (1998), *Imperfect Conceptions: Medical Knowledge, Birth Defects and Eugenics in China*, London: Hurst & Co., pp.57-58.

<sup>92</sup> See: *Gujin tushu jicheng yibu quanlu* 古今圖書集成醫部全錄, v.15, pp.26-27.

<sup>93</sup> *Xu mingyi lei'an* 續名醫類案 (Supplement to Famous Physicians’ Classified Medical Cases), by [Qing] Wei Zhixiu 魏之琇, firstly published in 1770, reprinted in 1971, Taipei: Hongye chubanshe, p.604.

chamber and told her old maid: ‘last summer I passed by a temple. In its cloister I felt my heart “moved” (dong 動) when seeing a wooden statue of a deity in the twilight. At that night, I dreamt about a man just same as that one I had met in the evening. I hence slept, having intimate relationship with him and later “was affected by the illness” (gan bing 感病). I was too ashamed to tell people. What the doctor said is exactly true.’ The old servant later told the doctor about it. Lu said: ‘the lady’s face looks partly red and partly pale; her pulses appear suddenly large and suddenly small. [They are simply the symptoms of] ‘demonic influences’ (sui 祟).’ As the cause of her ailment was in accordance with her symptoms, which appeared vigorous yet actually not very critical, [Mr. Lu] then used ‘decoction of peach seed’ (taoren jian 桃仁煎) for purgation. She lost blood lumping as if six or seven pieces of pig livers, each of them with holes as if fish’s eyes. She was cured finally.<sup>94</sup>

By this interesting case recorded by the third person rather than Lu himself, we are provided some clues to perceive further the encounter between pre-modern Chinese male healers and their female patients regarding sex disorders. The first question that comes in my consideration is the patient’s social status. Though no name was recorded in this case, it seems likely that this female patient must come from a good family which could afford at least one old maid, as well as calling in several doctors. Unlike most women who were bound to their households and domestic affairs then, moreover, this lady seems to have enjoyed certain freedom of travelling (probably

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<sup>94</sup> Yao Ruoqin 姚若琴 & Xu Hengzhi 徐衡之 eds. (1933/1971), *Song yuan ming qing mingyi lei'an*

with her family or in accompany with other women). Her conducts obviously ran counter to the moral precepts admonishing women to stay at home or stay away from temples.<sup>95</sup> As the patient's demonic illness was closely linked to the place that she had visited,<sup>96</sup> it explains her strong sense of shame – she might suppose that her illness was merely resulted from her improper visit to the temple and lustful thoughts for men. It might become scandalous since her sexual dreams with the anthropomorphic demon/deity had stigmatised her body by 'demonic foetus'. After all, the worse thing is that she had to expose her implicit love sickness and afflicted body to a male, elite, authoritative stranger! Under the scrutiny of male moralistic medical gaze, her sense of shame and anxiety thus became duplicated, partly from self-conscious blame, and partly from worry about potential social charges.

Apart from 'demonic foetuses', paradoxically, 'dreaming sex with demons' sometimes may result in sterility. In the Tang dynasty, Sun Simiao 孫思邈 indicated that 'dreaming sex with demons' is one of the twelve diseases leading to 'sterility' (jue chan 絕產).<sup>97</sup> In his medical experiences, Zhang Congzheng 張從正 (ca.1156-1228) found a woman who had dreamt about 'sex with ghosts and deities' and 'scenes of temple and underworld' for fifteen years could not be pregnant during this period. Not until her malady had been correctly diagnosed as 'an ailment of phlegm' and properly

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宋元明清名醫類案, 'Lu Cangzhou's 呂滄洲 medical case records', pp.5-6.

<sup>95</sup> The reason why women should stay away from temples was possibly because their body was thought as 'unclean' or 'polluted' due to their menstruation, which might defile gods and spirits. Meanwhile, in a number of vernacular novels deserted temples in wild fields were frequently depicted as dangerous places in which strange stories about spirits and ghosts often happened.

<sup>96</sup> Li Jianmin 李建民 has surveyed to the relation between demonic illnesses and their locations. See Li, Jianmin (1994), 'Suibing yu "changsuo": chuantong yixue dui suibing de yizhong jieshi' 崇病與「場所」: 傳統醫學對崇病的一種解釋 (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>97</sup> *Qianjin yaofang* 千金要方 (Essential Prescriptions Worth of A Thousand), by [Tang] Sun Simiao 孫思邈, dated in 651, reprinted in 1993/1996 as *Qianjin fang* 千金方, Beijing: Huaxia chubanshe, p.53.

healed by phlegm-expelling treatment, did she conceive.<sup>98</sup> Although its naturalistic view of looking at ‘demonic fetuses’, namely, phlegm obstruction, seems to rival the given medical explanations, this newly rising aetiology for varied diseases in the Jin Yuan dynasties continued to influence a number of later medical works, as I have mentioned elsewhere.<sup>99</sup> For example, Qian Guobin 錢國賓, a doctor in the Ming times, once diagnosed a woman’s ‘demonic fetus’ as resulting from phlegm. Accordingly, he cured her by using a recipe for purging phlegm. In this case the female patient also showed a strong sense of shame for her ‘sexual dreams’ and ‘demonic fetuses’.<sup>100</sup>

As for the links between sex, dreams, demons and reproduction, again, mediaeval Europe provides an interesting comparison. By then certain European including Thomas Aquinas and Caesarius did believe that demons can produce certain natural effects on the human senses because of their diabolical manipulation of seed. That is, ‘demons collect all wasted human seed, and from it fashion for themselves human bodies’.<sup>101</sup> Meanwhile, it seems to have been suspected that the seeds gathered from nocturnal emission can be used by demonic incubus to impregnate a human woman – unless the devil knew that there was sufficient generative virtue in the seed. Basically demons were thought unable to generate offspring of their own. Nevertheless, based on the assumption that ‘the *succubi* and *incubi* of the high Middle Ages possess no fixed sexual identity’ it seems possible that ‘a demon would first pose as a succubus, garnering the unsuspecting human male’s seed, next would

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<sup>98</sup> *Rumen shiqin* 儒門事親 (Treating Parents in Confucian Household), by [Jin] Zhang Congzheng 張從正 (c.1156-1228), in *Gujin tushu jicheng yibu quanlu* 古今圖書集成醫部全錄, v.15, p.30.

<sup>99</sup> Hsiu-fen Chen (2003), ‘Medicine, society, and the making and madness in imperial China’, Chapter 2, section 4.

<sup>100</sup> *Xu mingyi lei'an* 續名醫類案 (Supplement to Famous physicians’ Classified Medical Cases), p.605.

<sup>101</sup> Elliott, Dyan (1999), *Fallen Bodies: Pollution, Sexuality, and Demonology in the Middle Ages*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, pp.33.

transport it at dizzying speed (so none of the heat of its generative virtue would be lost), and then would shape shift into a male-seeming incubus. In this form it would impregnate a woman'.<sup>102</sup> Moreover, 'it is precisely the unstable sexual identity of the predatory demon stalking the cleric that makes this scenario a compelling *figura* for the cleric subjected to unwelcome emission'.<sup>103</sup> In this regard, semen stealing, metamorphosis and reproduction become significant aspects that characterize erotic dreams in religious contexts in mediaeval Europe.

An Indian case in the late second millennium B.C.E. was rather different from the previous examples. In this case 'incubus'<sup>104</sup> was thought to bring disease to a woman's unborn child, i.e., miscarriage, thus had to be driven away by a prayer to the fire-god. According to a recent research, the theme of demonic attack causing miscarriage also occurs frequently in other Indian texts.<sup>105</sup> This example and its counterparts in pre-modern China and mediaeval Europe as discussed above unveil culturally diversified attitudes towards sexual dreams with demons.

## **Dreaming Sex in Popular Belief and Literature**

Pre-modern Chinese medical opinions of 'sexual dreams (with demons)' are largely echoed by their counterparts in popular literature. A great number of *biji* 筆記 in late imperial China reflected fruitful contemporary observations of 'men's sex with fox spirits, chicken fairies and snake deities', which usually brought to dreamers

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<sup>102</sup> Ibid..

<sup>103</sup> Ibid., p.34.

<sup>104</sup> I quote this Latin term from Dominik Wujastyk's work on demonic illnesses in ancient India (see the next footnote). Due to my restricted knowledge relating to that context, certainly I am not qualified to indicate what the original term in Sanskrit should be

<sup>105</sup> Wujastyk, Dominik (1999), 'Miscarriages of justice: demonic vengeance in classic Indian medicine', in *Religion, Health and Suffering*, ed. by John R. Hinnells and Roy Porter, London and New York: Kegan Paul International, pp. 256-275, esp. p.258-259.

either good fortune (e.g. longevity) or misfortune (e.g. ‘demonic foetuses’).<sup>106</sup> Wilt Idema also points out that many popular Chinese novels display men’s ‘obsessional fear of losing one’s vital powers through the loss of one’s semen’.<sup>107</sup> In fact, the theme of human sexual intercourse with demons/deities had long been prevailing in popular beliefs and folklore. One of the most notorious examples might be the spirits/demons of Wutong 五通,<sup>108</sup> whom were feared because they would force women to comply with their sexual demands. In the Jiangnan area, especially in Hangzhou 杭州, the custom of worshiping Wutong spirits could be traced back as early as the Song dynasty.<sup>109</sup> According to a twelfth century source, Wutong, the five *incubi*-like goblins, often changed themselves into handsome noblemen to seduce women in dreams. Once they began liaison with married women, interestingly, they would not allow the husbands to sleep with their wives again – in a certain case they threw a husband out of bed or even locked him out of the chamber! When being possessed by the demons, some women fell down as if drunk or dead and remained up to a month in a state of catalepsy before revival. Others who tried to resist the demons’ approaches would fall ill. Some of them went crazy and remained mentally deranged forever. The rest of them, in contrast, turned into mediums whom people then call ‘immortals’ (xian 仙).<sup>110</sup> Under the influence of anecdotes and folktales,

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<sup>106</sup> See, for example, *Gengsi pian* 庚巳篇, by [Ming] Lu Can 陸燾 (1494-1551); *Kezuo zhuiyu* 客座贅語, by [Ming] Gu Qiyuan 顧啓元 (1565-1628); both are published together in 1987 by Beijing: Zhonghua shuju. See: pp.24-25, 36, 46-47, 66, 90, 233.

<sup>107</sup> 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>108</sup> Although they were commonly called ‘shen’ 神 (deities, spirits), Wutong were in fact more like monsters or goblins with ugly feature and dwarflike body. They could appear as monkeys, shaggy dogs, or frogs. More importantly, they had only one leg.

<sup>109</sup> *Xihu youlan zhiyu* 西湖遊覽志餘 (Additional Remarks on Travel in the West Lake), compiled by Tian Rucheng 田汝成 (1500-1563?), typeset based on the edition during the reign of Jiajing 嘉靖 (1522-1566), reprinted in 1980, Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, juan 26, p.476.

<sup>110</sup> Most of these descriptions are based on *Yi jian zhi* 夷堅志 (Records of Hearsay) written by Hong Mai 洪邁 (1123-1202). My reference is to Cedzich, Ursula-Angelika (1995), ‘The cult of the Wu-t’ung/Wu-hsien in history and fiction: the religious roots of the *Journey to the South*’, in David

many people of low social strata did believe that the five goblins could bring ailments or death as blame to those who disobeyed their will or simply insulted them.<sup>111</sup> Moreover, these spirits were also thought to be responsible for demonic pregnancies and monstrous birth. That is, women allegedly involved with Wutong might give birth to monkeys, pigs, or lumps of flesh.<sup>112</sup> Despite their disgraceful misconduct, paradoxically, Wutong spirits were regarded as the gods of wealth and came to be widely worshipped in Jiangnan especially during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. People believed that they demanded sexual favours in return for the endowment of riches.<sup>113</sup> Threat of sex and lure of wealth thus became a dilemma in the popular cult of Wutong in late imperial China.

In contrast, *Jinpingmei* contributes a fascinating account about a widow's sexual dreams. In this fiction, the heroine Li Pinger 李瓶兒 was described to have an erotic dream of 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. She became gradually weary, lost appetite, and kept lying in her bed all the time. Later, a physician was called in. He diagnosed the lady's symptoms – mutual struggle between *yin* and *yang*; periodic cold and fever; melancholy, etc. – as the illness of 'dreaming sex with demons'. By reading her 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

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Johnson ed., *Ritual and Scripture in Chinese Popular Religion: Five Studies*, Dexter, Michigan: Chinese popular culture project, pp.166-167, 195, 199, 201. For similar records about Wutong, please also see: *Gengsi pian*, juan 5, pp.51-53; *Xihu youlan zhiyu*, juan 26, p.476.

<sup>111</sup> The 18<sup>th</sup> century work *Zi bu yu* 子不語 records a story in which a man finally died because he had humiliated the spirits of Wutong with an improper way. See: *Zi buyu quanji* 子不語全集 (Censored by Confucius: A Complete Collection), by Yuan Mei 袁枚 (1716-1798), reprinted in 1987, Shijiazhuang, Hebei: Hebei renmin chubanshe, juan 8, p.141.

<sup>112</sup> Cedzich, Ursula-Angelika (1995), 'The cult of the Wu-t'ung/Wu-hsien in history and fiction: the religious roots of the *Journey to the South*', p.167.

<sup>113</sup> For discussion in length, see: von Glahn, Richard (1991), 'The enchantment of wealth: the god

illness from developing into the disease of ‘bone steaming’ (guzheng 骨蒸), a medical remedy was prescribed and finally cured her illness.<sup>114</sup> Obviously, the novel’s descriptions to the illness of love sickness and dreaming sex as well as their symptoms did not go beyond the contemporary medical terminology as discussed before.

Similar evidences are given in Qing novels. *Liaozhai zhiyi* 聊齋誌異 (Liaozhai’s Records of the Strange), a renowned novel of ‘record of strange’ (zhigui 志怪), portrays a number of stories about dreams, fox fairies and the theft of *qi* by sexual intercourse. *Hongloumeng* 紅樓夢 (The Dream of the Red Chamber; The Story of the Stone), another no less popular early Qing fiction, also depicts in its story one of the characters, Jia Rui 賈瑞, died shortly after ‘dreaming sex with “demons”’.<sup>115</sup>

In these aforementioned popular literary works, the relationship between sexual dreams, emotions and potential dangers are clearly displayed. Despite their somewhat different focus on gender, the ideas that sex, dreams, emotions, illnesses, even death are interrelated seem to be shared by both medical healers and literary writers. In sixteenth and seventeenth century Jiangnan, with the distinctively increasing prominence of the cult of *qing* 情 (feeling; sentiment; emotion, love) in literary and domestic life, greater weight were placed on the purely affective dimensions of dreams.<sup>116</sup> As a result, the causal relationship between thoughts and illness was frequently discussed by various people and might appear in a non-medical

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Wutong in the social history of Jiangnan, *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, 51:2, pp.651-714.

<sup>114</sup> *Quanben jinpingmei cihua* 全本金瓶梅詞話 (The Critical Comments on Poems in *Jinpingmei* in the Complete Edition), by anonymity, firstly published in 1600, reprinted in 1982/1991, Hong Kong: Taiping shuju, pp.442-443.

<sup>115</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>116</sup> Ko, Dorothy (1994), *Teachers of the Inner Chambers: Women and Culture in Seventeenth-century China*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, p.18, 110-112.

book.<sup>117</sup>

Generally, in pre-modern China both men and women were thought to be vulnerable to invasion of pathogenic *qi* or ‘evil spirit’ while dreaming. Although the number of records of men’s ‘sexual dreams’ is quite equivalent to women’s in literary works, however, medical works written by male scholarly physicians tended to indicate that female bodies regulated by Blood and emotion are more susceptible to demonic invasions. In this regard, the difference between ‘masculinity’ and ‘femininity’ was unequivocally delineated. The gender aspect of medical practitioners and medical theories may require a more careful examination and exploration in the future.<sup>118</sup>

## Conclusion

From an overall view, this paper initially introduces the medical understanding of dreams and sexual dreams in the time of the *Huangdi neijing*, and the ideas of ‘women’s sexual dreams’ in contrast to ‘men’s losing semen/vital essence’ deployed in the medical view of ‘*xulao*’ in the Latter Han dynasty. Then its focus shifts to the demonological interpretations of ‘having sex with demons (in dreams)’ appearing in mediaeval Chinese medicine. In addition to the dualistic aetiology of this illness – the naturalistic explanations of ‘deficient consumption’ and ‘cold damage’, and the supernatural outlooks of ‘demonic invasion’ – ‘dreaming sex with demons’ had become one of women’s ‘miscellaneous illnesses’ because of the categorization of

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<sup>117</sup> For the example of *Mengzhan yizhi* 夢占逸旨 (A Treatise on Dream Interpretation) by [Ming] Chen Shiyuan 陳士元 (16<sup>th</sup> century), see: Zeitlin, Judith T. (1993), *Historian of the Strange: Pu Songling and the Chinese Classic Tale*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, pp.154-155.

<sup>118</sup> The following work may serve as a useful reference for this issue: Grant, Joanna (1997), ‘Wanji’s *Shishan Yi’an*: Aspects of Gender and Culture in Ming dynasty Medical Case Histories’, Ph.D. Thesis, SOAS, University of London, U.K..

*Zhubing yuanhou lun*. In the mean times, the worm-based aetiology of new epidemics, namely, ‘*shibing*’ and ‘*zhubing*’, had been arising since the Six Dynasties. Yet, not until the Tang dynasty was the disease ‘*chuanshi*’ (transmission from corpses 傳尸) 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>119</sup> although this method of treatment was gradually neglected in the late imperial periods.<sup>120</sup>

Corresponding to the diversifying aetiology of diseases since the Song dynasty, ‘inner causes’ became no less important than ‘outer causes’ and ‘neither inner nor outer causes’ in the medical discourses of diseases/illnesses.<sup>121</sup> Medical interpretations of ‘sexual dreams with demons’ as an illness gradually turned to be internally oriented. Despite the lasting aetiology of ‘demons’ and ‘worms’ in medical configuration, the factors of emotions and of mental activities increasingly dominated in the explanations of this illness. As such, imbalance of emotions, such as lovesickness, erotic thoughts and sexual frustration, became the new perspective of looking into ‘dreaming sex with demons’. To treat these problems most likely seen as ‘emotional disorders’, interestingly, none of counselling skills (except very few

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<sup>119</sup> Furth denotes that ‘(f)rom the very beginning in mediaeval 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 mediaeval 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’. See 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>120</sup> As for the decline of the ‘arts of bedchamber’, Van Gulik assigns one of the reasons to the ‘puritanical ideology of the neo-Confucianists who sought to suppress teachings about sex’. Furth, by contrast, believes that its decline could be owed to ‘the later medical literature, which constructed erotic experience as “naturally” serving birth while representing sexual techniques in pursuit of longevity as dangerous delusion.’ See: Furth, Charlotte (1994), ‘Rethinking Van Gulik: sexuality and reproduction in traditional Chinese medicine’, p.129-30, 141.

<sup>121</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 Pharmacology), Taipei: Wenjin chubanshe, pp.212-214.

cases<sup>122</sup>) but drug medication was frequently employed by the pre-modern Chinese practitioners.

Owing to the emerging gynecological theories since the Song ‘dreaming sex with demons’ was engendered as a likely female illness caused by women’s emotional disorder. It is noteworthy that the illness of ‘sexual dreams with demons’ later was connected to women’s ailments of reproduction. With the new medical interest especially after the Jin Yuan dynasties, ‘women’s dreaming sex with demons’ was thought to possibly lead to either their sterility, or ‘demonic foetuses’. ‘Sexual dreams’ as a female illness in contrast to male ‘losing semen/energy’ demonstrated a general anxiety towards problems of sex and reproduction in pre-modern Chinese societies. Some cases of ‘dreaming sex (with demons)’ were further stigmatised as resulting from patients’ behaviours and thought which could be morally judged as improper. It thus seems reasonable for me to assume that women’s ‘femininity’ in late imperial China was largely defined in terms of their sexuality and susceptibility to ‘evil influences’ in the elite medical views. By accessing and scrutinizing female patients, male scholarly doctors inevitably played a complicit role with the mainstream values of the society to censor women’s lust and sex.

In her highly acclaimed and widely cited work of anthropology, Mary Douglas points out the close link between ‘blood’ and the concepts of ‘pollution’ in certain cultures.<sup>123</sup> A similar idea is employed to explain cultural meanings of women’s blood and menstruation in Chinese societies.<sup>124</sup> In pre-modern Chinese medical writings, women in the cases of ‘polluted thoughts and corrupted behaviours’ were

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<sup>122</sup> For example, the cases recorded in Wu Kun’s *Yifang kao*. See my discussion before.

<sup>123</sup> Douglas, Mary (1966/2002), *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, London and New York: Routledge.

<sup>124</sup> Ahern, Emily Martin (1985), ‘The power and pollution of Chinese women’, in Arthur P. Wolf ed., *Studies in Chinese Societies*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, pp.269-290.

often 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 foetus’ as a kind of false pregnancy is dangerous and even fatal ‘production’.

Turn to a broader cultural context with a concern to the relationship between medical and religious perceptions of dreams. At a glance, the outlooks of Buddhism and Daoism to some extent look coordinated to Chinese medical theories of dreams because they all agreed with that dreams reveal boundaries between parallel worlds. Nevertheless, the discrepancy between them should not be ignored, either. As we know, the dreams that implies Buddhist teachings are often seen as one of the pathways leading to the ‘awakening’ and ‘truly ultimate reality’. But Daoism regards dreams (not in a bad sense) more likely as a medium of self-cultivation wherein the body as microcosm merges with macrocosm. Both of their ultimate concerns stress on sacred worlds – though with different goals such as ‘enlightenment’ and ‘longevity’. In contrast, Chinese medical theories usually define dreams as sorts of pathological indications. In this regard, the medical emphasis on the ideal of ‘no dream’ did not go far from a certain Daoist ultimate concern.<sup>125</sup>

As ‘no dream’ is often seen as a good sign in both Daoism and Buddhism, why were there so many dreams been recorded in their scriptures and documents? Daoism and Buddhism surely provide some explanations. For Daoists, the occurrence of demonic dreams and nightmares are owing to *sanshi* or other demonic agencies. Buddhists however state that bad dreams are either caused by internal factors, e.g. a dreamer’s own wills (no matter good or bad) rooted in consciousness, or external

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<sup>125</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, p.101.

factors, e.g. sacred power or demonic influence.<sup>126</sup>

In medical observations, to be sure, the bounds between naturalistic and supernatural categories were not always clear but sometimes blurred. It may be improper to underestimate the influences of supernatural explanations in pre-modern Chinese medical theories and practices as a whole. As Keith Thomas puts it, ‘Satan was a convenient explanation for strange diseases, motiveless crimes or unusual success’ in early modern England. ‘Feelings of guilt evoked by sexual dreams and nocturnal emissions could be assuaged by the reflection that an incubus or succubus have been at work’.<sup>127</sup> By the same token, we may assert that the excuse of ‘demons’ and ‘deities’ might play a similar role in pre-modern Chinese discourses of illnesses.

Apart from the aspect of medical mentality in general, the aetiology of ‘demonic illnesses’ was also diversified to various types of ‘medical practitioners’ in traditional societies. As we know, the definitions of ‘medical profession’ had remained ambiguous for long before the modern era. Different kinds of healers – ranging from literate physicians, religious healers, shamans, and drug-peddlers, to midwives – all played a part in the medical terrain. It is hence not surprising for us to see a pluralistic perspective of diseases advocated in the *Jinpingmei*, that is, ‘illness is assumed to be not only physical in nature, but also caused by cosmic, demonic, and karmic factors.... non-physical problems were not considered by physicians to be “imaginary” or “psychological”, nor were specialists in those other fields considered to be purveyors of “superstitions”’.<sup>128</sup> Consequently, the triumph of a completely ‘iconoclastic’ medical view over a ‘superstitious’ one did not happen up until the late imperial

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<sup>126</sup> Please refer to *Youyang zazu* 酉陽雜俎, by Duan Chengshi 段成式, Wanli 萬曆 edition, reprinted in 1981, Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, former part, juan 8, p.84. Due to the complexity of Buddhist interpretations of dreams, I will not be able to probe it in depth here.

<sup>127</sup> Thomas, Keith (1971/1997), *Religion and the Decline of Magic: Studies in Popular Beliefs in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth- Century England*, London: Penguin, p.568.

<sup>128</sup> Thompson, Laurence G. (1990), ‘Medicine and religion in late Ming China’, *Journal of Chinese*

period.<sup>129</sup> Instead, an explanation integrated with both naturalistic and supernatural implications had continued to prevail in Chinese medical systems at least before the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

For instance, despite his clear distinction between ‘phlegmatic diseases’ and ‘demonic disorders’, the symptoms of both had been constantly confused by people, Zhu Zhenheng (1282-1358) never denied the existence of *xie* 邪 (evils) as a cause in the aetiology of diseases.<sup>130</sup> Similarly, Xu Dachun 徐大椿 (1693-1771) also stated:

As for illnesses being caused by demonic possession, foolish people would believe that it is because demons and deities are able to bring disasters to human being; rational people in contrast would think that there must be no demons and deities to evoke such illnesses. Both of them are just untrue. What demons and deities refer to is similar to the *xie* 邪 (pathogens) of Wind, Cold, Summer-heat, and Damp. When one’s ‘defensive *qi*’ (weiqi 衛氣) is depleted, one may be attacked by Cold; when one’s ‘nourishing *qi*’ (yingqi 營氣) is depleted, one may be attacked by Heat; when one’s ‘spiritual *qi*’ (shenqi 神氣) is depleted, one may be attacked by demons. That is because the spirit of human being is belonging to *yang* 陽. When *yang* is attenuated, one may be possessed by demons. ... To deal with demonic [illnesses], one’s spirit should be filled up. If the illness is caused by phlegm,

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*Religions*, 18: 45-59, esp. p.59.

<sup>129</sup> In his survey of *kewu* 客忤, Christopher Cullen holds a similar stance, that is, the ‘non-rationalistic discourse’ of this children illness had persisted in certain contexts of pre-modern times. See: Cullen, C. (2000), ‘The threatening stranger: *kewu* 客忤 in pre-modern Chinese paediatrics’, in *Contagion: Perspectives from Pre-modern Societies*, ed. by Lawrence I. Conrad and Dominik Wujastyk, Aldershot: Ashgate, pp.39-52.

<sup>130</sup> *Danxi yiji* 丹溪醫集 (Medical Collections of Mr. Zhu), written by [Yuan] Zhu Zhenheng 朱震亨 (1282-1358) and supplemented by his disciples, reprinted in 1993/1995, Beijing: Renmin weisheng

thought or fright, then it should be treated by seeking the cause first. ... Besides, there is also an ‘illness of violating demons and deities’ (chufan guishen zhi bing 觸犯鬼神之病). It may be cured by a ‘prayer’ (qidao 祈禱). Only in cases of ‘demons that seek revenges’ (yuan qian zhi gui 冤讎之鬼), ... it cannot be cured either by drug-therapy and acupuncture or by prayer.<sup>131</sup>

In this long passage, Xu attempted to bring a reasonable explanation to demonic illnesses. Unlike some neo-Confucianists who completely abandoned the popular conceptions of ghosts and deities, Xu appeared to choose an in-between stance, confirming the existence of demons and deities on the one hand, yet denying their supreme power leading to all kind of diseases on the other hand. In other words, Xu tended to ‘pathologize’ the given connotations of demons and deities by juxtaposing them and the environmental pathogens such as Cold, Heat, Damp, etc.. In so doing, the demons and deities in his views became more naturalism-oriented, affecting people mostly in case when they have suffered from physical and/or emotional insufficiency. Apart from the very few cases of ‘violating demons and deities’, therefore, Xu suggested that it is essential to look carefully where the illness really results from then prescribe proper treatments. Needless to say, the method of replenishing the body was recommended for the medical cause of ‘depletion’.

Both Zhu Zhenheng and Xu Dachun’s eclectic perspectives might represent one of the scholarly medical attitudes towards ‘demonic illnesses’. In their view, blind

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chubanshe, p.23, 361.

<sup>131</sup> *Yixue yuanliu lun* 醫學源流論, by [Qing] Xu Dachun 徐大椿 (1693-1771), in *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, reprinted in 1998, Taipei: Wuzhou chubanshe, *juan* 1, p.71-72. As for its English translation, see: Unschuld, Paul compiled and translated (1988), *Introductory Readings in Classical Chinese Medicine*, Dordrecht/Boston/London: Kluwer Academic Publishers, pp.94-95.

worship to demons and deities or sole appeal to religious rituals are not encouraged for healing diseases rooted in naturalistic factors. However, they may be useful for the real cases of ‘evils’ or ‘violating demons and deities’. Anyway, both naturalistic and supernatural explanations of diseases co-existed even in the late imperial period. Despite the frequent complaints from some officials and Confucian scholars who did not believe in supernatural power, people from all classes sometimes consulted *wu* 巫 in addition to physicians when being ill.<sup>132</sup> This fact indicates the complexities of social attitudes towards diseases and medicine which may deserve further scrutiny in the future.

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<sup>132</sup> Chao, Y’uan-ling (1995), ‘Medicine and society in late imperial China: a study of physicians in Suzhou’, Ph.D. dissertation of UCLA, Ann Arbor: UMI, pp.197-198.