This innovative book uses the lens of cultural history to examine the development of medicine in Qing dynasty China.

Focusing on the specialty of "medicine for women" (fuke), Yi-Li Wu explores the material and ideological issues associated with childbearing in the late imperial period.

She draws on a rich array of medical writings that circulated in seventeenth- to nineteenth-century China to analyse the points of convergence and contention that shaped people's views of women's reproductive diseases.

These points of contention touched on fundamental issues:

- How different were women's bodies from men's?
- What drugs were best for promoting conception and preventing miscarriage?
- Was childbirth inherently dangerous?
- And who was best qualified to judge?

Wu shows that late imperial medicine approached these questions with a new, positive perspective.