

FOREWORD

BY Z'EV ROSENBERG

Sun Simiao and the true Dào of Medicine

SHORTLY AFTER I BEGAN MY professional life in Chinese medicine more than forty years ago, I went to Bob Flaws' home in Boulder, Colorado to buy a few of his (then) xeroxed books, at the same time that Dr. Yeshe Dhonden, the Dalai Lama's physician, was giving a seminar on Tibetan pulse diagnosis (very similar to classical Chinese pulse methodology). The front piece to one of Bob Flaws' books was taken from Sun Simiao's medical ethics, reproduced here in Chapter 1, admonishing the physician to travel through mountains and snow to take care of patients. This short excerpt was a great inspiration

for my early Chinese medical practice. A few years later, Paul Unschuld's first translation of a Chinese medical ethics work was *Medical Ethics in Imperial China*, with a segment of the text taken from Sun Simiao's *Beiji qianjin yaofang* 《備急千金要方》. A few years later, I taught a 'Medical Ethics' seminar based on his book at Pacific College of Oriental Medicine in New York. I remember some of the students being overwhelmed by Dr. Sun's admonitions, and I was asked by one student at the end, "how do you expect us to live up to this"? I answered, quoting Ralph Waldo Emerson, that one needed to "hitch one's wagon to a star," in other words, having elevated goals would elevate our practice, even if we ourselves did not rise up to those heights.

In 1995, Ken Rose and Yuhuan Zhang released *Who Can Ride the Dragon* through Paradigm Publications, which contained an excerpt from Sun Simiao's Chapter 1, titled "Prerequisites for the Study of Medicine." It was through Ken Rose that I was connected with Dr. Sabine Wilms and her work. Since that time, Sabine and I have taught three retreats together in Taos, N.M., where she used to live, working with Paradigm Publications there. In these seminars, we combined field study, in the form of wildcrafting and preparing medicinal herbs from the mountains and valleys, with textual study, namely reading work from Sun Simiao, as well as the *Huangdi neijing* 《黃帝內經》, the *Nanjing* 《難經》, and specifically Sabine's translation of *Shennong bencaojing* 《神農本草經》, which we used as our guide for finding medicinal herbs and classifying them according to Qi, flavor, and specific applications in the context of the environment in

which they were harvested.

Now, many years later, Dr. Sabine Wilms has produced a definitive volume of Sun Sumiao's medical ethics, based on the first two chapters of his grand opus, *Beiji qianjin yaofang*: the essays "On the Professional Practice of the Great Doctor" and "On the Sublime Sincerity of the Great Doctor," along with Sabine's commentaries and translation notes. In the past few decades, our flexibility and understanding of classical Chinese language and our translation and interpretation skills have been broadened, deepened, and enhanced, thanks to the work of such excellent translators as Sabine. Dr. Wilms is undoubtedly the Western world's expert on Sun Simiao's medical works, having written her dissertation on his work for her Ph. D. degree at the University of Arizona.

We now have the ability to publish works not as "standard texts" designed to pass licensing exams, but as a template for dialogue on important understanding and applications of our foundational texts. Chinese medicine is more than therapeutics and diagnostics; it is also a way of life and philosophy, in other words, both practical and literate. But most importantly, Chinese medicine is about the accumulation of wisdom of the 老中醫 *lao zhongyi*/aged or experienced physicians, and passing on that wisdom to students and patients. It is wisdom that heals, wisdom that redeems, and wisdom that educates and allows up to fulfill our unique human potential.

I have spent my 40 plus years of study and clinical practice "hanging out" with Sun Simiao and am grateful to finally see this essential part of his masterwork published with the original Chinese text, translation, and Sabine's

enlightening commentary. It makes my own medical journey even more fulfilling and enjoyable, and I feel recharged for several more years of living and practicing Chinese medicine.

May this essential text serve as a guidebook to a fulfilled life, for ourselves as doctors of Chinese medicine, as well as our family members, students, and patients.

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