

FOREWORD

The author of this book stood out from the many students I have taught. What made him remarkable was the extraordinarily heartfelt interest and curiosity with which he pursued his study of Chinese Medicine and its pertinent classical texts. It is highly commendable that he placed such importance on the classics, especially given their deteriorating status and the popular disregard for the great writings of the ancients. In a time when these important medical classics have been gradually downgraded to elective courses in prominent medical universities, it is this passionate pursuit of his studies that I find most gratifying.

The author's ardent study of the classics has brought him close to the limits of the current understanding of Chinese Medicine classics, and this is amply evidenced in the pages of this manuscript. I am convinced that, having read this book, the reader will have a similar impression. Just as the author of this book says, the study of the classics serves as the foundation of the study of Chinese Medicine, and there is still nothing that can adequately substitute for this foundation. For this reason, if one desires to learn Chinese Medicine well, if one desires to attain the utmost heights of what this branch of learning has to offer, then one must emphasize the classical texts, its very foundation. "If you want to cross the sea to a distant shore, only a boat can take you there." This is something both ancient and modern masters alike have recognized as a necessity. There is no other way.

What sort of book is the *Shanghanlun* (Treatise on Cold Damage¹)? It is

1 For better readability, classical Chinese texts in later occurrences are referred to by their translations in italics (*Treatise on Cold Damage* in this case). Where the translation of a classical Chinese text is long, an abbreviated translation, also in italics, will be employed for later mentions of the work.

a monumental medical work that serves as a link between the past and the future; it is almost universally esteemed by the most eminent physicians as a most important piece of classical writing; it is “an axe that can fell a mountain”; it is a springboard into the Dao; and it is, most importantly in my estimation, a treatise that expounds upon the many difficult and complicated pathological conditions one may encounter as a physician. The importance of the *Treatise on Cold Damage* to Chinese Medicine is beyond doubt.

The *Treatise on Cold Damage*'s unique significance in this branch of knowledge has led it to become, at all times and in all places, a focus of attention for Chinese Medicine physicians. As far as the textual merits of the *Treatise on Cold Damage* go, members of Chinese Medicine circles still sigh with admiration and say that it is good beyond comparison. And yet, this author has produced a rare piece of writing in which profound meanings from the classics are handled in a simple, straightforward, and absorbing manner that is both unassuming and pleasant. Confucius said, “Youths are to be regarded with respect—who knows whether they might exceed their forebears?” These words are worth keeping in mind as we read this book.

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