

exercising humility (p.121), being kind and empathetic (p.95), treating patients fairly (p.93) and protecting patients' and colleagues' dignity (pp.111, 129).

Sūn expresses that wisdom occurs through processes that transcend our physical body and that Chinese medicine is a spiritual practice. We should be intentionally, actively virtuous and remember that we are rewarded in spiritual ways (p.123). Professional practice and the sublime sincerity of the great doctor are what is most enriching. These messages are still relevant to how we operate today as practitioners, particularly in the upholding of professional standards.

Why did it take centuries for Sūn Sīmiǎo's vision to become established? Sabine notes that change occurred when social circumstances were right (p.35). Learning more about this could inform future strategy as we continue to advance as a profession, overturn resistance to our paradigm and finalise matters of professional recognition. We have some information regarding factors that may have hindered Sūn's vision. Sabine outlines that he was likely not recognised as a professional medical physician at the time, and a strong model is required to implement change. It appears that Sūn's beliefs and values were not widely shared. Sabine states that his colleagues were likely to have considered his advice as 'revolutionary and impractical' (p.97). To embed change, a number of conditions need to be met: people need shared values and beliefs, a shared vision and access to resources, training and feedback.

We can develop and apply virtuous ethics in contemporary medical practice to support vulnerable patients. An example where this is greatly needed is in the IVF sector, where the patient's desire for a baby and the huge financial rewards for service providers can drive questionable behaviour and unethical

treatment. Sincerity in professional practice can limit unnecessary chaos, hurt and stress that might otherwise be experienced by practitioners and patients leading to complaints or issues around compliance. Healing-virtue power and medical ethics comes from developing good habits just like Sūn Sīmiǎo - self and social awareness, compassion, self-control, honesty and fortitude to speak out. The overall objective of Sūn was to alleviate suffering and ill-health within the bigger picture of preservation, cultivation and nurturing life to bring about harmonisation and enlightenment.

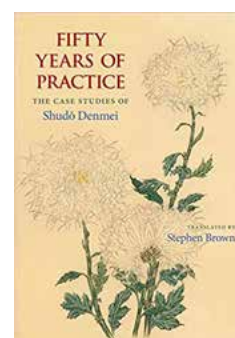
Sabine's translation and discussion can help each one of us navigate our professional and interpersonal journey. It has helped me to remember to intentionally take care of the heart, both of myself and my colleagues, to try to pacify escalating emotion - particularly anger/hatred (p.161), and to resolve demoralisation as this creates sabotage. Several of the scenarios I have witnessed could have been prevented. How? First and foremost, by knowing that there are complex factors that lead to difficult situations in governance and people displace their feelings and become resentful. Resilience, persistence, kind-heartedness and compassion are required. We can also make a considerate judgement of what to and what not to engage with. We do not always need to act - this is also wisdom (pp.57, 161).

From reading this book I realised that yì 意 refers not only to concentration, focus or intention and the ability to diagnose and treat a condition, but also to 'power of awareness', a mental capacity prior to thought, words or form. According to Rickett (in *Guanzi. Political, economic and philosophical essays from early China*. Volume Two, 1998) yì also refers to a sense of duty, doing the right thing in the right situation, which in

my opinion is central to the work of Sūn Sīmiǎo.

It is extraordinary to imagine that Sūn Sīmiǎo's advice is so ancient yet still so advanced for today. I highly recommend wherever you are in your journey of mastery of ethical practice that you join Sabine for this detailed exploration of medical virtue (醫德 yīdé), the great doctor (大醫 dàyī), scholar/Confucian physician (儒醫 rúyī), virtue power (德 dé) and virtuous actions in alignment with the dao (德行 déxíng), and so much more. Through her careful translation and engaging discussion Sabine connects us in spirit for the good of our profession, our health and the care of our patients.

Lianne Aquilina



### Fifty Years of Practice: The Case Studies of Shudo Denmei

Denmei Shudo  
Softback, 406 pages, \$49.95  
(Ebook \$34.96)

In the introduction to the English language edition of this book, the author shares two maxims that have guided his life and work: 'Heart is above knowledge and skill' and 'Forget oneself and serve others'. This new text is very much testament to the author living up to these expressions, such is the sheer generosity of spirit with which he shares the hard-won wisdom of his five decades of study and clinical practice.

Full disclosure - I am not a meridian therapy practitioner, although I have dabbled with Japanese approaches over many years, including learning *Shonishin* and utilising the root treatments of Meridian Therapy in clinic. The more I study the classic texts, the more I find the Japanese approach not only has great clinical utility, but is also eminently consistent with classical ideas about acupuncture. I have also devoured the author's previous book, *Introduction to Meridian Therapy*, to which in many ways this is the companion volume, further adding to the author's many English language publications, including articles in the *North American Journal of Oriental Medicine* and the book *Finding Effective Acupuncture Points*.

A significant part of the readability of Denmei Shudo's books is the self-effacing charm of his authorial voice. Despite his great skill and experience, he talks to the reader as practitioner to practitioner, without the grandiosity or esotericism to which exponents of traditional East Asian medicine (TEAM) are prone. In particular, the author is humble and honest about his own limitations, as well as those of acupuncture. This kind of information is clinical gold, especially for less experienced practitioners. I remember my undergraduate studies in acupuncture, in which serious diseases - such as multiple sclerosis, high blood pressure or fibroids - were often glibly differentiated into patterns alongside back pain and respiratory infections, as if the mere act of distinguishing them in this way meant that they could be easily treated by an acupuncturist. Many of us learn the hard way that some diseases can be extremely difficult to successfully treat. Even if one does not share such conclusions, it is hard to argue with the author's fifty years of clinical experience, and the integrity with which he sets out what he has

found to work or not. For example, in his section on atopic dermatitis, he acknowledges that whilst other practitioners seem to get good results (according to their published research papers), in his experience 'the results from acu-moxa are not so good'. Similarly, the section on cancer shows a practitioner at the height of his powers grappling with extremely difficult cases, with mixed - but refreshingly honest - results.

The cases in the book are grouped in broad medical categories such as 'Diseases of the eyes, ears and teeth' or 'Digestive disorders'. For each category the author gives a useful overview in which he shares with characteristic candour what he has learnt, providing personal experience of specific conditions (he is no stranger to health challenges) and sharing clinical nuggets that practitioners will be able to research and apply in clinic. Although ostensibly a book of case studies, the text goes much further than this. For example, the introduction presents the author's views on diagnosis - including important details on palpation - and treatment. Of particular interest is the section that describes the author's favoured needle technique, 'super rotation technique', in which the needle is barely inserted but stimulated with rapid back-and-forth rotation (there are Japanese language demonstrations on Youtube for the curious). The author also often summarises his learnings about specific conditions into clinical guidelines; for example, for asthma treatment his first clinical recommendation is to reduce needle stimulation: 'The secret to treating asthma is light stimulation.' For those who habitually elicit strong deqi sensations, such advice is surely worthy of consideration. As well as the classical meridian therapy approaches to treatment, various 'tricks of the trade' are presented that may be valuable 'bolt-ons' for practitioners

of other styles, such as the use of intradermal needles in 'axillary points' in the aforementioned asthma section. As well as material that relates specifically to case studies, there are also a number of 'Q&A' sections that discuss essential clinical questions such as 'Whether to treat one side or both sides', 'Retaining needles' or 'Amount of stimulation and healing reactions'.

As editor of the *Journal of Chinese Medicine* I am obliged to look at a lot of new publications, a job which can at times be onerous. Not so in the case of this book - nor indeed with any publications by Eastland Press - who remain in my book hands-down the best English-language publisher of TEAM texts in the world today. Their quality control is superlative, both in terms of which authors to publish and which texts they deem worthy of the effort. In the last 20 years of acupuncture publishing, this book is up there with Wang Juyi's *Applied Channel Theory in Chinese Medicine* as the most engagingly written, classically congruent and clinically valuable texts around. Whether or not you share Denmei Shudo's approach to acupuncture, his curiosity, diligence, rigour, humility and honesty mark him out as an exceptional practitioner and teacher. In a field such as acupuncture, where the subtlety inherent in the qi paradigm, coupled with the diversity of approaches available make deep understanding challenging, the sheer depth of clinical experience distilled into this text makes this book worthy of attention by all acupuncture practitioners.

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Daniel Maxwell



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