

Snake Oil

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Ji Hai

2019

Year of the *yin*-Earth Pig



*An Astro-Climatologic Handbook of Remedies:
Classical Chinese Medicine for Our Times*

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Fang Shi
Press

**Snake Oil: An Astro-Climatologic Handbook of Remedies:
Classical Chinese Medicine for Our Times**

Fang Shi Press is the publishing association of



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*To investigate through practice the wisdom of the ancients, in light of the spirit,
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Anthroposophy, and pedagogy.*

Snake Oil is an Astro-climatologic medical handbook annually produced for each New Year in the classical Chinese medical calendar system, adapted for our times. It offers detailed flavor and *qi*, herb and food suggestions taken from the ancient Chinese medical classics for the treatment of disease and disharmony in relation to changes and transformations expressed by celestial, atmospheric, and geological/geographical events, manifestation, or time-markers.



“Snake Oil” is a humorous term for those of us who practice Chinese herbal medicine. It is used today as a derisive term for anything that is seen as “unscientific” or intentionally fraudulent medical practice, or for medicine that is designed for profit rather than inspired by true intentions of promoting and sustaining health. Its origins supposedly come from Chinese laborers in the west who used a certain liniment for joint pain that became known as “Snake Oil.” The great irony is this: It was the western salesmen who usurped the benefits and profits of such a product (using false, useless, and sometimes harmful ingredients) – they called these hidden poisons or worthless potions “Snake Oil” to try to sell them at a high profit!

In ancient times, though there had been “secret ingredients” or a reluctance to disclose the actual dosage of each ingredient used (for dosage is in many ways the Master’s secret), the times of secrets ended with the birth of Chinese medicine. This occurred when the medicine became canonized in the *Han* and *Xin* (“New”) Dynasty, and this full disclosure of the secrets of medicine was a social, revolutionary deed.

Each formula was listed with ingredients, dosages, and exact preparation methods. Some formulas were boiled, some ground to powders, some rolled into honey, rice, molasses or water pills, some were soaked or boiled in alcohol, some made into pastes, oils, liniments, or syrups, and some were burnt on the skin. All of classical Chinese medicine became a medicine of preparation and formulation, and there was a specific method for each herb and each formula, even in the timing and preparation of plant and herb farming and cultivation – and though “snake gourd” was used, no snakes are listed in the classical *materia medica*.

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2019

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