

TCM Congress

3rd Scandinavian TCM Congress

„Chinese Medicine and the Fertile Spirit: Childhood, Nourishment and Long Life“



Sabine Wilms

Dr. Sabine Wilms has been studying the medieval Chinese medical author Sun Simiao and his treatment of the female body in early Chinese medicine intimately for a good decade and a half, since her days as a doctoral student at the University of Arizona. She currently divides her time between producing books on Chinese medicine, researching and lecturing about early Chinese culture and medical history, and living the good life in pursuit of the perfect goat cheese on her small farm in the mountains of Northern New Mexico.

Following a childhood in Tübingen and Würzburg, Germany, Dr. Wilms left Europe in 1988 for Taiwan to study modern and classical Chinese language and immerse herself in Asian culture. Two years later, after completing the "Zwischenprüfung" (a sort of German bachelor's degree) in Chinese and Japanese studies at the Julius-Maximilian-Universität in Würzburg, Germany, she received a scholarship to attend the University of Arizona in Tucson, Arizona, USA. She spent the next 12 years there, studying and teaching in the department of East Asian Studies under the direction of Prof. Donald Harper, with occasional research stints in Asia. Facilitated by a 6-month stay at the Academia Sinica in Taiwan, she received her Ph.D. in 2002, based on her doctoral dissertation titled "The Female Body in Medieval Chinese Medicine: A Translation and Interpretation of the 'Women's Recipes' in Sun Simiao's *Beiji qianjin yaofang*." In 2004, Sabine moved to Taos, New Mexico, for a position as lead editor, author, and translator of books on Chinese medicine for Paradigm Publications.

During this period, her fruitful cooperation with Nigel Wiseman resulted in the production of a number of books, such as *Jin gui yao lue: Essential Prescriptions of the Golden Coffer* (forthcoming in 2009), *Concise Introduction to Chinese Medicine* (forthcoming in 2009), and *Pathomechanisms of the Five Viscera* by Yan Shilin (separate books on the Heart, Liver, Lung, Spleen, and Kidney, 2005-2007), all published by Paradigm Publications.

Since then, Dr. Wilms has worked as an independent researcher, translator, and author. She has written a number of research articles in academic journals and books, such as "'Ten Times More Difficult to Treat': The Treatment and Interpretation of Female Bodies by Male Physicians in Medieval China" in *Nan Nü* 7/2 (2005); "The Transmission of Medical Knowledge on 'Nurturing the Fetus' in Early China" in *Asian Medicine: Tradition and Modernity* 2 (2005); "The Art and Science of Menstrual

Balancing in Medieval China" in Andrew Shail and Gillian Howie, eds., *Menstruation: A Cultural History* (Palgrave, 2005); and "Worth a Thousand in Gold: The Quest for Perfect Children in Early China" in Andreas Noll, ed., *Fertilität und Kinderwunsch* (Thieme, 2007).

More recently, it is with great pleasure that Dr. Wilms is able to offer her annotated translation of Sun Simiao's volumes on gynecology to the Chinese medicine community under the title *Bei ji qian jin yao fang: Essential Prescriptions worth a Thousand in Gold for Every Emergency: Volumes 2-4 on Gynecology* (The Chinese Medicine Database, 2007). She is currently busy translating the remainder of Sun's writings, as well as many other as yet un-translated marvels of early Chinese literature.

Given the quickly growing acceptance and popularity of CM practice in non-Asian countries, Dr. Wilms sees an urgent need to make the historical sources of Chinese medicine available to a wider audience of students, practitioners, patients, and academics. She has therefore dedicated the academic aspect of her life to this goal of clear and precise translations.