

《森林之灾与岐黄之祸》

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Doomed Forests Are TCM's Woe

by Zhu Guoben*

Translated by Chu Qian (with permission from the author)

TCM resources come from the nature; majorities of them are plant-based, therefore TCM is also called “Herbal Medicine”. The *Great TCM Dictionary* published in 1977 recorded 5767 ingredients, 4773 of which come from herbs, 740 from animals, 82 from minerals, as well as 172 composite-mixtures commonly used as single-ingredient such as Sheng Yao (Hydrargyrum Oxydatum Crudum) and Shen Qu (Medicated Leaven). In the last two decades, chemically synthesized drugs began to show limitations and adverse, toxicological effects. People's understanding of drugs took a detour before returning to the natural kingdom, hoping to find alternative solutions using green resources. This is also one of the reasons that the world is experiencing a craze for TCM and its drugs today.

Nevertheless, the green space today is completely different from 4000 years ago during Shennong's time. Studies have found that due to logging and ecological deterioration following the expansion of human activities, a great number of wild species were either extinct or endangered, affecting roughly 60,000 plant species to various degrees worldwide, at an estimated rate of one specie per day. In China, there are 28,000 vascular plant species, 2,800 of which are endangered or threatened. As forest fires in Greater Khingan Range and illegal logging in Southern China led to collateral damage, TCM resources often take the first hit. Trees with medicinal values like the Du Zhong (Cortex Eucommiae), Hou Po (Cortex Magnoliae Officinalis) and Huang Bo (Cortex Phellodendri) take 15 years from sprouting to maturation before they are stripped. Several decades are needed for the forests to recuperate despite immediate replenishment with younger trees. It's this decimation of forest resources that threatens TCM's very existence and development.

One day when we return to earth on a spaceship, what was picturesque and lush has turned into isolated patches of Huang Bo and Du Zhong, expropriated of their skins, standing feebly in the chilling wind. In the northwestern region, fighting for licorice root has left the field with grids of trenches, as if whips of cruelty were lashed on the face of the earth. TCM will be extinct; it will be antiquated. Our children no longer learn about Li Shizhen, let alone Bianque or Zhang Zhongjing. If that happens, will we regret the past when we could have spoken up and put down regulations; will we regret for not awaking ourselves in time?

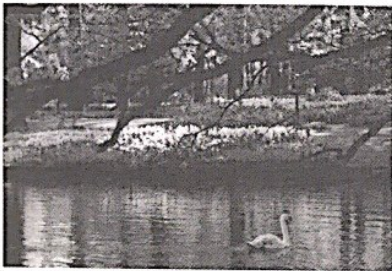
If so, then it's not too late; we are still trudging the path of hope. For whichever reason illegal logging is done, for livelihoods, for making a fortune or even venting one's grudges, it shows people are vicious and silly, unlawful and utterly weak. Therefore, they must be properly governed. To safeguard the resource, there needs to be more stringent laws and policies. For the future of TCM, we need to strategize to increase the number of herbal culture centers, and to consolidate the supply of expensive and rare ingredients. Currently, the chaos in the market is reflected by hearsays like “to get rich, sell the herbs,” “to be the county magistrate, first open an herbal factory.” To tackle this, National TCM Administration (NTCMA) is entitled to singular decision-making. It is not allowed for other governing parties to interfere, as much as it is inappropriate. Otherwise, people would have no herbs to consume, and the country would lose its treasure. If that happens, NTCMA won't bear to face the public!

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中药资源都是自然药物，尤其以植物药居多，故有“本草”之称。1977年出版的《中药大辞典》共载载中药5767味。其中包括植物药4773味，动物药740味，矿物药82味，以及传统作为单味药使用的加工制成品（如升药、神曲）等172味。近20年来，化学药品越来越暴露出它的局限性和毒副作用，人们对药物的认识兜了一个大圈子以后又开始注目于绿色的自然王国，以期在天然药物中寻找新的出路。这也是世界上出现“中医热”和“中药热”的原因之一。

但是，今天的绿色世界与4000多年前神农尝百草的时代相比，已经面目全非。据报道，由于人类生产活动的扩展和对自然的过度开发，伴随着森林毁灭和生态环境的恶化，大量野生植物已经灭绝或处于稀有、濒危状

态。地球上大约有6万种植物受到不同程度的威胁，平均每天就有一个种灭绝。我国属于高等植物的维管束植物约2.8万种，有2800种濒危或受到威胁。大兴安岭一把火，南方林区“一把刀”。“城门失火，殃及池鱼”，首先使中药资源受到严重破坏。像杜仲、厚朴、黄柏这样一些药用植物，都是高大的乔木。从种一棵幼苗到能够剥下皮来做药，一般需要15年时间。乱砍滥伐以后，即使马上补栽补种，也得过几十年才能恢复元气。中药资源的破坏，已经直接威胁到中医药学的存在和发展。

如果我们乘宇宙飞船从天外归来，看到过去风景如画、含苍叠翠的优美林区变成了童山秃岭，子遗的黄柏树、杜仲树被剥去树皮在寒风中悲枪萧瑟，大西北成片的甘草滩上只留下“甘草大战”开挖的纵横战壕，一如大地被巨鞭抽打留下的累累伤痕。中药已经绝迹，中医成为文物，孩童不复知李时珍，更遑论扁鹊仲景。斯时斯刻，会不会后悔当年没有疾呼高声，没有令行禁止，没有管乱活死，没有在应该醒来的时候睁开眼睛呢？

既如此，现在还把握在我们手中，希望还在自己的脚下。乱砍滥伐的动机，也许是为了温饱，为了致富，为了发泄，但都暴露了愚昧和卑劣，无法和无能，因此必须综合治理。对资源保护，应该有更强有力的法制和方法措施。从中医中药的伟大前途考虑，应该作出规划，建立更多更好的药用植物基地。对中药材的名贵、紧缺品种，争取实行专营。目前这种“要发财，靠药材”，“若要当县长，首先办药厂”的状态，反映了市场的混乱和管理的失控。对此，中医药主管部门有权统一政令，整饬纲纪，不允许多方插手，也不宜有几个婆婆共管。否则，人民吃不到中药，民族丢失了瑰宝，国家中医药管理局何以谢天下！

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