



CHINESE HERBAL MEDICINE

Materia Medica

REVISED EDITION

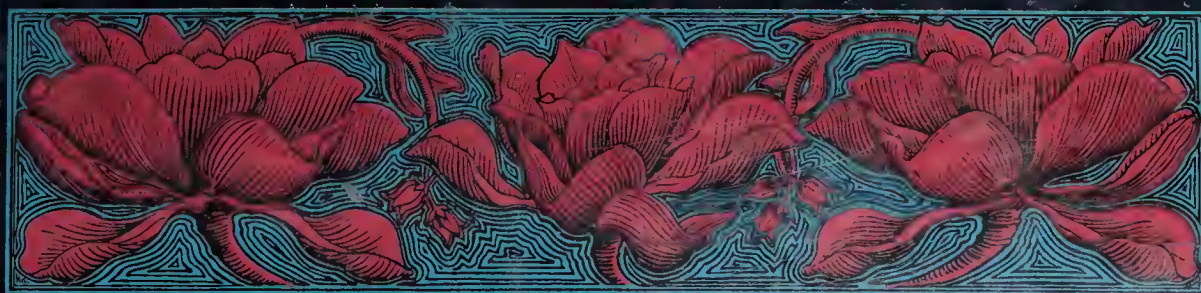
中药学

COMPILED AND TRANSLATED BY

DAN BENSKY & ANDREW GAMBLE

WITH TED KAPTCHUK

ILLUSTRATIONS ADAPTED BY LILIAN LAI BENSKY



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Essential to the practice of Chinese herbal medicine is a thorough understanding of its materia medica. *Chinese Herbal Medicine: Materia Medica (Revised Edition)* is an extensive sourcebook of information concerning the most commonly used medicinal substances in traditional Chinese pharmacology.

Compiled from leading textbooks in China, this revised edition presents an in-depth study of the characteristics of more than 470 herbs and medicinal substances. Meticulously illustrated, each herb is identified by its pharmaceutical and botanical names, together with its Chinese, Japanese, Korean and English common names. Relevant botanical and zoological information (family name, where grown, when harvested) is also provided.

Each entry details the traditional properties, actions and indications, principal combinations, dosage and contraindications of the herb, and contains summaries of abstracts regarding modern pharmacological and clinical research. The revised edition also provides brief descriptions of the qualities to look for in the appearance of each herb.

The materia medica are conveniently organized in chapters according to function. Chapter summaries compare and contrast herbs with similar properties. The introduction traces the historical development of Chinese herbal medicine, comparing it with the herbal traditions of other cultures. It also describes the preparation and dispensing of the medicinal substances. Extensive indices, bibliographies and cross reference tables provide easy access to information throughout the book.

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Dan Bensky and Andrew Gamble
with Ted Kaptchuk

Illustrations Adapted by
Lilian Lai Bensky

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To Cheryl, for everything

To Yu Li-Jung, Yun Dz-Yu, and Ma Guang-Ya
for their inspiration and guidance

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Preface to Revised Edition

THE FIRST EDITION OF THIS BOOK WAS published six years ago. Since that time there has been a tremendous growth of interest in Chinese herbal medicine. Throughout Europe and America more and more people are seriously studying and applying this East Asian tradition. Following the publication in 1990 of the companion volume to this book, *Chinese Herbal Medicine: Formulas & Strategies*, it was decided that a revision of our *Materia Medica* was warranted. We wanted to update the book and remedy some deficiencies brought to our attention by astute readers. In addition, we wanted a better 'fit' between the two books. To this end we have matched the capitalization scheme and terminology, dosage system, and herbal names in this book with those in *Formulas & Strategies*. We have also made the following changes:

- ♦ addition of some primary and addendum herbs, bringing the total number of substances discussed to over 470;

- ♦ addition of relevant botanical and zoological information (family name, where grown, when harvested);

- ♦ widening of the scope of the English names to include all those in common use, whether technically 'correct' or not;

- ♦ brief description of what qualities to look for in the appearance of each herb;

- ♦ addition of more alternate Chinese names and their placement in the main entry.

One of the important new sources we used is *Chinese Materia Medica (Zhong yao xue)* by Ling Yi-Kui, which is now the standard textbook on the subject in China. We used this text to supplement the "Actions and

indications," "Major combinations," and "Cautions and contraindications" sections in our book. It was also consulted for our heading, "Text in which first appeared." The updated botanical and zoological information came primarily from *Pharmacognosy of Chinese Materia Medica (Zhong yao jian ding xue)* by Ren Ren-An. For other new sources of information consulted for this revised edition, the reader is referred to the Translators' Bibliography.

Finally, we have added page number references to all of the cross-indices, which we believe makes them easier to use.

This edition of our *Materia Medica* is only a revision, and not a full-scale rewriting of the text. For example, there has been a tremendous amount of new research into the pharmacological actions of the herbs. We have not even attempted to update the research section of this book because of the enormity of such a task. Those readers specifically interested in pharmacological research should consult *Pharmacology and Applications of Chinese Materia Medica* (2 vol.), edited by Hson-Mou Chang and Paul Pui-Hay But (Singapore: World Scientific Publishing Company, 1987). The Chinese Medicinal Material Research Centre at the Chinese University of Hong Kong and the Oriental Healing Arts Institute of the U.S.A. both publish English-language bulletins with information that is more recent than that found in our book.

A number of people have been a great help in completing this work. We would first like to extend our thanks to Ma Shou-Chun, originally at the Chongqing Institute of Traditional Chinese Medicine and now at the Northwest Institute of Acupuncture and Oriental

Medicine in Seattle, for contributing his clear and elegant calligraphy for the herbal names. We also thank Anne H. Kubota for updating the Japanese transliterations of the herbal names as well as her help in proofreading. Cyong Jong-Chol and Yi-sang Yu provided the Korean transliterations of the herbal names. All errors are, as always, our own. We have all appreciated the forthright and helpful comments of colleagues such as Paul Karsten, Stuart Kutchins,

Subhuti Dharmananda, and Stephan Palos. John O'Connor again contributed valuable editorial assistance. My sincere thanks to my family—Lilian, Miles, and Jordan—for their endurance and support during the revision process.

Dan Bensky
Seattle, 1992

Preface to First Edition

WE HOPE THE APPEARANCE IN ENGLISH of this Chinese materia medica will contribute to a deeper understanding, utilization, and investigation of China's medical tradition in the West. Our intention is not to portray the gospel about China's ancient herbal tradition, but rather as accurately as possible to reflect the understanding of contemporary practitioners. The traditional Chinese medical system, including the herbal tradition, is not a monolithic body of "truth," but a group of ideas developed over more than two thousand years which attempt to deal effectively with the problems of health and disease.

The herbal component of the Chinese medical tradition is the product of a long process. It brought together folk remedies with the therapeutics of physician-literati. It synthesized the medicine of one dynasty and another, one place and another, and one thinker and another. Each new compilation of Chinese remedies organized, arranged and used this knowledge with individual emphasis, color and texture. We realize that no single Chinese work can adequately serve as a reference text for English-speaking practitioners who do not have access to the literally thousands of volumes in the Chinese herbal medical literature. Our book has been compiled from what we believe to be the best available modern Chinese sources to make it, as much as any one text can be, a basic reference source for Western practitioners of Chinese herbal medicine. We want to stress that this is only a beginning text, for the study of the herbs is only the first step on the road to being able to use Chinese herbal medicines. This book is not meant in any way to be a treatment manual, but only one part of the foundation for the study of Chinese herbal medicine. The reader should also remember that, except for some of the material in the

introduction, all of the information in this text (including the illustrations) is from Chinese sources.

The material in the section under each herbal entry entitled "Functions and clinical use" * is, for the most part, drawn from *Chinese Herbal Medicines (Zhong Yao Xue)* by the Shanghai College of Traditional Chinese Medicine, *Traditional Chinese Prescriptions and Medicines (Zhong Yi Fang Yao Xue)* by the Guangdong College of Traditional Chinese Medicine, and *The Clinical Application of Chinese Herbal Medicines (Zhong Yao Ling Chuang Ying Yong)* by the Zhongshan Medical School. We followed the latter text in deciding which herbs would be placed in which chapter and the order they appear in that chapter. We did, however, alter the order of the chapters. The section "Major combinations" is based primarily on information found in the above texts from the Zhongshan Medical School and the Shanghai College of Traditional Chinese Medicine, as well as *Chinese Herbal Medicines (Zhong Yao Xue)* by the Gansu Provincial College of New Medicine. Most of the information presented in the "Major known ingredients" and "Pharmacological and clinical research" sections is based on abstracts from *An Encyclopedia of Traditional Chinese Medicinal Substances (Zhong Yao Da Ci Dian)* edited by the Jiangsu College of New Medicine. That text was also used in determining the botanical or zoological names for the sources of the substances. "Cautions and contraindications" and "Dosage" are based on all the texts above. "Properties" and "Channels entered" were determined from the majority opinions expressed in those texts. For a list of all the texts used in the preparation of this book, please consult the bibliography.

* Please note that in the revised edition this section is called "Actions & Indications."

This book is designed for serious practitioners or students of traditional Chinese medicine and therefore assumes that the reader has at least a basic understanding of traditional Chinese medical theory and terminology. We have provided a glossary for the major terms used in our book that are not in the common parlance of the traditional Chinese medical community in the West. The *pinyin* transliteration of all the terms in the glossary also appear in the general index with appropriate cross-references. As all translators have their own peculiarities of style, we suggest that even those of you who will only be using this text as a reference familiarize yourselves with the glossary first.

The aspect of traditional Chinese medicine which is the subject of this book is called "herbal medicine." While this is technically incorrect, as many of the substances do not originate from plants but are of animal or mineral origin, it is the commonly used term and we have adopted it. We have, however, used the word "medicinal substance" instead of "herb" whenever it is correct and not too awkward. The reader should remember that these terms are for the most part interchangeable. Another term which causes confusion is that which describes texts of medicinal substances. They are commonly called pharmacopeias, but this word implies some official status which this book and most, but not all, of the Chinese herbal texts throughout history do not have. The term which we believe to be correct is *materia medica*.

We suggest that all readers begin by reading the introduction. This is important for two reasons. First, it gives a historical and cross-cultural view of the development of the traditional Chinese *materia medica* which will put the information in the main text in the proper perspective. Second, the background and meaning of the headings under each herbal entry are explained. This will enable the reader to better appreciate the information in the main text.

Each chapter consists of substances that share similar functions. The introduction to each chapter outlines the basic disorders for which the substances are used, along with a general statement of what is believed to be their effects from a biomedical viewpoint. At the end of each chapter (or subchapter) is a summary of the comparative functions of the more important herbs discussed in that chapter. They are placed in the summaries so that the reader does not have to guess under which substance the comparison is placed. We strongly recommend that whenever using this text, even just to look up one herb, the reader check the appropriate chapter summary.

Each herb in this book is identified by its pharmaceutical, botanical (or when appropriate, zoological), Mandarin, Japanese, and Korean name. When possible, an English and a literal English translation

of the Chinese name are also provided, but for reference only. Because this is an English text we have used the most precise Western name, i.e., the Latin-based pharmaceutical name, as our standard name throughout. However, we have also included the Mandarin name every time an herb is mentioned. The aim of the selection of the pharmaceutical names was to be as precise as possible. The format for the pharmaceutical names is first, the part of the plant or animal used, followed by the genus name and, when appropriate, the species name, and then any other pertinent information. A few examples will make this practice clear. When a particular herb always comes from the same plant we use the complete name, including the species name (as in *Bulbus Fritillariae Cirrhosae* (*chuan bei mu*)). When more than one species of the same genus is used, we use the genus name (as in *Folium Artemisiae* (*ai ye*)). When plants that belong to two different genera are used, we use both of the genus names separated by "seu" which is Latin for "or" (as in *Herba Lemnae seu Spirodela* (*fu ping*)). When plants or animals from more than two genera are used, we use the Mandarin name as the basis for the pharmaceutical name (as in *Herba Baijiangcao*). Sometimes there is some other information that is important in identifying the substance; this is placed at the end of the pharmaceutical name. For example, the herb may be fresh and not dried (as in *Rhizoma Zingiberis Officinalis Recens* (*sheng jiang*)) or it may be cooked prior to being sold (as in *Radix Rehmanniae Glutinosae Conquatae* (*shu di huang*)).

We believe that this protocol is consistent and clear, but it is slightly different from the practice used in sources presently available. Also, not everyone who is interested in this material knows the pharmaceutical name. To make it easier for students to use this book, we have provided a few cross-indices at the end of the text. The first one is arranged by Mandarin name and includes many alternate names for the herbs. The cross-indices that follow are arranged by Japanese, Korean, and English names. We hope that these tools will make the information in this text accessible to all readers.

This text has two indices. The first is of the medicinal substances and is arranged by pharmaceutical name (ignoring the name of the part). Every time a substance is mentioned it is recorded in this index, with the page on which it is discussed in depth appearing first. The second index is by traditional Chinese medical terminology. While it is not recommended that this text be used as a treatment manual, this index can help the reader understand more about how the substances and traditional disease entities interface.

The first two appendices are of general use. The first is a guide to the *pinyin* pronunciation system of Mandarin Chinese to assist the reader in pronouncing

the names of the substances. The second is a table of Chinese dynasties to help in dating some of the books and people noted in the text.

The acupuncture component of China's medical tradition has become interactive with much of the rest of the world's medicine over the last thirty years. Research and studies done on acupuncture in Paris or Los Angeles affect the current understanding of acupuncture as much as work done in Shanghai, Beijing, Seoul, or Tokyo. The herbal medicine of China has likewise always been affected by other medical traditions and influenced them in turn. China exported Cinnamomi Cassia (*gui zhi*) to Rome and Radix Angelicae Sinensis (*dang gui*) to India. From the earliest times, Fructus Schisandrae Chinensis (*wu wei zi*) from Korea was incorporated into China's medicine, Arabian myrrh, Myrrha (*mo yao*), was adopted in the Tang period (581-618 A.D.), and American Ginseng, Radix Panacis Quinquefolii (*xi yang shen*), entered the materia medica of the Qing dynasty. It is our hope in

bringing this herbal knowledge to an English-speaking audience that the slow historical movement of herbal knowledge will take on the recent pace of the acupuncture exchange. This dialogue will contribute to a cross-fertilization in world health care and to the availability of a richer medicine to people throughout the world.

A number of people have been of great help in completing this work. We would like to thank Anne H. Kubota, Jacqueline Young, Sekyo Nam Haines, and Nam Sok-Chul for providing the Japanese and Korean transliterations of the herbs. Anne Kubota also contributed material on the historical development of herbal medicine in Japan. The following people contributed valuable editorial assistance: John O'Connor, Joe Kelly, Patty O'Connell, Francine Rainone, Phil Zuckerman, Lisa Rittel, Alex Gross. Andy thanks Mark Sherwood for his special help. We would all like to thank Miles for keeping everything in perspective for us.

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