
Foreword

The transmission and development of Chinese medicine has a frontier of its own; until recently reference works were few. Since the founding of the Republic of China, the burgeoning of schools has brought change in education methods and even in the conveyed knowledge itself. In the early years of the Republic, Hsieh Kuan of the Shanghai Chinese Medical School compiled *The Comprehensive Chinese Medical Dictionary* (*Zhōng Yī Dà Cí Diǎn*). His work, as some would have it, was an answer to the challenge of modern sciences, yet from a broader perspective, it was “following Heaven and responding to Man,” a natural response to the changing times. Seventy years later, Wiseman and Feng’s English dictionary represents a new milestone in the transmission of Chinese medicine.

The creation of dictionaries is the work of “rectifying the names.” When the names are not right, discourse is foiled. Academic study must have a common language. However, in Chinese medicine, with its vast academic history, it has been exceedingly difficult to establish a common language. Our thanks must therefore go to Nigel Wiseman and Féng Yè, who devoted over a decade to the compiling and researching of material for *A Practical Dictionary of Chinese Medicine*. Wiseman journeyed East to obtain the scriptures and fathomed the riddle of words in rarified books. It takes little to imagine his assiduous labor. The author’s powerful command of English is a call to study, and his insistent expression of the hope that Western students will take up the study of Chinese so as to be able to “enter the hall and behold the wonders within” is an admonition that naturally springs from deep inquiry, and is one mark of his sincerity and rigor.

Any academic discipline that moves onto the world stage receives worldwide contributions and challenges that infuse it with life and promote its transformation through development. This is implicit in Kuhn’s notion of paradigms in the evolution of science. This English dictionary of Chinese medicine is a brave start in the progression from a common language to a world language. What is more, in its scope and in the standards it sets, it will reflect the sophistication of Chinese medicine after its reception in the West, which with unflagging innovative effort will undergo constant development. Scholars should view this book as a bridge and, even more, as a path.

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1997