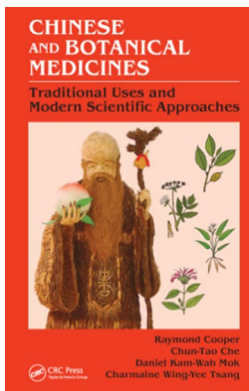


Raymond Cooper, Chun-Tao Che, Daniel Kam-Wah Mok, Charmaine Wing-Yee Tsang: Chinese and Botanical Medicines: Traditional Uses and Modern Scientific Approaches

John Edmondson¹

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Bibliography

Chinese and Botanical Medicines: Traditional Uses and Modern Scientific Approaches
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This collaborative work provides an overview of Chinese Traditional Medicine and the scientific basis for its use in modern pharmaceutical and medical practice. It covers the subject in a well-balanced, informative way and takes us well beyond the somewhat metaphysical rationale for this kind of medicine into the scientific evidence that supports the use of these methods for today's medical care. As an alternative to mainstream Western medicine it describes the use of traditional Chinese medicinal herbs and formulas, including the exotically named “Four Gentlemen Decoction” and the “Sour Jujube Decoction”, which are combinations of four and five medicinal herbs, respectively.

In comparison with some other books written by medical researchers, this one is noteworthy for its accurate use of the scientific names used in botany. But it also illustrates what

might be termed ‘tongue phrenology’ whereby different areas of the tongue are examined to diagnose different ailments. Some might see this as a roller-coaster of conflicting approaches, but the book manages to steer a steady course between these two extremes.

There is one potential pitfall in the use of herbal medicines, namely quality control. The Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew is currently researching the botanical identity, quality and nomenclature of Chinese medicinal plants and their commercially traded *materia medica*. Testing, for ‘trading standards’ purposes, remains one of the weaknesses of the commercial supply chain, though (as we read in Chapter 8, “The current use of TCM”), the authorities in Hong Kong are beginning to introduce regulations for both practitioners and for the medicines themselves. But the book does provide reassurance that supporting evidence is being discovered to validate the safety and efficacy of many Chinese traditional herbs and their combinations, and Chapter 7, “TCM safety and regulations”, addresses this point in more detail.

There is a short bibliography of works written in Chinese, and an appendix of plant names in Latin, Romanised Chinese (and occasionally English), and Chinese characters. Each chapter ends with some suggestions for further reading, but there is no overall references section. In conclusion, I can recommend this book for reference libraries in medical schools as well as botanic gardens, though individual purchasers may be deterred by the bookshop price of around £70 to £80.

✉ John Edmondson
chromatographia@springer.com

¹ Royal Botanic Gardens, Richmond, UK