

# FUNDAMENTALS OF TRADITIONAL CHINESE MEDICINE



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# Fundamentals of Traditional Chinese Medicine

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## PREFACE

Last year, the Chinese Ministry of Public Health started a two-year project to teach traditional Chinese doctors English in a specialized course. The aim of the course is to bridge the gap between foreign acupuncture students and their Chinese teachers, and to improve future international courses and scientific exchanges. By teaching in English loss of teaching time because of translation is eliminated, and the content is clearer.

I was invited to give a four-month course on the fundamentals of traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) in English. When I finished my courses, some of my students encouraged me to publish my lecture notes, for the benefit of readers at home and abroad. Immediately after returning from Beijing, I started to compile and supplement my lecture notes with the help of the comments I received from many hours spent discussing acupuncture with doctors from all over China. This enabled me to improve my writing with new facts and to develop a holistic and systematic structure similar to the TCM concept.

Now that I have completed my book, I hope that it will be helpful to readers. My main motivation for writing this book was to spread TCM all over the world. This may help increase efficacy in the struggle against disease.

There are some difficult interpretations of the ancient classics that have led to misunderstandings and even misapplications in clinical work. I hope I have been able to dispel any misunderstandings.

The theories and fundamental knowledge described in this book is the basis for other branches of Chinese medicine and pharmacology, as well as a must for both domestic and foreign readers that intend to further study this traditional health system which is more than 2,000 years old.

In the process of my writing, I have referred to a lot of classics and texts for traditional Chinese medicine and pharmacology, such as the *Fundamentals of Traditional Chinese Medicine* published by the Shanghai Science & Technology Press, the *Basic Theories of Traditional Chinese Medicine* also published by the Shanghai Science & Technology Press, the *Practical Chinese Medicine* published by the Beijing Press, and others.

My book is mainly written for two groups of readers. The first one is the domestic professionals, to help them teach TCM in English, as well as to provide a framework for international scientific exchange that is necessary to further development and optimal use of historical health research.

This book is useful not only for foreign readers who already have some knowledge of TCM, but also for interested laymen who need a comprehensive approach.

During my writing I was aware that confusion in the past was due to misinterpretation or wrong translations of TCM terms, since our sources are written in ancient Chinese characters. Since there are no established TCM terms in English, I have referred to my

*Chinese-English Terminology of Traditional Chinese Medicine* published by the Hunan Science & Technology Press. TCM has its own set of terms. Although some of them are the same as those of Western medicine, the names of the internal organs of TCM are seen as connected to the emotions, as well as having distinct functions in controlling and balancing the flow of *qi* (vital energy) in the body. Some terms cannot be easily translated into English, for instance, *qi*, yin-yang, *zang-fu*, etc. For this reason, foreign readers will understand them better after they are familiar with their historical background. Otherwise they will be inevitably confused with the terms of modern medicine. Main reference books I used in compiling this book include *Basics of Traditional Chinese Medicine*, a textbook edited by noted TCM physician Professor Yin Huihe of Beijing's Sino-Japanese Friendship Hospital for medical colleges and universities throughout the country.

I would like to thank Dr. Adren Berthoud, my dear friend from Switzerland, for his careful reading and his many suggestions, and also Mr. C. F. Martin of Canada for going over the English Text.

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November, 1989

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