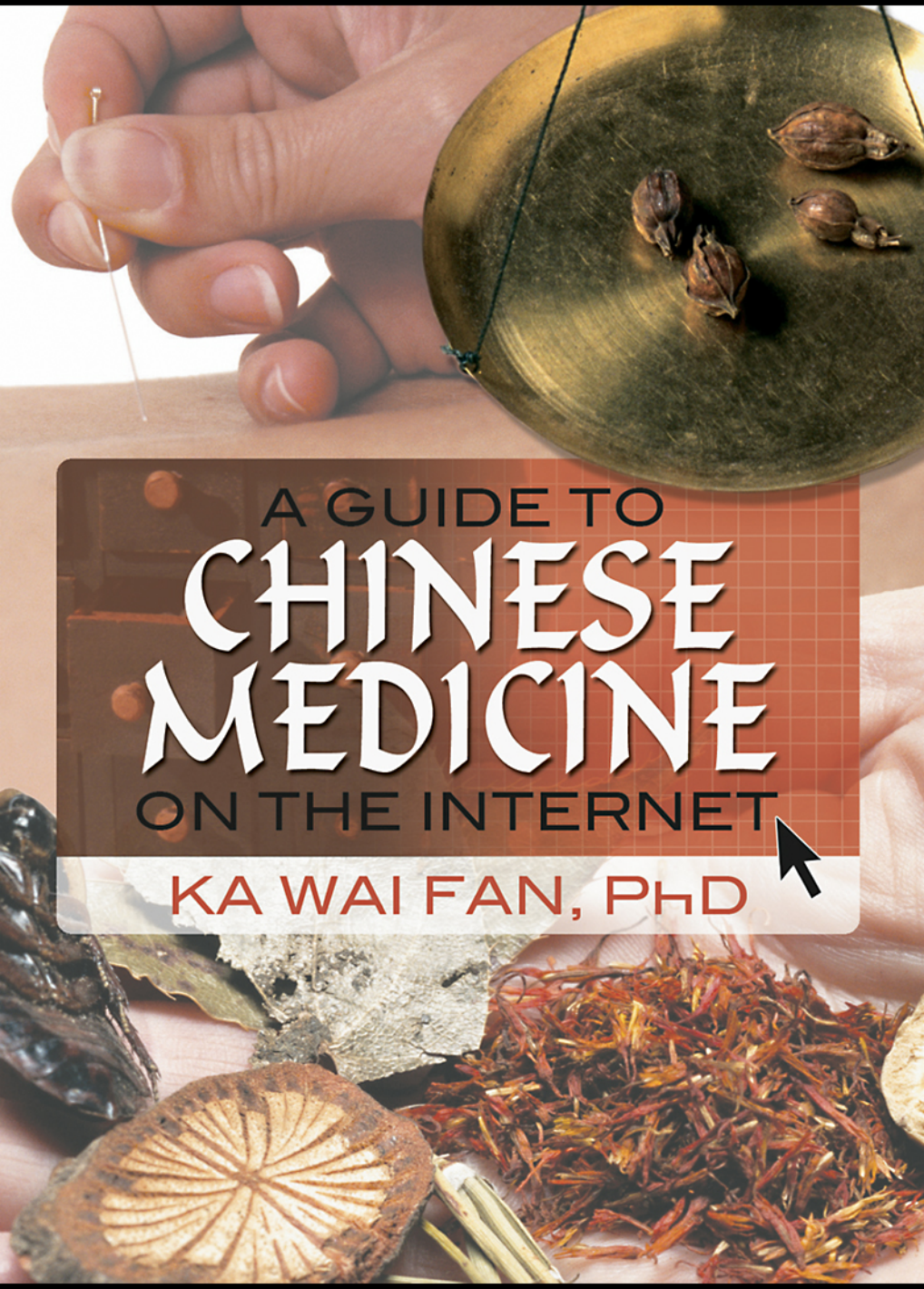

A GUIDE TO CHINESE MEDICINE ON THE INTERNET

KA WAI FAN, PhD

A Guide to Chinese Medicine on the Internet

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Ka wai Fan, PhD, is a full-time lecturer in the Chinese Civilization Center, City University of Hong Kong; an honorary adjunct assistant professor in the School of Chinese Medicine at the Chinese University of Hong Kong; and honorary visiting fellow (2006-2009) at the Center for Traditional Chinese Science and Civilization in The Institute for the History of Natural Science, Chinese Academy of Sciences, Beijing. He received his PhD, MPhil, and BA all from the Department of History, Chinese University of Hong Kong. He worked as an assistant professor in the Institute of History, National Tsinghua University, Taiwan. His research interests include the history of Chinese medicine and online information on Chinese medicine. He has written several publications on both the online resources of Chinese medicine, and the history of Chinese medicine.

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Introduction

Over the past few decades, Chinese medicine, being a kind of complementary and alternative medicine (CAM), has become a growing focus all over the world. This is because Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) has been playing an important role in the prevention and cure of diseases and the prolongation of life, through methods such as acupuncture, herbal therapies, and Qigong. More and more people are paying attention to Chinese medicine, although the Chinese medical system is a non-Western medical system.[1]

The Internet is being increasingly used in conjunction with research: to share information; to disseminate findings; and to publicize projects and organizations. At the same time, the ability to sift through the ever-increasing amounts of information made available online to find quality and accurate data is becoming more important every day. The Internet is a very important search tool for faculty members and students. Currently, many disciplines are dependent on the Internet for the dissemination of information. In fact, many professors and scholars use online resources to pursue their own research.[2] However, simply using a search engine, such as Google or Yahoo, to look for information will not necessarily lead one to quality resources, and is more likely to provide a large number of unordered results to sift through. Many useless items are also included in the results, and the quality or reliability of the search results cannot be ensured. In a survey of the information available on the World Wide Web (WWW) about the use of herbal medicine in the treatment of cancer, most sites were found to be inadequate in a number of areas, including bias, accuracy, clear presentation of sources of information, and regularity of updates.[3]

A great deal of Chinese and English-language information about Chinese medicine is available online. However, this information is not reviewed by experts and the authors of such information may not be professionals in the field represented by the information. Many people are concerned that the information about Chinese medicine that is available on the Internet may be wrong, useless, and even harmful if followed without further advice. The purpose of this book is to provide a guide to the information about Chinese medicine that is available on the WWW in order to help interested people find up-to-date and reliable information and learn about new developments in Chinese medicine easily and quickly. It should be noted that the book does not encourage the use of any particular Chinese medical therapy for the treatment of any disease. If readers want to use Chinese medicine for treatment purposes, they should consult their doctor or a qualified professional rather than accept at face value what is stated on a Web site. Any information posted on the Internet should only be used for reference purposes, not for making any treatment decision.

Although there are guides available for CAM online resources,[4] there does not seem to be any publication that functions as a guide to using the Internet to research Chinese medicine.[5] This book provides a categorized listing of Web sites related to Chinese medicine, with a brief description of each site's content. In addition, it discusses guidelines for searching, cataloging, and evaluating Web sites concerned with Chinese medicine based on the author's personal experience as a user.

CHINESE MEDICINE AS COMPLEMENTARY AND ALTERNATIVE MEDICINE (CAM)

In 1998 the United States government established The National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine (NCCAM) as one of the twenty-seven institutes and centers that make up the renowned National Institutes of Health (NIH) within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. NCCAM is dedicated to exploring complementary and alternative healing practices in the context of rigorous science; to training CAM researchers; and to disseminating authoritative information to the public and to professionals. So

what is CAM? As defined by NCCAM, CAM is a group of diverse medical and health care systems, practices, and products that are not presently considered part of conventional medicine. Complementary medicine is used together with conventional medicine. Alternative medicine is used in place of conventional medicine.

What is the meaning of "conventional medicine"? Conventional medicine is medicine as practiced by holders of MD (medical doctor) or DO (doctor of osteopathy) degrees and by allied health professionals, such as physical therapists, psychologists, and registered nurses. Terms for conventional medicine include allopathy; Western, mainstream, orthodox, regular medicine, and biomedicine. Some conventional medical practitioners are also practitioners of CAM.[6] As NCCAM is an authoritative institute, its definition is widely accepted. Many CAM Web sites copy this definition and link it to NCCAM.

Under "Medical Subject Healings" the National Medical Library has an entry headed "Alternative Medicine" (also used in MEDLINE): "An unrelated group of non-orthodox therapeutic practices, often with explanatory systems that do not follow conventional biomedical explanations" (MeSH Term Working Group, NIH, 1993). Between 1963 and 1993, the relevant entry had been headed "Therapeutic Cults" and read "non-orthodox therapeutic systems which have no satisfactory scientific explanation for their effectiveness."[7]

Presently, the description of alternative medicine or complementary medicine (with a definition of "alternative medicine" combined with that of "complementary therapies") under the heading "Medical Subject Healings" in the National Medical Library reads:

> Therapeutic practices which are not currently considered an integral part of conventional allopathic medical practice. They may lack biomedical explanations but as they become better researched some (physical therapy, diet, acupuncture) become widely accepted whereas others (humors, radium therapy) quietly fade away, yet are important historical footnotes. Therapies are termed as complementary when used in addition to conventional treatments and as alternative when used instead of conventional treatment.[8]

The difference between the two descriptions is very apparent. The former bluntly stated that CAM had no satisfactory scientific explanation for the effectiveness of any therapies, whereas the latter—while still stating that CAM may lack biomedical explanations—concedes that some CAM therapies may become widely accepted as they become better researched.

The Alternative Medicine Homepage is maintained by University of Pittsburgh librarian Charles Wessel, who is an authority on CAM Internet resources. He provides three definitions on his Web site. The first definition cites the National Library of Medicine stated previously. The second definition states that "[CAM] as medical interventions [are] not taught at United States medical schools or [are] not available at United States hospitals." This definition comes from David Eisenberg of the Harvard Medical School, who with his colleagues conducted surveys into the use of CAM in the United States between 1993 and 1998. Eisenberg says that "Alternative Medicine can be defined as medical interventions that are neither taught widely in US medical schools nor generally available in US hospitals."[9] This definition first appeared in an article by Eisenberg in 1993 and was repeated in another article in 1998. David Eisenberg's articles are widely cited and his definitions have therefore found their way onto the Web.

The third definition provided on the Alternative Medicine Homepage comes from the Panel on Definition and Description, CAM Research Methodology Conference, Office of Alternative Medicine, National Institutes of Health, Bethesda, Maryland, April 1995:

> Complementary and alternative medicine as a broad domain of healing resources that encompasses all health systems, modalities, and practices and their accompanying theories and beliefs, other than those intrinsic to the politically dominant health system of a particular society or culture in a given historical period. CAM includes all such practices and ideas self-defined by their users as preventing or treating illness or promoting health and well being. Boundaries within CAM and between the CAM domain and the domain of the dominant system are not always sharp or fixed.[10]

This definition does not focus on distinguishing between CAM and conventional medicine; instead, CAM is viewed as a collection of healing resources with its own theories and beliefs.

The *Oxford Concise Medical Dictionary* is written by medical experts, and updated from time to time. The *Oxford Concise Medical Dictionary* (fifth edition, 1998) has the following entry under the heading "alternative medicine":

> The various systems of "healing" including homeopathy, herbal remedies, hypnosis and faith healing, that are not regarded as part of orthodox treatment by the medical profession, especially when offered by unregistered practitioners. Most of the treatments are of unproven benefit but are tried by sufferers of chronic or incurable conditions when orthodox treatment has failed. Many alternative therapies are ridiculed by the medical profession, but acupuncture and osteopathy are now generally accepted to be of value in some circumstances. The extent to which individual registered practitioners indulge in or spurn these therapies varies enormously but is governed by the overriding principle (laid down by the General Medical Council) that shared care is only permitted if the registered practitioner remains in overall control; this is often unacceptable to those practicing alternative medicine.[11]

Alternative medicine is defined as *not* being part of orthodox medicine; the examples of therapies given only serve the point of letting us know what therapies belong under the heading of alternative medicine, without thereby "approving" of them in any way. According to the dictionary, alternative medicine may be said to have the following four major characteristics: (1) It is a healing (or medical) system but not part of orthodox medicine; (2) it is offered by unregistered practitioners, not the medical profession; (3) the treatments of alternative medicine are of unproven benefit; and (4) sufferers use alternative medicine when orthodox treatment has failed. In addition, the dictionary offers no description of "complementary medicine" directing readers to go to a cross-reference "see *alternative* medicine."

In 2002, the *Oxford Concise Medical Dictionary* published its sixth edition. It is interesting that there is now no entry "alternative medicine" it having been replaced by an entry: "complementary medicine," thus only directing us to "see *complementary* medicine," which is described as follows:

> Complementary medicine—various forms of therapy that are viewed as complementary to conventional medicine. These include (but are not confined to) osteopathy, acupuncture, homeopathy, massage, reflexology and reiki. Previously, complementary therapies were regarded as an alternative to conventional therapies, and the two types were considered to be mutually exclusive (hence the former names alternative medicine and fringe medicine). However, many practitioners now have dual training in conventional and complementary therapies. There is very limited provision for complementary medicine within the confines of the National Health Service.[12]

The difference between the two editions is very noticeable, the sixth edition having effectively recast alternative medicine as complementary medicine. No longer being placed in an oppositional position to conventional medicine, complementary medicine is now viewed as complementary to conventional medicine.[13] According to the sixth edition of the dictionary, complementary medicine may be said to have the following three major characteristics: (1) CAM is used as complementary to conventional medicine, to be used when conventional medicine has failed; (2) CAM is offered by many registered practitioners who are trained in both conventional and complementary therapies; (3) The National Health Service in the United Kingdom also provides some (although very limited) complementary therapies for sufferers. The changed definitions in the two editions undoubtedly reflect a growth in the medical profession's understanding of CAM and also observable trends in the provision of CAM.

To sum up, the definitions reflect our changing understanding of CAM. Previously, as the *Oxford Concise Medical Dictionary* (fifth edition) pointed out, many alternative therapies were ridiculed by the medical profession. One of the differences between CAM and

conventional medicine is that CAM is considered to be nonscientific. Marcia Angell and Jerome Kassirer say that

> It [CAM] has not been scientifically tested and its advocates largely deny the need for testing. . . . Alternative medicine also distinguishes itself by an ideology that largely ignores biologic mechanisms, often disparages modern medicine science, and relies on what are purported to be ancient practices and natural remedies.[14]

It is difficult for the medical profession to accept CAM when CAM is defined as nonscientific and is not taught in medical schools. However, when searching for CAM information online, the author finds that, first, more and more professional medical journals publish research, case reports, and clinical reports about CAM, and CAM journals also state that published articles are peer-reviewed and based on scientific and biomedical research.

Second, according to a survey, there is tremendous heterogeneity and diversity in content, format, and requirements among courses in complementary and alternative medicine at U.S. medical schools.[15] For example, the Stanford University Faculty of Medicine provides a CAM program on the topic of "Successful Aging."[16]

Third, university libraries, such as those at the University of British Columbia and McMaster University,[17] provide professional CAM information on the Web. Special research centers have also been established, such as the Oregon Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine in neurological disorders, and the Richard and Hinda Rosenthal Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine at Columbia University.[18] Many research centers for CAM therapies are funded by NACCM. In other words, CAM is not being totally rejected by the university medical education system.

Chinese medicine, as part of CAM, also shows these trends. Chinese medicine, including acupuncture, Qigong and herbals, continually edges toward the mainstream of conventional medicine, and more serious research is being conducted both scientifically and clinically. Using scientific methods to study Chinese medicine is now mainstream. In some European countries and the United States,

there are regulations governing the practice of Chinese medicine, especially acupuncture treatment. Many medical journals publish articles related to Chinese medicine in the English-speaking world. The University of Westminster and the University of Middlesex, both in the United Kingdom, provide degree courses in Chinese medicine, of course using English to teach.

In Chinese people's minds, Chinese medicine is not CAM. Although universities of TCM in China teach Chinese medicine, half of their courses actually teach Western medicine, and research into Chinese medicine in China emphasizes the integration of Chinese and Western medicine. What is Chinese medicine? This question is very difficult to answer. NCCAM offers the following definition of TCM:

> Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) is the current name for an ancient system of health care from China. TCM is based on a concept of balanced Qi (pronounced "chee"), or vital energy, that is believed to flow throughout the body. Qi is proposed to regulate a person's spiritual, emotional, mental, and physical balance and to be influenced by the opposing forces of yin (negative energy) and yang (positive energy). Disease is proposed to result from the flow of Qi being disrupted and yin and yang becoming imbalanced. Among the components of TCM are herbal and nutritional therapy, restorative physical exercises, meditation, acupuncture, and remedial massage.[19]

NCCAM's description seems only to emphasize the concept of Qi. Actually, Chinese medicine is based on philosophical systems (the theories of yin-yang, five phases and Qi), the view of the body (zang-fu—internal organs) system, system of Meridians, acupoints), the causes of diseases, diagnosis, treatments, etc. Wikipedia describes the TCM as follows:

> Traditional Chinese Medicine is a range of traditional medical practices used in China that developed during several thousand years. These practices include herbal medicine, acupuncture, and massage. TCM is a form of *Oriental medicine,* which in-

> cludes other traditional East Asian medical systems such as Japanese and Korean medicine. TCM says processes of the human body are interrelated and constantly interact with the environment. Therefore the theory looks for the signs of disharmony in the external and internal environment of a person in order to understand, treat and prevent illness and disease. TCM theory is based on a number of philosophical frameworks including the Theory of Yin-yang, the Five Elements, the human body Meridian system, Zang Fu theory, and others. Diagnosis and treatment are conducted with reference to these concepts. TCM does not usually operate within a scientific paradigm but some practitioners make efforts to bring practices into an evidence-based medicine framework.[20]

Wikipedia's description of Chinese medicine is very concise and clear.

HOW TO EVALUATE WEB SITES RELATED TO CHINESE MEDICINE

How does one evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of Web sites? This is a very critical point when searching on the Internet. However, due to each discipline having its own rules and practices, it is very difficult to arrive at general rules that are suitable for all disciplines. Robert Harris's *CARS Checklist* is a general tool that offers some general criteria for evaluating the quality of Web sites. A summary of the *CARS Checklist for Research Source Evaluation* follows:

- Credibility: Trustworthy source, author's credentials, evidence of quality control, known or respected authority, organizational support.
- Accuracy: Up-to-date, factual, detailed, exact, comprehensive, audience and purpose reflect intentions of completeness and accuracy.

- Reasonableness: Fair, balanced, objective, reasoned, no conflict of interest, absence of fallacies or slanted tone.
- Support: Listed sources, contact information, available corroboration, claims supported, documentation supplied.[21]

These are general rules for the evaluation of Web sites. Medical and medicine-related Web sites are likely to make suggestions for treatment or guide readers to adopt / give up some form of treatment. Therefore, the accuracy and reliability of the information provided may well be affected by the author's opinions and have resulted in the information being subjective rather than objective. The author browsed the Web for the topic "how to evaluate medical information on the Internet," and found that the criteria used for evaluation of such information show no great differences.

There are a number of questions any user of the Web interested in medical information should ask: Who is providing the information? Who is paying for the site? Web sites by governments, universities, or other academic institutions, professional associations, and research foundations are among the best sources for scientifically sound health and medical information. What is the purpose of this page? Who is the intended audience? Is the information on this Web site peer-reviewed? Is the information based on scientific evidence and evidence-based medicine? In addition, the reader should be very careful when consulting Web sites that sell pharmaceuticals and provide medical services. It is not easy, and perhaps impossible, for people who are not medical experts to differentiate between Web sites that offer information based on scientific evidence and evidence-based medicine and those whose information is not scientifically based.

Lillian Brazin, in her book *Guide to Complementary and Alternative Medicine on the Internet,* offers one more piece of advice, which is to look out for an official "seal of approval":

> Does it bear the "HONCode" logo? (This code is awarded to sites that meet the HONCode of Conduct). . . . its (Health on the Net Foundation) mission is to guide Internet searchers to reliable and useful online medical and health information. It sets ethical standards for those who develop health and medi-

> cal Web sites. . . . URAC (American Accreditation Healthcare Commission) aims to help consumers identify sites that meet high accountability and quality standards. URAC lists the accredited Web sites with the name of the company that produces the sites. The sites are reviewed annually, and the date the accreditation expires is listed. . . . For a good guide to determining a CAM site's credibility or the validity of its claims, check out Quackwatch (http://www.quackwatch.com).[22]

This is a good suggestion, but unfortunately only a few Web sites are evaluated by the Health on the Net Foundation, the American Accreditation Healthcare Commission, or Quackwatch.

Generally speaking, Web sites about Chinese medicine should provide information that is credible and accurate, and the approach taken to information should be a reasonable one. It is just as important that the site's design is user-friendly, i.e., information is easy to find and readable, and the icons are easy to use, etc.

Another issue of the Web site is its accessibility, which requires the host server to be stable and always online. According to the author's experience, Web sites in Mainland China are often disconnected and even missing, and are slow to download Web pages.

As mentioned, Web sites provided by governments, universities, academic institutions, professional associations, research foundations, and nonprofit organizations are among the best sources of scientifically sound health and medical information. The most reliable authors of information available on the Web are professional associations that publish or co-publish academic journals (not newsletters), preferably with reputable publishers.

If readers want to know the effectiveness of the treatment of Chinese medicine, they should consult searchable journal databases, such as Academic Search Premier, ProQuest, ScienceDirect, Springerlink, ISI Thomas, Elsevier Wiley Science, etc. Much information can be found on these databases. You may say that, "I do not pay for a subscription, so I will not be able to see the full text" or "I am not a doctor, so what are the advantages of browsing these databases?" As most of the journals in these databases are peer-reviewed, reading the abstract of an article is a good way to start—especially since

abstracts are both published in full and freely available. Generally speaking, abstracts of medical articles include purposes, methods, and results.

A Web site may also provide good suggestions for further searching information on Chinese medicine. As the Web site of California Medial Association points out, take advantage of Internet reviews and annotated links to other internet resources. For some health and medical topics, there are an overwhelming number of possible sources of information. How can you tell which of the many sources are worth exploring? Good starting points are sites that collect links to resources by topic, and particularly useful are those that also review sites, using expertise from experts, practitioners, and/or librarians. Some examples of such collected and reviewed lists are Medical Matrix, HealthWeb, Health and Medical Informatics Digest, MedWeb, and some of the sites of professional medical organizations as well as university or research sites. Published guides, like the many Internet books now in print, may provide useful pointers but can be out-of-date quickly due to the volatile nature of the Internet.[23]

Readers should familiarize themselves with two or three reliable Web sites about Chinese medicine, sites you can trust or that have been reviewed or at least mentioned favorably in books or by experts. If you find a new Web site that seems to contradict much of what is found on a site that is familiar to you, you should be very careful.

NCCAM reminds you of what you should know and avoid. The NCCAM Web site identifies the medical circumstances under which complementary and alternative therapies are appropriate; explains how to find out what scientific studies have been done on the safety and effectiveness of specific treatments; and offers guidelines about evaluating statements made about the effectiveness of a given therapy.

THE BASIC TERMS OF CHINESE MEDICINE

After browsing many Web sites about Chinese medicine, readers will have come across a variety of basic concepts, terms, and theories of Chinese medicine. In order to assist readers in browsing the

Web sites listed in this book, the author has selected thirty-six terms and provided very brief descriptions (according to the authoritative references). The author also recommends Chen Hua's book *Zhong yi de ke xue yuan li* (*Outline of Sinomedicine,* available at: http://healther .stormloader.com),[24] as it offers descriptions of Chinese medical terms and theories. It may be seen as an introduction to Chinese medicine.

acupressure: A method of treatment involving the application of finger pressure at acupuncture points.[25]

acupuncture: The practice of puncturing the body with metal needles (steel, gold, or silver) at specific points in order to regulate construction, defense, Qi, and the blood.[26]

acupuncture point (or acupoint; also xue wei, xue dao): A place on the surface of the body where Qi and blood of the channels and network vessels gather or pass. Through the channels and network vessels, points are connected to other parts of the body and notably the bowels and viscera, whose state of health they can reflect. Various stimuli such as needling, moxibustion, massage, acupressure, and electroacupuncture can be applied at points to regulate internal functions.[27]

Bencao Gang Mu (also Compendium of *Materia Medica*): Bencao Gang Mu, a dictionary of Chinese herbs, was written by Li Shi Zhen (1518-1593). It consists of fifty-two volumes, with more than 1.9 million characters, and more than 1,100 pictures. The book lists 1,892 "medical materials" comprising herbs, animals, and minerals with 11,096 formulae being used in the past.[28]

CAM: Complementary and alternative medicine.

channels or meridians (also jing mai, jing luo): They are the passages through which Qi and blood circulate, correlate the viscera with the limbs, connect the upper and lower parts with the interior and exterior of the body, and regulate the mechanisms of the various

parts of the body. These include the Jing-mai (the channels) and Luo-mai (the collateral channels), and hence, make the human body an organic whole.[29] A distinction is made between regular channels, usually referred to as the twelve channels, and extraordinary vessels. The twelve channels, together with Renmai (the anterior midline channel) and Dumai (the posterior midline channel), are called the fourteen channels.

cupping: A method of treatment involving the application of suction to skin to draw out blood and sometimes pus. Cupping is also called "fire cupping" because the suction is produced when, for example, a lighted alcohol swab placed inside the cup burns the oxygen to create a vacuum after the cup has been placed on the skin.[30]

dietetic therapy (also dietary therapy, Shi liao): It refers to the cure method of using the different nature and nutrients of the food to regulate Qi, blood, and yin and yang of zangfu organs.[31]

eight principles: Identification of disease patterns by eight fundamental principles, namely interior and exterior, cold and heat, vacuity and repletion, and yin and yang.[32]

electroacupuncture: A method of acupuncture in which an electrical current is applied to needles inserted in the body in order to produce a combined needle and electrical stimulus.[33]

five flavors (also Wu wei): Acridity, sourness, sweetness, bitterness, and saltiness. Medicinals or foodstuffs of different flavors with different actions.[34]

five phases (also five elements or Wu xing): The ancients thought that the five kinds of materials—metal, wood, water, fire, and earth—were the indispensable and most fundamental elements in constituting the universe. These were bound by enhancing, inhibiting and restraining relationships between them. They were also in constant motion and change. In Traditional Chinese Medicine, they are used to explain and expand on a series of medical problems by comparing

and deducing from such properties and mutual relationships.[35] Each of the five viscera is associated with one of the five phases: Liver-wood, Heart-fire, Spleen-earth, Lung-metal, Kidney-water.

four examinations (or four diagnoses): The four examinations, inspection (or looking), listening and smelling, inquiry (or asking), and palpation, provide the raw data for diagnosis.[36]

four qi (also four natures): The four natures of medicinals: cold, heat, warmth, and coolness. Cold medicinals are those effective in treating heat patterns, whereas hot medicinals are those effective in treating cold patterns. Warm and cool medicinals are medicinals with mild hot or cold natures. In addition, there is also a balanced nature whose nature is neither predominantly hot nor cold.[37]

herbalism (also Bencao, herbal medicine): The medical use of preparations that contain exclusively plant material.[38]

Huangdi neijing: The *Huangdi Neijing* (Yellow Emperor's Inner Classic) is likely the most seminal medical text of ancient China. The theoretical foundations of Chinese medicine are systematically covered. The work is comprised of two texts, each of eighty-one chapters or treatises in a question and answer format between the mythical Yellow Emperor (Huangdi) and His ministers. The first text, *Su wen* (Plain Questions) covers the theoretical foundation of Chinese medicine, diagnostic methods and treatment methods. The second and generally less cited text, *Ling shu* (Spiritual Pivot), deals with acupuncture in great detail. [39]

Ji xing: Medicinal preparation. The final form in which medicinals (usually the various ingredients of a formula) are administered, taken, or applied. Commonly used preparations are decoction, pill, powder, wine, and paste.[40]

Jin gui yao lue fang lun (also Jin gui yao lue, Synopsis of Prescriptions of the Golden Chamber): A medical book of three volumes by Zhang Ji (Zhang Zhongjing) of the Eastern Han

Dynasty, completed before 206, it contains twenty-five chapters. The first chapter is a general treatise on the consequences of diseases in the order of organs and meridians; Chapters 2 to 17 deal with the symptoms and treatment of some forty internal diseases; Chapters 18 to 19 with the symptoms and treatment of external disease and dermopathies; Chapters 20 to 22 with gynecopathies and obstetric problems. The other three chapters contain some other prescriptions and prohibited diets. It is the first systematic monograph in China on internal diseases, not only summarizes medical experiences before the Han Dynasty, but also offers the treatment of disease on the basis of differentiation of symptoms and signs and general principles for the formulation of prescriptions. The 262 prescriptions it contains are very valuable clinically even today. [41]

Kampo medicine: The form of Chinese medicine practiced in Japan.[42]

meditation: Meditation is a state of mind which does not seek to manipulate thoughts and emotions but merely to allow them to settle.[43]

moxibustion: A method of applying a heating stimulus to the body by burning the dried and sifted leaf particles from the herb mugwort on or close to the skin, with the aim of freeing Qi and blood, coursing Qi, dispersing cold, eliminating dampness and warming yang. Moxibustion is divided into two distinct methods: indirect moxibustion and direct moxibustion.[44]

Nan jing (also Classic on Medical Problem, Difficult Classic, or Huangdi's Classic on 81 Medical Problem): A medical book completed before the Eastern Han dynasty, attributed to Qin Yueren. Complied in the form of questions and answers, the book mainly deals with the basic theories of TCM, including such aspects as physiology, pathology, anatomy, diagnosis, and treatment. Of eighty-one problems dealt with in the book, problems one to twenty-two are on pulse study. Problems twenty-three to twenty-nine are on the meridians and collaterals. Problems thirty to forty-seven are on the

zang-fu organs and the viscera. Problems forty-eight to sixty-one are on diseases. Problems sixty-two to sixty-eight are on acupoints, and problems sixty-nine to eighty-one are on acupuncture.[45]

Oriental medicine: Oriental medicine includes Chinese medicine, Japanese Medicine (Kampo medicine) and Korean Medicine. Japanese Medicine and Korean Medicine are based on TCM, sharing the same medical theories and practices. Sometimes, oriental medicine only means Chinese medicine.

Qi (also Chi, vital energy): Qi refers (1) to the refined materials which are highly nutritious and circulate in the body, analogous to the "Essence principle" or "Virtue principle"; (2) to the functional activities of the viscera and tissues; and (3) to respiratory gases.[46]

Qigong (also Qi-qong, Qi gong): Exercise consisting in controlling respiration and calming the mind and having the ultimate goal of improving physical health, mental alertness, and preventing and treating disease. Nowadays, a broad distinction is made between quiescent Qi cultivation and active Qi cultivation. Quiescent Qi cultivation consists of breathing exercises in lying, sitting, or standing posture aimed at regulating and containing true Qi. Active Qi cultivation consists in gentle rhythmical movements and self-massage.[47]

Shang han lun (also Shang Han Za Bing Lun, On Cold Damage): The world's most famous clinical medical book was written by Zhang Zhongjing around 200 BC. It includes the *Shang Han Lun* and the *Synopsis of Prescriptions of the Golden Chamber.* The *Shang Han Lun* covers diseases due to external attack, also known as "traumatized by coldness." The *Synopsis of Prescriptions of the Golden Chamber* covers all the clinical difficulties and complications of internal damage. The *Shang Han Lun* is the oldest complete clinical textbook in world medical history, and the *Shang Han Lun* and the *Synopsis of Prescriptions of the Golden Chamber* are two of the four most important medical classics which students must study in Chinese medical education.[48]

Shennong bencao jing (Shennong's herbal Classic): An herb book, the earliest herbal work in China, authorship unknown, completed at about the turn of the Qin Dynasty. The original book is long lost, seen only in other herbal literature of later generations. The existing texts are all complied by later editors. The book begins with a general introduction dealing with the theory of *Materia Medica* and the composition of prescriptions. In the following parts, medicinal materials are classified into three classes according to their functions. In addition to such important theories as different roles played by the medicines within a prescription including the monarch, the minister, the assistant, and the guide, the combination of yin and yang, and the seven different effects in compatibility of ingredients, the book also elaborates on the different names, properties, flavor, functions, and indications of each time. As a comprehensive summary of the achievement in the field before the Qin and Han Dynasty, which laid a foundation for the theoretic system of Chinese *Materia Medica,* this book has high historic and scientific value.[49]

seven affects (also seven qing): Joy, anger, anxiety, thought, sorrow, fear, and fright. In excess the seven affects can be a cause of disease. Powerful or lasting emotions and certain mental activities can damage yin, yang, Qi, blood, and eventually the bowels and viscera.[50]

six excesses (also six yin): Excess or untimeliness of the six Qi (wind, cold, summer heat, damp, dryness, and fire) that invade the body through the exterior to cause disease.[51]

Taiji (also Tai Chi, Taiji quan, Taiji chuan): A system of movements and postures rooted in ancient Chinese philosophy and martial arts used to enhance mental and physical health.[52]

Traditional Chinese Medicine (also TCM): Described previously.

traditional medicine: Traditional medicine is the sum total of the knowledge, skills, and practices based on the theories, beliefs, and experiences indigenous to different cultures, whether explicable or not, used in the maintenance of health as well as in the prevention,

diagnosis, improvement, or treatment of physical and mental illness.[53]

Tuina (also Tui na, an mo): Chinese massage. Rubbing, pressing, or other manipulation of the body for the treatment and prevention of disease. Massage helps to free the channels and vessels, and also helps to disinhibit the joints. By stimulating the movement of Qi and blood, it can regulate the function of the bowels and viscera, and increase resistance to disease.[54]

Wen Bing (also warm disease): Any of various heat (febrile) diseases characterized by rapid onset and shifts, pronounced heat signs, and a tendency to form dryness and damage yin.[55]

yin-yang: These are general terms for the two opposites of matters and phenomena in nature, which are interrelated and opposed to each other. They represent not only two different matters in opposition but two opposite aspects in the same entity. In Traditional Chinese Medicine, they are used to summarize and explain problems in the fields of anatomy, physiology, pathology, diagnosis, treatment, etc.[56]

Zang fu (also viscera, zangfu): The five viscera are organs of the chest and abdomen: heart, lung, spleen, liver, and kidney. The pericardium is considered a sixth viscus in channel theory. The six bowels (paired by a functional relationship with their respective viscera) are the stomach, small intestine, large intestine, gallbladder, bladder, and triple burner. The function of the viscera is to produce and store essence, while that of the bowels is to decompose food and convey waste.[57]

When searching for information on Chinese medicine, the terms used in Chinese medicine and Western medicine are mixed up. Chinese medicine is traditional but scientification and modernization are mainstream features in the development of Chinese medicine. Therefore, to use Internet search engines effectively any search should combine Chinese medical terms with Western medical terms, such as “acupuncture and cancer” or “Taiji and diabetes.” To express

Chinese medical terms in English, Chinese medical terms should be replaced by their simple English equivalents; examples are meridians and acupoints, which are the standard English terms for Chinese terms. There are also standard codes for the location of meridians and acupoints for non-Chinese speaker. The Chinese traditional medicine and *Materia Medica* subject headings consists of 6,938 subject headings, listed mainly according to the order followed in the Pinyin system. There are fourteen main subject headings and fifty-nine sub-subject headings.[58] If readers can refer to the subject headings listed in the book, time will be saved in running a search on the Internet. All in all, we also need to pay attention to related terms such as complementary and alternative medicine, oriental medicine and traditional medicine, when searching for information on Chinese medicine on the Internet.

This book has collected relevant Web sites mainly in Chinese and English, and some in Japanese. Chinese Web sites are also divided into traditional or simplified Chinese. The former is common in Taiwan and Hong Kong, and the latter in Mainland China and Singapore. When browsing different Chinese databases and Web sites, readers should take care to choose the right code (Big5 for traditional Chinese and GB for simplified Chinese).

CLASSIFICATION OF WEB SITES ON CHINESE MEDICINE

This book is intended for an English-speaking audience who may not be familiar with Chinese and Japanese Web sites of Chinese medicine. The author considers (1) that the classification offered here should prove useful to librarians when building an electronic library for Chinese studies; and (2) that the list of Web sites should prove useful not only to people interested in issues of health and illness, but also to practitioners and researchers of Chinese medicine and CAM.

In this book, Web sites are grouped into the following chapters: portals and general Web sites, organizations, libraries, schools, journals, databases, and history and philosophy. Readers should be re-

minded that (1) a number of Web sites listed in this book are linked to each other. If a certain organization also publishes journals, it will be introduced as two entries in separate chapters. (2) Some Chinese and Japanese Web sites that do not have English titles will be translated.

Portals and General Web sites

As a way of introducing the topic, useful portals and general Web sites are listed in this chapter, comprising a multiplicity of Web sites.

Organizations

This chapter will list Web sites maintained by governments and official organizations as well as sites maintained by academic associations and societies. The author considers information on these sites to be generally more reliable.

Libraries

The widespread use of the Internet has led to libraries' Web sites having become more and more powerful and diverse in the functions offered, going beyond searching library indexes, and now providing a range of other services.

Schools

There are many schools of Chinese medicine which teach and conduct research on Chinese medicine, and as a result their Web sites usually offer much information about Chinese medicine. This chapter lists the Web sites of schools of Chinese medicine, both in China and in Western countries.

Journals

This chapter lists journals of Chinese medicine and CAM journals which can found on the Internet, including academic journals and

newsletters. Online newsletters usually are free. Journals offer the best source for an understanding of the newest developments and research results.

Databases

Web sites of databases/bibliographies and electronic texts are research-oriented tools, and intended for researchers, librarians, and faculties.

History and Philosophy

It is necessary for students of Chinese medicine to study its history. The history of Chinese medicine is like a key to open the door to its treasures. In this chapter, useful and often well-known Web sites are listed that focus on the history of Chinese medicine. This chapter also lists and introduces Chinese medical classics that are available online—with some able to be downloaded at no charge—since learning from the medical classics is the most important way to understanding Chinese medical theories and experiences.

The number of Web sites on Chinese medicine is abundant, but how to use these Web sites effectively and wisely for research and education remains a great challenge in the future.[59]

ASSUMPTIONS

1. This book is for an English-speaking readership but it is unavoidable that the links to many Web sites will be written in Chinese, and even in Japanese.
2. This book does not discuss online information on hospital, publisher, Tibetan medicine, or Traditional Chinese Veterinary Medicine.
3. This guide is not meant to be an introduction to the Internet itself. The book assumes that the reader has a working knowledge of Web browsers, and is able to use search engines and databases.

4. The medical methods and treatments mentioned in this book are not intended to help a reader diagnose, treat, cure, or prevent any disease. If the reader wants to use Chinese medicine in the treatment of any illness, please consult a qualified doctor or professional expert. NCCAM and ChinesemedicineSampler.com[60] have developed a set of questions to help a reader select a reliable practitioner or acupuncturist.

NOTES

1. http://nccam.nih.gov/news/report.pdf.

2. Herring, S.D. (2001). Using the World Wide Web for research: Are faculty satisfied? *The Journal of Academic Librarianship, 27*(3): 213-219.

3. Molassiotis, Alexander et al. (2004). Quality and safety issues of Web-based information about herbal medicines in the treatment of cancer. *Complementary Therapies in Medicine 12*(4): 217–27.

4. Stirling, Dale (2004). Complementary and alternative medicine: A checklist of online resources. *Online Information Review 28*(1): 43-52. Brazin, Lillian (2003). *The Guide to Complementary and Alternative Medicine on the Internet,* Binghamton, NY: The Haworth Press. Rees, Alan (2001). *The Complementary and Alternative Medicine Information Source Book,* Westport: Oryx Press.

5. Fogelman, Betsy (1993). *The Oriental Medicine Resource Guide: An Information Resource Guide,* Santa Fe: In Word Press. Hu, Bin et al. (eds.) (2006). *Zhong yi yao wen xian jian suo* (Chinese medical literature search), Shanghai: Shanghai Science and technology Press. The purpose of this book is to teach students of Chinese medicine how to search medical terms, databases, dictionaries and documents but the book does not focus on online resources and does not provide ample useful Web sites.

6. National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine URL: http://nccam.nih.gov/.

7. Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine URL: http://www.pcom.edu/library/Internet_Guides/Complementary_Information_Reso/Complementary_&_Comp.html.

8. Medical Subject Healings of National Medical Library URL: http://www.nlm.nih.gov/mesh/.

9. Eisenberg, David et al. (1993); Eisenberg, David et al (1998).

10. The Alternative Medicine Homepage URL: http://www.pitt.edu/~cbw/altm.html.