A Cornucopia of Reference Works

for the History of

Chinese Medicine

by

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As the history of medicine has evolved into a specialty, its practitioners have reconnoitred in many new directions. Scholars increasingly see the study of texts and careers, not as an end in itself, but as a means to explain the character and circumstances of change—changes in the social roots of medicine, and in clinical practice as well as in concepts. Studies of Chinese medicine have evolved more slowly than researches on European and American medicine. Few studies of China, by scholars East or West, are up to the standard current at the forefront of medical history.

There are many reasons for this retardation. Not least among them have been the vast size of the primary literature and the dearth of reference tools. Since the late 1970’s, however, compilation of dictionaries, bibliographies, and other aids has accelerated in China. There have been some notable contributions from Japan as well. A decade ago it was practically impossible to find one’s way in more than a tiny fraction of the sources; now it is merely daunting. The purpose of this survey is to list and describe the most reliable and useful among a flood of reference sources that have appeared in the nineteen-eighties. I include a few older books that remain essential, and mention untrustworthy new works only when for some reason a warning is in order.

Orientation
The growth of postgraduate education in China has produced a number of reference handbooks, which introduce some combination of sources

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and methods. The best of these is Ji Wenhui 1986, which describes a broad and thoughtful choice of about 370 reference tools. It presupposes elementary training in sinology. Guo Aichun, a versatile and prolific scholar, has provided an excellent chronological table of medical history (1984). Although a great many dates are uncertain, his choices are on the whole reasonable. The book covers mainly books and authors to 1911, and only government regulations pertaining to medicine from 1911 to 1966. An overview of current issues in the history of basic medical doctrine is given by Wang Yuquan and Song Tianpin 1980. For an analogous review of problems in the study of ancient writings on materia medica see Xie Zongwan 1981.

For more recent reviews of scholarship, see the historical and other pertinent surveys in the Yearbooks of Traditional Chinese Medicine (Tan Yunhe 1984-).

Finding Primary Sources

Some historians have claimed that traditional medicine deteriorated after the Sung dynasty, although I cannot recall this assertion coming from anyone who is familiar with a significant portion of the post-Sung literature. There are of course many ways to measure decline. There was certainly no decline in volume of publication. From the Qing on, a large proportion of introductory textbooks were in effect classified anthologies of Huangdi nei jing 黃帝內經, Shang han lun 傷寒論, and the Song-Yuan masters. Deeper writings also proliferated. They provide clues about what was happening at the frontiers of medicine, but there are few aids to finding one's way among them.

In addition to improved catalogues, we now have several reference works that compactly describe early medical books, and diverse collections that bring scattered texts together in handy form.

On authenticity and related matters, Tamba no Mototane's Iseki kō 醫籍考 (Studies of medical books, 1819) and Okanishi 1958 are handy as ever for information about individual titles. Ma Jixing 1982 provides (in preliminary form) a magisterial introduction to the critical study of authenticity, filiation, and interrelations of important texts, especially those of the Sung and earlier. Ma's indefatigable labors of collection and colligation have solved many problems about which less assiduous scholars could offer only opinions.

The most complete list of extant primary sources for traditional medicine remains Zhongyi Yanjiu Yuan & Beijing Tushuguan 1961, a preliminary publication. It enumerates every known edition of over six thousand books in the fifty largest Chinese collections, with information on their location. Books are arranged by subject and date (many of the latter are provisional, and should be checked in recent monographs before use). These books appear under nearly eight thousand titles, since minor variations and alternate names are not unusual. A revised edition, which will include roughly eight thousand distinct books (about thirteen thousand titles) in over a hundred libraries, is nearly ready for the printer. No such union catalogue is available for Japanese holdings. The
most valuable catalogue of a single collection is that of the Apricot Rain Reading Room, the library of the Takeda Science Foundation (Takeda Kagaku Shinkō Saidan 1982). Other recent catalogues especially worth consulting are those of Tokyo University library (Tōkyō Daigaku 1980) and the Ueno Library (Tsukasa Shobō 1976).

Another signal contribution by Guo Aichun is a series of province-by-province medical bibliographies, compiled from a thorough survey of local gazetteers (Guo 1984- ). This work contains many more titles, from the Six Dynasties to 1911, than any previous compilation. Many of the books cited no longer exist. Guo provides occasional notes, and excerpts information about authors. He points out discrepancies between gazetteers, but does not resolve them using bibliographic data from primary sources or other secondary works.

Descriptions and evaluations of medical books have been included in well-known annotated catalogues of general collections for a thousand years. A few specialized descriptive catalogues were compiled in the first half of this century (e.g., Ding & Zhou 1955 [original version by 1929] and Cao 1936). In fact nearly two centuries ago Tamba no Mototane’s Iseki kō set a standard for bibliographic reference works that has seldom been surpassed.

New works entirely devoted to critical abstracts of ancient medical sources are, for purposes of historical scholarship, far more informative and more authoritative than their predecessors. The handiest and most inclusive is the preliminary but readily available fascicle on medical books and authors of an encyclopedia of Chinese medicine (Zhongyi Yanjiu Yuan et al. 1981- ). Its generally brief articles characterize and indicate the value and influence of 2258 works, indicating for each whether it has been reprinted since 1949. Jia Weicheng 1982 includes only three hundred sources, but gives for each a summary of contents, information on the author, listings in early bibliographies, and extant editions through the Qing. Information in the latter two categories is usually incomplete, and the book does not evaluate. Sun Jifen et al. 1984- combines the wide coverage of the encyclopedia with detailed listings like Jia’s. It provides representative quotations and some assessments, but bibliographic data on modern editions only. Guo Aichun 1985, part of an ambitious collection of reference works on acupuncture and moxibustion, reproduces prefaces, tables of contents, and short critical discussions by specialists for about three hundred sources from the second century B.C. to 1965. Zhang Zanchen & Yu Ying’ao 1987 provide information on books devoted to external disorders (waïke).

An important work of broader scope deserves mention for its discussions of medical classics. The volume on medical history of the Encyclopedia of Chinese Medicine is about equally divided between Chinese and non-Chinese medicine (Li Jingwei et al. 1987). It contains descriptions of more than two hundred Chinese books, generally at least 400 characters long, and signed by well-known historians of medicine. These articles are up to date, and often contain more detailed evaluations than those in Zhongyi Yanjiu Yuan et al. 1981- .
Classical encyclopedias and anthologies that reprint large numbers of texts are helpful in finding a variety of sources on a given topic, so long as they are used with caution. Old collections routinely rephrase and rearrange. Even new ones do not describe the contexts of their citations; a user who fails to consult the original text will often be led into misunderstanding. To a critical scholar anthologies and encyclopedias have two uses: identifying books worth reading from beginning to end, and yielding fragments of lost works.

Two recent reprints are especially valuable. One gathers the extant articles or parts of articles on medicine from the vast Ming encyclopedia Yongle da dian 永樂大典 (1408) into a single typeset, punctuated volume. It includes a number of complete early medical books that have not survived in any other form. Since only a portion of the Yongle da dian itself still exists, coverage of medical topics is spotty. What remains—for instance, a section on pediatrics—is invaluable (Xiao Yuan et al. 1986). The second reprint is Yi shu 藥述 (1826), a little-known but excellent topical anthology of short excerpts, clinically oriented, that draws on more than three hundred medical books and a number of non-medical works. Neither reprint translates its text into simplified characters.

The Yongle da dian reprint might instructively be compared with two bulkier and more expensive reprints of the complete section on medicine from the Qianlong Encyclopedia (Gujin tushu jicheng 古今圖書集成) of 1725. This work is intrinsically less useful than the Ming encyclopedia, even though it gives medical materials a special section rather than interspersing them among other texts. Its texts on the whole are not rare. It tends to cite classical sources from late works rather than the earliest, and relies heavily on Ming medical orthodoxy rather than giving a balanced view of medicine. Its main value lies in its systematic and chronological presentation of therapy. For those prepared to take advantage of this strength, only the unpunctuated 1977 Banqiao, Taiwan, reprint can be recommended. The punctuated 1959-1962 Beijing version was censored to remove "superstitious and irrational material" that "has no clinical value," and was translated into simplified characters.2

Of new anthologies the broadest is Qian Yuanming 1986, which quotes every type of old Chinese writing. The compiler topically arranges short excerpts from roughly a thousand sources. The latter are generally cited, usually by juan number, mostly from quotations in encyclopedias and other large third-hand collections (editions are specified). Selections are reproduced in simplified characters, with fairly frequent explanatory annotations and occasional critical comments. The topical arrangement is judicious, and each item carries a descriptive title. The compiler's failure to verify these quotations by comparing them with the originals severely limits the reliability of this book. An old collection nearly as broad in scope is Yang Yuanji 1953. This anthology, drawn

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2 See "A Word from the Publisher" at the beginning of Volume I.
from 322 books, is based on exceptionally broad exploration in primary sources. It is particularly rich in excerpts from informal essays and jottings.

Most anthologies are limited in type of literature or topic. Chen Bangxian 1982 provides a thorough collection from the Standard Histories. But Chen’s book is not as convenient to use as it might have been. He distributes under medical subjects the relevant contents of the Shi ji 史記, then repeats the process for the Han shu 漢書, and so on down the list of histories, one by one, providing no index to help the reader quickly find all the citations on a given theme. Chen Chiming 1974 extracts from the standard histories and presents case records of forty-three physicians, with interpretations that sometimes clarify, and sometimes waste space trying to find simple identities between traditional and modern diagnoses.

Wang Xinhua (1983) brings together discussions of medical doctrine aptly chosen from over two hundred technical sources, excluding the early classics—unfortunately without exact references. Huang Zili’s anthology (1988), which draws on 270 books from Huangdi nei jing to the end of the Qing period, includes discussions of medical disorders as well as of doctrines, but Huang’s comments are seldom of scholarly interest, and there is no index. Xu Fulin et al. 1985 opens up a neglected field of study. This book is an anthology of malpractice, even including accounts of physicians’ erroneous self-therapy from the Song to the twentieth century. Yang Weizhou 1980 gleans from over seventy classical sources nearly five thousand therapeutic formulas for eye disorders, with valuable discussions—an important resource for a neglected field. Zhou Yimou 1983 presents a rich harvest of reflections on medical ethics from Sima Qian (145-ca. 90 B.C.) to 1897.

Many recent textbooks of classical Chinese for medical students offer selections from familiar sources. Since they are useful only to novices, they are discussed under “Language Textbooks” on page 34.

Surveying Scholarship
The standard bibliographic guide to modern Chinese historical studies of medicine has been Wang Jimin 1957-1958. The revision by Zhongyi Yanjiu Yuan (1981) extends coverage to 1978. Publications related to medical texts found at Dunhuang are listed in Wang Jinyu 1987. For Japanese scholarship Miyasita 1961-1963 has yet to be superseded. To find pertinent Western writings there is no alternative to searching the National Library of Medicine’s computer database. Success depends on choice of keywords, and thus requires some attention to the design of the classification system, or the help of someone trained in it. In any case one must expect to winnow from the output a large proportion of irrelevant entries. Sivin 1988 cites important recent contributions from China, Japan, and the West.
Reading Texts

*Language Textbooks*: In time-honored principle, the individual physician deepens his mastery of medicine through constant interplay between classical doctrine and clinical experience. His cases reveal, as only practice can, the inner meaning of the ancient writings; the wisdom of the sages knits a sequence of individual observations into a coherent understanding of the patient’s dysfunctional body processes. But few students beginning medical school in the last twenty years can read the old language. The resulting need to teach it in medical school has engendered not only a number of great books translated into the vernacular, but a large genre of textbooks for courses in “medical classical Chinese” (*yi guwen* 医古文). Such books vary greatly in size, diversity, information on early syntax and diction, and so on. The most widely used is Liu Zhenmin et al. 1980, which provides excellent selections from theory to biography to poetry, along with information on reference books, particles, the critical study of early writings, and so on. Considerably more extensive and useful to historians is Duan Yishan 1986, meant not as a textbook but as a resource collection from which teachers can make their own choice of assignments. It includes 90 substantial texts in old-style characters, heavily annotated, with analyses, exercises, and some translations into the vernacular. Some selections, especially very early writings, are not medical, but help to extend the beginner’s grasp of cultural context. The book also contains introductory matter on such topics as ancient time reckoning.

*Dictionaries*: The cascade of dictionaries that has appeared since the early 1970’s has yielded a few of real value. Most primarily define compounds. Among these is a large-scale dictionary of traditional terminology that reflects with good accuracy the understanding of the present-day physician (Zhongyi Yanjiu Yuan et al. 1981- ). Its volume on basic concepts provides a conspectus of technical terminology, and other volumes provide greater detail. Li Jingwei et al. 1987 is a superior one-volume dictionary of Chinese and “world” medicine. The part on Chinese medicine contains about two hundred biographies, more than two hundred descriptions of books, and nearly a hundred topical surveys. Xu Yuanzhen et al. 1983 covers nearly ten thousand terms, names, and book titles. Its plan is vague, encompassing astrology and other matters, and it is not highly reliable. Dictionaries like these are helpful for learning to read current medical writings, but are of little use for the evolving and varying usages of technical terms in books written before this century.

I have come across only a few recent single-character dictionaries, most of them routine productions. Yang Huasen et al. 1985 does not give many senses lacking in a good general dictionary, but its illustrative quotations from a wide range of medical sources have their uses. Although Wang Sunren & Chen Zhuyou 1982 mostly give sound definitions, they skip over important but difficult senses. Li Rong 1986,
which purports to be a dictionary of difficult characters, mostly contains ordinary words and modern chemical terms found in the standard textbooks now used in colleges of Chinese medicine.

The handful of Chinese-English dictionaries of traditional medicine published since 1980 merely show that experienced physicians waste their time compiling such works unless they are at home in both languages. The least dangerous of these reference books is Ou Ming et al. 1986, a considerable improvement on the same team’s 1982 glossary. Its scope is wide and its definitions, in both Chinese and English, substantial. Still, its definitions need to be checked against the more reliable of the Chinese works cited above. The Chinese-English glossary edited by Xie Zhufan & Huang Xiaokai (1984) also has some value if used with caution. Frank Liu & Liu Yan Mau 1980, Shi Xuezhong et al. 1983, and others of their sort, meant primarily for sale outside China, are especially to be avoided.

More specialized lexicographical works are beginning to appear, but they too vary greatly in quality. Fang Wenhui 1982 on medical loan words is a work of exceptional merit, helpful in coping with all sorts of odd usages. Xue Fengkui’s little handbook of medical philology (1986) contains a number of sound observations and useful examples. Yu Yunxiu 1953 still occupies alone a critical niche. Yu, a pioneer of the history of medicine, surveys all the terminology for symptoms and diseases in the Confucian classics and the earliest dictionaries. He identifies some terms with counterparts in Western medicine, and presents pertinent information on those that do not correspond. Perhaps no Chinese author before or since has made this distinction so meticulously. From the 1950’s on, anathema has often been hurled at Yu because in the twenties he stood out among modern physicians who argued against preserving traditional medicine. Nonetheless in this book he produced one of the most serviceable aids to the study of early medicine. For similar terms in the medical literature, both classical and contemporary, Wang Yuting et al. 1988 provides a less sophisticated but quite useful work of scholarship.

Of the many recent dictionaries and handbooks of materia medica, Jiangsu Xin Yixue Yuan 1977-1978 outshines the rest for historical studies. It incorporates not only the classical drug repertory but thousands of plants previously noted in only in rare compendia of local flora. It is usually used alongside Shiu-ying Hu’s handbook of 1980, which distills decades of research into a discriminating list of standard English translations for medicinal plant names. This combination can quickly solve most problems of identification—at least so far as one who is not a taxonomist can settle them. The title of Huang Shengbai & Chen Zhongming 1988 suggests a conventional textbook of pharmacognosy, but actually most of this useful work takes up problems in the identification of 52 simples, and the rest discusses books on materia medica, with many acute observations. Another unexpectedly serviceable volume is a selection of prescriptions from Bencao gang mu 東草綱目 (Shanxi Sheng Zhongyi yao Yanjiuyuan 1982). Because it is incomplete, it is less useful to the pharmacist or clinician than the original Bencao
gang mu, several editions of which include a complete index of formulas. The 1982 publication, however, offers the historian notes on significant differences between formulas as they appear in Bencao gang mu and in its sources.

Several studies from Zhu Sheng 1957 on have revealed important changes in the preparation of medicinal substances over history, especially in the Tang-Song transition. The need for an accurate compendium of information from early books about methods of processing a given plant, animal, or mineral product has been filled by Wang Xiaotao 1986. This book in dictionary form is arranged by the names of the drugs, grouped according to type of source. It revises and brings up to date (but does not entirely replace) Wang’s earlier book which gathers in chronological order such data as they appear in 167 premodern sources (Zhongyi Yanjiu Yuan Zhongyao Yanjiusuo 1973).

Concordances and Indexes: These are the most essential tools for systematically exploring and comparing texts, for pinpointing transitions in the meanings of words. They are the key to many historical conundrums as well. No concordance to a medical classic yet exists, but the first indexes have been published, and are saving a great deal of time for those who have learned how to exploit them.

Kosoto et al. 1981, among many other indispensable contributions, traces chapter by chapter analogous passages in all the main Han medical classics except the Mawangdui documents and, surprisingly, the Huangdi bashi yi nan jing. Tables make it easy to locate corresponding texts in a variety of early sources. Kosoto and his colleagues have provided a number of other invaluable indexes in the eighth volume of their reprints of medical rarities. Okanishi Tametō included in the definitive printing of his Xin xiu bencaо reconstruction (1978) a table that for many years had been passed in manuscript form from one expert to another, and was heavily used by all. For about four thousand names of drug ingredients (including variants) it provides references to excellent editions of the four most important classical compendia of materia medica (and page references for three of them). It also includes compact information about oldest listing, misattributions, appearance in a great many other primary sources, and so on.

Tools that make it possible to look up words and passages in the classics have also begun to appear. Ren Yingqiu’s posthumously published index to the Huangdi nei jing (1986) is more than an index and less than a concordance. Ren, the leading historian of medical doctrines until his death in 1984, has established excellent texts of the Su wen and Ling shu, with each of their 81 chapters divided into numbered sections, and the longer sections into subsections. These texts, in old-style characters, provide a standard for citation analogous to the texts furnished in many volumes of the Harvard-Yenching Sinological Index Series. The index includes not only phrases (set off by punctuation in Jen’s texts) but technical words and terms. It is not exhaustive for terminology, but it includes every phrase in the two classics.
Ren’s phrase index does not incorporate the *Huangdi nei jing tai su* 太素, for some historiographic purposes the best point of entry to the Inner Canon, nor the fragmentary *Huangdi nei jing ming tang* 明堂, a generally neglected part of the corpus. At the time Ren’s indexing project began, not to include the Tai su was no doubt a wise choice. This work was lost in China before the Yuan; it survives primarily in one incomplete twelfth-century Japanese manuscript kept at the Buddhist temple Ninnaji, outside Kyoto. The recent publication by Kosoto Hiroshi and his colleagues (1981) of the Ninnaji MS in crystal-clear photographic reproduction has revealed that no modern edition of the Tai su is complete enough to be useful for research. Many sections marked “missing” in all of the Chinese typeset reprints are fully or partly legible in this new printing. It is easy to see whether an individual character is complete or damaged. This splendid achievement (and a similar reproduction of the Ninnaji Ming t’ang MS in the same series3) is only a first step. A modern critical edition analogous to those provided in Ren’s volume is needed before work on a concordance or index can begin.

Making a concordance or index is not just a matter of sorting words. Success depends largely on rigorous, consistent definition of what words are to be included, and on the establishment of a reliable text. Failure to think through such matters has led to a great deal of wasted effort in Zhang Shunjing’s indexes to *Shang han lun* and *Jin gui yao lue* 金匮要略 (1983, 1984). There are several quite discrepant versions of the two classics, and there is no highly satisfactory edition of either. Zhang’s arrangement is excellent—symptoms arrayed by category, prescriptions listed by stroke order, and technical terms set out in stroke order. But in the first section, grouping of variant names for symptoms often ignores significant distinctions; the third section is incomplete. Zhang’s texts, taken from *Yi zong jin jian* 医宗金鉴 (1743), were apparently chosen not for their scholarly value but because at the time of compilation these editions were prescribed for a qualifying examination in Taiwan.

Similarly, a combined index of the classics already indexed by Jen and Zhang plus the *Huangdi bashiyi nan jing* (Gu Zhishan forthcoming), will be little employed in scholarship because the compilers based it on the most widely available texts. Such a phrase index (based on Jen’s design) will make the old books accessible to medical students who cannot cope with scholarly versions. But none of the editions used has value for critical research. All are in simplified characters, in effect a form of translation in which much information is lost. When two or more old characters (for instance, 乾 and 千) are translated into a single simplified character (in this case 千), the latter, although not ambiguous in current speech, may become highly so in classical Chinese. That is why

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3 The 1988 critical edition of the *Ming tang* by Huang Longxiang is worth consulting, but its philological value is compromised by the use of simplified characters.
Jen’s index, and many other recent reference books and reprints, retain the old orthography.

Readers will find some help in interpreting old documents from recent photographic works meant for clinical reference. For instance, Gu Yidi & Fei Zhaofu 1988 offers 251 color plates illustrating various disorders as defined by traditional physicians today, and Song Tianpin 1984 provides nearly three hundred color photographs of subtle variations in tongue color and coating. Tongue signs as an element in diagnosis was formerly well developed among Western physicians, but except for a few salient discolorations has died out since the 1930's; it is still prominent in Chinese medicine.

**Identifying Authors**
The old standard biographical compendium of Chen Bangxian & Yan Lingzhou (1956), largely excerpted from standard reference works, is uneven in coverage and unreliable, as Chen Menglai 1958 and others have pointed out. Liu Feibai 1986 merely plagiarizes Chen & Yan. Li Yun et al. 1988 is much more comprehensive, and provides a bit more information, occasionally even dates. The volume of the Unabridged Dictionary of Chinese Medicine devoted to books and authors is much more useful. Although only a preliminary version, it contains fewer errors and more substantial information than Chen’s book (Zhongyi Yanjiu Yuan et al. 1981). The Academy is now preparing a biographical handbook which will cover more doctors in greater depth than will the definitive version of the Dictionary. In the mean time the volume on medical history of the Encyclopedia of Chinese Medicine contains about two hundred short but substantial biographies signed by leading historians (Li Jingwei et al. 1987). Chen Menglai 1987 is similar in coverage, but a little more detailed. Zhang Zhenchen & Yu Ying’ao 1987 give information about 237 physicians who were known for treatment of external disorders.

For information about more obscure physicians, it is best to look into local sources. Guo Aichun 1984- reproduces data on authors from gazetteers. Chen Daojin & Xue Weitao 1985 provides biographical notices of doctors from Jiangsu; Chen Xianful & Lin Senrong 1981, from Sichuan.

The Taoist Canon has not been exploited in Chinese compilations of medical biography. For physicians with Taoist connections, the microfiche index to personal names in all 1477 books gathered in the Zhengtong dao zang 政統道藏, compiled by Projet Daozang of the École Pratique des Hautes Études, Paris, is invaluable (Schipper 1986). Weng Dujian 1935, an outstanding index in its day, has been rendered quite obsolete as a guide to biography by this massive French compilation.

**Conclusion: Outstanding Needs**
Considering the dearth of trustworthy reference works a mere decade ago, one can only celebrate their recent proliferation. The current dis-
tribution of scholarly effort in China—a combination of individual initia-
tive and planning in research organisations—has begun to meet many
long-felt needs. What are the next steps?

Dictionaries: Simple technical dictionaries are only stopgaps. Needed in
the long run is a dictionary of traditional medicine compiled on historical
principles, separating ancient and recent meanings and showing their ev-
olution. A pattern lies ready in standard dictionaries of classical Chinese
such as the old 
Ci hai, 諸海, the new Ci yuan, 諸源, and the partly
published Hanyu da cidian 漢語大詞典, which reproduce the earliest
known usage of each sense, but on the whole these works ignore the ter-
minology of the scientific and medical classics. Some volumes in the
preliminary edition of the Unabridged Dictionary of Chinese Medicine
carry the reader part of the way toward this goal when they name the
primary source from which each definition is taken. This is done more
or less systematically in the volumes on internal and external medicine
(both mostly devoted to pathological terms); the volume on pharmacy
specifies juan as well (Zhongyi Yanjiuyuan et al. 1981- ). The next steps
might be to specify in detail changes in sense, and to reproduce the ear-
liest occurrence of each usage.

Concordances: It will be easier to unsnarl the tangled relations between
four surviving versions of the Inner Canon of the Yellow Lord, its re-
cently excavated precursors, and the three later works that represent the
first medical syntheses, if we have concordances based on sound critical
editions, preferably one concordance that includes them all. Because of
the many overlaps in these texts, a combined concordance would save
much labor in compilation and publication, and not a little bookshelf
space in use.

Bibliographies of Current Scholarship: The most obvious weakness in
reference tools worldwide is current bibliography. There is no simple
way to keep informed about the most recent publications in medical his-
tory. The Yearbooks of Traditional Chinese Medicine summarize the
most significant work on selected topics, but there is no comprehensive
list of books and articles. In Japan writings on physical science are in-
cluded in the annual Kyoto bibliography of Asian studies, but scholar-
ship on medical history is generally omitted (Jim bun Kagaku Kenkyuu,
1966- ). Coverage of medicine in Kagakushii Kenkyuu’s 科學史研究
bibliographies is scant. The critical bibliographies of Isis, the journal of
the international History of Science Society, are comprehensive for the
history of Western medicine, but incomplete even for Occidental publi-
cations on Chinese medical history. The annual Bibliography of Asian
Studies, unlike Isis, does not list publications in Chinese and Japanese.
Its citations of Western-language writings are inadequate. Exhaustive
current bibliographies would be a great boon, especially if maintained in
standard computer text files so that individuals could procure and com-
bine copies for rapid searching. It should be possible eventually to in-
clude large bibliographies in databases on networks accessible to personal computers worldwide (the U.S. National Library of Medicine database so far is of negligible use for historical research).
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Gujin tushu jicheng 古今圖書集成 (Complete collection of books and illustrations old and new). Ed. Jiang Tingxi 蒋廷錫 et al., presented 1725. 10,000 juan.

Huangdi bashiyi nan jing 黃帝八十一難經 (Canon of problems in the [Inner Canon of the] Yellow Lord). Anonymous. Probably second century A.D.
Now usually referred to as Nan jing.

Huangdi nei jing 黃帝內經 (Inner canon of the Yellow Lord). Anonymous. The two most frequently reprinted books by this title, the HNJ Su wen 景問 and Ling shu 靈樞, were probably written in the first century B.C. The only extant recensions, those of Wang Bing 王冰, 762, considerably alter the arrangement of parts. Wang’s versions were considerably revised again in the eleventh century. Two other texts in the same tradition, the HNJ Tai su 太素 (Grand basis) and Ming tang 明堂 (Hall of light) were written by Yang Shangshen 楊上善, probably 666/683.4 Su wen and Ling shu in typeset reprint, Beijing, 1956; Tai su and Ming tang in Kosoto et al. 1981.
No available translation is reliable.


Jin gui (or kui) yao lüe 金匱要略. See Shang han za bing lun.

Shang han lun 傷寒論 . See Shang han za bing lun.

Shang han za bing lun 傷寒雜病論 (Treatise on Cold Damage and miscellaneous disorders). Attributed to Zhang Ji 張機, 196/220. Divided in N. Sung into Jin gui yao lüe fang lun (Essentials and dis-

4 For the basis of my translations of titles, see Sivin 1987, Bibliography A.
cussions of prescriptions in the golden casket; now usually referred to as Jin gui yao lie), Shang han lun (Treatise on Cold Damage disorders), and Jin gui yu han jing 金匮玉函經 (Canon [of prescriptions] in the gold and jade caskets).

The attribution has often been questioned.

*Yi shu* 醫述 (The medical heritage).  楊promise  程文照.  Compiled 1792-1826, printed 1833.
Clinically oriented general introduction to medicine in the form of an anthology.

*Yi zong jin jian* 醫宗金鑑 (Golden mirror of the medical tradition).  Wu Qian 吳謙 et al., presented 1743.
An attempt by the Qianlong emperor to establish a comprehensive standard textbook.

*Yongle da dian* 永樂大典 (Unabridged encyclopedia of the Perpetual Well-being reign period).  Compiled 1403-1407.  Originally 22,877 juan.
The medical portion, 72 of the surviving 795 juan, has been reprinted in Xiao Yuan et al. 1986.


**Sources Published after 1900**

Short, occasionally still useful descriptive notices; no index.  Beginning of a contemplated series of 365 reprints, of which only 128 were published.

Completed 1964.  Excerpts arranged topically under each history.  No index.


Short articles, generally to the point, on 3180 doctors, including a small proportion active in the Republican period and a few PRC figures. Gives only titles of sources. In stroke order; index in chronological order by locality.


Criticizes careless editing and corrects many errors. This journal was a temporary incarnation of *Zhonghua yishi zazhi*, on which see Wang Jinyu 1987.


Over 200 biographies in chronological order with some indications of sources. A preface surveys the evolution of medical biography.


Arranged roughly in chronological order, no index.


Short, anecdotal articles on 1071 physicians from the Han to 1911. No index by locality, etc. Usually gives juan or page numbers for sources.


Original version completed ca. 1929 but never published. Expanded, but primarily useful for Ding’s notes. Four-corner index of titles and authors.


Fang Wenhu 方文辉 1982. *Zhongyi gu ji tongjiezi gujinzi li shi 中医古籍通借字古今字例释* (Explications, with examples,


Indexes phrases, “key words,” names of drugs, standard formulas, acupuncture loci, etc., in popular eds. of five classics in simplified characters.


Topical bibliography from Six Dynasties; citations from gazetteers, with biographical information on authors.


Reproduces prefaces, tables of contents, and short specialist discussions of ca. 300 sources from the Han to 1965 (130 prior to 1911). Indexes of titles and authors.


Devoted partly to the classical literature and partly to problems of identifying simples.

Cites ca. 370 reference sources. Includes an appendix on time reckoning and a stroke-order index to book titles.

Information on authors, contents, early citations in bibliographies, and extant editions before 1912. Indexes of book titles and authors.

Makes earlier dictionaries of medicinal plants, etc., obsolete. Vol. 3 is indexes of Latin and Chinese names (including variant names), chemical constituents, therapeutic functions, and scientific monographs.

Coverage from 1963 on.

Includes a great variety of indexes, cross-reference lists, and concise studies.

Contains, in addition to biographies and descriptions of books, about a hundred short topical surveys, and appendices on serial publications, hospitals and medical schools, scholarly organizations, and chronologies. Indexes of personal names and book titles only.


Articles of a few lines each on 10,500 physicians to the end of the Qing period.

Plagiarized from Chen Bangxian & Yan Lingzhou 1956.

A glossary. Capricious, uncomprehending translations and explanations.

Textbook for schools of traditional medicine.

Ma Jixing 马继兴 [1982]. *Zhongyi wenxianxue jichu 中医文献学基础* (Foundations of the study of Chinese medical literature).
[Beijing: Zhongyi Yanjiu Yuan].
Tentative edition; no index.

Lists in Japanese on Japanese, Chinese, and other foreign medicine, arranged within topic by author. Titles of parts vary. No index.

The 1964 Taipei ed. is to be avoided.

More than 4500 entries. Technical terms in current use only, in stroke order with stroke and pinyin indexes.

Excerpts on every aspect of history, concepts, poetry, case histories, etc., all annotated, from about a thousand books, including fiction.


Scholarly index of technical terms as well as phrases. The text, edited from a 1956 reprint of Ming eds., is punctuated and divided into sections, with a summary of each. Arranged by stroke order with a character index.


Indexes to names, official titles, gods, institutions, places, topographic features, etc., in the 1120 vols. of the Zhengtong dao zang.


Contains about 3000 out of 10,000+ formulas arranged topically, with notes on significant divergences from sources.


The most comprehensive and least trustworthy of Chinese-English dictionaries recently published in China.


Published 1988.


Two hundred eighty-two color plates arranged by tongue coloration, with topical index.
By students of Ren Yingqiu. Covers 504 titles, mostly premodern, some Japanese and Korean. Abstracts of a page or more, with some evaluation. Indexes of titles and authors.

Unannotated catalogue of the Foundation’s library, the best Chinese medical history collection outside China.

Covers 1983 on. See esp. sections on “medical history and sources” and “schools of thought.”


Covers publications 1906-1957.

Covers 1909-1985, with a few Japanese contributions.

Short dictionary of single characters taken from modern reprints of forty classical works; ignores difficult senses.

Arranged partly by portion of plant used, partly by type of plant, animal, or mineral. Stroke-order index. See also Zhongyi Yanjiu Yuan Zhongyao Yanjiusuo 1973.


Excellent, sparsely annotated selections that voice diverse views on all aspects of theory and therapeutic doctrine. Cites over two hundred sources (omitting the earliest classics) without exact references.


Gives 110 citations.


Ca. 2500 entries based on a survey of 93 classical and modern sources. Includes modern disorders treated by combined traditional and modern therapy. Gives locus classicus, symptoms, causes, type of therapy, relation to other disorders.


Topical, no index.


Reprints the 72 extant juan that pertain to medicine. Typeset, original orthography.

Glossary with stroke-order index. Use with caution.


Gives 134 citations.


Anthology, mostly of case records, from Sung to recent times. Grouped by type of error, with comments on each excerpt by the editor, but no index.


Arranged by stroke order.


Arranged in stroke order by title of formula; cross-references to variant names, index of symptoms and syndromes.


Short selections from diverse non-medical literature. No simplified characters. Indexes of medicinal substances, physicians, and sources. I have been unable to find further collections.

Judicious glosses on all the words for diseases in Confucian classics and very early dictionaries; informative about identification with modern disorders.


Includes corrections of errors in Iseki kō, descriptions of Chinese and Japanese waike treatises (all except a few of them premodern), and biographies of over 200 physicians known for waike.


In addition to shortcomings noted on p. 37 above, these two works are poorly informed on Shanghan lun studies.


Enumerates every known edition of over six thousand works in the fifty Chinese libraries with the most extensive medical holdings.


Reprinted Hong Kong: Commercial Press, 1975, under title ZMS cidian 詞典 (Dictionary . . . ), a misnomer. See idem 1981-.


Considerably different in content and coverage from idem 1973. Includes some terms from materia medica and prescriptions.

medicine (Neike fence 内科分冊, 1985), and external medicine, traumatology, and EENT (Waike gushang wuguanke fence 外科 骨伤五官科分册, 1987).

All are tentative editions. For predecessors to the “basic concepts” volume (actually a dictionary of classical medical terms) see Zhongyi Yanjiu Yuan et al. ed. 1973, 1979. The scope of the 1981 volume on medical books and authors is similar that of 1973, but content is little changed from 1979.


Lists over ten thousand articles arranged chronologically by topic, with indexes of authors, titles, and sources. Definitive for history, but Wu Guanguo & Ji Hong 1958 is still worth consulting on clinical topics.


Summary indications of processing for particular drugs from 167 books, from the Shennong bencao to 1893. Arranged by source in chronological order, no index. Censored. Compiler was Wang Xiaotao, q.v.


Contains 74 excerpts in chronological order, profusely annotated. No index.


Covers the past two thousand years.