

Publisher's Foreword

The *Shen Nong Ben Cao Jing* (*The Divine Farmer's Materia Medica Classic*) is one of the 10 premodern classics of Chinese medicine selected in the People's Republic of China as nationwide research priorities within the Chinese medical literature. Also referred to as the *Shen Nong Ben Jing*, the *Shen Nong Ben Cao*, the *Ben Cao Jing*, and simply the *Ben Jing*, it is one of the two most important of these 10 preeminent Chinese medical classics. The *Huang Di Nei Jing* (*The Yellow Emperor's Inner Classic*) is the *locus classicus* of Chinese medical theory and especially acupuncture and moxibustion, while the *Shen Nong Ben Cao Jing* is the *locus classicus* of so-called Chinese herbal medicine. All the rest of the Chinese medical literature, both premodern and contemporary, is built on the foundation of these two seminal texts. Therefore, it is not difficult to understand why we have chosen to publish this first English language translation of the *Shen Nong Ben Cao Jing* as part of Blue Poppy Press's Great Masters Series.

Shen Nong is one of the three greatest heroes of Chinese culture, the other two being the Yellow Emperor and Fu Xi, the revealer of the eight trigrams. These three legendary divine beings are credited as being the fountainhead of Chinese lifearts. The name Shen Nong can be translated as Divine Farmer, Divine Peasant, Divine Agriculturist, or Divine Husbandman. Among his numerous discoveries and revelations, Shen Nong is credited with teaching the Chinese people how to farm -- thus his most common name. The first reference to a connection between Shen Nong and Chinese herbal medicine is found in the *Huai Nan Zi* (*The South of the Huai Master*) written by Liu An who died in 122 BCE.

Ancient people ate grasses and drank water. They gathered the fruit from trees and ate the meat of clams. They frequently suffered from disease and poisoning. Then Shen Nong taught people for the first time how to sow the five grains, to observe whether the land was dry or wet, fertile or rocky, located in the hills or in the lowlands. He tasted the flavors of all the herbs and springs, [determining] whether they were bitter or sweet. Thus he taught people what to avoid and where they could go. At that time, [Shen Nong] encountered 70 [herbs] in one day, [determining which were] medicines and [which were] poisons.¹

This is the first surviving recorded instance in the Chinese literature crediting Shen Nong with determining the medicinal properties of things by tasting them himself. This story has then been repeated and embellished upon down through the centuries. Some versions even give Shen Nong a see-through stomach so he could witness the effects of what he ate on his internal organs!

The words *ben* and *cao* mean tree roots and grasses or herbs respectively. Therefore, as a compound term, they generically refer to the Chinese materia medica, and materia medica is the most commonly used translation of *ben cao* used in English today. *Ben* and *cao* are used in Chinese medicine to refer to materia medica in general because the overwhelming majority of traditional Chinese medicinals are derived from vegetable sources. However, since the Chinese materia medica also includes mineral and animal medicinals, we have used the words, "so-called Chinese herbal medicine," above.

As mentioned previously, this work is the *locus classicus* of the *ben cao* or materia medica literature of Chinese medicine. It is this literature which describes the ingredients of Chinese medicine, their flavors and natures (*i.e.*, temperatures), their functions, and indications. According to this book, medicinals have five basic flavors -- sour, salty, sweet, bitter, and acrid -- and four qi or natures -- cold, hot, warm, and cool. Hot diseases should be treated with cold medicinals and cold diseases should be treated with hot medicinals. This

¹ Liu An, *Huai Nan Zi*, "Xiu Wu Xun," chap. 19, p. 1a, anthologized in *Zhu Zi Ji Cheng* (*An Anthology of Various Masters*), Hebei People's Press, ed. by Luan Bao-qun & Lou Xi-yuan, Tangshan, 1986.

book also introduced the first method of classifying Chinese medicinals. Within this classic, all medicinals are classified into three grades or categories: superior medicinals corresponding to heaven which govern the maintenance of life and are without toxicity, medium medicinals corresponding to humankind which benefit human nature and have some medicinal functions, and inferior medicinals corresponding to earth which cure disease and definitely do have some toxicity. Further, medicinals are also categorized into sovereigns, ministers, assistants, and envoys. Hence, one can find all the most basic and elemental theories of Chinese herbal medicine in seminal form in this classic.

Although a book titled the *Shen Nong Jing* (*The Divine Farmer's Classic*) is mentioned by various Chinese medical authors and Daoists interested in longevity practices in the Qin dynasty (221-206 BCE), this book has long been lost, and it is not at all clear that it was, in fact, an early version of this materia medica. The first mention of the *Shen Nong Ben Cao per se* are found in the writings of the Daoist physician Tao Hong-jing whom lived from 452-536 CE. According to Tao, the knowledge of Chinese materia medica transmitted orally from the time of Shen Nong was first written down in the later Han dynasty (circa 200 CE). As Paul U. Unschuld says in his *Medicine in China: A History of Pharmaceuticals*, "This opinion was based upon the fact that the names used for the places of origin of the drugs in the various pen-ts'ao works of T'ao's time were common to the later Han period."²

In fact, it is due to the writings of Tao Hong-jing that we have any version of the *Shen Nong Ben Cao Jing* today. Tao is the author of the *Ben Cao Jing Ji Zhu* (*Collected Annotations on the Materia Medica Classic*) and a *Shen Nong Ben Cao Jing*. According to Unschuld, these are the same book and sometimes they are referred to jointly as the *Shen Nong Ben Cao Jing Ji Zhu*. Tao wrote the *Shen Nong Ben Cao Jing* first in three books and later revised this into the *Ben Cao Jing Ji Zhu* in seven books based on Daoist cosmological beliefs involving the number seven. However, the contents of these two books are identical. In his preface, Tao mentions three main sources for his work. These include several different versions of the *Shen Nong Ben Cao Jing*, the *Tong Jun Cai Yao Lu* (*Gentleman Tong's Notes on Gathering Medicinals*), and the *Lei Kung Yao Dui* (*Lei Kung's Comparison of Medicinals*). He also mentions Zhang Chi (142-220? CE), Hua Tuo (190-265 CE), and Hua Tuo's students, Wu Pu and Li Dang-zhi, as authors before him who had worked on earlier versions of the *Shen Nong Ben Cao Jing*. However, as Unschuld states, "It can no longer be proved whether there was, in fact, ever a specific, original work entitled *Shen-nung pen-ts'ao ching*, or whether various pharmaceutical collections of the Han period were written with this or a similar title."³

In any case, even Tao Hong-jing's *Shen Nong Ben Cao Jing* and *Ben Cao Jing Ji Zhu* were lost. Nevertheless, efforts to recreate the *Shen Nong Ben Cao Jing* were undertaken at least as early as the Song dynasty (960-1280 CE). This may sound crazy to Western readers not familiar with premodern Chinese literary practices. If something is lost, it's lost. However, it was not uncommon for Chinese authors to include whole books or at least chapters from previous books into their own new compilations. This was an accepted literary practice and carried no opprobrium of plagiarism as it would in the contemporary West. This process was made easier by the fact that Tao Hong-jing had used two different colors of ink in his version of the *Shen Nong Ben Cao Jing*. Everything written in red ink was supposed to be the words of Shen Nong. Since succeeding authors of later *ben cao* continued this convention, it makes the identification of quotes from the *Shen Nong Ben Cao Jing* somewhat easier.

As early as the Tang dynasty (618-907 CE), Sun Si-miao had incorporated lengthy sections of the *Shen Nong*

² Unschuld, Paul U., *Medicine in China: A History of Pharmaceuticals*, U. of CA Press, Berkeley, 1986, p. 17

³ *Ibid.*, p. 17

Ben Cao Jing into his own *Qian Jin Fang (Prescriptions [Worth] a Thousand [Pieces of] Gold)*, and this book has survived till today. It is one of the earliest sources for recompiling the *Shen Nong Ben Cao Jing*. The *Jing Shi Zheng Lei Bei Ji Ben Cao (A Classic & Historic [Work]: A Materia Medica for Emergencies [Based on] Pattern Categorization)* compiled by Tang Shen-wei in 1108 CE is the most important surviving source for recreating the *Shen Nong Ben Cao Jing*. However, even Li Shi-zhen's late Ming dynasty (1368-1644 CE) *Ben Cao Gang Mu (Great Outline of Materia Medica)* has been used to help recreate this seminal materia medica classic since even Li maintained the convention of using red and black inks in order to identify the supposed words of the divine Shen Nong.

At this point, the reader should remember that in ancient times, doctors would copy other doctor's copies of books by hand. Therefore, different copyists often took the liberty of rearranging texts depending on their own tastes and proclivities, just as modern college students might rearrange their teacher's lecture notes in order to facilitate their own study. Because of this, several different versions of the *Zheng Lei Ben Cao* currently exist, and, therefore, there are a number of different versions of the *Shen Nong Ben Cao* available today. The main discrepancies between these existing versions of the *Shen Nong Ben Cao* are 1) the number of medicinals they include, 2) the format of their presentation, and 3) the texts on certain particular medicinals. It is believed that the original *Ben Cao Jing* contained 365 medicinals. However, all extant versions fall short of this number despite many previous scholars' efforts to recover these lost medicinals. In terms of format, some versions have four books, while others have only three. Some versions simply divide all the medicinals into superior, medium, and inferior grades, while others first divide them into wood, grass, animal, and stone medicinals which are then subdivided into superior, medium, and inferior grades. Some versions contain a table of contents at their beginning and others do not. Still others give a list of medicinals to be discussed before each section of each book. In addition, there are minor discrepancies in the text itself under each medicinal. For instance, some versions discuss the geographic origins of the medicinals, while others do not. This last discrepancy is based on the assumption by certain editors that this information was a later addition and not part of the original text.

The present translation is based on the *Ben Cao Jing (Materia Medica Classic)* edited by Cao Yuan-yu and published by the Shanghai Science & Technology Press in Shanghai in 1987. It is Yang Shou-zhong's opinion that this version is the most carefully collated and edited of the various versions available in the People's Republic of China and is probably closer to the original than any other. The most popular current version of this seminal medicinal classic is the *Shen Nong Ben Cao Jing (The Divine Farmer's Materia Medica Classic)* published by the Chinese Medical Classics Publishing House in Beijing in 1982. Readers familiar with that version should note that these two are not the same. The present version differs from the *Ben Cao Jing* version in that it includes a Book Four. This is comprised of those passages which are absent from our source text but which are common to many other versions. Specifically, these are segments included as appendices at the end of the *Shen Nong Ben Cao Jing* edited by Huang Shi. Huang Shi was a high-ranking official during the reigns of Jia Qing (1796-1820) and Dao Guang (1821-1850). In addition, we have created a new Table of Contents to make this book easier to use for modern readers and we have deleted the listing of medicinals discussed in each chapter as superfluous given the Table of Contents and index of medicinals at the back. Insertions within brackets have been added by the translator in order to bring out the meaning of the text and render it in better English while allowing readers to identify the words which actually are in the source text.

The terminology and methodology used in this translation is based on Nigel Wiseman and Ken Boss's *Glossary of Chinese Medical Terms and Acupuncture Points*, Paradigm Publications, Brookline, MA, 1990, with updates and revisions as contained in Nigel Wiseman's *English-Chinese Chinese-English Dictionary of Chinese Medicine*, Hunan Science & Technology Press, Changsha, 1995. The medicinals are identified by their Chinese names written in Pinyin followed by their Latinate pharmacological nomenclature in parentheses. Sources for these Latinate identifications are Bensky and Gamble's *Chinese Herbal Medicine:*

Materia Medica, Revised Edition, Eastland Press, Seattle, 1993; Hong-yen Hsu's *Oriental Materia Medica: A Concise Guide*, Oriental Healing Arts Institute, Long Beach, CA, 1986; Stuart and Read's *Chinese Materia Medica*, Southern Materials Center, Taipei, 1979; Paul U. Unschuld's *Medicine in China: A History of Pharmaceutics*, U. of CA Press, Berkeley, 1986; *A Barefoot Doctor's Manual, Revised & Enlarged Edition*, Cloudburst Press, Mayne Isle, WA, 1977; and the *Zhong Yao Da Ci Dian (Large Dictionary of Chinese Medicinals)*, Shanghai Science & Technology Press, Shanghai, 1991. In particular, Stuart & Read's *Chinese Materia Medica* is a good resource for finding the Chinese characters for the medicinals in this text as well as discussions of their botanical identifications and common English names. When a medicinal is subsequently discussed in a footnote, we have simply referred to it by its capitalized common English name or a simplified version of its Latin botanical name in nominative case. Regrettably, the translator was unable to find Latin (or English) identifications for a very small handful of medicinals. Hopefully, as scholars in China continue to research this classic, these will be added to future editions of this work.

Westerners often think of Chinese medicine as Daoist medicine. In most cases, this is a benign myth. In actual fact, the overwhelming majority of the great books of Chinese medicine were written by authors who identified themselves as Confucianist. However, the *Shen Nong Ben Cao Jing* is definitely an example of the Daoist contribution to the development of Chinese medicine. As the reader will see, there is a great interest on the part of the author in using so-called herbs in order to achieve immortality and other supernatural powers and abilities. In addition, there are more references to demonology in this book than to the essentially Confucian medicine of systematic correspondences. Modern readers coming across references to flying in the sky and warding off demons and ghosts through the administration of Chinese medicinals should understand the historical context and provenance of this seminal classic *and take the information with a large grain of salt!* It should also be remembered that many Chinese, including emperors and even famous doctors such as Huang-fu Mi, made themselves ill and even cut off their lives prematurely by taking such external elixirs compounded out of potentially toxic materials.

Nevertheless, when it comes to Chinese materia medica, the two great books are the *Shen Nong Ben Cao Jing* (contained herein) and Li Shi-zhen's *Ben Cao Gang Mu (Great Outline of Materia Medica)*. It is with great pleasure that Blue Poppy Press is able to make this first English language translation of the *Shen Nong Ben Cao Jing* available to Western scholars and practitioners of Chinese medicine as part of our Great Masters Series. Hopefully this translation will help deepen the Western understanding of the history and development of Chinese herbal medicine. In particular, we believe it will be useful for professional practitioners to compare these early Chinese medicinal descriptions with standard contemporary descriptions as found in Bensky and Gamble's *Chinese Herbal Medicine: Materia Medica*. Such a comparison will afford a better understanding of the evolution of contemporary Chinese medicine at least in terms of materia medica. For more information on the history and development of the *ben cao* literature in China, the reader is referred to Paul U. Unschuld's excellent *Medicine in China: A History of Pharmaceutics*.

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Book One

Preface to the *Ben Cao Jing*

There are 120 superior class medicinals which are used as sovereigns.¹ They mainly nourish life and correspond to heaven. They are non-toxic and taking them in large amounts and for a long time will not harm people. If one intends to make one's body light², boost the qi, prevent aging³, and prolong life, one should base [one's efforts] on the superior class.⁴

There are 120 medium class medicinals which are used as ministers.¹ They mainly nurture personality⁵ and correspond to humanity. They may or may not be toxic, and [therefore,] one should weigh and ponder before putting them to their appropriate use. If one intends to control disease, supplement vacuity, and replenish exhaustion, one should base [one's efforts] on the middle class.⁶

There are 125 inferior class medicinals which are used as assistants and envoys.¹ They mainly treat disease and correspond to earth. They are usually toxic and cannot be taken for a long time. If one intends to eliminate cold and heat and evil qi⁷, break accumulations and gatherings, and cure disease, one should base [one's efforts] on the inferior class.⁶

Medicinals [in a prescription] are classified as the sovereign, minister, assistant, and envoy. To achieve synergism and coordination, it is appropriate to use one sovereign, two ministers, and five assistants. It is also possible to use one sovereign, three ministers, and nine assistants and envoys.⁸

Medicinals should coordinate [with each other] in terms of yin and yang, like mother and child or brothers.⁹ They may be roots, stalks, flowers, or fruits [of a plant], and they may be herbs, stones, bones, or flesh. Some [medicinals] can go [*i.e.*, be used] alone. Some need each other. Some mutually reinforce [each other]. Some fear each other. Some are averse to each other. Some clash with each other. Some kill each other. These seven emotions [*i.e.*, relationships] require that, when combining [medicinals], it is proper to use those that need each other and are mutually empowering. One should not use those that are mutually averse or mutually clash. As for toxic medicinals, they should be processed with those to which they are averse or with those that kill them. Otherwise they cannot be used in combination.

Medicinals may have five flavors -- sour, salty, sweet, bitter, and acrid. Furthermore, they have four qi -- cold, hot, warm, and cool.¹⁰ They may be toxic or non-toxic. Whether they should be dried in the shade or in the sun, which seasons and months they should be collected and processed in, whether they should be used raw or after processing, where they should be produced, whether they are genuine or fake, or old or new, all this has a method to go by.

Because of their natures, some medicinals are appropriate for pills, others for powders, some for boiling in water, others for soaking in wine, and [yet] others for boiling down to a paste. There are also cases where one material is suitable for various forms. Some, [however,] cannot be put in water or wine. One should follow the natures of medicinals and must not violate these.

In order to treat a disease, one should first make a study of its origin and observe its mechanisms. Before the five viscera become vacuous, the six bowels are exhausted, the blood vessels [*i.e.*, the pulse] become chaotic¹¹, and the essence spirit is dissipated, administration of medicinals will surely result in survival. If disease has already taken shape, then half recovery can be achieved. If the disease condition has gone too far, it will be hard to restore the life.

When treating disease with toxic medicinals, one should first use a sorghum grain-sized amount. Once the disease is gone, one should stop using it. If the disease is yet to leave, double the amount. If it is still there, increase the amount 10 times. The amount is measured by the removal of the disease.

To treat cold, one should use hot medicinals. To treat heat, one should use cold medicinals. For non-dispersion of drink and food, one should prescribe ejecting and precipitating medicinals. For demonic influx and *gu* toxins¹², one should prescribe toxic medicinals. For welling abscesses and swellings, sores and tumors, one should prescribe wound medicinals.¹³ For wind dampness, one should prescribe wind dampness medicinals.¹⁴ In all [cases,] one should follow appropriately [*i.e.* match the medicinals to the nature of the disease].

If the disease is located above the diaphragm in the chest, one should take the medicinals after meals. If the disease is located below the heart [or] in the abdomen, one should take the medicinals before meals. If the disease is located in the four limbs or the blood vessels, it is proper to take the medicinals on an empty stomach in the morning. If the disease is located in the bones and marrow, it is proper to take the medicinals on a full stomach in the evening.

The great diseases mainly include wind stroke, cold damage¹⁵, cold and heat¹⁶, warm malaria¹⁷, malign stroke¹⁸, sudden turmoil¹⁹, enlarged abdomen, water swelling, intestinal afflux²⁰ and dysentery, inhibited urination and defecation, running piglet²¹, qi ascent, cough and counterflow²², retching and vomiting, jaundice, wasting thirst, lodged rheum and food aggregation²³, hardness and accumulation, concretions and conglomerations²⁴, fright evil²⁵, withdrawal and epilepsy, demonic influx, throat impediment²⁶, toothache, deafness, blindness, incised wounds, broken bones, welling abscesses and swellings, malign sores, hemorrhoids and fistulas, and goiters and tumors. In males, there are five taxations and seven damages²⁷, vacuity and fatigue, languor and emaciation, while in females, there are vaginal discharge, flooding, and blood block. [Besides,] there are wounds caused by worm and snake bite and damage done by *gu* toxins. The above is a [short] synopsis.

One should base [the treatment of disease] on its primary [pattern] which may [then] have variants. [These variants] can be likened to branches and leaves.²⁸ [Then] it is proper to make a prescription in accordance with the signs they show.

1 Superior class medicinals are superior in a number of different ways. In brief, they are non-toxic medicinals that are able to nurture life and therefore bestow longevity. In contrast, medium grade or middle class medicinals are able to cultivate personality or modify temperament, as are, for example, *He Huan* (Cortex Albizziae Julibrissinis) and *Xuan Cao* (Radix Hemerocallis Fulvae). The former resolves anger, while the latter is able to help relieve worry. Since this class of medicinals may be toxic, their prescription requires care. Inferior class medicinals specifically treat disease. They are usually at least slightly toxic. This means that they cannot be taken in large amounts or for prolonged periods of time without developing negative side effects. In our source text, there are 119 superior class medicinals, 120 middle class medicinals, and 122 inferior class medicinals. Put together, there are 361 medicinals, four short of 365.

The terms sovereign, minister, and envoy and assistant in this text do not mean what they have now come to mean in Chinese medicine. In this case, they are simply synonyms of superior, middle and inferior class medicinals. Later medical thinkers enlarged on these terms and now the principal ingredient in a formula is the sovereign, while the other components are ministers, assistants, and envoys.

2 This implies not only limberness but also the acquisition of such supernormal abilities as the power to fly

or to walk a thousand *li* without becoming tired. Such references underscore that it was principally the Daoists who created the early materia medica literature. In that case, they were not primarily concerned with the treatment of disease but the achievement of “immortality” and various extraordinary powers through the ingestion of various “elixirs.”

3 The Chinese literally says “no aging.” This again belies the Daoist preoccupation with elixirs of immortality conferring extreme longevity. It does not just mean the slowing of the aging process and prevention of untimely senility.

4 This passage corresponds to the initial section of Book Four. It has been purposefully preserved for readers to make a comparison between different versions.

5 It was believed that some medicinals are effective for treating disease and, at the same time, are good for the cultivation of various virtues in human beings.

6 The second and the third passage combined correspond to the second passage in our Book Four. See Note 4 above. In many other versions, there is no phrase corresponding the part from “one should base” to the end of the sentence. In that case, the sentence can be rendered as: “[The medicinals] are intended to make the body light...or control disease...”

7 Here, evil qi refers to sudden, serious conditions and/or mental-neurological problems, such as epilepsy, pestilential wind, and malign stroke. The latter is a sudden loss of consciousness or sudden contraction of paralysis. In sometimes later sections this term means no more than a sudden, serious condition.

8 This refers to the proportions of the amounts of ingredients in a formula. One sovereign and two ministers is called an odd prescription. It is for so-called near disease. One sovereign and three ministers is an even prescription. It is designed for so-called distant disease. On the one hand, a sovereign medicinal is one from the superior class. On the other hand, it also may refer to the main ingredient in a formula which has a direct action on the disease. Minister, assistant, and envoy medicinals should be understood in a similar way.

9 Medicinals are divided into yin and yang depending on their natures and actions. Those that are ascending and effusing are yang, while those that provoke vomiting or are precipitating are yin. Those which are acrid, sweet, and heat-generating are yang, and those that are bitter, sour, and salty are yin. Those which are rich in flavor are yang, while those of with a bland flavor are yin. Medicinals that tranquilize and are sluggish in action are yin. In contrast, those that easily and quickly penetrate are yang. Those which are able to move the qi division are yang, while those able to move the blood division are yin.

As to mother and child, etc., there are two different interpretations. According to one interpretation, the various medicinals in a prescription should work in a well coordinated way similar to a mother and her child or between brothers. According to another interpretation, various medicinals in a formula should have a five phase relationship between the generator and the generated (mother and child) and between assistants or envoys (brothers). However, this latter interpretation is controversial. In fact, there is a conspicuous lack of five phase systematic correspondence theory in this text. Unschuld explains this in terms of the Daoist proclivities of the early *ben cao* authors who rejected the model of systematic correspondence along with other Confucian-Legalist notions.

10 Nowhere subsequently in the body of this classic are the four qi or natures mentioned. Only flavor is attributed under each medicinal’s individual discussion. The concept of the four qi as part of a medicinal’s nature was a later advance in Chinese medical theory. Therefore, this section must have been added by some later editor.

11 The term chaotic pulse should be understood in a general way. It does not merely mean a terribly arrhythmic pulse. A pulse which is incongruous with the season or the disease is also called a chaotic pulse.

12 The terms demonic influx (*gui zhu*) and *gu* toxins (*gu du*) are often mentioned in juxtaposition as a single concept. Demonic influx is a synonym of cadaverous influx (*shi zhu*). The word demonic (*gui*) can be defined as terrible, intractable, or fatal, while influx (*zhu*) means infectiousness. Therefore, demonic influx usually refers to an infectious disease of sudden onset manifesting acute abdominal pain, cold and heat, masses in the rib-side region, and aching pain everywhere in the body which baffles location. This disease may last years before it finally ends in death. In some contexts, demonic influx may also refer to *lao zhai* (taxation consumption) or tuberculosis in modern terms.

Gu toxins refer to disease caused by imaginary or real poisonous worms. These were believed to cause unbearable stomachache, fulminant swelling, blood ejection, and derangement. In premodern texts, many disorders with unclear causes are often spoken of as *gu* toxins. Sun Si-miao (581-682 CE) said:

There are a thousand kinds of *gu* toxins which differ from each other. These may manifest as precipitating fresh blood; a desire to stay in a dark room, hating light; a perverse mood, now being angry but now happy; or heaviness of the limbs with aching and soreness in the hundreds of joints. There is no end to their manifestations. Some cases will not die till three years after contraction. Some acute cases die in a month or 100 days. On death, [the worms] never fail to exit from the nine portals or through the rib-side.

13 Wound medicinals are those that disperse binding (*i.e.*, scatter nodulation), free the flow of the channels, disinhibit the orifices, dispel wind, transform phlegm, and precipitate blood stasis. In addition, such medicinals are often applied externally.

14 *E.g.*, *Fang Feng* (Radix Ledebouriellae Divaricatae), *Bai Zhu* (Rhizoma Atractylodis Macrocephalae), *Chai Hu* (Radix Bupleuri), and *Gui Zhi* (Ramulus Cinnamomi Cassiae)

15 Wind stroke and cold damage here imply two patterns of cold damage disease. When wind cold strikes a person, it gives rise to the illness of cold damage. If it manifests spontaneous sweating and a moderate pulse, it is known as wind stroke. If it is characterized by absence of perspiration and a tight pulse, it is called cold damage.

16 Cold and heat may refer to alternating fever and chills, but oftener they refer to fever with aversion to cold.

17 Warm malaria is a specific type of malaria in which the attack of fever precedes the chills or fever is followed by an absence of chills.

18 Malign stroke is similar to demonic influx and *gu* toxins. Sometimes these are difficult to distinguish. It covers a large spectrum of variegated diseases or problems. There are 14 species of malign stroke which even include committing suicide by hanging, drowning, summerheat stroke, and frostbite. According to the *Zhu Bing Yuan Hou Lun (Origins & Symptoms of Various Diseases)* published by Chao Yuan-fang in 610 CE, malign stroke "is stroke by a demonic or spiritual qi under the condition of debilitated essence and spirit." Its main signs and symptoms are sudden onset, cold and heat, heart and abdominal pain, generalized pain, blood ejection and hemafecia, inhibited breathing, urinary and fecal stoppage, and arch-backed rigidity.

19 Sudden turmoil is a result of the mutual interference between the clear and turbid qi. Its manifestations are mainly sudden onset with simultaneous vomiting and diarrhea.

20 Intestinal afflux refers to dysentery with hemafecia.

21 Running piglet is also called kidney accumulation. It refers to qi starting from the lower abdomen and rushing to the heart. This qi often moves up and down irregularly.

22 Qi ascent is a trouble accompanying coughing, similar to asthma in modern terms. Qi ascent and counterflow cough are often mentioned as one single trouble. Then its translation is cough with counterflow qi ascent.

23 Lodged rheum and food aggregation constitute a syndrome which centers around indigestion. Its manifestations may include chest fullness and glomus, emaciation, alternating cold and heat, no appetite, and abnormal defecation.

24 Hardness and accumulation mean accumulation and gathering which in turn can be synonymous with concretions and conglomerations. A concretion is a tangible mass which is fixed in location, while a conglomeration is an intangible mass which comes and goes and may move about.

25 This term is synonymous with fright wind as usually seen in children.

26 Throat impediment often does not simply mean sore throat. It is characterized by sore throat, difficulty swallowing and speaking, and sometimes dryness in the mouth, vexation, and a curled tongue.

27 The five taxations refers to taxations of the five viscera. This term is derived from the *Nei Jing (Inner Classic)*, which says, "Protracted looking damages the blood [*i.e.*, the heart]; protracted lying damages the qi [*i.e.*, the lungs]..." However, this term may also refer to affect taxation, thought taxation, heart taxation, worry taxation, and emaciation taxation. The seven damages or injuries are liver damage, heart damage, spleen damage, lung damage, kidney damage, bone damage, and vessel damage.

28 This sentence implies that a pattern may have several variants or sub-patterns. The primary pattern is the root, while its variants or sub-patterns are the branches and leaves growing out of it.

Ben Cao Jing

Book Two

Jades & Stones: Superior Class

Yu Quan (Nephritum) is sweet and balanced.¹ It mainly treats hundreds of diseases of the five viscera. It limbers the sinews and strengthens the bones, quiets the ethereal and corporeal souls, promotes the growth of the muscles and flesh, and boosts the qi. Protracted taking may cultivate endurance to cold and summerheat and make one free from hunger and thirst² to become a non-aging immortal. If one takes five catties [*i.e.*, 500g of it] when dying, one's complexion will remain unchanged for three years after death. Its other name is *Yu Zha* (Jade Sweet Wine).

Dan Sha (Cinnabar)³ is sweet and slightly cold. It treats hundreds of diseases of the five viscera and the body. It nurtures the essence spirit, quiets the ethereal and corporeal souls, boosts the qi, brightens the eyes, and kills spirit demons and evil malign ghosts.⁴ Protracted taking may enable one to communicate with the spirit light⁵ and prevent senility. It is capable of transforming into mercury. It is produced in mountains and valleys [or mountain valleys].

Shui Yin (Mercurius) is acrid and cold. It mainly treats scabs, itching sores, and bald white scalp sores, kills worms and lice on the skin, induces abortion, and eliminates fever. It kills the toxins of gold, silver, copper, and tin. When melted, it reduces to Cinnabar. Protracted taking may make one an ever-living immortal. It is produced from the earth in the plains.

Kong Qing (Azurium)⁶ is sweet and cold. It mainly treats clear-eye blindness and deafness, brightens the eyes, disinhibits the nine orifices, frees the flow of the blood vessels, and nurtures the essence spirit. Protracted taking may make the body light, prolong life, and prevent senility. It is able to transform copper, iron, lead, and tin into gold. It is produced in mountains and valleys.

Ceng Qing (Azurium)⁶ is sour and a little cold. It mainly treats eye pain, relieves tearing and wind impediment⁷, disinhibits the joints, frees the nine orifices, and breaks concretions and conglomerations, accumulations and gatherings. Protracted taking may make the body light and prevent senility. It is able to transform into gold and copper. It is produced in mountains and valleys.

Bai Qing (Azurium)⁶ is sweet and balanced. It mainly brightens the eyes, disinhibits the nine orifices, [treats] deafness and evil qi below the heart, provokes vomiting in people, and kills various toxins and the three [kinds of] worms.⁸ Protracted taking may enable one to communicate with the spirit light, make the body light, prolong life, and prevent senility. It is produced in mountains and valleys.

Bian Qing (Azurium)⁶ is a little cold and non-toxic. It mainly treats eye pain, brightens the eyes, and [heals] fracture [caused by] falls as well as welling abscesses and swellings, and refractory incised wounds. It breaks accumulations and gatherings, resolves toxic qi, and disinhibits the essence spirit. Protracted taking may make the body light and prevent senility. It is produced in mountains and valleys.

Yun Mu (Muscovitum) is sweet and balanced. It mainly treats dead muscles and skin in the body⁹ as well as wind stroke cold and heat [with dizziness and sickness] as if on board a cart or boat. It eliminates evil qi,

quiets the five viscera, boosts the fetal essence [*i.e.*, semen], brightens the eyes, makes the body light, and prolongs life. Its other name is *Yun Hua* (Cloud Flower). Yet another name is *Yun Ying* (Cloud Floret). It is also called *Yun Ye* (Cloud Fluid), *Yun Sha* (Cloud Sand), and *Lin Shi* (Fluorescent Stone). It is produced in mountains and valleys.

Po Xiao (Slaked Lime) is bitter and cold. It is non-toxic and mainly treats hundreds of diseases. It eliminates cold and heat and evil qi and expels accumulations and gatherings in the six bowels as well as firmly bound retention and aggregation [of water and food]. It is able to transform 72 kinds of stone. If it is taken after being sublimated, it may make one an immortal with a light body. It is produced in mountains and valleys.

Xiao Shi (Mirabilitum)¹⁰ is bitter and cold. It mainly treats accumulated heat in the five viscera and stomach distention and block. It flushes away accumulated abiding drink and food, weeds out the old to bring forth the new, and eliminates evil qi. It may be sublimated into a paste. Protracted taking may make the body light. It is also named *Mang Xiao* (Aristate Lime). It is produced in mountains and valleys.

Fan Shi (Alumen) is sour and cold. It mainly treats cold and heat, diarrhea and dysentery, white ooze [*i.e.*, white vaginal discharge], genital erosion, malign sores, and eye pain. It fortifies the bones and teeth. If it is taken after being sublimated, it may make the body light, prevent senility, and lengthen life. It is also named *Yu Nie* (Feather Alumen). It is produced in mountains and valleys.

Hua Shi (Talcum)¹¹ is sweet and cold. It mainly treats generalized fever, afflux diarrhea, difficult lactation in women, and dribbling urinary block. It disinhibits urination, flushes accumulations and gatherings in the stomach [with] cold and heat, and boosts the essential qi. Protracted taking may make the body light and free from hunger and it may prolong life. It is produced in the mountains and valleys in Zhe Yang.¹²

Zi Shi (Flouritum) is sweet and balanced. It mainly treats the heart and abdomen, cough and counterflow, and evil qi. It supplements insufficiency and [hence treats] women with 10 year old infertility due to cold wind in the child's palace [*i.e.*, uterus]. Protracted taking may make the center warm, the body light, and prolong life. It is produced in the valleys of Mount Tai.¹³

Bai Shi Ying (Quartz Crystal) is sweet and slightly warm. It mainly treats wasting thirst, impotence, yin [essence] insufficiency, cough and counterflow, and enduring cold in the chest around the diaphragm. It boosts the qi and eliminates wind damp impediment. Protracted taking may make the body light and lengthen life. It is produced in mountains and valleys.

Qing Shi, Chi Shi, Huang Shi, Bai Shi, Hei Shi, etc. (Haloysitum Viridis, Rubrum, Aureum, Album, Negrum, etc.)¹⁴ are sweet and balanced. They mainly treat jaundice, diarrhea and dysentery, intestinal afflux with pus and blood, genital erosion, precipitation of blood, red and white [vaginal discharge], evil qi, welling abscesses and swellings, flat abscesses, hemorrhoids, malign sores, head sores, and itching scabs. Protracted taking may replenish the marrow, boost the qi, and make one fat and strong, free from hunger, and the body light while prolonging life. The five colors of Haloysitum [each] respectively supplement the five viscera in accordance with their colors.¹⁵

Tai Yi Yu Yu Liang (Limonitum)¹⁶ is sweet and balanced. It mainly treats cough and counterflow qi ascent, concretions and conglomerations, blood block, and leaking. It eliminates evil qi. Protracted taking may build endurance to cold or summerheat and hunger and make one an immortal with a body so light as to be able to fly a thousand *li*. Its other name is *Shi Nao* (Stone Brain). It is produced in mountains and valleys.

Yu Yu Liang (Limonitum)¹⁶ is sweet and cold. It mainly treats cough and counterflow, cold and heat,