



Chinese Medicinal Herbs: A Modern Edition of a Classic Sixteenth-Century Manual

Shih-Chên Li

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Chinese scholars have been writing medical treatises for nearly 5,000 years, the grandest and most comprehensive of them the *Materia Medica* (Pen Ts'ao), a natural pharmacopoeia drawn from the animal, vegetable, and mineral kingdom. Published by Li Shih-chen in 1578, after three decades of research, it remained largely unknown beyond China until Western physicians (such as the editors of this volume) began working in the region in the mid-nineteenth century.

Like other Westerners in China, F. Porter Smith and G. A. Stuart encountered people who often acted as their own doctors, employing natural remedies that were sufficiently effective to be worthy of research. The physicians used Li Shih-chen's Herbal Pen Ts'ao as the foundation for this modern edition of that portion of the massive sixteenth-century document, annotating their translation with observations from their own experience.

As a basis for modern-day holistic medicine, *Chinese Medicinal Herbs* provides a valuable compendium for practitioners of alternative healing methods. Students, professionals, and health-care specialists will want to own this landmark treatise, a treasury of tried-and-true wisdom from centuries of practical experience.

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