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## Chinese Herbal Patent Medicines: The Clinical Desk Reference

*Jake Paul Fratkin OMD, LAc*

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In *Chinese Herbal Patent Medicines: The Clinical Desk Reference*, a greatly expanded version of his earlier work on patent medicines, Jake Fratkin provides the practitioner and interested layperson a wealth of information on Chinese herbal patent medicines. Also included is information on topics surrounding concern about their use (e.g., endangered species and their alternatives, heavy metal and chemical contaminants, Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP), label accuracy, etc.). The appendices and glossaries are provided by experts in the field, including Subhuti Dharmananda, Andrew Ellis, Richard Ko, Lorenzo Puertas, and the author.

This text, a veritable “PDR” for Chinese patent medicines, provides clearly articulated information on 1,280 products with 850 formula descriptions in a monograph format. More than 550 of the book’s formulas meet Australian GMP standards (Australian GMP regulations mandate careful adherence to proper procedure, detailed record keeping, and laboratory testing of each batch to assure the safety of the products). Purchasing GMP products from China guarantees freedom from worries of contamination. The book also contains a complete listing of both herbal products from mainland China that are available in North America and the FDB (California Department of Health Services, Food and Drug Branch) toxicology reports on patent medicines.

Eighty pages of color photos provide a helpful visual reference to better remember the product information in the monograph. Along with the color photo of the patent medicine, the author also provides the pinyin, Chinese characters, and its English translation. This well-rounded means of providing necessary information from multiple perspectives is echoed throughout this fully-indexed text.

The text is organized into 12 categories including a broad range of topics such as the common cold, musculoskeletal complaints, gynecological disorders, digestive complaints, Shen disorders, miscellaneous (e.g., stop smoking, weight loss) and tonics.

Each patent medicine monograph offers a description of indications, history of use and current applications, ingredients (and standardization if available), cautions and purity where provided, additional notes, and packing and dosages. I also appreciate that the author provides the pharmaceutical and pinyin name of the herbs in the text, as Western-trained practitioners tend to have a proclivity toward the former. The appendices provide the necessary cross-indexes for the herbs and patents, so that there are multiple ways of efficiently navigating the text.

In this text Fratkin provides the practitioner with necessary information to make prescription decisions and offer patient education about patent formulas, all in one easy-to-utilize text. This book is recommended to all practitioners of Chinese patent medicines.