

TGIF

THE NTU LINGUIST CHATROOM

A rose is not a rose: A Digital Synonymy for Historical and Ethnopharmaceutical Research

Whether plant, animal or mineral, simple or compound, drugs constitute an important part of cultural exchange, and have done for thousands of years. The exchange of potent substances is a powerful lens for studying the meeting (and divergence) of cultural horizons. A multi-lingual database of drug terminology would be a very useful tool to support scholars to study the histories and forms of translation, transmission, adaptation and assimilation of medical, material and intellectual culture over time. But the historical, philological, ethnographic and botanical vicissitudes of such research requires multi-disciplinary expertise. The Polyglot Medicine project approaches this large goal with simple beginnings by bringing together Drs. Stanley-Baker, Zakariah and Perono Cacciafoco with the Medicinal Plant Name Service at the Royal Botanical Gardens at Kew, to link medicinal nomenclature in Chinese, Malay and Abui with botanical identities. The aim to develop an online digital infrastructure that will house drug texts (whether manuals, tracts or “stories”), as well as a digital synonymy database to tag the texts and link them across languages. We intend the database as a publication outlet, to support future scholars to publish drug terms in further languages, and expand the work. Thus we hope to produce a new online publishing format for ethnographic and philological drug terms. As we are in the design phase, we will present the problems and tentative solutions, and welcome your input in a digital workshop format.

ABOUT THE SPEAKER



Dr. Michael Stanley-Baker is an interdisciplinary medical humanities scholar interested in medicine and religion in China and beyond, particularly in how ethnicity, language and medical epistemes organize these practices in different ways at different times. He applies methodologies from history, anthropology, Sinology, Science and Technology Studies, and Digital Humanities to study their history and their present. He is interested in the role that critical scholarship can play in understanding these practices outside the academy, and in furthering communication between the biomedical sciences, humanists and practitioners of Chinese

medicine. He has a PhD in History of Medicine from the Wellcome Centre for Medical History at University College London, as well as a clinical degree in Chinese medicine, and has held research placements at the Max Planck Institute for the History of Science, the Needham Research Institute in Cambridge, Leipzig University and Academia Sinica in Taipei. He has received funding for schooling and research from Indiana University, the Wellcome Trust, the Chiang Ching-Kuo foundation, the Ministries of Education and of Science and Technology in Taiwan and the Ministry of Education and National Heritage Board in Singapore, and the Henry Luce Foundation/ACLS. He is an assistant professor in history in the School of Humanities and in medical humanities at the Lee Kong Chian medical school NTU, and serves as the co-convenor of the Digital Humanities research cluster at NTU, and as Vice-President of the International Association for the Study of Traditional Asian Medicine.

WEBINAR ●

Date: 23 October 2020
Time: 1.30pm-2.30pm

ZOOM INFORMATION ●

Register at
<https://tinyurl.com/tgif-michaelsb>
or scan QR code



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