

Preface

Parasites of humans and their house or game animals threaten mankind since its beginning at the early steps of human evolution. Many parasites like the thread worm *Ascaris lumbricoides* or the head louse *Pediculus humanus capitis* had become even specialists for humans and were distributed by wandering groups of the late *Homo sapiens* into the farthest spots on earth. Thus, it is not astonishing that humans became aware of this unwanted neighborhood and started the search for means to get rid of these aggressors. This occurred especially everywhere on the world where mankind reached the status of “high cultures,” e.g., the Assyrians, Babylonians, the Egyptians, the early Chinese, the Romans, the Mayas, Incas, or even as the Europeans in the so-called dark centuries of the Medieval.

Everywhere it was noted that plants or their fruits had an influence on the health of humans and their farmed animals. These plant effects were diagnosed as being lethal, bad, inefficient, or useful. This knowledge became at first transmitted orally from generation to generation and later was written down in many high cultures (e.g., Egyptians, Greek, Romans, Chinese, Europeans) and used to treat sick humans and suffering animals. Of course, plants were always in the focus of interest and were used as natural medicines, raw, in extracts, or as powders.

In modern times when chemotherapy had been propagated starting by scientists like the German Nobel Prize winners Paul Ehrlich (*1854 †1915) and Gerhard Johannes Paul Domagk (*1895 †1964) or by the English Nobel Prize Winner Alexander Fleming (*1881 †1955), a lot of the basic knowledge on plant effects was forgotten or neglected. However, in recent times where resistances of agents of diseases against chemotherapeutics increase at high speed, it is worthwhile to consider again the efficacy of plant-derived products.

Thus, this book focuses on the effects of the *Traditional Chinese Medicine*, which has been used for at least 1,000 years and is still used. Thus, this book considers especially plant-derived effects on parasites, which become more and

more important in times where the number of humans on earth is enormously enlarged and where chemotherapeutics are on the way to lose their efficacy. Of course, the contributors of this book always compared the effects of the plants on diseases to the effects of existing chemotherapeutics. So it is always important to look into the past and in the future in order to be prepared.

Düsseldorf, Germany
Guangzhou, China
Chongqing, China

Heinz Mehlhorn
Zhongdao Wu
Bin Ye

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Mehlhorn, H.; Zhongdao, W.; Ye, B. (Eds.)

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