A Chinese-English Phrasebook
for Medical Encounters
(Mandarin Pronunciation/Simplified Chinese)
for English-Speaking Medical Students

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Self-Directed Project in 2015/2016
A Chinese-English phrasebook for medical encounters
(Mandarin pronunciation – see notes on pg. 8-12 before using)
For English-speaking medical students

A general caution on speaking Mandarin to patients:

- Always start with English. Only use Mandarin when there is a need, and be humble. Also be aware that your patient may not speak Mandarin, even if they are of Asian descent.
- Accept that there are limits to your abilities in Mandarin and do not try to manage a patient completely with the phrases. They are merely to help in urgent situations or build rapport.
- We have used nín (您) in this book as a respectful way to say “you”.
  You also may hear nǐ (你), which is a general-purpose “you”.

Introduction/General Phrases
Hello. nín hǎo. 您好。  Goodbye. zài jiàn. 再见。
Do you speak Mandarin? I know a bit. nín huì shuō zhōng wén ma? wǒ huì yì diǎn. 您会说中文吗? 我会一点。
My name is ___. wǒ jiào ___. 我叫___。
What is your name? nín jiào shén me mínɡ zi? 您叫什么名字?
I am a medical student. wǒ shì yī xué shēnɡ. 我是医学生。
I am a doctor. wǒ shì yī shēnɡ. 我是医生。
Please ___. qǐng ___. 请___。(used throughout this booklet)
Thank you. xiè xie. 谢谢。  You’re welcome. bú kè qì. 不客气。
I am sorry. dui bù qǐ. 对不起。 It’s okay. méi guān xi. 没关系。
I don’t understand. wǒ tīnɡ bù dǒnɡ. 我听不懂。
Please say that again. qǐng zài shuō yì biàn. 请再说一遍。
In-patient in distress
Pain/painful. tòng. 痛。
Are you in pain? nín tòng ma? 您痛吗?
Where is the pain? ná lǐ tòng? 哪里痛? (see p.4)
“My ___ hurts. wǒ de __ tòng. 我的___痛。” (see p.4)
Please point to (show me) where you have the pain.
    tòng de di fāng qíng zhǐ géi wǒ kàn. 痛的地方请指给我看。
When did it start? shén me shí hòu kāi shǐ de? 什么时候开始的? (see p.3)
Does it hurt a lot? hěn tòng ma? 很痛吗? (neg: bú tài tòng 不太痛)
From 1 to 10 how painful is it? 1 being the least pain and 10 being the most serious pain. cóng yī dào shí jí, nín de tòng shì dì jǐ jí? 从一到十级，您的痛是几级？一是最轻的痛，十是最严重的痛。
Does it hurt anywhere else? (i.e. radiation)
    yǒu méi yǒu qí tā di fāng tòng? 有没有其他地方痛? (neg. méi yǒu)
Is it hard to breathe? hū xī kùn nán ma? 呼吸困难吗?
I will find help for you. wǒ huì zhǎo rén bāng nǐ. 我会找人帮您。
I will be right back (return). wó mǎ shàng huì lái. 我马上回来。
The doctor/nurse is coming.
    (yī shēng)/(hù shì) huì lái. （医生）/（护士）会来。
More on pain:
Did the pain start suddenly? téng tòng shì tū rán kāi shǐ de ma? 疼痛是突然开始的吗?
What is the pain like? zěn me tòng fǎ? 怎么痛法?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Continuous. chí xù. 持续。</th>
<th>___ or ___? ___ hái shì ___? 还是 ___?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sharp. zhēn cì tòng. 针刺痛。</td>
<td>Intermittent. duàn duàn xù xù. 断断续续。</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burning. zhuó rè tòng. 灼热痛。</td>
<td>Dull. yín yín tòng. 隐隐痛。</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Throbbing. jì dòng tòng. 悸动痛。</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Ensuring comfort in a stable patient
Do you need ___? nín xū yào ___ ma? 您需要__吗?
I will get ___. wǒ huì ná ___. 我会拿__。
  Bathroom. cè suǒ. 厕所。
  Water. shuǐ. 水。
  Blanket. bèi zi. 被子。
  Tissue. zhǐ jīn. 纸巾。
  Pain medication. zhǐ tòng yào. 止痛药。
Do you feel ___? nín ___ ma? 您__吗?
  Cold. lěng. 冷。
  Hot. rè. 热。
  Hungry. è. 饿。
  Comfortable. shū fú. 舒服。

Medical Interview (Questions and Answers)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>When did it start? shén me shí hòu kāi shǐ de? 什么时候开始的?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Today jīn tiān 今天</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 yī</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___ days ago ___ tiān qián ___ 天前</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(see pg. 4 for body parts and symptoms)

*for quantities (of days, objects, etc.), use liǎng 两 instead of èr for two.

**cultural note:** Chinese patients may name organs like lung or intestine as the source of their pain. In that case, ask them to point to where the pain is.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Where/what is the problem? nǎ lǐ bù shū fú? 哪里不舒服?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>My. wǒ de. 我的。</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Head</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>tóu</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Arm</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>gē bo</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stomach</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>wèi</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Kidney</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>shèn</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fever</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>fā shāo</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Short of breath</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>qi chuǎn</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Heartburn</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>wèi zuó rè</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Abdominal Pain</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>dù zi tòng/ wèi tòng</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>肚子痛/胃痛</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>小便(困难)/(痛)</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Questions to clarify timing of symptoms
Better/worse ___? __ hǎo xiē / huài xiē? __ 好些 / 坏些?
in the morning. zǎo shàng. 早上 / night. wǎn shàng. 晚上
lying down. tǎng zhe. 躺着 / sitting up. zuò zhe. 坐着
after a meal. chī guò fàn. 吃过饭
with movement. dòng de shí hòu. 动的时候
when not moving. bú dòng de shí hòu. 不动的时候

Past Medical History:
Do you have ___? nín yǒu méi yǒu ___? 您有没有__?
(affirmative: yǒu, negative: méi yǒu)
Do any family members have ___? jiā rén yǒu méi yǒu ___?
家人有没有__?
High blood pressure. gāo xüě yā. 高血压。
Infectious disease (HIV, HepB, HepC, etc.). chuán rǎn bìng. 传染病。
Cardiovascular Disease. xīn zàng jí bìng. 心脏疾病。
Depression. yì yǜ zhèng. 抑郁症。
Arthritis. guān jié yán. 关节炎。
Osteoporosis. gǔ zhì shū sōng. 骨质疏松。
Diabetes. táng niào bìng. 糖尿病。
Lung disease. fèi bìng. 肺病。
Cancer. ái zhèng. 癌症。
Stroke. zhòng fēng. 中风。
Asthma. xiào chuǎn. 哮喘。
—itis. ___ yán. ___ 炎。(Inflammation = yán zhèng 炎症)

Enlisting the help of an interpreter
I will find an interpreter. wǒ huì zhǎo rén fān yì. 我会找人 翻译。
Do you prefer Mandarin or Cantonese?
nín xí guàn pǔ tōng huà hái shì guǎng dōng huà?
您习惯普通话还是广东话？
*sometimes patients can speak Mandarin but prefer Cantonese
Physical Examination

Asking permission:

May I **examine** you?

* wǒ kè yǐ gěi nín zuò **jiǎn chá** ma? 我可以给您做检查吗？

In the context of being examined, several important ways to express "**no**": bù ké yǐ, bù xíng, bú yào, ké yǐ **bù** jiǎn chá ma? (The last one is asking if it would be possible **not** to examine.)

May I examine you **here**? (pointing)

* ké yǐ jiǎn chá **zhè lǐ** ma? 可以检查这里吗？

Can I ___ this? (pointing at article of clothing)

* wǒ ké yǐ bǎ zhè ge __ ma? 我可以吧这个__吗？

  lower. wǎng xià yí. 往下移
  raise. wǎng shàng yí. 往上移
  remove. ná diào. 拿掉

Asking questions:

Does it hurt when I do this? zhè yàng tòng bú tòng? 这样痛不痛？

Where does it hurt? zài ná lǐ tòng? 在哪里痛？

Warning:

This may feel uncomfortable. zhè kě néng huì bù shū fú. 这可能会不舒服。

Directions:

Please take **deep breaths**. qǐng shēn hū xī. 请深呼吸。

Hold your breath. biē zhù qì. 憋住气。bǐng zhù hū xī. 屏住呼吸。

To stop: It’s okay. kě yǐ le. 可以了。or "Please relax." (below)

Please **relax**. qǐng fàng sōng. 请放松。

Please relax **your** __. qǐng fàng sōng nín de __. 请放松您的__。

Please **lift** your __. qǐng tái qǐ lái nín de __. 请抬起来您的__。

  arm. gē bo. 胳膊。
  leg. tuǐ. 腿。

(see pg. 4 for more.)
Please **stand** up. *qǐng zhàn qǐ lái*. 请站起来。
Please **sit**. *qǐng zuò*. 请坐。
- down. *xià lái*. 下来。
- up. *qǐ lái*. 起来。
- on the bed. *zài chuáng shàng*. 在床上。
Please **lie down**. *qíng tǎng xià lái*. 请躺下来。
Take a few steps **back and forth**. *qǐng qián hòu zóu jǐ bù*. 请前后走几步。
Please **copy me** (demonstrate, e.g. range of motion tests). *qǐng gēn wǒ xüé*. 请跟我学。
Please maintain this position (e.g. strength testing). *qíng bǎo chí bù dòng*. 请保持不动。

**Taking blood pressure**
I **would like** to take your blood pressure.
- *wó xiǎng liáng nín de xüě yā*. 我想量您的血压。
**Can** I take your blood pressure?
- *wǒ ké yǐ liáng nín de xüě yā ma?* 我可以量您的血压吗？
**Which arm** do you prefer? *nǐ xiǎng yòng nǎ ge gē bo?* 您想用哪个胳膊？
- Either (any) are okay. *dōu ké yǐ*. 都可以。or *suí biàn*. 随便。
  - Left arm. *zuǒ biān*. 左边。
  - Right arm. *yòu biān*. 右边。
- This one. *zhè biān / zhè ge*. 这边 / 这个。
While I'm measuring your blood pressure:  
- *zài wǒ gěi nín liáng xüě yā de shí hòu...* 在我给您量血压的时候... 
  - Please **relax** your arm...  
    - *qǐng fàng sōng nín de gē bǒ*. 请放松您的胳膊  
      (and) remain **silent**. *(hé) bǎo chí ān jìng*. (和) 保持安静。
This is your blood pressure. *zhè shì nín de xüě yā*. 这是您的血压。
**Your blood pressure is** __. *nín de xüě yā __*. 您的血压__。
I will order tests for you: wǒ huì gěi nín cè yàn: 我会给您测验:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ultrasound</th>
<th>X-ray</th>
<th>CT</th>
<th>Lab tests</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>chāo shēng bō</td>
<td>X-ray</td>
<td>CT</td>
<td>huà yàn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>超声波</td>
<td>X光</td>
<td>CT</td>
<td>化验</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Basic treatment phrases**

I will give you ___. wǒ huì gěi nín __. 我会给您__。
  a medication. yào. 药。
  a medication for ___. wèi le __ de yào. 为了__的药。
  IV fluids. shū yè. 输液。
  a blood transfusion. shū xüě. 输血。

Please take the medication. qǐng chī yào. 请吃药。
  ___ times a day. měi tiān __ cì. 每天__次。(see numbers, pg. 3)
  ___ pills each time. měi cì __ kē. 每次__刻。

**Cancer screening**

Have you ever had ___. nín yǒu méi yǒu zuò guò ___. 您有没有做过__。
  Pap smear. gōng jīng jiǎn chá. 宫颈检查。
  Prostate exam. qián liè xiàn jiǎn chá. 前列腺检查。
  Breast exam. rǔ fáng jiǎn chá. 乳房检查。
  Stool test (e.g. FIT and others). fèn biàn jiǎn chá. 粪便检查。

**Read these first to get the most out of this booklet**

**An important note on "yes" or "no":**

Yes/no questions in Mandarin are generally answered using the first verb/adjective of the question ([underlined](#)) where applicable in our booklet). Unless otherwise indicated, an answer of *(verb)* means "yes", and an answer of *bù* *(verb)* means "no".

  e.g. Are you in pain? nín tòng ma?
      affirmative ("yes"): tòng negative ("no"): bù tòng

  e.g. May I examine you? wǒ ké yǐ gěi nín zuò jiǎn chá ma?
      affirmative ("yes"): ké yǐ negative ("no"): bù ké yǐ
### Brief Guide to Pinyin (used in this booklet)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initial sounds (consonants)</th>
<th>Basic vowels</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>b, p, m, f, d, t, n, l, g, k, h, r, w, y, s, sh, j</td>
<td>a as in hat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>z</td>
<td>e as in the, except after i, y or u/ü, where it's pronounced as in red</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>q, c</td>
<td>i usually: as in machine after z, c, s, zh, ch, sh, r: a buzzed continuation of the consonant (like the e in roses)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x</td>
<td>o written &quot;o&quot; or &quot;uo&quot;: similar to English wallet (note that &quot;o&quot; by itself is pronounced as if written &quot;uo&quot;) in &quot;ao&quot; or &quot;ong&quot;: as in tone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>zh</td>
<td>u like oo in loop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ch</td>
<td>ü made at front of mouth (like i) with lips rounded (like u), similar to German über or French super</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Diphthongs and Finals

General note: as a rule of thumb, diphthongs (that is, compound vowels) are pronounced with greater emphasis on the first vowel than would be expected in English. e.g. ya or ia are pronounced with emphasis on the i sound.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Diphthong</th>
<th>Pronunciation</th>
<th>Diphthong</th>
<th>Pronunciation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ai</td>
<td>rhyming with <strong>eye</strong></td>
<td>ia</td>
<td>as if written &quot;ya&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ei</td>
<td>as in <strong>weigh</strong></td>
<td>ie</td>
<td>as if written &quot;ye&quot; (e pronounced as in red)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ao</td>
<td>rhyming with cow, with more emphasis on the a sound (as in llama)</td>
<td>iu</td>
<td>pronounced like English you (i.e., y + oo)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ou</td>
<td>rhyming with go</td>
<td>ui</td>
<td>as if written &quot;wei&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>uo</td>
<td>as if written &quot;wo&quot;, similar to <strong>wallet</strong></td>
<td>üe</td>
<td>said as ü + e (e pronounced as in red)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-ng</td>
<td>as in &quot;singing&quot; and never as in &quot;ungrateful&quot;</td>
<td>in</td>
<td>similar to &quot;ing&quot;, more nasal (tongue tip to hard palate). n at the end of any other syllable is pronounced as in English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ian or yan</td>
<td>as if written &quot;yen&quot; (a is pronounced like e in red here), similar to the English name “Ian”</td>
<td>iang or yang</td>
<td>i as in machine -ang like lung (not like &quot;ian&quot;)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Read these first to get the most out of this booklet

A Guide to Tones

(see pg. 12 for explanation)
Guide to Tones (continued)
Mandarin has four tones and a neutral tone:

1) a high tone (indicated with a macron/bar e.g. mā), which is at the highest comfortable pitch

2) a rising tone (indicated with an acute accent/upward slanting stroke e.g. má), which starts from neutral pitch and rises to the highest comfortable pitch

3) a low tone (indicated with a caron/v-shaped stroke e.g. mǎ), which descends quickly to the lowest comfortable pitch and usually stays there, but classically can also rise to or slightly above neutral pitch (dotted arrow) - this is usually omitted, but you may hear Mandarin speakers do this

4) a falling tone (indicated with a grave accent/downward slanting stroke e.g. mà), which descends quickly from the highest comfortable pitch to the lowest comfortable pitch

5) a neutral tone (indicated by no markings e.g. ma), which lies at a mid-range pitch

Tone numbers can also be used; however, for easy visual recognition, we use tone markings in this handout. It is very important to be able to distinguish tones in Mandarin. Practice these to familiarize yourself with them!
Thank you for using this booklet. We’d love to hear any feedback you may have about it! Please email wynnwktran@gmail.com.

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