

Acknowledgment

As scientists get used to online conferences in the past year, it is good to be able to spend some time thinking.

My teacher on microbiology from Fudan University, Prof. Baolong Hu, described a thorough bathing and scrubbing of oneself as “spread plate, spread plate,” years before the launch of the Human Microbiome Project (HMP) and the Metagenome of the Human Intestinal Tract (MetaHIT) Consortium. The textbook written by his teacher, Prof. Deqing Zhou, is widely in use by college and graduate students in China. It is my great honor to take on this opportunity, made possible by Elsevier, to put together a book on the human microbiome, which is a field both young and old.

The virology class taught by Prof. Jiang Zhong opened my eyes to the fascinating things viruses can do. The zoology class led by Prof. Yanyun Yang was lively and comprehensive, and we had elegant charts from some missionaries a century ago. My biochemistry teacher, Prof. Weida Huang was teaching according to *Lehninger Principles of biochemistry*, my first biology textbook in English.

Much of the metagenomic studies on the microbiome depend on bioinformatics. My teacher on bioinformatics at Fudan University, Prof. Yang Zhong (who also contributed to developments in Tibet University, ShanghaiTech University, etc.), has unfortunately passed away in a car accident in the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region.

I was very fortunate to be able to study for my Ph.D. at Case Western Reserve University. Cleveland is a very affordable city with plenty of activities. I enjoyed a very nurturing environment in the laboratory of Prof. Eckhard Jankowsky, with fun and collaborative people in the lab and in the department at large. My brief time in Prof. Yi Zhang's lab then at Chapel Hill, and as an editor in London, made me further unfit for a conventional narrow path in academia.

I stumbled into the metagenomic field at the end of the year 2012, after meeting many young people at BGI, and as Mr. Qiang Feng and Prof. Jun Wang insisted. Despite being strangled by Illumina after BGI purchased Complete Genomics and rushing to upgrade the sequencing technology (led by Prof. Xun Xu), we did OK in the metagenomic field, never forgot our initial mission to benefit human health.

Academician Huanming (Henry) Yang has high hopes for metagenomics. He, a few years ago, likened the metagenomics technology to the invention of microscopes, as a major advance in microbiology. Prof. Jian Wang is pushing for large-scale screening of colorectal

cancer. After successful protection of infants, longevity for a population breaks down into how well we control the major diseases that come with age, without much decay in physical and cognitive functions.

I sincerely thank the Elsevier staff, Stacy, Mica, Kavitha, Mohanraj, Selva, and probably many more people I didn't get to know. Thank my colleagues for their excellent studies over the years. In particular Chen Chen, Lilan Hao, Xin Tong, Youwen Qin, Yanmei Ju, Jie Zhu, Yanzheng Meng, Weiting Liang, and Zhuye Jie, for checking the text, and for improving the worked samples and the high-resolution display items for publication in this book. Thank my dear husband, Dong, for support and inspiration.

And thank you for being interested in this book. This has been a great opportunity for me to learn, and to put together discrete information for a more coherent picture. I apologize that it is increasingly difficult to keep track of every publication. But it is high time that we go beyond fecal samples and crude questionnaires, and carefully research in the microbes that show up in "sterile" body sites. I do hope that there would be better examples to be included into subsequent editions, for clinical practice, new research, and education.