

Preface I

Infectious diseases are of global concern. They have been such in the past and will continue to be such in the future. Multidrug-resistant tuberculosis, malaria, AIDS, viral hepatitis, pandemic influenza and other emerging infections are just a few of the problems the world is facing. For China, the country with the largest population in the world, most of these diseases are a particular challenge. A dramatic example is the SARS outbreak, which has told us that, in order to successfully control infections, increased efforts are necessary to understand the disease mechanisms and epidemiology and to develop new tools for diagnosis, prophylaxis and therapy. This volume is an impressive document on the enormous progress that Chinese research has made in the last couple of years in all of these fields. Since, so far, only some of these studies have been published in international journals, a lot of information has not spread beyond the borders of the country. I therefore warmly welcome the opportunity to introduce this volume, which gives a broader overview to the outside world of what Chinese bacteriologists and virologists are doing.

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Thirty years ago, when China resumed its normal environment for scientific activities, communication with the outside world began. A number of eminent virologists, bacteriologists and molecular biologists, including the late Joseph Melnick, Pierre Tiollais, Morris Pollard and my many other friends, visited China, and I had the opportunity to be their scientific interpreter. Besides, young Chinese students and scientists were sent abroad to study, which was hugely beneficial for China in proceeding at a rapid pace during the 30 years. In 1982, my mentor, the late Prof. Fei-Qin Lin, started to edit a journal named *Medical Microbiology Abroad*, which published reviews and abstracts introducing new progress in medical microbiology from journals published in various languages, including English, French, Russian and Japanese. The editorial board of *Medical Microbiology Abroad* consisted of medical microbiologists from many provinces of China, and the journal was well received. *Medical Microbiology Abroad* has been an important reference journal providing scientific information on medical microbiology for scientists and mostly graduate students throughout China, especially for those in regions where foreign journals were not easily accessible.

After more than 20 years of publishing *Medical Microbiology Abroad*, the editorial board realized that since the Internet is widely used, people can read journals on the websites. At the same time, more and more research on medical microbiology is being conducted, and to promote translational research we need to set up close contact among microbiologists, clinicians, veterinarians, epidemiologists, vaccinologists and health workers. Therefore, we decided to change *Medical Microbiology Abroad* into the *Journal of Microbes and Infections*, a journal publishing research articles, reviews and scientific news on microbes and infections in humans and animals. The current editorial board has been expanded to include microbiologists, immunologists, epidemiologists, medical doctors

and veterinarians. The first issue of the *Journal of Microbes and Infections* (in Chinese) was published in 2006. After close to three years of hard work, we have been looking for opportunities to introduce part of the work in China to the outside world. Now, our effort is supported by World Scientific Publishing Company, which decided to publish selected articles from the journal in English. We consider this a good approach to building up communication between Chinese scientists and scientists abroad. We hope that this window will open up a supplementary track for scientists outside of China to know in detail the work on microbes and infections carried out in China, and perhaps this journal can also serve as a matchmaker for future collaboration among scientists. Due to the limitation of space, the material and methods are omitted from this book. However, readers can contact the authors for details.

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