



Mild Ailments Need No Potions

Description

The influence of the English language permeates my life. I am still some shade of banana-man, yellow on the outside but white within. But the white within has mellowed to hues of yellow with passing years. The yellow of ripening has accelerated in the recent golden years.

I went to English medium schools and institutions of higher learning all my life. My parents decided that (under colonial rule and legacy) it was best to send to English medium schools. I only started on my journey to discover my mother tongue when I was 45 years old. Whenever strangers abroad ask me what my mother tongue is; or when I have to fill in forms to indicate my mother tongue, I always feel unsettled and uneasy.

My cultural identity is now in sharper focus because of the ongoing geopolitical conflict between the US and China. The West dominated the media. As I am more conversant in English, I tend to absorb the news and views of the influential giant US multimedia (through subconscious osmosis). In the eyes of the West, information from China is considered propaganda (of the Chinese Communist Party), not worth a second thought! How often do we read materials originating from China written in Chinese for a more balanced view? I do now because I can.

I am glad we have formed a group of Western-educated friends that share things Chinese. We are, to varying extent, at least bilingual or bicultural, probably more! Many of us are trilingual. We exchange information, views, observations, and opinions.



Crepe-ginger



Plant



Cheilocostus speciosus, or crêpe ginger, is a species of flowering plant in the family Costaceae. Some botanists have now revived the synonym *Hellenia speciosa* for this species. [Wikipedia](#)

One day, Foo Keong Tatt posted a nature-inspired painting (of his walk in the Singapore Botanical Gardens). He painted a flower and asked if anyone knew the name of the flower. Tan Choon Huat responded very quickly, identifying the flower as crêpe ginger. The name was confirmed by Soo Eng Hiong (He planted crêpe ginger in his garden.)



小病不在吃药
 贵在心理调顺

辛丑年强达

Foo Keong Tatt also included a Chinese couplet (??) and asked if someone could offer a translation of the couplet included in the painting.

??????

Simple translation for the couplet:

小病不在吃药

贵在心理调顺

Mild ailments need no potions,
 All it takes is smooth emotions.

21:37

Hong Hai's translation

I thought the whole experience was refreshing, engaging, and enriching. We have woven elements of art, language, and values with social health.