

---

## **PL-07 Ethnic medicines in China – a look beyond TCM**

*C. Weckerle*

Institute of Systematic Botany, University of Zürich, Zollikerstrasse 107, CH-8008 Zürich, Switzerland. weckerle@ethnobot.ch

China is diverse, not only regarding its landscapes and cultures but also regarding its medical systems. What is mainly known in the West is the so-called Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM). However, beside TCM, there exist other officially recognized "Ethnomedicines" such as the Tibetan or the Mongolian medical system, as well as a variety of locally practiced systems among the diverse ethnic groups. Especially China's Southwest, which is well-known for its biocultural diversity, harbors a high diversity of medical traditions. On the basis of several case studies from this region, the present paper analyses the mutual influence between these local practices and knowledge and the TCM. It also investigates recent developments and changes among local knowledge systems and argues, that not only a knowledge transfer between the ethnic groups can be observed, but also a mutual influence between local and institutionalized systems in the past and present.

---

## **PL-08 Heritage, Medicinal Material resources and our efforts**

*Z. Zhao*

School of Chinese Medicine, Hong Kong Baptist University.

China has one of the longest histories of using Ethnomedicine and some of the most abundant medicinal material resources of any country on the planet. Its time-honored medical system has been continuously making great contributions to the health of people at home and abroad. The use of Ethnomedicine (traditional Chinese medicine, or TCM) in China began more than 3000 years ago. Books that record the sources and applications of medicinal materials are commonly known as Ben Cao (Materia Medica). There are over 400 such books from all the past dynasties of China. These various Ben Cao document ancient people's experience and represent centuries of accumulated wisdom in combating disease and preserving health. Representatives of this rich heritage are introduced here. China has a vast territory, with diverse landforms, mountain ranges, and climates. Thus, China has abundant ethnomedicinal resources. According to the statistics, over 11,000 botanical species, nearly 1600 zoological species and 80 mineral substances are used medicinally in China. The general information on Chinese medicinal material resources is briefly introduced here. In the past decade, our research team at Hong Kong Baptist University has been conducting field investigations and laboratory work related to Chinese medicinal resources. As a result, we have achieved the following: 1) Academic books and papers (regarding Chinese medicinal material resources, macro-/microscopic identification and quality evaluation of Chinese medicinal materials, microscopic identification of proprietary TCM products, Chinese herbology and formula, medicated diet, and medicinal material processing) have been published. Macro-/microscopic identification of some Western herbs have been included in 2009-2010 USP Dietary Supplements Compendium. Using these publications and results from our ongoing research activities, we intend to establish a database of ethnomedicinal materials that will be available on the internet, worldwide, in the near future. 2) In 2001, The Government of Hong Kong Special Administrative Region assigned the task of setting up Hong Kong Chinese Materia Medica (HKCMM) Standards. The HKCMM Standards project is going smoothly with the international collaboration. The standards of 61 CMM covered in phase III to II have been issued. And 36 CMM standards for phase IV research work will be finished at the end of 2010. Building upon the proven result, the Department of Health has planned to further develop the standards of another 104 CMM in mid 2010 (Phase V). 3) The Bank of China (HK) Chinese Medicines Center has been established. The Centre displays over 3000 voucher specimens of ethnomedicines (mainly Chinese medicinal materials) from all corners of the world. (4) An authentication center for Chinese medicinal materials has been established at Hong Kong Baptist University. This authentication center has been playing an important role in guaranteeing the effectiveness and safety of ethnomedicines including, but not restricted to, TCM. In-depth international collaboration is needed to further explore Ethnomedicine related culture heritage and medicinal material resources in the world.

---