

# Herbal Explorations

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## Expanding Horizons:

## Exploring TCM Museums Across the Globe

We are all feeling the effects of the economy and travel may not be the first thing on our minds. However, with the summer months come patients on vacation and the urge to take a break ourselves. There is a multitude of travel deals to distant and near lands to be found, so why not combine a bit of education about your craft with a pleasurable vacation? Keep in mind these museums of Chinese Medicine all over the world.

Hangzhou, China

### **Hu Qing Yu Tang Museum of TCM**

A trip to Mainland China would not be complete for a practitioner of Traditional Chinese Medicine without a visit to the Hu Qing Yu Tang Museum of Traditional Chinese Medicine in Hangzhou. This 4000-plus square meter building is divided into five different parts and is a showcase of antique architecture. Learn more about the history of Chinese medicine in the exhibition hall, which houses numerous artifacts and descriptions, as well as anecdotal stories of historically famous Chinese doctors such as Bian Que, Lishizhen and Hua Tuo. Watch pills being shaped and herbs being cut by masters, or give it a shot yourself. Sometimes even doctors need checkups, and what better place to have one than in the health clinic with a famous Chinese doctor. Buy your prescription and pick up some patents in the pharmaceutical factory. Satiating

that appetite you have most likely worked up by enjoying a medicinal meal. *95 Dajing Lane, Hangzhou, China.*

Shanghai, China

### **Museum of Medical History**

At the prestigious Shanghai College of Traditional Chinese Medicine, the alma mater of our founder Dr. Bing Yin Lee, the Museum of Medical History holds a plethora of ancient treasures. With over 10,000 precious relics, including a Neolithic stone acupuncture needle (*Banshi*), a Ming Dynasty herbal medicine gourd, and a Qing Dynasty bronze figure for learning acupuncture, this museum will take visitors back in time and through the evolution of traditional Chinese herbal medicine and acupuncture. *1200 Cailun Road, Zhangjiang Hi-Tech Park, Pudong New District, Shanghai.*

Beijing, China

### **Yushengtang TCM Museum**

Another place you will find numerous historical pieces is at the Yushengtang TCM Museum. Originally the Bai clan's herbal medicine shop, the Emperor Qianlong changed the name to Yushengtang in reverence to the medical skills and ethics of Bai Linyun of the clan. His descendants founded the museum ten years ago as

## CLOSER TO HOME:

KAM WAH CHUNG & CO. MUSEUM

Originally a trading post constructed in 1876, the Kam Wah Chung & Co. Museum showcases the lives of the Chinese community of John Day, Oregon. Lung On and Ing Hay, two Chinese immigrants from Guangdong, established this apothecary and store that quickly became a mainstay of the community, supporting them religiously, socially, and medically.

Recently rediscovered and turned into a State Heritage Site and Park and a National Historic Landmark, the museum holds Chinese herbs, medicines and old artifacts to give the visitor a sense of what it was like when it was open. Call 800-551-6949 for location and hours.

*Photo used with permission from Wikimedia commons.*



a place to exhibit over 3,000 artifacts and medical texts. No. 69, Fengtai South Road, Sihe Manor, Beijing, China.

Hong Kong

### **The Garden, Hong Kong Museum of Medical Sciences**

If your travels take you to Hong Kong, take the opportunity to see Chinese herbs in their live state at the Herbal Garden of the Hong Kong Museum of Sciences. Planned in collaboration with herbal, botanical and medical professionals, the garden provides an educational experience to anyone desiring to learn about the characteristics and nature of herbal medicine. Inevitably, you will learn something here to share with your patients as you look at the plants in their original state. No. 2 Caine Lane, Mid-Levels, Hong Kong.

Stops Along the Way to China

### **Japan, South Africa, & Los Angeles**

The Institute of Natural Medicine at the University of Toyama maintains a Museum of Materia Medica that houses crude drug samples of both botanical and animal origins. In addition to Chinese medicines, the museum also showcases Japanese, Taiwanese, African, Vietnamese, Tibetan and Ayurvedic folk medicines. Sugitani Campus; 2630 Sugitani, Toyama-shi, Toyama 930-0194, Japan.

Johannesburg is home to the Adler Museum of Medicine, located on the medical school campus of Wits University. Although the museum mostly tells the story of the evolution of modern medicine, it also pays homage to holistic treatments, including acupuncture and Chinese medicine. University of Witwatersrand Medical School, 7 York Road, Parktown, Johannesburg, South Africa.

Many of us might find a trip to the Chinese American Museum in Los Angeles a bit easier to make this year. One of the museum's on-going exhibits is the Sun Wing Wo General Store and Herb Shop, a recreation of a store opened in 1891 that served the Chinese community in Los Angeles for almost sixty years. Across from the general goods section of the gallery is the herb store recreated. Make every effort to visit the museum on the Second Wednesday of every month to speak with Albert Lew, who worked for his uncles and cousin in the herb store as a young boy. Mr. Lew will recount firsthand how essential this store was to the Chinese community during these years of persecution. 425 N. Los Angeles Street, Los Angeles, CA 90012.

If life, work or the economy has you rooted to your home this summer, be sure to browse the website of the [Beijing Digital Museum of TCM](#), a veritable wealth of information and education.

If you have the opportunity to visit any of these places, please give us a report!

# Update:

## Acupuncturists, cGMPs, and the FDA

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As Acupuncturists, we are keenly aware that Chinese herbs are an integral part of our practice. Despite our training and hundreds of hours dedicated to learning the marvelous properties of these herbs, we have not been equipped with a thorough understanding of the legal system that governs our practice.

Herbs and herbal products in America are regulated by the Food and Drug Administration ("FDA"). All products governed by the FDA must fall into one of the following three categories: (1) Food (2) Drug or (3) Cosmetics. Herbs and herbal products fall under food, with herbal products classified under a special class of foods known as dietary supplements. Whether herbs are classified as food or under dietary supplements depends on whether there are any claims associated with the product. For example, if ginger is simply sold as ginger it is considered a food, whereas if ginger is accompanied with a statement such as "aids digestion," it is considered a dietary supplement.

Companies must be careful with their statements about their products or else they will be classified as a drug. The statements must not indicate an intended use of the article such that it is a "diagnosis, cure, mitigation, treatment, or prevention of disease." Presuming the FDA has not approved the product, "articles (other than food) intended to affect the structure or any function of the body of man or other animals" [FD&C Act, sec. 201(g)(1)] will be treated as an unapproved drug.

Assuming that the claims associated with the products have not rendered it a drug, the dietary supplement must comply with Current Good Manufacturing Practices ("cGMPs"). The cGMPs were enacted in 2007 and are staggered to apply to companies by the number of employees. Companies with more than 500 employees had to comply by June 2008. If the company has less than 500 but more than 20 employees, it has until June 2009 to comply. And finally, if a company has less than 20 employees, it has until June 2010 to comply.

Right now, you must be thinking, "Great! I do not have to worry about this." WRONG, sorry to burst your bubble. If you compound anything in your clinic (e.g. add one herb or granule to another), you will fall under cGMPs. Some of you will breathe a sigh of relief, while others, your heart rate and stress level might shoot up dramatically. Relax; the FDA has said that acupuncturists will be given discretionary enforcement. This means that even though acupuncturists who compound herbs, granules, or extracts are manufacturers under the cGMPs, the FDA will avoid coming after you due to certain factors like the one-to-one nature of the practitioner-client relationship. However, this does not mean you should not try to implement some of the cGMP requirements into your pharmacy practices.

These are several practices that I recommend that you adopt, if you currently do not already follow these procedures:

- (1) Check the herbs into inventory as soon as receive them. Confirm the identity of the herbs that you received is what you ordered. Write down the lot number if there is one.
- (2) Clearly identify each herb and separate them, so you will not confuse them.
- (3) Try to track which herbs are used when. For example, if you run out of Dang Gui and start another lot, record the date which you stopped using the old lot and the date you start using the new lot.
- (4) Track by date the prescriptions that you make. This allows you to trace back which herbs from which vendors were used in that prescription.
- (5) Be sure to clean your contact surface and work space to discourage microbial growth.

These are but some of essential elements that every pharmacy should adopt to ensure that if the FDA does come calling, you are able to answer their questions to a reasonable degree.

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## CALENDAR:

If you are going to be at these conventions and would like to set up a meeting, please call us at (800) 233-4307.

### JUNE 8-9, 2009

Institute of Food Technologists  
Anaheim, CA

### JUNE 16-18, 2009

Organic Trade Association  
Chicago, IL

### JULY 9-11, 2009

Natural Products Association  
Las Vegas, NV

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- Wu Pi Wan
- Yao Tong Wan
- Zhi Gan Cao Wan



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