

Herbology

History and Foundation of Chinese Herbs

Chinese herbs have been used as medicine for more than 10,000 years. Their potency has been documented in China and in other parts of Asia for centuries. Knowledge of the power of Chinese herbs was passed down through generations of herbal medicine scholars and finally transcribed into the texts that are still used today. The ancients classified more than 300 plants, minerals and animals into 18 categories based on the way they affect the body. These herbs are further classified by qualities such as the meridians they enter, taste and temperature. Such classifications remain the foundation of Chinese Medicine theory and practice today. The application of Chinese herbal formulas is an art that draws on a strong foundation of Chinese natural philosophy, and Chinese medicine theory. These theories are ancient ways of understanding the microcosm of the body through the macrocosm of the natural world. The philosophy of Chinese medicine states, the dense (that with form such as blood, organs, and tissue) and the subtle (formless energy, breath, and qi) in all of existence, are intimately related and are constantly influencing one another. Thus, the use of Chinese herbal medicine is a way of restoring harmony by regulating the subtle and the dense energies of the body.

Different from Pharmaceuticals

Herbal formulas are different from modern Western pharmaceuticals. Chinese formulas are a combination of several medicinal herbs, while pharmaceuticals are usually an isolated active chemical compound. Chinese herbal formulas have been proven over thousands of years to activate slow, subtle shifts within the body engendering long-lasting and potent changes. This is in contrast to the sudden, often dramatic, chemical changes that are inherent in the design of pharmaceuticals. For this reason, herbal supplements are often taken over several weeks or months and in some cases years. Furthermore, herbal combinations are designed so that the potent qualities of a strong acting herb are tempered by the moderating qualities of other herbs resulting in a balanced formula. Designed to meet the body as food and to assimilate as such, herbs rarely cause side effects like those found when taking pharmaceuticals.

Several Ways to Receive Herbal Medicine

Although society has changed a great deal since the dawn of Chinese Medicine theory, the principles that sit at its foundation still apply to contemporary society. Changes to the medicine are adaptations for modern convenience and they demonstrate a further reaching application of these ancient principles. Traditionally, Chinese herbal formulas are prepared as soups or teas, and are considered food medicine. Chinese herbs are still available in what is called raw or loose form. That is, they are dried roots, leaves, rhizomes, and seeds, which can be combined into unique formulas then brewed at home by the patient. Most westerners are not interested in taking herbs in this form for two reasons - it requires time-consuming preparation and because the resulting tea usually has an unfamiliar taste and smell. Today, herbs are prepared as tinctures, tablets, pills, capsules and powders to accommodate the modern busy lifestyle of western culture. A tincture is an alcohol-based liquid concentrated formula. Tinctures and powders are especially useful because they can be easily combined, simulating the versatility of raw-herb formulas. Herbs are also applied to the skin. When prepared for this use they are called balms, liniments and oils. These herbs powerfully relieve aches and pains,

chest congestion, and skin infection and may be given for their subtle energetic effects on the mind and spirit as well. In whatever form they are provided, herbal formulas are designed using the principles of Chinese Medicine theory, and they hold an essential place as one of the five primary components of treatment at ASOMNE.

The Highest Quality in Herbal Medicine at ASOMNE

At ASOMNE we use only the highest-quality herbal products. Where possible we purchase organic materials such as in the case of powdered herbs. The capsules, tablets and tinctures that we supply are quality controlled and each batch is tested to ensure the absence of toxins. Furthermore, the herbs we purchase are manufactured by companies who produce them to pharmaceutical-grade quality-control standards, not merely the food-grade standards required by the FDA of herbal supplements. Patients can feel fully confident that the herbal medicine prescribed by ASOMNE herbalists are manufactured to the highest standards, and prescribed based upon many years of education and clinical experience for efficacy.