

INTRODUCTION AND DIFFUSION OF CHINESE HERBAL THERAPY IN ITALY

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TCM has been introduced in Italy from the Sixties of the last century.

Acupuncture has been the first therapeutic technique that has spread in our country and has introduced other therapeutic techniques of TCM.

Only from the Eighties of the last century Chinese Herbal therapy has been introduced in Italy when a small group of medical Ph doctors acupuncturists (and I was one of them) has been dedicated to this subject.

In the beginning, our work has been very hard because we couldn't find any book on Chinese herbal therapy written in Italian (and the books on this subject written in English and French were few and too simple) and it was impossible to find in Italy Chinese herbs.

Only at the end of the Eighties the situation improved, when some interesting books on Chinese herbal therapy appeared in the English medical literature. In the same time some firms were born in Italy and in San Marino (it is a very small State of few squares miles of extension inside the borders of Italy) and started to import and commercialize Chinese herbs and

medical products.

The possibilities to find directly in our country Chinese herbs improved the practice and the development of this therapeutic technique.

After a long period of studies Ph Dr Massimo Muccioli and I started the first Italian course of Chinese herbal therapy inside the Sant'Orsola Hospital in the School of Chinese Medicine of Bologna in 1988.

In the beginning of our experience Prof. Song Xuan Ke (a Chinese professor living in London and graduated in Guangzhou College of TCM) was really helpful for the development and deepening knowledge of Chinese herbal therapy. He has been teaching for a long time in our School during the years 1988 and 1989.

On december 1990 I came in Guangzhou and I discussed an Italian teaching program of Chinese herbal therapy with the Foreign Affairs Departement of Guangzhou TCM University and for the first time the President of TCM Guangzhou University and I signed in that year a Memorandum that was renewed and enlarged in 1996 and 2001. On the...(in base)... of this Memorandum some professors TCM Guangzhou University came to Italy to teach in our School.

Prof. Liang Song Ming, the Director of Chinese herbal therapy Departement of TCM Guangzhou University was the first teacher to came to Italy in 1992. After his visit Prof. Qiu Zuo Yi and Prof Xie Jin Hua were twice invited in Italy.

Dr. Dai Lian Yi of TCM Hospital of Guangzhou taughted in Italy in the spring of 1993 and helped us to improve our knowledge of some specific techniques of Chinese herbal therapy.

These relationships with your University were the occasion to introduce the study, the teaching, the clinical pratice of Chinese herbal therapy in Italy between the end of the

Eithies and the beginning of the Nineties in the last century.

In the meantime, in 1992 the first Italian books of Chinese herbal therapy such as *Diagnosis and Therapy in Acupuncture e Chinese Medicine* printed by Tecniche Nuove (Sotte L., Muccioli M., *Diagnosi e Terapia in Agopuntura e Medicina Cinese*, Tecniche Nuove, Milano, 1002) e *Chinese Herbal Therapy* printed by Red printing house (Sotte L., *Farmacologia Cinese*, red edizioni, Como, 1992) written by dr. Massimo Muccioli and me.

The edition of these volumes promoted an accurated study of the principles of Chinese herbal therapy and its larger spreading.

In the same time, thanks to the Italian Journal of TCM (*Rivista Italiana di Medicina Tradizionale Cinese*), I started to diffuse this old therapeutic technique in Italy and I published the studies and researches made in Italy, China and other western countries on this subject.

1992 was a very important year because on february the Italian Society of Chinese and Traditional Herbal Therapy (SIFCET, *Società Italiana di Farmacologia Cinese e Tradizionale*) was founded and I had the honour of being the President till year 2000.

This Society gathered all the Italian Ph Doctors interested on Chinese Herbal therapy and on its integration with biomedicine.

We listed 230 Chinese herbal remedies and 150 Chinese formulas that represented the basic program of each Chinese herbal therapy course organized in Italy in the next years.

In the Nineties in Italy other important books that promoted the deeping of the knowledge of this subject such as *Chinese Herbal Formulas* (Sotte L., *Ricette Cinesi*, *Quaderni di Medicina Naturale della Rivista Italiana di Medicina Tradizionale Cinese*, Civitanova Marche, 1994) edited by

Italian Journal of TCM in 1994 and Chinese Phytotherapy (Sotte L., Fitoterapia Cinese, red edizioni, Como, 1998) edited by Red printing house in 1998 were published.

From Nineties the teaching of Chinese herbal therapy began to be introduced in many Private Western Phytoterapy Schools in Italy and in the University too, such as in the Phytoterapy Master organized by the Faculty of Pharmacia of the University of Siena in wich I teach Chinese herbal therapy from 1994 till now.

The years of the new Millennium have been a moment of study and spreading of this therapy and last year Chinese Pharmacology (Sotte L., Muccioli M., ed altri Farmacologia Cinese, CEA, Milano, 2010) was published, this book surely will help all Italian doctors interested in this study for next years.

Even if the pratice of Chinese herbal therapy in Italy is riserved to a small public till now I think that the progresses of the last years will help this therapeutic technique to spread