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Editorial

Asian Journal of Pharmacognosy, why?

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“Naturam primum studeat cognoscere rerum”

Titus Lucretius Carus (99 BC– c. 55 BC)

Pharmacognosy from the Greek words “*φάρμακον*” “a medicine” and “*γινώσκω*” “I know”, is a section of teaching of pharmacy devoted to the identification, authentication, pharmacological properties and toxicity of medicinal plants, fungi and other raw natural products of medical value also collectively known in Latin as “*Materia Medica*”. In fact, since Pedanius Dioscorides of Anazarbus (40-90 AD), Greek physician in the armies of the Roman Emperor Nero, pharmacognosy has been the main pillar of pharmacy and medicine teaching in European universities for almost 2000 years. The last few decades have seen a progressive removal of pharmacognosy for schools pharmacy worldwide. As a result, pharmacy students are becoming unable to identify medicinal plants, for formulate them, to prescribe them and to provide counselling to patients willing to safely and effectively use medicinal plants and this is a dangerous trend for patients. In the same time, an increasing number of non-pharmacists are manufacturing and/or selling herbal products, even online, opening the way not only to fraud but life-threatening poisoning. In addition to that, increasing incidence in non-communicable illnesses (cancer, obesity, type-2 diabetes, Alzheimer) as well as increased resistance to antibiotics are disintegrating the current fallacious dogma that “*pharmacognosy is an obscure and very descriptive subject*” because drugs, which come most often from plants, fungi and bacteria are urgently needed. Further, medicinal plants knowledge in Asian developing countries is decreasing owed to reducing number of living healers, shamans and other *hakims* with empirical knowledge. The future global health challenges coming ahead will only be defeated with natural products from medicinal plants from Asia because the oldest human knowledge on medicinal plants is from Asia (Susruta, Chen-Nong and others) and if universities are not playing their roles by implementing strict and complete pharmacognosy teaching, the need for, at least, a journal on Asian pharmacognosy becomes obvious. This journal is an attempt made to maintain and spread knowledge in medicinal plants in Asia and their uses for the development of drugs and the wellbeing of community. The Asian Journal of Pharmacognosy offers the possibility to publish research articles, reviews, but also ‘Ethnopharmacological Notes’ which refer to simple field observations of uses of medicinal plants in remote Asian areas. Besides, it is becoming more and more difficult for Asian researchers attached to developing countries university to publish their researches in peer reviewed journal because of editorial requirements and fees which hamper the publication of simple but good experimental evidences. Our journal responds to this need by publishing simple but scientifically good after peer review. I would like to equally express my gratitude to all members of the Editorial Board of our journal for allowing this first issue to be published.