

The Globalization and Modernization of TCM

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Mentions of Chinese medicine can conjure up images of mysterious brews for all types of ailments. While such "traditional" Chinese medicine (TCM) practices are still alive and well, increasingly it is the formulated "modern" Chinese medicine that is sold in China to the tune of \$21 billion annually, and exported around the world.

Is it possible to harness the "ancient secrets" in the 13,000 TCM preparations for Western drug development? That is GSK's hope; the company has [mobilized](#) one of its Shanghai-based Discovery Performance Units to investigate ways to merge TCM with modern technology for neurodegenerative diseases. Novartis and Sanofi R&D centers in China are also exploring TCM.

These ideas are not necessarily revolutionary. Some ancient TCM ingredients, purified and synthesized, have already been widely accepted as Western pharmaceuticals. BMS's Taxol (paclitaxel) for the treatment of solid tumors was isolated from the bark of the Pacific yew tree. Novartis has had a successful collaboration with the Chinese Academy of Military Sciences on the anti-malarial artemisinin.

When the US FDA issued [the guidance](#) for industry on botanical drug products in 2004, it recognized the complexity of the workings of drugs such as TCM, where identifying each and every active ingredient is often a complicated process. Since then, a number of Chinese companies have invested heavily in the U.S. registration process.

Tasly, a leading TCM pharma based in Tianjin, has initiated a U.S. Phase 3 trial for its Danshen Dripping Pill, a combination of salvia and notoginseng extracts with synthetic borneol, for the treatment of chronic stable angina pectoris. In 2011, Tasly [invested](#) \$40 million to build a manufacturing plant and training facility in Maryland. Hutchison MediPharma, a well-known Chinese start up, has programs in IBD (Phase 3) and oncology (Phase 2) ongoing in the U.S. L.E.K. has identified over 30 other Chinese medicine sponsors in the U.S. and European regulatory registration processes.

TCM's technical standardization and internationalization are also part of China's 12th Five Year Plan. Attend the [BIO Convention in China](#) to hear more on how the 12th Five Year Plan will bolster TCM, and attend the "[Globalizing Traditional Chinese Medicines](#)" panel for a look at how Chinese and Western companies are integrating TCM into their pipelines.

Helen Chen is the head of China life sciences for the global strategy firm [L.E.K. Consulting](#). She can be reached at h.chen@lek.com



In its second year, the BIO Convention in China will bring together executives from biotechnology, pharmaceutical companies and investment firms from North America, Europe and Asia to meet and explore business opportunities with China's emerging biotech and rapidly expanding pharmaceutical sectors. To learn more about BIO China and to register for the event, go to bio.org/biochina



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