

Radical Remedy - Thomas Leung Transcript

0:00:00 - Chloe

Hey guys, it's Dr Chloe and you're listening to the Radical Remedy Podcast. Today's guest is Dr Thomas Leung. He is not only a pharmacist, but a doctor of Chinese medicine as well and the CEO of Kamwo Herbs. If you have never been there before, Kamwo is an absolute institution in New York City, chinatown. They've been around for 50 years educating the public on the power of Chinese herbal medicine and filling herbal formulas for practitioners all over the country.

I love Dr Leung's unique approach to Chinese medicine. He's incredibly down to earth and has a great respect for both Western and Eastern medicine, and I found this conversation to be so helpful and we dispelled a ton of myths around Chinese herbal medicine and really, hopefully, will help you understand more deeply why I love this medicine so much. Please check it out, let me know what you think, make sure to go over to KamwoHerbs.com and find out more about what they do. It's really, really incredible and I'm so grateful that Dr Leung was able to share his time with us. I hope you guys enjoy the episode. Please remember to like, follow, share. It means the world to me. All right, guys. Today I'm here with Dr Thomas Leung, the CEO of Kamwo Herbs in New York. Kamwo is an absolute institution when it comes to Chinese herbal medicine. They've been around for 50 years and it is truly an honor to have you here to speak with me today. Thank you so much for joining me, tom.

0:01:28 - Thomas

Hello Chloe. Thank you for having me. Pleasure to be here with you.

0:01:32 - Chloe

So I know that your father founded Kamwo, but when was it that you really decided that you wanted to follow in his footsteps, or was that just a given from the start?

0:01:42 - Thomas

You know I get this question a lot and I grew up in the business. I think after I graduated college in 1992, I worked a few years as a pharmacist at the school in University of Buffalo. I came back to the business and I started working there full-time in 1994 and that's and I'm here ever since Pretty much been here all my life.

0:02:08 - Chloe

I love that you have the dual background of the Western pharmacology. Also, I've always felt like Chinese herbal medicine is such an incredible way to help bring Chinese medicine to Western nerves or people who are less comfortable with Chinese medicine as a whole, because we can look at the Western pharmacological actions of the herbs as well as the Eastern energetics of them. How would you sort of describe some of its core principles and how we look at herbs as opposed to how Western medicine looks at pharmaceuticals?

0:02:39 - Thomas

Chinese medicine is about balancing the yin and yang of the organ systems and to maintain health. I mean a nutshell. That's what it really is. People oftentimes attribute that you know, or it was, oh, this is very good for preventative medicine and it is. It's one of our strong points, but that's not exclusive. We also treat acute management as well. We treat acute conditions. We manage acute conditions as well In Western medicine. Our strong point is to treat acute conditions. We treat that very well in Western medicine.

Preventative medicine, we kind of we're okay, we're pretty good, but in terms of maintaining health in Western medicine we're really lacking, comparatively speaking with Chinese medicine. And you know to your point about earlier about me being a Western pharmacist and

having Western pharmacology knowledge and also Chinese medicine knowledge. You know, the funny thing is in other parts of the world, like in China, Japan, Korea, medicine is medicine and they choose what's best for the individual condition, individual presentation and there's less of a delineation between Western medicine and Chinese medicine. That's something I wish that in the United States, in the West, that we are, I guess, moving toward that trend. That would be, I think, would be very helpful for everyone. Public health.

0:04:21 - Chloe

Yeah, it's interesting seeing the changes in our society as we're bringing Chinese medicine into hospitals and different Western medical systems.

I know, when I studied I studied for a month in Heilongjiang University in Harbin and it was amazing getting to see acupuncture with pharmaceuticals, with Chinese herbs and exactly as you said, whatever the patient needed and however the patient was going to be best served, and I always think that's the best way to do it. You know, western medicine certainly has tremendous value in so many ways, but Chinese medicine, as you said, is really powerful in terms of preventing health, restoring health, health and one of the things I've been obsessed with recently. My sort of catchphrase has been you know, I think it's time that we start building health with Chinese medicine as opposed to responding to disease, which is typically what we're doing with pharmaceuticals. So if we can sort of get that hand in hand where people are actually fostering health with herbal medicine, acupuncture, lifestyle and the wisdom of traditional medicines, then when we're getting sick or have acute diseases, you know, pharmaceuticals and Chinese herbs can also be really phenomenal to respond to them.

0:05:30 - Thomas

But I agree. I agree Absolutely.

0:05:34 - Chloe

So one of the things that I always have a hard time describing, so now I'm going to put it on you I would love to talk about. So in Chinese herbs we look at the herbs as in sort of different groupings, so in different categories, and how we look at them. How do you typically describe that to somebody who's coming into Camel and looking for some information on how Chinese herbs work? So why do we have herbs for phlegm or versus? You know how do we use herbs. Or, if you want to break it down, maybe first doing acute versus chronic herbs, whatever sort of seems like a best starting point.

0:06:09 - Thomas

So there are gatekeepers, the practitioners themselves. So people don't just come in and say, hey, I have this condition, give me some herbs that transform phlegm, or give me some herbs that do X and Y and Z. For most part and there are exceptions, of course, for most part people would see a practitioner because, unlike Western herbology, it's not like this herb is good for this condition and this herb is good for that condition, so well, therefore I can use it, as you know as well as anyone. Being a Chinese medicine practitioner is all about patterns, right, and people may have the same cough, but they have to show different patterns. We have to discern, distinguish what patterns they have and then then we have the appropriate formulation.

So, and I think that oftentimes the your regular Chinese medicine patient are educated, at least in Asia, they are here in the United States maybe less so, but it's not something that they would come in and just say hey, give me this or what. What herb is good for transforming phlegm? What herb is good for that? To them, it's you know. It really shouldn't be. It's really you need to see a practitioner would then give you phlegm and, of course, for your exceptions, right. So it's not across the board for the most part that that's how that at least now an outside and retail setting. That's upwards.

0:07:40 - Chloe

Yeah, I guess what. I guess what I'm getting at is more. I get a lot of people who ask you know? And people constantly ask me to come up with formulas and just say you know, I have radical roots. So we have patent formulas that are pretty safe for people to take off the shelf. I formulated them that way so that they were more accessible to people to get a taste of Chinese herbal medicine without having to go to a practitioner. Again, I will always advocate that custom herbal formulations and working with a practitioner is something that everybody should be doing, but what I get all the time is people saying Well, what do I do for thyroid disease? What do I do? What's your favorite herb for allergies or what? So why is it that we sort of use Chinese herbs in what? Well, let's start with what are pattern differentiations? When you talk about that, like, what are the patterns in Chinese medicine? What does that mean?

0:08:34 - Thomas

Yeah. So in Chinese medicine we assign different patterns for different conditions. So you know, a headache, for example, which is a very common now in the West, in Western medicine if you have a headache, for most part of course there's exceptions, I'll lower it up a little bit here, just because there's a few options here and there, for most part, and I'll tell you as a pharmacist, if someone has a headache and it doesn't seem like one of those you know acute situations sure you can take an ibuprofen. You know, like Advil, that percent, one of those endsets right Now it's the right old head to head inflammatory drugs, the Aspen family, and there'll be fire.

In Chinese medicine it's really not like that. We need to know why. You know what's the underlying cause that causes headache, because in Chinese medicine pretty much we cannot treat you unless we know what the pattern is. And back to the very beginning of this podcast, what I was describing how does Chinese medicine work? We balance the yin and the yang in different organ systems and when that balances off it could present in a certain pattern and result in a certain condition or symptoms. In this case would be a headache. So one common one for headache could be from, let's just say liver cheese stagnation, right, where people get stressed, and that's one way to treat, as opposed to another type of headache where maybe blood stagnation, where the blood's not flowing very well, that could also be a different type of headache.

The presentation can be often different, right, the science is the side. The symptoms may vary a little bit. So, yeah, so patterns is what we need. Oftentimes we need to know what the patterns are, so it's always very hard to treat. That's why a lot of the over-the-counter formulations that are with herbal medicine is very hit and miss, because if you hit the right pattern, at least, if you don't hit the right pattern, that doesn't do a thing. So that's why the Chinese medicine to reinforce, just to tell you everything enough. It's a very individualized medicine and the value of the practitioner is very important. Yeah.

0:10:59 - Chloe

Absolutely, and one of the things I always love talking about whenever I'm on podcasts is I reinforce how much education we actually have is how to best Chinese medical practitioners.

So, lovely Because so many people think that it's. You know, a six-month certificate program. You know it is just to get your master's degree. So to be a licensed acupuncturist, master's of Chinese medicine, you do three years of eight classes a semester, three semesters a year minimum, not to mention passing multiple different boards, and then to get the doctorate there are different levels of doctorate, but then you're doing additional training on top of that. So it's just for the master's. It's a course equivalent, I believe, of four and a half master's degrees in three years, or two law degrees. So I just love hammering that one because I really enjoy it Absolutely.

0:11:53 - Thomas

In February I'll be giving a talk, as I'm also a farm well, a Western pharmacist. So the New York State Association of Pharmacists. They invited me to give a talk about Chinese medicine and while I spoke to the organizer, the amount of schooling that a Chinese medicine practitioner has to go through, they, their mind is completely blown. They would never thought that one it would be that many years. Like you said earlier, master's degree is also a doctorate degree. So we're looking at four, six years on top of your undergrad. Yeah, right, so there's undergrad that's not even factored in. So if you go through the whole track, it's very rigorous. So you're not graduating until your late 20s, assuming that you're coming to Chinese medicine school right after college. So it's very rigorous and people are very well educated. What about that?

0:12:53 - Chloe

Yeah, yeah, it's, I know I sort of stumbled into it and I think I have one of my. One of my teachers, Michael Young, would always say it's, it's really a calling, and if it's not a calling you won't stay in the field. And it's one of those things for me. I can say you know it's, it's one of the greatest honors in my life. I could not be more obsessed with Chinese herbal medicine and the power that it holds. So I'm just really grateful that I sort of fell into it and I'm really excited to do what I can to try and help spread awareness. One of the things that you do with Kamwo is you guys do a lot of education for the public. You guys, I know I've seen videos or pictures of you guys on social media with a bunch of kiddos in the store. How do you see Chinese medicine working with kids? How does that sort of play out for you? What kind of questions are they coming in with that that you might be able to share with us?

0:13:45 - Thomas

Yeah, so that's something that we love to do and we, yeah. So you know, we just we just love doing that, especially the elementary school tours, which we get a ton of in the tri-state area and they usually come around between April to June when they have to fuel trips, when it's warmer, and so we have these second grade, third grade, fourth grade, fifth grade, all, actually all grades. But the younger ones are really fun. They come in and they have no idea, they have no biases, right, like they just come in and they are very receptive. They're like they're empty slate, you know, just open minded about, there's no prejudice about anything. And they're so receptive to that and we love it and we do. We basically tell you know in key terms what Chinese medicine does and how we differ from like a writing or CVS, similarities, things like that. And yeah, they're very receptive. And then the reason we do this is we want the next generation to be aware of what Chinese medicine is is not as mysterious and break a lot of the the myths surrounding Chinese medicine, because people have these preconceived ideas what Chinese medicine is and they're a very inaccurate and so when they meet someone like me or my colleagues who do the tours, not so much the children. Again, the children don't really have much of an idea what Chinese medicine supposed to be, but you can see the chaperones, the teachers. They're blinded, blown all the time and I really love that. And it's not just elementary school students, we also have high school students. We have colleges that come in. Regular is the King University. We just recently hosted patient university as a medical botany class, medical colleges because oftentimes one of their class requirements is to learn about alternative medicine. So they oftentimes choose us. So we give them a talk, nursing programs, classes, and that's not even talking about the Chinese medicine schools that come in and do the tour. So we do this all the time and it's just to educate them about just some of the things that we're just talking about now in the podcast.

And one of my favorite tidbits I just wanted to know, Chloe, and I think you will appreciate that there's always mind blow people is. When I tell them about Chinese medicine, I said do you know that? Who are the practitioners of Chinese medicine? Who they are? And there was all the.

If they have this stereotype, especially the older folks, adults, they have the stereotype some old guy behind a beaded curtain right. They have the stereotype and I tell them do you know that the majority of practitioners are of Chinese medicine, are not even Asian? The statistics is 60% of Chinese medicine practitioners are white, only 20% are Asians. That include South Asians and the balance of that is our Latinos, Jewish people, blacks, you know just. Whatever the demographics is about, country right. So and keep it to skip Like wow, 80% of TCM practitioners, or Chinese medicine practitioners, are not even Asian. So it is. And you know listen, Chloe, you've been around at Pacific College at most of our colleagues. Majority of them are not Asians. I mean you yourself. Look at other people you know. So that's one of the message I want to bring out there let people know this medicine is not exclusive to Asians.

0:17:56 - Chloe

Yeah, well, I remember when I studied in China. I remember some of my friends that I made from the course, from the university out there. They were blown away that so many it was mainly white girls from Boulder, Colorado, were climbing out there to study Chinese medicine and we're so passionate about it. And they were like, why are you studying Western medicine? You know, and we were like this is, this is incredible. We're, we're, we're all in non-Chinese medicine.

But it's, it is fascinating to see, I think a lot of practitioners from what I see and you can correct me or you know, let me know what you, your experience has been since you've been teaching for quite a long time also is a lot of people who find Chinese medicine become practitioners of Chinese medicine do so because they have really challenging health conditions that they have then somehow found Chinese medicine for, and then Chinese medicine has dramatically changed their life and then they become incredibly passionate about then passing that on to as many people as they can.

So it really is a labor of love. And then another thing that I also like to point out to people is there's really very few places that you can get a job as an acupuncturist or as a Chinese medicine practitioner. So it's always hard for me when I look at other practitioners. So many people get out and they have to start a business. So if you are working with a practitioner of Chinese medicine, that person has not only trained, as you know, a doctor or a practitioner of Chinese medicine, but they've also gone through all the challenging groups of learning how to successfully run a business in order to provide this medicine for you, which are really not overlapping skills. Some of us quite enjoy it. I think both of us are included in that very, very small minority but most practitioners really have to fight kind of tooth and nail to get through the schooling and then to also provide the medicine for people.

0:19:46 - Thomas

Oh, absolutely, you hit the nail in the head. So in China, if you were a Western medicine doctor, a Western MD, you also study some Chinese medicine, not a lot some. So to them, even you know, so they have working knowledge of Chinese medicine. What I wanted to say about that is, in the programs in China, the four big hospitals, the university, I mean universities, Chinese medicine universities they have foreign programs. People from all over the world come and study there and they're taught in English, like you were. So people from Spain, Italy, France, whatever they're all, so they, it's really worldwide. So that's the more.

And to your point about the starting your own business yeah, and it used to be a lot more of that. There weren't that many jobs. It's more now because now, especially in the big cities, most hospitals now have a Department of Acupuncture. Maybe 20, 30 years ago not the case, but now I can't imagine a hospital not having Department of Acupuncture. So that's fair. And then there are more places now for graduates to get a job. So there's more. So it's a little bit better. But yeah, you're right. You know, back in the day when we were graduating, you pretty much have to set up your own office, and not everyone is. I would say their personalities lend

to be successful in that environment, but so it is very challenging, you know. So environment is a little bit different, but yeah, oftentimes private practice just constitute a big part of our profession.

0:21:33 - Chloe

Yeah, it's interesting to see the different paths that there are within there and anybody who's listening. If you fall in love with Chinese medicine, I could not pick a better career although I haven't seen patients in a minute, but I still love it so much. So why don't we go through what is sort of like a typical intake for somebody coming in to see a Chinese medicine doctor for the first time? How does that kind of look?

0:21:59 - Thomas

Well, the intake, it's really not that different from a Western medicine intake. I would say. I mean, as you know, of course you know that the diagnostic with us is a little bit different, right? Because I would say it's a lot different. Maybe it's a little different. This is, of course, the similarities, but you know.

But we would treat your pulse. That's one of the dynamics that I'm the pulse tells a lot of quality. Now, in the old days, western medicine, allopathic medicine, we do pulse take a lot. But with the, you know, with now more modern dynamics, they kind of that skill set has fallen by the wayside. It's not emphasized as much. I can't even remember a going to a primary doctor there. But I feel my pulse, I EMT all the time. Right, you go a lot important. So we still retain that.

Another thing that we oftentimes ask, and Chinese medicine practitioners, we need to look at your tongue. I think your tongue can tell you a lot about your constitution. Again, in the old days, I would say I don't know, maybe last century a Western physician would look at your tongue too as well. So we still retain that. It tells us a lot of information. And then, looking at your tongue, feeling your pulse, looking at your complexion, asking about your extensive GI history would stall your urine, urine, urine, quality of your urine All these things will build up an important picture that lets us know what pattern you have. So it may seem a little weird for people to say why are you looking at my tongue and why is my complexion so important to you? These are important pieces of information that necessary. In by themselves they only tell us everything, but it helps build the big picture.

And then that was the questions that we were asked about. Your condition will give us a very good idea what pattern it is. Or there's something that would be a right fit for Chinese medicine, or it's not a right fit for Chinese medicine. I think that is as important. As you know, going through the Chinese medicine programs or Chinese medicine programs, knowing triosh isn't one, it's something that we treat, something that we can treat, something that requires immediate medical intervention. So I always emphasize that Chinese medicine practitioners are not ignorant in those things we do, that we see something that requires that the work's far out right away. So, yeah, we're round about answering that question, though Is that too long?

0:24:54 - Chloe

No, no, it's great. I think it's always funny when people you know if you say you're a Chinese medicine practitioner. I was just at the dog park with my puppy and somebody was like, do you look at people's tongues? And they, like you could see them doing everything they had not to stick out their tongue at you and you're like, I mean, I don't care, I can tell you very quickly what your tongue tells. But it is an entertaining facet that I think a lot of people find very amazing. But yeah, I think it's always amazing to me to see the many different layers of how people present and all the different signs and symptoms that their bodies are giving us without having to do complex diagnosis, which it's phenomenal to have these complex things.

I always think of my son, Remy.

He's got that rare genetic disorder that causes and tract epilepsy and cognitive disabilities and Parkinsonian, like traumas, all sorts of stuff right, and it took two and a half years before the genetic condition was actually diagnosed because if it's so very rare, we had to do a whole egg zone testing and so, as a practitioner of Chinese medicine, I was treating him for phlegm, missing the mind and a wing disorder essentially, and so it was entertaining when I got the diagnosis for his rare genetic disorder.

I was like nothing about this. Genetic disorder changes how I'm treating my child from a Chinese medicine perspective. So it's wonderful to have those Western tests and diagnostics and they're really, really cool and interesting. But it is always mind blowing to me to see how the framework of Chinese medicine and the way that we're able to view the body and its mechanics and its ability to function are still very valid and we can use that in any circumstance. I always say you don't need a Western diagnosis to see a Chinese medicine practitioner. We can really look and see what's going on underneath in a really profound way.

0:26:56 - Thomas

Absolutely, and so nothing that I want to emphasize is that Chinese medicine practitioners primarily most of us are, I would say, your GP, general practice, just like your primary general practitioner. They don't make all the calls meaning that they would send you out for diagnosis so they would read what the radiologists would say on MRI or on an X-ray. You know all these things, you know what, and that's something that we also do. They do that in China. We also do that too. So when we talk about this in class all the time, if someone presents with an immobile mass in their app, one of the things you do, you refer out the sonic MRI, find out what it is before you start treating them. So we don't have blinders on. We say, oh, we only do palpation, do tons and people's pulses. No, like your GP, like any, we refer out, we read diagnostics. We may treat the same way or we may choose not to treat the presentation and the condition does.

There's not a good fit for Chinese medicine, right? So that's something that I always preach in class. We do not need to treat everything in the sun. There are some three conditions in Chinese medicine we are very good at and there's some certain conditions that we're not treating with Chinese medicine. Case in point you get hit by a car, you're not. You're not getting treated by Chinese medicine, at least not right away, right, yeah, if you think you're going to have a stroke, obviously that's cute intervention. So you wouldn't go to your GP when you have a stroke, no, you should be going to the emergency room.

So there you know, we have to be practical about and we as Chinese medicine practitioners, educated on these conditions as well, we know when to treat, when not to treat. When is the good option for us this is a good option for Chinese medicine and when is not. So it's I, I, I, I tell, and I want to tell the public about this, because sometimes people have this idea and they that, oh, it's either Chinese medicine or Western medicine. I hear that all the time and the reality is that's not the case. People who come to see Chinese medicine practitioners also use Western medicine, but they choose what's best for them depending on the presentation. So that's something that I think that it's real realistic and I think it's it's it's right. That's the proper way to handle your health.

0:29:52 - Chloe

I agree with that. I always tell my patients, you know, start with diet and lifestyle and you know, hone that in. Are you sleeping? Are you actually moving? What are you eating?

Let's start with the bare basics, because how many people in our society are actually doing those bare basics correctly, you know, and many practitioners are at fault of it also. So I'm not

saying I or anybody else is perfect, but but start with that. And then you know energy work, acupuncture, you know muck Sebastian, herbs, but pharmaceuticals, or you know, like Western interventions are, are totally options in there also, and I think it's important to look at all of the options. Look at where you are in your disease state, in your mental health state.

You know I often will have patients with, you know, very severe anxiety or depression and if they need an acute inter intervention for a little while while they're working on building up, you know, healthy habits to build health and resilience, that can be really a game changer for a lot of people. So I think I think we don't want to throw out the baby with the bathwater. What if it comes to any medical option? So what are some of the misconceptions that commonly walk through your door when it comes to Chinese medicine, I know that I constantly get asked about rhinos, horns and all sorts of animals which we do use some animals in our herbal medicine, but I'd love to hear you speak about some of those myths that so I teach herbs at the herbology at the Pacific College and it is immensely frustrating to that.

0:31:36 - Thomas

We have that stigma in Chinese medicine that we use in bone disease species, and so in our program we do learn about these what we call obsolete products, obsolete substances such as rhino horns, tiger bones. I just want to let people know that in our medicine, you know, like any other medicine, it evolves through the centuries. It's not a static where it's so encased in the side of the mountain in China and therefore it's gospel or scripture and then it never changes. That doesn't happen. Like any other medicine. Things that work, okay, we keep. Things that don't work, we move, we move beyond. And it's very clear Our medicine is very, very well documented and through the centuries you can see the evolution, what worked and what didn't work.

And especially now, since the 1950s in China there's more or less standardized Chinese medicine. They've established academic institutions to stare at Chinese medicine and they call it TCM, traditional Chinese medicine, and they set the standards. What is what we should use while we need to? Okay, those are the things we don't do anymore. Now get back to the endangered species and things, things like rhino horn, tiger bones, all the stuff that a lot of that was never really a big part of it in traditional Chinese medicine, like I was saying, mainstream Chinese medicine, rhino horn is not that commonly used even back in the day, but it takes a life that's long because of how exotic it is and then because of how illegal it is, and then you see people outside of our medicine are attributing qualities to it. That's not even in the literature in the first place. First of all, I would say, as a herbs professor, it's nowhere in mainstream Chinese medicine literature that it's even a half a PZAC in any way.

0:33:57 - Chloe

Oh, that doesn't even fit it whatsoever.

0:34:02 - Thomas

We know right, it's not even in that category. But of course, the people who are perpetuating these myths are the people who are doing the illegal activities and they don't have it, they don't care. So it's not something that is mainstream, but yet because it was used in our medicine at some point. And, by the way, of course, in China now, all the Chinese medicine universities, in the correct column that's not something that we. They teach it as a matter of history. But not modern therapeutics. We don't use that. It's here in the United States, but more so, we also teach that we don't use it. We use it as a historical standpoint.

So all the things that you hear about people stealing rhino horns, poachers in Africa, that is contraband, organized crime syndicates they that's not the Chinese medicine People, as it's almost folklore takes on its life, right. So you and I, let's take rhino horns, for example. In the old days, yes, there were people who use it for very high fevers, right, like perhaps someone of

meningitis. That's something they would use. Who is going to pay all this money for someone to poach rhino for meningitis? No one. So the people who want to perpetuate this trade as a legal trade are not going to say, hey, we can use this for high fee. Nobody, it's not valuable.

So what do they do? They make up other stuff Like, oh, it's an aphrodisiac, and all these which is not even part of our medicine. So I just want people to know it's not part of our medicine. Tiger bolts in the old old old days people may use it for arthritic conditions. Nowadays we have so many other options it's no longer taught as such. So now they say, oh, tiger bolts can also use as an aphrodisiac. It seems everything comes about after the aphrodisiac. What the hell? That's the best seller for everything. And all these are not mainstream Chinese medicine at all. I know we're spending a lot of time, but I'm very passionate about letting people know that's not part of our medicine.

0:36:21 - Chloe

No, it's literally one of the most common questions that I get, and I have people constantly either harassing me on social media or I remember even a couple years ago I went on a date with somebody who knew that I was a doctor of Chinese medicine and owned a third company by second herb company and was like you know, I would never trust Chinese herbs. You never know what they put in there. That was plastic. First of all, I own the company. Second of all, I own a company that filled formulas for practitioners all over the country. Third of all, I have a doctorate in this. I do know what's going in all of this Incredibly to the detail. Do I know what's going in there? This is just not something that we do in our medicine anymore, but it's mind-blowing how far that myth has been perpetuated.

0:37:17 - Thomas

Absolutely, If we have a chance I don't know, it's. One of the topics we can talk about is how regulated our industry is too.

0:37:23 - Chloe

I would love to go into that. Yeah, that would be great.

0:37:26 - Thomas

Okay, one of the myths about Chinese medicine is like a Wild Wild West Anything goes, it's not regulated. Number one that's not true. The FDA stands for Food and Drug Administration, so herbs are not considered drugs, but they're considered food, being the FDA has the effinit for food, so they actually falls under the jurisdiction. They do regulate that. They regulate raw herbs as food. They regulate capsules, granules, pills. These are processed herbs or processed food. They call it dietary supplements. That's also fall under the jurisdiction, so they're regulated. So a lot of you think that, hey, now they're not regulated. You can input whatever you want. No, there's a standard. The FDA in 2005 came up with this new rule, the new legislation, the updated legislation, that if you're going to make something right, if it's where there's herb, whether it is a dietary supplement, it is required to have documentation that it is what it is, that you have lab to show that it's safe. That includes testing for heavy metals and pesticide. That is required.

0:38:52 - Chloe

Yeah, another common misconception.

0:38:55 - Thomas

Yeah, and, by the way, if you grow herbs in the United States, it's not going through customs, you do not need labs. So if you grow herbs, let's just say we're in New York State, upstate New York, you bring it to market, no one checks. But if you're bringing herbs in, you need to have labs. So just let people know because it's coming from the other country. You need labs for sure. So now, all there. So this is all. I'm talking about raw herbs and I'm talking about all forms

of stuff when they're coming into the country. You absolutely there's a standard that the Food and Drug Administration require. It's called good manufacturers. Oftentimes you see in that literature it's called GMP, the manufacturer practice. That's a standard they set up that manufacturers have to follow. So let's quickly talk about many companies in the US.

When we go and buy and we go acquire dietary supplements from China, we have to find a factory that's registered with the Food and Drug Administration, that has GMP certification. So the FDA is aware of them and the FDA, by the way, have offices in China, because it's not just a Chinese medicine thing. When you go right aid and you buy, let's just say, ginkgo Biloba capsules, it's the same FDA GMP standards from China, like that in those Chinese manufacturers, and that's how we protect ourselves as a country to maintain that standard. So it's no different from when you go to Walgreens or right aid to buy these supplements. It's the same standards as the whole. So people should know that our industry is very much regulated. So it's not like, oh, anything goes. So people often come surprised to hear that because they think that, oh well, it's like we just bring in whatever we want. Oh, you kiddo.

0:41:18 - Chloe

Yeah, yeah, it's definitely one of the misconceptions I see often is, you know, winning radicals. So it's CBD and Chinese herbs that I always joke. I don't know whether people are more scared of hemp or whether they're more scared of Chinese herbs having heavy metals and pesticides or just sort of like the whatever misconceptions that people are coming to Chinese herbs with. And I'm like these are both incredible and the research behind every single herb in every one of my formulas is profound, and that includes hemp as well. So it's always quite tricky, and especially with radical roots. One of the reasons I wanted to do this was because and why I wanted to do the podcast. I mean is, with radical roots, I can't say anything about anything on my website whatsoever because we have hemp. I think you had your credit card processor shut down or gotten trouble for it because you guys were selling hemp. Also, I think a lot of people don't know all of the regulations with that in this podcast. It's not about CBD, so we won't go too far into it, but it is. It's such a pain.

I have a very. I have a modification of Shiaoosan which is free and easy to wander for anybody listening. It's like one of the most commonly prescribed Chinese herbal formulas for women's health. It's also been heavily researched for xantholytic and neuroprotective properties. Blah, blah, blah. Fucking. Amazing formula right, super safe for most people. It'd be hard to go wrong with this one, and on my website I wrote the base of this formula is a Chinese herbal formula that has been used for hundreds of years to support women's health, and I had my credit card processor hold my money for a month and I was like support women's health, that's literally as big as I could possibly get.

I did not say endovtriosis, fertility, absolutely nothing. I just said support women's health and she upped me down. So I think the education component about Chinese herbs, letting people really know the power of our medicine, the versatility of it, is just so important. One of the things I'd love to dive into is what are some of the things that you see most commonly clinically or in the pharmacy? Like what kind of conditions are you seeing people come in with that are really well supported by Chinese medicine? Obviously, we don't treat any Western diagnosis. That's one of our regulations in our field. We treat based on Chinese medicine powder, as you were saying, but a lot of people come in with Western diagnoses and just curious what you guys are seeing a lot these days.

0:43:54 - Thomas

I think we may be a bad person to ask about that only because we get such a varied you know we get prescriptions from all over the country, all different types of practitioners, so across the board, pretty much everything on that sun. So it's really hard to answer that question. But I'll tell you some top ones. I would say probably one about. Top one is fertility helping older

women older as in what. Traditionally people get pregnant earlier in the 20s, but women are having them later and later and as you get older your fertility rate tends to go down and something that that's one of the strong points of Chinese medicine. We help build up right the the buy so that we can help with conception and also sustain in pregnancy. That's something that Chinese medicine is very good at and we oftentimes compliment Western medicine. So even a lot of reproductive endocrinologists are very receptive of that stuff competing its complimentary. So that's a big part. That's one at the top. Another one that we have a lot of is sports medicine. We're very good at sports medicine, particularly the recovery stages of sports medicine. So we see a lot of form because as people get older or people who are more deficient, the healing process is much slower. And I'll tell you as a Western pharmacist, if they say, hey, what medicine do we have to help people heal better, and really it would be tough to give you a good answer. Maybe you sell calcium, not really Like in Chinese medicine. It's a no brainer, right. We would tonify liver and kidney systems and that would help build strength, strengthens the cinnamon bones, the bones and the tendons. Every Chinese medicine practitioner learns that in school, very straightforward, so we do a lot of that as well. That's one of and of course you know you're running the mill anxiety, colds, tonifying, lot of tonifying formulations. But I had to say, if you ask me, like, what are the more popular ones where Western medicine is not very good, and that we are very good at those we do see a lot of. I'll give you one homo-replacement therapy is out in Western medicine, right, because that's something that we really do it. But in Chinese medicine we are very good at that Controlled menopausal synthins and things like that. We get those formulas all the time. Anxiety, and there's another one what you said about Shaiyosan, like a Shaiyosan modification based type formulas. We get them all day long.

Western medicine what do we have? We have a lot of good LZL, edin, I-azipine, things like that, soul off, whatever, you don't go, all of these things, but those things have a lot of side effects and a lot of people would want to choose it the natural way, where we actually are balancing the body and we're optimizing the body's ability to rectify itself, which I will always advocate to try first, because a lot of people don't know. And I'll tell you as a pharmacist, if you're on soul off, you're on it forever. I mean, that's just facts. It's not like, oh, let me go on for two weeks. It's a commitment for you Because it's really not addressing the root of the problem.

You're addressing it very specifically chemically in that pathway. How that works, right, it's serotonin, we uptake inhibitor, right. So what does it do? Why is the system off? We don't even care. In Western medicine We'll just kind of fix that one little pathway. In Chinese medicine, we balance your body and let your body rectify itself. That should always be first choice in my book, right? Like if family members, whatever someone who asks that's what I would tell them. So these are the things that we're very good at in Chinese medicine and Western medicine and those are the type of formulations that we see a lot of.

0:48:34 - Chloe

Yeah, I think I mean I'm personally of the belief that pretty much every woman should at least see an acupuncturist or a doctor of Chinese medicine a couple of times and see how that goes. I mean the amount of hormonal issues in our society today, with the you know and your friend disruptors in the water and everything you know and our fabrics and all of the stuff, it's just it's an epidemic. And same with infertility. And Chinese medicine is just mind blowing when it comes to supporting women's health, from teens through menopause, as you said, and I always look at, you know, even just teenagers being put on birth control to regulate their cycles and their emotions, and it's like, you know, just just get them on some, some basic herbs and they'll feel so much better. So that's one thing that I I'm always advocating for for women.

0:49:25 - Thomas

No, I, I absolutely. You know it's not like that. These things are bad, but that really should to my book. As a pharmacist, it should be the last option. You know, I would always try to rectify it, naturally, if I can. Let's try that route. First, you know, and then often you'd be surprised. Many things can be can be fixed with a combination of balancing the, the body, diet, exercise. You would be surprised how, how well and people made a understanding. Oh my God, Chinese medicine is a miracle. No, it's not a miracle. All we do is we, we optimize your physiology to do this thing. That's all it is.

0:50:08 - Chloe

Yeah, it's really honoring the body and reminding it what it's supposed to do. And one of the things I love about Chinese herbal medicine, compared to even Western herbology, is that difference in terms of we use herbs together to create dynamic formulas that, as you're saying, are addressing the symptoms but also the underlying patterns of disharmony, so that you're building health over time and you know it really helps you. You know, learn to grow in health as opposed to just you know, the Western mindset where you're just hitting this one pathway and not looking at the downstream effects in different ways, that that always seem to have some of the surprisingly delirious effects when the research comes out, when you're on, absolutely One one I love.

0:51:00 - Thomas

One condition I love to talk about is lower track urinary tract infection. Right, it's very common. That's just the way that the urinary tract of women is there is susceptible to infection. So what's the medicine? We're very good at giving you antibiotics and that would take care of it. But guess what happens?

Oftentimes when we give you antibiotics and Western medicine, it basically carpet bombs your the, the, the, the floor, the normal floor and your gut, right, and you end up getting a yeast infection because you kill the bad bacteria, but you also kill the good back and kill, kill the good bacteria in it In addition to the bad bacteria, right, so the microorganisms, and that really is not good.

And then people end up getting yeast infections and oftentimes it will come back, and it come back in Chinese medicine. What we do is we help address the pattern, which is DMP oftentimes, and we let that. We're allowed the physiology to rectify itself. This should always be tried first because it doesn't upset the normal floor. And we know and I'm sure a lot of your listeners what what female uh probably know this that how many times they have UTI and they get over, and I think antibiotics over and over again. It's like a like a vicious cycle, and that's about there's antibiotic resistance in our in in this country, overuse of that type of the robotics, so something that I would say is a strong point in Chinese medicine. Oh, that's one example of.

0:52:37 - Chloe

Yeah, I had one patient who had UTI, yeast infection, uti and yeast infection, I think 30 times before she came to see me a couple years ago and I was just like, okay, um, and then nobody nobody stopped this cycle in any way, shape or form. So we're just going to look at this now. Um, so we're we're running lower on time, but there are a couple of things I still would love to pick your brain about. So one obviously, colds and flus have been on people's minds these past couple of years. I think Chinese herbal medicine is pretty damn phenomenal at treating colds and flus.

Um, what are there any herbal formulas that you recommend that families might have on hand? Like even something like cold well or uh, yin chow? You know just some of the basics and maybe a little bit of a description of what's going on. Six, and maybe a little bit of a description about, like, when you might want to take those formulas and when you know a pattern might,

or you know a presentation of somebody's cold or flu might be something that they really want to go and see. Um, a practitioner for how we sort of address acute uh situations like that in Chinese medicine.

0:53:46 - Thomas

Yeah, so cold and flus are oftentimes a viral. What do we have for viral and Western medicine? Not really anything. I mean, I didn't have the new one now, uh, that it's anti-viral but you have to take it within the first. I forgot how many hours, like, maybe some of the hours Arrest is too late. And then, even if you were to take it, it only should, like shorten the presentation, like your recovery times, a little bit quicker. Uh, oftentimes people miss that window. It's just that, you know, uh, and it's not that effective. And this is just in the literature.

That's what it is, um, in Chinese medicine, what we do, one of the, the strengths that we have, is to twigles. What is strengthening your body before beforehand. You know, during COVID, not everyone presents with the same severity Right when they contract the virus. And why is that? And it's what the tutor reason was the medicine. But from a Chinese medicine standpoint, it's just that our chia energies, our weight chia, our protective chia, is stronger, and we can actually address that in Chinese medicine.

For those who oftentimes get, uh, many times get sick during the flu season and whatnot, that's something before the flu season, we will build up the body with a formula Well, you're a Jade windscreen. That's a very common formula, right, and many, many companies make a variation of that. So that's, people to build that up before, not during, before, that's one thing, but once they have a call, but like a variation of Yin-chao, many companies make it. You mentioned the ninco co-plows. Many companies make a variation of the Yin-chao formula, which is also good. But of course I would, I would say, consult with a practitioner to make sure that it's the right formulation for you, those things that we can do, and it would help shorten your symptoms. Or, in the first case, when you strengthen the body, you will have maybe very minimal symptoms or no symptoms, right, because we know, just because the virus is present within you, this, uh, necessarily manifests clinically the same way. So that's something to keep in mind. How do you treat yourself is important. Your constitution matters and the presence of viruses helps, yeah.

0:56:16 - Chloe

Yeah, I think there's just such a wisdom to our medicine and I thought that COVID was such a beautiful example of how we look at patterns in Chinese medicine, because everybody was presenting differently. Some people had dry cough, some people had really flaming cough, some people had no cough, some people had no symptoms whatsoever, people had, you know, sort of more of the steaming bones wasting, sort of exhaustion, um, and that's really the. The strength of our medicine is that we're able to assess both the person, their health, and the strength of the pathogen. That's sort of attacking the body and and support them. And obviously, again, we can't say we treat any of these things.

But you know, I think it's a very good idea to have a Chinese medicine practitioner on hand If you are sick, and it's something that we do treat very, very well. Chinese herbal medicine I think we have just classically what? At least 40 different classical Chinese herbal formulas for colds and clues, so we can get very specific on exactly what we're doing. And then, obviously, in Chinese medicine I guess we didn't even get into this, but a lot of practitioners will customize formulas specifically for the P-shirt, so you're really getting customizable pharmaceuticals. So if you have a severe cold or a clue. You know it is a really powerful way to go and I'm sure you guys were right in the thick of it there in China.

0:57:43 - Thomas

Well, super-duper busy during that period, yeah but sure.

0:57:48 - Chloe

What? What would sort of be your dream in terms of where Chinese medicine goes in the states Like? What would you like to see happen? More research or more inclusivity into Western medical systems?

0:58:02 - Thomas

One day, Chinese medicine would be just called medicine, and so it will be Chinese medicines. It's like a branch of there's Western medicine. Chinese medicine it'll just be medicine, and I think that we would, and that it would be ideal that people choose the best option depending on the presentation and there will be no hesitation, Because I think that the more educated you are about half of physiology and the management of these diseases, you realize that each medicine can benefit with the presence of the other. Why are we choosing one and not the other, Like it should be? We should have the full range of options for our patients, right, and it would be my dream one day that in while medical school it would be used. While Chinese medicine, Western medicine is an option. Maybe it may take a few generations of people in, maybe, so we'll see.

0:59:06 - Chloe

I love that For me, just one of the things that I'd like to add is I think you know, as a practitioner, I just want to honor you and the work that you and your crew do over at Kamwo. I am very passionate about the belief that nobody will you know that as a field, we will not reach your vision of being a more inclusive and included medicine unless we, as practitioners, get out there and like, actively educate the public on our medicine and what we're doing, what we're capable of. So really, it's truly such an honor to get to speak with you today and to to watch you guys and all the incredible work that you've done over the past 50, 50 years. Thank you for the kind words and the same.

0:59:50 - Thomas

I could be said for you and your out here doing this and spreading the good news about Chinese medicine and the role that we play. It is important for us to get out there and let people know Awesome.

1:00:06 - Chloe

Well, thank you so much, and I will talk to you soon.