

## H- 201 Alternative Health Practice, its Practitioners and

### Users

#### Dancing between Chinese Herbs and People: Learning, Practice and Management,

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Chinese herbs are the most common method for health promotion in Asia Pacific area. Recently, western countries also begin to emphasize on the researches of Chinese herbs. However, related studies are more focused on the industry or medicine practitioners. Researchers rarely deal with herbs themselves. In this study, we use multi-method to collect the fieldwork data in Tainan area and discuss the interaction between herbs and people in Chinese herbal pharmacies. From the concept of Actor-Network Theory ( ANT ) and biomedicalization, we illustrate how Chinese herbal pharmacies mediate knowledge, marketing and society. Also, we discuss the recent debate of herbal management in Taiwan.

The herbal duality of agricultural product and pharmaceutical plays an important duality role of family and if family during the apprenticeship of Chinese herbal practice. In order to master detailed differences of herbs, the staffs of Chinese herbal pharmacies have to immerse themselves in herbal works daily. Thus, the apprenticeship acts as an if family. Herbs verify the learning outcome of apprentices when practicing in market. Moreover, staffs of pharmacies also gain clinical medical knowledge and experience from the daily practice and could give advice of drug or prescription usage to clients. In other words, the herbal duality endows agency to Chinese herbs and enables Chinese herbal pharmacies to mediate knowledge, marketing and society. The same duality, however, also puts herbs in a grey area of governmental management.

In this study, we apply the ANT to Chinese herbs and Chinese herbal pharmacies, which are embedded in Chinese daily life context, and we want to explore the extent of ANT and biomedicalization in Taiwan. In this way, not only do we deeply comprehend the local medicinal system, but also expand the research scope of STS.