



Statement opposing the use of rhino horn in medicines by the American College of Traditional Chinese Medicine and Council of Colleges of Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine

As President of the American College of Traditional Chinese Medicine (ACTCM) and President of Council of Colleges of Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine (CCAOM), the professional organization that represents fifty-two acupuncture and Oriental medicine colleges across the United States, I, Lixin Huang, am committed to assuring excellence in education in AOM and in supporting conservation of endangered species.

The American College of Traditional Chinese Medicine (ACTCM) has been at the forefront of Traditional Chinese Medicine education since its inception in 1980. The College offers two degree programs—the Master of Science in Traditional Chinese Medicine (MSTCM) and the Doctorate of Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine (DAOM). Our community clinics serve as a diverse and demanding training ground for our students, while also providing affordable health care services to patients and the public.

The vision of American College of Traditional Chinese Medicine is to be an international center of educational excellence that advances professional collaboration and ecologically sustainable medicine. Building upon thirteen years of partnership to work between traditional Chinese medicine profession and conservation community, ACTCM has been a strong leader in promoting healthy people and healthy planet.

Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) is an ancient and profound healing art that originated more than 3,000 years ago. At the core of TCM is an understanding that the body, mind and human spirit are integrally connected, and that restoring and maintaining energetic balance are essential to health and wellbeing.

Balance is a central principle of ecology, as well - that each living organism has an ongoing and continual relationship with every other element that makes up its environment. Traditional Chinese Medicine also supports this principle, focusing on the importance of being in balance with nature and how this balance affects our health and well-being. I, as well as the greater ACTCM and CCAOM communities, are aware of the crucial importance of minimizing our impact on the ecological system and balancing the interrelationship between humans and the environment.

Rhino status and use in folk medicine

Animals and plants have existed as an important part of TCM for a long time. While promoting TCM development and its cultural heritage, ACTCM and CCAOM also attach great importance to the conservation of endangered species including rhinos and tigers. Based on the principle of harmonious development of human beings and nature, ACTCM has worked for many years to

encourage rhino and tiger conservation, through raising awareness of the imperiled status of these species as well as supporting the national and international laws banning the use of and trade in their parts.

According to TCM theories, rhino horns were used to treat typhoid fever, convulsions, macula, carbuncle and other disorders, which was the traditional use over thousands of years. However, some individuals and organizations with little understanding of the essence and modern development of TCM misinterpret and exaggerate the medicinal properties of rhino horns. Such misinterpretation shows little respect for the TCM profession and medical practices, and is harmful to rhino conservation efforts.

To protect wild rhinos, the Chinese government responded to an international trade ban by banning the use of rhino horns in traditional Chinese medicine in 1993. Rhino horn was removed from Chinese pharmacopeia and substitutes were used successfully to treat patients. Since then, many governments and non-government organizations have worked effectively and reduced the demand for rhino horns, which has contributed to rhino recovery in the wild.

However, over the last few years, the world has seen a dramatic increase in rhino poaching and illegal trade in rhino horn. For example, in South Africa alone, as many as 250 rhinos have been killed so far of this year, according to statistics from the National Parks Department. The rate of poaching if not curbed could exceed 2010 levels when a record 333 rhinos were killed in the country. Poaching is being undertaken almost without exception by sophisticated criminals, sometimes hunting from helicopters and using automatic weapons; demand and profits are so high that the resources poachers are willing to use far outpace those of the rangers tasked with protecting the wild rhinos.

While this increase may be in part attributable to traditional medicine, the overwhelming demand derives from a non-traditional and unproven use – as a cure for cancer. There is *no evidence* that rhino horn is an effective cure for cancer and this is *not documented in TCM nor is it approved by the clinical research in traditional Chinese medicine*.

Conclusion

Rhinos once roamed Europe, Asia and Africa and were known by early Europeans who depicted them in cave paintings. In historical times, rhinos were still widespread in the African savannas and the tropical forests of Asia. Today, very few rhinos survive outside national parks and reserves. If they are to continue to survive, we must do all that we can to protect them.

For that reason, American College of Traditional Chinese Medicine and Council of Colleges of Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine would --

- Reiterate that rhino horn is no longer approved for use by the traditional Chinese medicine profession and there is no traditional use, nor any evidence for the effectiveness of, rhino horn as a cure for cancer.

- Encourage members of the CITES Standing Committee to take strong action to ensure that rhino range and consumer states receive all support necessary to ensure that illegal international trade is stopped.
- Encourage members of the Standing Committee to take decisive action where these Parties are not taking the necessary steps to protect and conserve the world's last remaining rhinos.

On behalf of ACTCM and CCAOM, I appreciate your careful consideration and strong support of ongoing rhino conservation around the globe.

Sincerely,

Lixin Huang, MS

President, ACTCM

President CCAOM