The Hong Kong government attaches great importance to developing traditional Chinese medicine (TCM), and has taken steps to establish Hong Kong as an international center for TCM. As TCM is fast gaining popularity, legislators are confident that the government will soon integrate the use of TCM and herbs into the local medical system, i.e. the merging of traditional and modern medicines.

The SAR government has begun the training of professionals in Chinese medicine through the granting of an education fund. The Chinese University of Hong Kong, with funding support from the University Grants Committee, will provide comprehensive degree programs in Chinese medicine in 1999. Traditional Chinese pharmacology constitutes an integral part of the curriculum. A similar degree has also been offered by the Baptist University. In addition, the Vocational Training Council (VTC) is planning to run a higher certificate course in Chinese medicine dispensing and manufacturing in 2000, while the Employees Retraining Board (ERB) will provide a certificate course in Chinese medicine dispensing (elementary level) in late 1999.

On 7 May 1999, TCM experts began a five-day conference on the progressive trend of TCM in the coming millennium. Well-known doctors from the US, China, Hong Kong and Taiwan were among the experts in attendance. Views and ideas on TCM research were exchanged and new conceptual ideas were developed. At the opening ceremony of the conference, Darson Chen, president of the World Institute of Chinese Medicine, commented that more and more people are beginning to recognize the importance of developing traditional Chinese medicine.

‘The government has taken steps to establish Hong Kong as an international center for TCM.’