

# China, The Awakened Giant

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The history of Chinese medicine is as long and legendary as that of the country itself. Its origins date back 3000 years [1]. Scientific knowledge and medical practice has gone through numerous stages.

Between the 8th and 3rd centuries BC, China went through a period of great cultural and intellectual development called the “Hundred Schools of Thought” [2]. An attempt was made to seek the explanation of the phenomena of the universe in nature itself, leaving aside explanations based on magic and myths [2]. The new ideas discussed and developed during this period have profoundly influenced philosophical views and lifestyles up to the present day in East Asian countries.

A fundamental milestone was the publication of “Huangdi Neijing”. Also known as the “Inner Canon of Huangdi” or “Inner Canon of the Yellow Emperor”, it is the earliest surviving work on Chinese medicine [3]. Its author, Emperor Huangdi, is not only considered the initiator of Chinese Traditional Medicine but also the father of Chinese civilization.

Caring for the health of the population has been a priority in this country throughout the centuries. As a history lover, it is difficult for me to find another example of a nation embarking on an unequal war to defend its public health. This happened when the Western powers, led by the British Empire, sought to promote opium addiction among the Chinese population in order to equilibrate their trade balance by trafficking drugs [4]. These infamous conflicts went down in history as the “Opium Wars” and cost the lives of thousands of Chinese citizens.

In the last decades, China’s healthcare system has made great achievements in the management of medical services and public health for the Chinese people [5]. Average life expectancy at birth was 35 years before the founding of new China, and it reached 77.0 years in 2018 [6]. The projected life expectancy at birth in mainland China in 2035 is 81,3 years [7].

On April 6, 2009, China presented an action plan to undertake a radical and ambitious reform of the health system [8]. The goal is to achieve universal health coverage.

The history of shock waves in this country is a reflection of the described dynamism and historical background. The beginnings of its use in China can be traced back to the 1980s in the urological field. Prof. Xing Gengyan was the pioneer of indications in musculoskeletal pathology starting in 1993. Since that moment he has been a promoter not only of research and clinical applications, but also of medical education. In 2019, he organized in Beijing the largest international shock wave congress in history. It is a great honor that he has contributed to this issue by writing about the development of this therapeutic practice in China.

In parallel with healthcare and academic development, the Chinese industry has risen to the occasion by providing high-quality devices.

The content of this volume reflects not only the ability of our Chinese colleagues but also their openness to the world and their generosity in sharing information. Numerous universities and hospitals from different regions throughout China have collaborated selflessly. This could not have been accomplished

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without the monumental task of Dr. Sun Wei, our Guest Editor. Napoleon Bonaparte is credited with the phrase "China is a sleeping giant, when she wakes she will shake the world". Two hundred years later the giant is awake and brimming with energy.

**Declaration of patient consent:** The authors certify that they have obtained all appropriate patient consent forms. In the form, the patient has given his consent for his images and other clinical information to be reported in the Journal. The patient understands that his name and initials will not be published, and due efforts will be made to conceal his identity, but anonymity cannot be guaranteed.

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