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## Current Situation and Protective Measures of Chinese Medicinal Resources

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China is situated in the southeastern part of the continent of Eurasia. It ranges continuously through temperate, subtropical, and tropical regions from the north to the south. China has a rich flora with about 30 thousand species of higher plants forming various types of vegetations in different areas.

According to general investigation on chinese herbal medicines (1983-1987), there are 12772 medicinal herbs determined, including 11118 herbal drugs, 1574 animal drugs and 80 mineral drugs. Among them more than 1000 medicinal herbs are used as commodity crude drugs, others are folk medicines. There are over 600 bases for the production of Chinese medicinal materials. The richest areas of medicinal resources are Yunnan, Guangxi, Sichuan, Guizhou, Hubei, Shanxi, Xinjiang, Helongjiang, Neimenggu, Jilin and Henan. In addition, there are about 300 cultured medicinal herbs which occupy 5.5-6 million mu of land.

In recent years, the medicinal resources apparently reduced because of overexploitation and destruction of land and nature resources. The wild resource stocks of over 100 medicinal plant species and 40 animal species have rapidly declined, such as Glycyrrhiza uralnensis, G., glabra, Ephedra sinica, Astragalus mongolicus, Saposhnikovia divaricata, Cistanche deserticola, Fritillaria ussuriensis, Lithospermum erythrorhizon, Magnolia officinalis, Notopterygium incisum, Phellodendron amurense, Picrorhiza scrophulariiflora, Vitex trifolia, Moschus sifanicus, M. berezovskii, Cervus nippon, C. elaphus, Eretmochelys imbricate, Gekko gecko, Saiga tatarica, Rana temporaria chensinensis, Selenactos thibetanus, Geoemyda spengleri, etc. Based on statistics, there are about 3000 plant species which is near to extinct in China, 60%-70% of them possess medicinal value. 168 medicinal plant species and 162 animal species are placed on the national list for the protection of near extinct species.

Causes endangering the extinction of medicinal herbs include reckless excavation, deterioration of ecological environment by human exploit, irrational harvesting program and the fragile nature of wildlife species itself. Counter measures to overcome these phenomena were suggested such as: protection by maintaining the nature preservation zone, improvement of excavation program on a scientific basis, transform wildly grown species to cultivable varieties, establishment of gene pool, delve into the study of factors causing the danger of extinction and means for their control, investigation and identification of the diversified genetic mutants for their particular protection etc.