



Editorials

Three Legs Cooling Water : Tested Over Time

Sixty years ago, four Singaporean Chinese families decided to go into business together to market a secret traditional medical recipe which become known as Three Legs Cooling Water.

Today, Three Legs Cooling Water is more popular than it has ever been, with several hundred million bottles consumed in its major markets of Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore every year.

The manufacturer of Cooling Water, the Wen Ken Group, maintains that the preparation's secret recipe, made up entirely of the finest herbal and mineral ingredients, has a cooling effect on the body - excellent for balancing the body's yin and yang.

Cheong Wing Kiat, Group Business Development Director, says one of the main ingredients is Gypsum Fibrosum, which is "cold" by nature, and reduces "heatiness" - particularly involving the lungs and stomach.

"It's not like western medicine where you can clinically trial products and test them," say Cheong.

"Traditional medicines rely more on building up trust down the generations. Each generation continues to buy the preparation because ultimately they believe in the effectiveness of the product.

"It's just like ginseng - if you put it to the test it's very hard to get a breakdown because these are really biological properties.

"But after 60 years in the markets, million of consumers believe Three Legs Cooling Water has stood the test of time," says Cheong.

Clinical trials on Traditional Medicines

In the near future, the Wen Ken Group intends to tie up with some of the research technology leaders from China, Japan and the rest of the world to undertake clinical

trials on traditional medicines in South East Asia.

With traditional medicines, it seems that it is not just the individual ingredients that add together to give a result.

"The preparation, the selection of the right ingredients from the right source and the way in which the product is put together are all vital," he says.

Just as different grapes from different climates, planted in different kinds of soils produce distinctively different wines, so traditional herbs from different locations in China and other places have different qualities.

Cheong says under Chinese di dao - roughly translated as "from the place noted for the genuine" - for instance, herbs from different parts of China have different qualities.

"That's why we have to select very carefully where they come from. We know where the best herbs for Cooling Water come from," he says.

More than a cure

Cheong says with a customer base of more than 200 million around the region, people do not just take Three Legs Cooling Water as a cure or a remedy - some also take it as a preventative measure.

With two plants in Malaysia and a third about to open in Johor Bahru, as well as a state-of-the-art plant in Indonesia, the Wen Ken Group has largest capacity of any pharmaceutical company in the region.

Wen Ken insists on the highest quality lab. Control in its plants around the region to constantly check the stability of the product, and to ensure its purity and efficacy.

To date, Wen Ken has concentrated with considerable success on its three closest markets - Indonesia, Singapore and Malaysia - with its distribution network and marketing flair playing a very important role in boosting its sales.

Last year, the company found an appropriate partner in Cambodia who has now started importing directly, with some of the product flowing into Vietnam and Laos.

"There are too many markets for us to enter at the same time, although we are also looking at Myanmar and India" says Cheong.

The proof of the pudding is in the eating

Cheong says Three Legs Cooling Water does not have direct competitors, but naturally there are a lot of imitations and substitutes. Obviously, Cheong does not rate mineral water companies such as Perrier as competitors.

"Perrier and other mineral waters are lifestyle products - ours is traditional medical

preparation," he says.

"if you look at all the successful drink manufacturers - the global leaders such as Coca Cola or Dr Pepper's - they all have recipes dreamed up by pharmacists.

"Why can't we have the same for Asia ? " he asks, adding that this is the chief reason Wen Ken has come up with its new LeKool functional drink.

"Our commitment in making that product will not be less than any of the global players," he says.

So, as far as Three Legs Cooling Water is concerned, Cheong says:"There's really something in the bottle - we can't explain it at the moment, but it's really proven to be an effective product.

"If Cooling Water is not effective, why do so many people continue to buy it after so many years ? " asks Cheong.

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