

Pharmacognosy Studies on Chinese Herbal Medicine — Zicao (1) Studies on Tibetan Zicao  
○Ya-Ni Hu<sup>1</sup>, Zhi-Hong Jiang<sup>1</sup>, Pei-Gen Xiao<sup>1</sup>, Zhong-Zhen Zhao<sup>1</sup> (<sup>1</sup>School of Chinese Medicine,  
Hong Kong Baptist University, Hong Kong)

**[Introduction]** Zicao (purple gromwell, Boraginaceae), a widely used Chinese herbal medicine in China, Japan, Korea, etc., is mainly derived from the dried root of *Lithospermum erythrorhizon* Sieb. et Zucc, *Arnebia euchroma* (Royle) Johnst, *Arnebia guttata* Bunge or other several *Onosma* species. For its remarkable pharmacological activities being demonstrated in the past decades, many researches have been conducted accordingly. However, most studies have focused on the above three ordinary species. Few reports have examined other species, especially for Tibetan Zicao. In fact, Tibetan Zicao is widely distributed in the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau and has been used as “Zicao” for thousands years in Tibet. In this study, a preliminary study on the pharmacognosy of Tibetan Zicao was carried out.

**[Methods & Results]** From the field investigation in Tibet, studies on resources and phytotaxonomy of Tibetan Zicao were performed. The results show that the name “Tibetan Zicao” has been used for several different species of the genus *Onosma*. To differentiate the species, their morphological and histological characteristics were compared with the species of *Lithospermum* and *Arnebia* genera.