Healwell – Professor Dato’ Dr. Hassan Yaakob, Executive Chairman – Malaysia



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Dr. Hassan, founder and CEO of Healwell and House of Healin, brings research and entrepreneurship together with the aim of turning Malaysian traditions into scientific innovation.

Could you share with us your entrepreneurial story and how this brought you to start Healwell?

In 1989, I noticed an ancient trend coming back amongst the Malaysians that saw people using boiled gamat—one of 23 species of sea cucumber present in Malaysia—as a remedy for injuries and pain. Of course, as a scientist I was very skeptical at first so I set myself the goal of finding out whether an effect could be derived from the properties of gamat. It was a challenging task, as the animal melts in contact with sunlight, so researching its properties was more complex than usual. We decided to conduct an initial test with 10 rabbits. We observed the healing process of a small incision on the skin when the purified gamat extract was fed twice daily to the animals and noticed a faster healing process compared to that given by providone-iodine or other antiseptics. We decided to go more in depth with the study and found that the substance also had a painkilling effect when taken orally. It was an incredible discovery, which was awarded with the first prize at the National Scientific Awards (MINDEX) organized by the Ministry of Science, Technology and

Environment of Malaysia in 1994. This is when I knew I had to further research the properties of gamat extract and eventually provide it to the whole country. We were looking at how the gamat extract works to exhibit healing properties, and what we have found is that it mimics antibiotics and antiseptics. The key extract is a group of polypeptides with wound healing properties, which act as a rejuvenating factor. We then tested it on animals and found that their hair was growing faster and longer than that of other animals and they were more energetic and lively.

It is always a great challenge not only to back up your product with R&D but also to brand it attractively enough to compete against established companies. What were the initial challenges you faced when creating your Gamat product?

Our research provided evidence for the 300-year-old Malaysian belief that saw gamat as a cure used for pain and dermatological disorders. Starting a company is always a challenge. First of all, with a background in academia and a limited knowledge in management, I certainly required the support of a financial advisor. Even before we had decided to commercialize the extract, word-of-mouth was helping us render the product marketable. Some initial logistics were also a challenge. I was initially sourcing gamats in the seas of Langkawi and Pangkor. However, due to overharvesting, they were getting increasingly hard to find and our attempt at farming them had not succeeded. I eventually identified a community of fishermen in the south of Thailand that was able to collect them for us.

After more than ten years of R&D, I finally put together a gamat-based product line under the brand “Healin”. Through wisdom of time and the great response and results from our patients, we slowly grew and I decided to dedicate my career to entrepreneurship and improving the lives of sufferers, without overlooking my academic enthusiasm. It is the belief and the passion that make an idea achievable and this is precisely what gamat represents to me.

Malaysia is a country that comprises different cultures with different historical beliefs. How does gamat compare to other healing solutions available in the market today?

The real difference with gamat-based products is that the key extract is a polypeptide which possesses rejuvenating properties which lead to healing. It has no chemicals, and as opposed to more traditional medicines, which may have contraindications, our products are made from purified gamat extracts which contain the polypeptide, then purified to its clearest form. This polypeptide acts as a wound healing agent and cell rejuvenating factor. The remarkable healing effects of this product, which have been documented throughout the years, are manifested through rejuvenation. Cell rejuvenation leads to: an enhanced immune system, improved memory and cognitive function,

remodeling of body musculature and reduction of total body fat, enhanced sexual function and an increased rate of wound healing. This extract is the key ingredient in Gamogen – a food supplement with no limits for someone to consume. The brand can be found in House of Healin, of course, as well as Guardian, Watsons and other popular pharmacies, the whole of Malaysia, Indonesia, Brunei and some other Asian countries.

What is your favorite success story that you have encountered with Gamogen?

Many times, Gamogen has made an impact on conditions where traditional medicine could not cure. One particular case will always stay in my heart as one of the first inspirational stories. I once came across a woman named Puan Halimah who suffered from diabetes for several years and had accidentally injured her foot causing her toe to swell. She had consulted several doctors and tried various traditional medicines but with no success. Her leg kept swelling so much as to impede her movements until her doctor in Selama, Perak, Malaysia eventually suggested to amputate her leg. A Healin agent recommended her to consume Gamogen and place Lukano gel on her foot and to her amazement the gel starteddrying up the pus on her wounds. It reduced the swelling of her toe and other parts of her leg, which meant she could avoid the amputation. I can hardly describe the excitement and joy she manifested and the pride I felt in knowing many more were to be helped in the future. Also, our skin rejuvenating cream line, Derma-x, has been proven to cure psoriasis and dermatitis in patients with severe manifestations of these conditions, where modern medicine had failed. We have extensive documented records of the curing properties that Derma-x has on severe skin conditions, due to its rejuvenating and regenerating properties, with complete long term results.

The company is already exporting to countries like Japan, Indonesia and the UAE. Which regions will you target next and how will you adapt to their market differences?

One of the most successful markets where our products are currently marketed is Indonesia, with a great response from consumers and impressive sales volume. Our next step will be to set up “House of Healin” in Indonesia, giving patients direct access to our products. More than 10 percent of the Indonesian population is extremely wealthy, which equates to almost 25 million people, the same as the entire population of Malaysia. Another country I am looking at is Saudi Arabia, and the United States, which would come naturally after the UAE. Our recent obtainment of Halal certification, which has become an anchor for the marketing of our products here in Malaysia, will definitely be of great help when entering these markets as well. The only minor concern I had initially is related to production: our factory here may not be able to cope with such expansions. But I am already considering different platforms overseas and I am confident we have exciting

times ahead.

How do you see the company evolve in the next three to five years and what would you like to see Healwell stand for?

As a supplement for rejuvenation and anti-aging, as opposed to a medication, I see great opportunities for the future. High cholesterol, hypertension, diabetes and arthritis are all conditions associated to the ageing process. This is why people getting closer to the age of 40 are especially likely to manifest these conditions. Based on the claims by the American Academy of Anti-Aging Medicine, humans are designed to live at least until the age of 120 so living until the age of 80 is too short. With more information about how to live a healthy life, life expectancy is constantly increasing and I am sure I will see my products play a part in this evolution.

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