

New Areas to Explore In TCM

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As is known to all, one of the most precious treasures of the Chinese nation is TCM (Traditional Chinese Medicine). According to the general understanding, TCM is a wide range of medicine practices with common concepts which have been developed in China for more than 2,000 years, including a variety of practice forms such as herbal medicine, acupuncture, massage (Tui Na), exercise (Qi Gong) and dietary therapy.

On account of the long history of development and practice, TCM has been proved its remarkable and trustworthy effect in aspects of illness prophylaxis and treatment and health maintenance as well. It is the observation of one's physical condition in the large that makes TCM distinct from and some kind of ahead of modern western medicine.

Nonetheless, with the development of modern science and the spread of western philosophy, modern western medicine is winning more and more preference among the public while TCM is now facing more and more doubts and challenges in our country. It happens now and then that TCM is called in question by Chinese scholars. A proposed law was once passed to try to abolish TCM by six specific measures signed by the government of ROC earlier in 1929 which classified TCM as a kind of pseudoscience.¹ Later in 2006, a professor of Zhongnan University wrote an article², holding that TCM had no reason to exist any longer in the modern society, which led to a gigantic discussion of the necessity of the existence of TCM in a wide

¹The law was called 《废除旧医以扫除卫生事业之障碍案》, which called off TCM doctors, provided compulsive education on medicine to the doctors, prohibited the treatment of contagion by TCM, banned the disseminate of TCM in the mass media and forbade the foundation of TCM schools.

²张功耀, 《告别中医中药》, 医学与哲学, 2006-7。

cross-section of society. Meanwhile, the absence of sophisticated and scientific system also becomes another reason why TCM can hardly be thoroughly acknowledged worldwide. A document published by the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in 2007 mentioned TCM in the description of the whole medical systems.³ According to the document, America defined TCM as a unique culture system rather than a scientific system. And up until now, still six states do not have existing legislation to regulate the professional practice of TCM.

Thus, the conventional sense of TCM seems to cry for new blood and new areas to be explored to ensure that it can cope with the changing times. At the same time, different opinions on TCM in some aspects promote it to germinate into a brand new appearance which could possibly be easier for people nowadays to understand and to believe in. To achieve the goal, what TCM has to solve are the perfection of the whole system and the better explanation of its theory. But here comes the question. What can we perfect the system of TCM by? And how can we explain the theories in a more scientific way?

Effectively there come four research directions helping answer the questions above. The first is called the TCM academism, which requires a deep application of dialectics.⁴ According to Deng's opinion, dialectics is absolutely a must in TCM which clears the misunderstanding that a prescript doesn't necessarily differ from individual to individual with the same illness. With a dialectical opinion, a prescription is able to be transformed into various modalities which in TCM we call dafang, xiaofang, jifang, oufang and fufang.⁵ Another area is the integrated

³ "NCCAM describes whole medical systems as involving "complete systems of theory and practice that have evolved independently from or parallel to allopathic (conventional) medicine." These may reflect individual cultural systems, such as traditional Chinese medicine and Ayurvedic medicine."

⁴邓铁涛,《邓铁涛再谈辨证论治》,上海中医药报,2003。

⁵大方、小方、奇方、偶方、复方。

traditional Chinese and western medicine.⁶ In this area TCM and modern western medicine are considered equally important and it is emphasized that both two systems could benefit each other and improve treatment. For example, in the treatment of tumor, it is proved better to apply the herbs which can benefiting qi for activating blood circulation in the early stage of treatment to create a more comfortable condition for operation and herb which can Sanjie and detoxify our body is good after operation to eliminate the rest tumor cells and help recurring ourselves. But for tumors at the middle stage, radiotherapy with proper dosage of herbs may be the appropriate choice to protect the hematopoiesis of the bone marrow. It is the two different systems playing their best role at the proper stage that benefits our health more than usual. Also, there's a trend to understand and explain TCM theory and even Jingluo with modern medicine and modern science.⁷ This area of research intends to view TCM in a span-new way and attest the scientific basis of TCM so as to push it to a new level. One typical case in this area is studying traditional Chinese medicine with biomechanopharmacology, which help us understand the mechanization of promoting blood circulation to remove blood stasis with TCM. Last but not least, analyzing diseases of modern life by means of TCM is also a new area to be further explored. By this way, TCM could speed up its way to accommodate itself to modern life.

To make a long story short, these four new areas are all going to boost the growth of TCM towards slightly different but apparently progressive aspects. There is no point totally keeping the original mode of development for TCM any longer for it can barely meet the need of people nowadays when all is said and done. After all, only by

⁶宋红莉, 李宜, 《中西医结合时中医现代化之路》, 时珍国医国药, 2005-7。

⁷仲维玺, 陈飞松, 《是什么因素阻碍了中医药理论的现代化和国际化》, China Basic Science, 2005-7(1)。

facing the changes and challenges of the times and finding ways to adapt to it can
TCM stands forever.

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- ^x 唐仕欢,陈建新,杨洪军,黄璐琦,《证-熵-方——中医药研究的新领域》,中国中医基础医学杂志,2010-4(16/4)。