



Communication

Predicaments, Reasons and Countermeasures for Inheritance and Development of Traditional Chinese Medicine Theory

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Abstract: With the advancement of human society, the development of natural and social sciences and the concept of human healthy life have both changed fundamentally. Modern medical theory is facing a new opportunity of innovation and breakthrough. However, due to the realistic predicaments in such currently medical situations, the inheritance and development of traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) theory which is the key to the healthy and sustainable development of TCM are facing many difficulties and tremendous challenges. In order to solve the problems of the inheritance and development of TCM theory and explore corresponding solutions, this study uses literature research method to point out the realistic predicament of the inheritance and development of TCM. Then, based on analyzing the cause of the predicament, the research finds that the opportune integration of the relationship between knowledge and practice, science and witchcraft, TCM and Western medicine, inheritance and innovation is an effective way to solve the problems. In conclusion, based on the realistic predicaments for the inheritance and development of TCM theory, the cause analysis of the predicament of the inheritance and development of TCM theory has been carried out and the corresponding countermeasures and suggestions have been given for the inheritance and development of TCM theory.

Keywords: TCM Theory, Inheritance, Development, Predicament, Causes of Formation, Countermeasures

1. Introduction

TCM theory is the foundation and core of TCM. The inheritance and development of TCM theory is related to the breadth and depth of the development of TCM, which plays an important role in the pharmaceutical and healthcare fields. [1-2] However, TCM was in the trouble of inheritance and development in modern society because of disturbance of meaning for themselves, lacking of motivation for innovation, without tight combining with modern science and technology, complex development environment and without deep understanding of traditional Chinese culture, and so on. [3] Hence, how to correctly solve the predicaments has become an urgent need for many TCM theory researchers. Some researchers discussed several theoretical problems in the

inheritance and development of TCM from the perspectives of culture, property and development process. [3-4] Taking these researches into consideration, these publications rarely explored the countermeasures and suggestions for the inheritance and development of TCM theory. Therefore, this study hopes to discuss the bottlenecks and propose constructive solutions to promote the inheritance and development of TCM theory.

2. Realistic Predicaments for the Inheritance and Development of TCM Theory

People's cognition is the cyclic practice and process with the properties of infinite and reciprocating. Each complete

cycle will help you reach a new height. "People's understanding, in terms of nature and society, is a gradual process from low to high, shallow to deep and single to comprehensive." However, people are always in a certain social and era environment, leading the cognitive and historical limitations. Thus, it is reasonable for the inheritance and development of TCM theory that falls into difficult situations and encounters severe challenges. [4] From the perspective of cognition and practice, the current predicaments of TCM theory are mainly as followed aspects.

2.1. A Predicament of Cognition That Lacks of Advantages of Original Thinking

Actually, deviating from the original thinking means abandoning the unique cognitive methods and practical forms constructed by TCM, which induces incomplete understand of the internal motivation of self-innovation. Thus, it is always difficult to achieve the true self-change and self-innovation.

2.2. A Predicament of Science That Attempts to Express TCM Theory in an Absolutely Scientific Formatted Language

On the basis of the relatively weak conditions of the research platform, the study of TCM theory was following by the absolutely scientific formatted language such as the substitution of overall thinking by analytical thinking or ancient Chinese language by mathematic language, resulting in insufficient refining of the results. However, if it changed, the own characteristics of TCM theory will be unsustainable and will be difficult to become the self-system, TCM will disappear in the world.

2.3. A Predicament of Standardization That Lacks of Discourse Power

Western medicine, with the advantages of natural science, has formed the world medical standard system. TCM must be integrated with the established rules such as the research of basic theories, the effect of clinical practices, the development of innovative drugs and the evaluation of scientific achievements. The accordance of evaluation thinking, judgment standards, operating methods, and technological processes of TCM with that of Western medicine leads to a stumbling block to the process of internationalization of TCM.

2.4. A Predicament of Talents That Seriously Short of Inheriting, Innovating and Specializing Elite Talents

Talents are the basic factors to support the development of a theory or a subject. The talent training in the industrialization conception emphasizes on performing their own roles, which is far removed from the view of TCM talents that understand astronomy, geography and personnel. At present, the total numbers of elite talents who know the ancient and modern medicine, place equal focus on both practice and theory, love and devote himself to TCM are insufficient. There is also no stable team exploring the inheritance and innovation of TCM. If this situation maintains for a long time, the theory of

inheritance may gradually shrink and eventually disappear.

2.5. A Predicament of "Pseudo-science" That Mixes with Non-scientific Rationality such as Witchcraft, Superstition and Supernatural Power

These non-scientific rational factors, like the scientific rational factors, belong to the objective category, are the manifestations of the essence of TCM theory. If we can't objectively recognize and treat the truth and illusion in the phenomenon of nature, or even exaggerating the illusion in an infinite or unprincipled way, it is only a matter of time that TCM theory falls into cognitive disorder without changeover.

3. Causes Analysis of the Predicament of the Inheritance and Development of TCM Theory

3.1. A Lack of Identity with Practical Value

The identity of practical value is an emotional attachment arising from the good effect of a specific behavior of individuals or groups. This is a kind of trust to best wishes that generated and amplified from the heart. The remarkable curative effect is the core and standard of medical practice value. In ancient times, the essential reason why the witchcraft and witch doctors were undoubted is that human disease could be relieved and cured and human could achieve their psychological, physical and spiritual state balances when suffer from disease. At that time, witchcraft was not only for itself, but also was a special behavioral state and a useful spiritual consolation based on emotion and will. Since modern times, Western medicine has been widely spread all over China. Studying it further, Western medicine has definite curative effects, which can quickly restore the body's health. After deep thinking, we will find that Western medicine has the relatively stable effect when the same diseases are treated with same treatment. The predictability of treatment effect meets the public psychological expectations. In contrast, the doctor of TCM uses different therapies and prescriptions to the same syndromes of different individuals. The theoretical value of syndrome differentiation is obviously better than Western medicine theory. However, the predictability of the treatment effect of TCM is hard for ordinary people to understand and the possible risks are magnified by human with skeptical mentality. Then they will guess and doubt the practical value of TCM. Finally, the sense of distrust and the tendency of keeping away will gradually accumulate, resulting in a crisis of identifying with practical value of TCM. This crisis mainly refers to the curative effect of TCM, which is the basis of the practical value of TCM that should be affirmed and trusted.

3.2. Lack of Identifying with Reasonable Core

The identity of reasonable core is the scientific affirmation and cognition of individuals or groups based on specific concepts, basic principles and logical derivation results in the theoretical system, which generates a sense of belonging of

rational perception. Thus, the identity reasonable core with properties of scientific rationality and rich theoretical connotation was also widely accepted among individuals or groups. The establishment of TCM theory follows the laws of the development of the objective world consciously or unconsciously during its initial period and strives to make the subjective world conform to the objective reality. For example, the Zangxiang doctrine in the theory of TCM is based on the long-term clinical practice experience of ancient TCM physicians. The TCM theory is formed under the guidance of the Yinyang theory and the five-element doctrine. The description of the position and form of the viscera is very close to the conclusions of modern anatomy. The systematic interpretation of the relationship between the five internal organs coincides with the modern system theory. And “the theories on the pathogenesis” has already showed the understanding of the internal and external causes of the development of things. The theory of syndrome differentiation is formed from practice, which reflects the scientific thinking starting from reality and conforms to the cognitive laws of human beings. These theories have both theoretical considerations and internal evidence, which were self-contained and self-perfecting. Furthermore, TCM theory not only plays a guiding role in the diagnosis and treatment of diseases over 2,000 years, but also has a great clinical significance today. TCM theory can explain almost all physiological and pathological phenomena of the body in the living nature and treat disease according to syndrome differentiation. [5-7] However, in reality, some people ignore the scientificity of the reasonable core of the theoretical system of TCM. Somebody even regarded TCM theory as absurd deception and embedded absurd theory in the theoretical system of TCM, bringing an identity crisis of reasonable core. This crisis, in essence, is the pseudo-scientific problem of TCM theory. Hence, the pseudo-scientific label influences the inheritance and development of TCM theory greatly.

3.3. Lack of Identifying with Traditional Culture

The identity of traditional cultural is a self-confidence posture of individuals or groups in all material, institutional and spiritual representations that existed and formed with the course of history and still affected the way of the thinking and behavior of some ethnic groups, which is also an emotional sense of belonging and pride arising spontaneously. It is a high degree of affirmation and self-confidence from the community. The formation of TCM theory is not only a systematic rational knowledge but also a higher level of philosophical summary, which contains rich traditional culture and spirited characteristic. [8-9] However, since modern times, under the influence of western industrial civilization and the transformation of traditional culture, the fundamental spirit of Chinese traditional culture of “happiness consists in contentment” and “make efforts and be kind” has gradually faded out owing to the continuous impact of “wholesale Westernization” on people's lives when facing the Western civilization which is much more advanced than China. The

result is that people fully accept the West in action and enter an abnormal state of self-denial. Traditional Chinese culture gradually loses its own characteristics in the communication between East and West and finally falls into silence, which ultimately influences the normal development of TCM theory.

4. Countermeasures and Suggestions for the Inheritance and Development of TCM Theory

We mainly use the literature research method to seek the path of the inheritance and development of TCM theory. The literature research method means that we can comprehensively and correctly understand and master the problems and form a scientific understanding of the facts with the help of the retrieval, collection and review of literatures. Through this method, we can have a deep understanding of historical background and realistic status of the relevant issues, which is useful to form a cognition and understanding of the bigger picture scientifically and rationally. Based on the above analysis, we hold the view that it is necessary for the inheritance and development of TCM theory in the real-world environment to dialectically treat and handle the relationship between cognition and practice, science and witchcraft, TCM and Western medicine, inheritance and innovation.

4.1. Handling the Relationship Between Cognition and Practice

In the first place, practice is the sole criterion of truth. TCM theory is formed from the need of practice, which is the core of the inheritance and development of TCM theory. [10] Through repeated practice, People's perceptual cognition has been upgraded to rational cognition, which forms TCM theory. The tasks and subjects of the inheritance and development of TCM theory are put forward by the needs of practice and are always carried out according to these needs. Only in this way can we find the law of internal development of TCM theory. Secondly, we must attach importance to the guiding role of correct understanding in practice. The TCM theory can fully reflect its true value when applied in specific situations. Based on the systematic understanding of the nature and laws of human physiological mechanisms, TCM theory has accumulated a wealth of valuable experience in progress of battling the disease for thousands of years. TCM theory should initiatively adapt to new health needs and new changes in disease spectrum under the new medical practice directions. [11-13] It also should be further enriched and developed in the new practice in order to guide humans to fight against disease. Only in this way, TCM theory can effectively meet new challenges. Thirdly, we should achieve the specific and historical unity of cognition and practice, which is important to effectively inherit and develop TCM theory. TCM theory is the understanding of social existence and disease existence under certain historical periods and conditions, which is restricted by these aspects. Once formed, it will work independent of specific practice with following its logics and

laws of inherent development. It is not conducive for the inheritance and development of TCM theory to transcend and lag behind specific practices. TCM theory should meet the needs of the ages and conform to the laws of changes and the development of objective things.

4.2. Handling the Relationship Between Science and Witchcraft

The relationship between science and witchcraft, which is not completely opposite to each other, has confused the inheritance and development of TCM theory. TCM theory is a scientific summary of medical practice, which successfully guided the ancient Chinese people to fight against diseases such as plague and build medical and health services. [14] With the gradual development of human rational thinking, TCM theory stepped onto the historical stage as a scientific theory. [15] TCM classics, in particular Huang Di's Canon of Internal Medicine and Zhang Zhongjing's Treatise on Cold Pathogenic and Miscellaneous Diseases in the Western and Eastern Han dynasty, makes TCM different from Western medicine and the primitive witchcraft medicine with few regional differences. [16-17] However, the views of medical science and witchcraft were homologous and medical science originated from witchcraft indicate that medical science and witchcraft are inextricably linked at the source although they have taken different development paths since the Han dynasty. The properties of incompleteness and long-term of TCM theory plunge it in the long dispute between science and witchcraft, which affect the inheritance and development of TCM theory. Therefore, in order to make a correct breakthrough in the construction of TCM theory, it is necessary to deal with the complex relationship between science and witchcraft and use the favorable conditions provided by contemporary scientific development to explore and interpret the scientific connotations of TCM theory deeply. At the same time, all witchcraft activities with obvious and ignorant colors should be opposed and combated unequivocally, just like the historical predecessors such as Bian Que, Zhang Zhongjing, Sun Simiao and Li Shizhen. In a word, we should promote the development of TCM theory toward a correct breakthrough way.

4.3. Handling the Relationship Between TCM and Western Medicine

TCM and Western medicine were born in different historical environments simultaneously. Both of them are the common spiritual wealth of human beings and have made remarkable contributions to human reproduction and development in their respective progress. In the past 300 years, western learning has gradually spread to the East. The huge difference in medicine system promoted a debate over the relative merits of TCM or Western medicine when the two systems collided. Owing to the voice of 'pseudoscience' and 'abolition of TCM' still exists, the inheritance and development of TCM theory in accordance with the internal logic law is greatly disturbed and forced to stop to response to

various doubts and criticisms. [18-20]

The reasons of the centuries-old disputes between China and the West were listed in the following aspects: attaching more importance to the universality while ignoring the differences in medical and pharmaceutical models in understanding; adopting uniform standards rather than making a concrete analysis of concrete conditions in methods. Therefore, to correctly handle the relationship between TCM and Western medicine, we should insist on the principle of "seeking common grounds while putting aside differences" and pursue common goals with common aspirations and common interests. Only in this way can the two sides live in harmony and develop together. Meanwhile we should respect the different thinking methods and treatment methods formed in the different historical process. The historical antagonistic contradictions formed by different systems of TCM and Western medicine should be changed into realistic non-antagonistic contradictions. The principle of "seeking common grounds while putting aside differences" will build the bridge between TCM and Western medicine to realize easier communications and win-win symbiosis.

4.4. Handling the Relationship Between Inheritance and Innovation

Inheritance is the trade-off while innovation is the sublation. They are associated with a dialectical relationship of the unity and opposite. The inheritance and development of TCM theory requires not only the gradual accumulation, the inheritance of the complete theoretical system and good methods formed in the long-term practice, but also the self-sublation, self-transformation, and the continuous absorption of new practical experience to produce new theoretical results. [21-22] For that matter, handling and utilizing the relationship between inheritance and innovation is an important issue and an inherent necessity of development related to the future and destiny of TCM theory. We believe that the inheritance and innovation of TCM theory should follow the principle of "TCM provides equal importance to tradition and innovation, thereby not considering inheritance to be imitation but innovation" and maintain an inclusive mind. We should critically inherit the existing theoretical system. The TCM theory has been proven by practice and recognized by the common people, which can be retained and inherited without hesitation. New discoveries, new concepts and new theories are put forward with new ideas and methods according to the new social production, life and medical practice. The new contents with more vitality perfected the theoretical system of TCM. At the same time, we must maintain an inclusive mind. On the premise of following the inherent laws of development of scientific theory, we should comply with own theoretical system of TCM to further research and normalize. All the things that are helpful for the inheritance and development of TCM theory can be accepted, digested and absorbed. In this way, the scientific nature and practicability of TCM theory can be confirmed in multiple ways, multiple levels and multiple perspectives. Finally, the system of TCM theory will be more abundant and systematic.

5. Conclusion

TCM theory, as the soul of TCM, is extensive, profound and has a long history. However, due to the interweaving and entanglement of historical and realistic factors, the unclear cognition of the innovative impetus, the difficulties of integrating of the modern science and complex development environment, the inheritance and development of TCM theory falls into various predicaments in the modern society. Through literature search, collection and review, we believe that we should attach great importance to creative research of the inheritance and development of TCM theory via multiple perspectives and dimensions. On the premise of abiding by inherent law of TCM development, we need to deeply analyze the factors affecting and restricting the development of TCM theory and correctly deal with the four major relationships. Then drawing on the achievements of modern science and technology and making innovative breakthroughs can not only inherit the inherent characteristics of TCM theory, but also conform to the future development trend of medicine. The researchers should promote the theoretical and practical development of TCM and the transformation of academic achievements, which is beneficial to serve for the medical and health cause of human beings.

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