TRADITIONAL CHINESE MEDICINE MAKING – ITS MARK ON THE WORLD

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ABSTRACT: This paper discusses the traditional Chinese medicine and its wide utility in eradicating malaria, treating hemorrhoids and kidney stones, and simple and safe method of cataract extraction perfected by the Chinese physicians.

The current world wide upsurge in the popularity of Chinese medicine began in the early 1970s and continues today. According to a 1982 survey in Japan, more than 40 percent of the Western-trained physicians were practicing Kampo, a Japanese version of Chinese medicine, and 20 percent more were expected to follow suit.

In the United States, traditional Chinese medicine, which was virtually unheard of only a decade ago, is now being practiced, taught and researched in a number of states. Some American universities have also established masters and doctoral programmes in traditional Chinese medicine.

In recent years, many traditional Chinese medicine specialists have been invited by other countries to lecture, treat patients and participate in academic exchanges. In return many foreign scholars have also come to China for advanced study in traditional Chinese medicine. Of the foreign students studying natural sciences in China, those majoring in traditional Chinese medicine make up the highest percentage.

The Chinese Ministry of Public Health has trained more than 1,200 acupuncturists from 116 countries and regions. Of these, 99 have been from the United States, 49 from Australia, 44 from Great Britain, 38 from Japan and 23 from the Federal Republic of Germany. And the number of applicants for acupuncture training from developed nations is increasing.

Qigong, or breathing exercise, is a part of traditional Chinese therapy and has also drawn worldwide attention. In the United States, 1, 00,000 people are said to practice the relaxation therapy, developed from the Chinese breathing exercise. Since 1983, study groups from Harvard University’s medical school, the American Life Essence Research Institute and the Body and Intelligence Study Group have visited China for educational exchanges. Qigong has also attracted a considerable following in Japan, where centre, organizations and books devoted to the therapy have begun to appear. Last year, Chinese specialists were invited to Japan to help train personnel in medical research, treatment and data processing at its new China Qigong Recuperation Research Institute.
Since 1977, the World Health Organization (WHO) has also supported the development of traditional Chinese medicine by helping to popularize Chinese acupuncture in various countries and acknowledging acupuncture therapy as “a new internationally applicable medical discipline”. So far, WHO has set up six traditional Chinese medicine co-operation centres in China. Last year in Guangzhou it sponsored a regional symposium on the role of traditional Chinese medicine in primary medical treatment and health care. During the symposium, representatives from more than 20 countries were introduced to the curative effects of traditional Chinese medicine. WHO’s support not only attests to the mounting enthusiasm for traditional Chinese medicine round the world, but also helps to promote its proper application.

In recent years, many academic organizations specializing in traditional Chinese medical research have opened in different parts of the world. At international and regional conferences on traditional Chinese medicine the number of participants, academic papers given and countries represented has increased every year. For example, at the second symposium on acupuncture anaesthesia held in August, 1984 in China, 425 scholars from more than 50 countries and regions presented more than 700 papers on the subject.

While rejuvenating and developing its own Kampo, Japan has paid considerable attention to the theory and application of China’s traditional medicine and to the combined use of both its traditional and Western medical technologies. China’s prescription for blood clotting diseases, particularly those relating to the heart, has a great impact on Japanese medicine. In the early 1980s a Japanese physician in Beijing published 16 articles in Japan reporting China’s achievements in treating blood clotting. Preparation No.2 prescribed by the Academy of Traditional Chinese Medicine created a huge stir in Japanese medical circles because of its efficacy in treating cardiovascular diseases and chest pains. Since 1980 the Japanese government has allocated considerable funds for research into blood clotting. Japanese physicians have also applauded Chinese treatment for chronic kidney failure, which doctors of Western medicine have preferred to treat with artificial kidneys or kidney transplants. However, Chinese doctors of traditional Chinese medicine confirmed as early as the 1950s the effectiveness of medical herbs such as rhubarb, ginseng, licorice root, ginger and monkshood, and the combined use of both traditional Chinese and Western therapies in treating this virtually incurable disease. Upon learning of the Chinese approach last year, Japanese scientists immediately began researching the treatment and corroborated its effectiveness.

In diagnosis and treatment, the theoretical Foundation of traditional Chinese therapy has been the contradictory balance of the Yin and the Yang, vital energy and blood. Employing this integral facet of traditional Chinese medicine, Japanese researchers achieved almost the same research results as Chinese medical specialists. The paper in which the Japanese team announced its findings was cited as one of the three best papers at the 17th International Medical Conference held last year.

In acupuncture and moxibustion research, many countries have spent years trying to confirm the existence of the body’s channels and collaterals, or pathways, through which the vital energy, or qi, circulates. Their efforts were unsuccessful until recently
when Chinese specialists showed how pricking points on the body would stimulate other areas through certain channels and collaterals. This discovery, medically termed “stimulation transmission through channels and collaterals,” will no doubt prove very important for the further development of acupuncture and traditional Chinese medicine.

In addition to its research into traditional Chinese medicine, Japan has also established a number of academic societies and groups to translate ancient and recent works on the subject. In some of Japan’s medical journals almost 80 percent of the articles are translations of Chinese books or papers. Some Japanese doctors have set up offices for the practice of traditional Chinese therapy in Japan.

Although traditional Chinese medicine appeared only recently in the United States, it has become extremely popular in certain parts of the country. The Americans who use traditional medicine from China have also incorporated its various theories and practice, into their application of the medicine. For example, American acupuncturists, often follow pricking with Chinese herbal broth. At the core of the spread of traditional Chinese medicine in America are its Chinese–American communities.

Traditional Chinese medicine has also become popular and useful in other countries. For example, the Soviets, who took up Chinese acupuncture in the late 1950s, established their own “reflex therapy”. The Moscow Central Reflex Therapy Research Institute is famous worldwide not only because I.P. Pavlov (1849 – 1936) developed the theory of “conditioned reflex” there, but also for its “reflex therapy”. The Soviets have also conducted some of the most advanced research in to ginseng and civujia traditional Chinese medicinal herbs. Acupuncture has also secured a firm foot hold in France, Federal Germany and Britain. These countries, too, have a number of world famous Chinese medical scholars, including J. Needham of Britain and M. Porkert and U. Unschuld of Federal Germany, and de Tymowski of France.

Why has ancient Chinese medicine aroused so much interest in the world today? It is mainly because people have begun to re-evaluate not only traditional Chinese medicine but Western medicine as well. Chinese medicine’s popularity was sparked, at least in part, by a change in people’s view of the two medicines. In the past, people tended to think of western medicine as scientific and perfect and traditional Chinese medicine as primitive and inexact. However, it is now generally acknowledged that both medicines work well; and as each has its own strengths and weakness, their integration leads to better treatment.

The change in people’s understanding of traditional Chinese and Western medicines stems from the successes and failures of both. Western medicine is far from perfect. First, it has only limited success in a number of complicated diseases, such as cancer and hepatitis, and it is almost powerless in treating Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS). Second, many Western medicinal prescriptions such as steroid and anticancer drugs have very serious side effects. For example, overdose of the medicine chinoform will cause SMON, or Subacute Myelo-Optics Neurosis. Third, Western medicine is limited in some of its theories and methods. For example, some Western physicians overemphasize clinical examinations and test results and neglect the subjective and objective factors of the
patient. Sometimes, they manage to treat and cure the symptoms, but fail to cure the cause of the illness and help the patient fend off further attacks. As a result, the illness is not cured and leaves a patient with mental and physical pain.

As the reputation of Western medicine has suffered setbacks, traditional Chinese medicines has become more popular. Traditional Chinese medicine stresses that illness is not only the result of localized problems, but the result of localized problems, but the result of an imbalance in one’s physical condition as well. In checkups and treatment doctors of traditional Chinese medicine emphasize not only local treatment but treatment doctors of traditional Chinese medicine emphasize not only local treatment but treatment of the whole body. Moreover, the herbal medicines that China has been using for more than 2,000 years have no significant side effects. Increasingly, people throughout the world are recognizing the efficacy and safety of acupuncture, massage, Chinese bone fracture treatment and gigong. Traditional Chinese medicine often yields satisfactory results when applied to complicated cases, thanks to its attention to a patient’s entire body, to the environment’s impact on his or her health and to raising his or her general resistance. It is such success that has aroused world-wide interest.

A new understanding of the role of Western and Chinese medicines has been an important influence on the world-wide interest in traditional Chinese medicine.

Further studies into the popularity of traditional Chinese medicine show that the filed will in the future become even more widespread. The world’s scientific arena is now undergoing revolutionary changes. The basic theory behind the change entails replacing reductionism with holism. In regard to the relations between an organism and its various paths, reductionism holds that an organic whole is the sum of its parts. However, with the discovery of the quantum theory, the theory of relativity the Heisenberg Uncertainty Principle and other new theories, the grounds for reductionism began to waver. The upholders of the new theories maintain that understanding individual parts is not at all enough to understand the whole, for an organic whole possesses features distinct from its parts. Given this, a new scientific mode of thought – holism – has gradually taken shape. This thought maintains that an organic whole is more than the sum of individual parts. To understand the special features of an organic whole one must observe the dynamic inter relations (organic ties and interactions) between the various parts that make up the whole.

With the development of this new approach to science, people have noticed that the theories and practices of China’s ancient medicine are based on similar premises. The basic thought behind traditional Chinese medicine – the dynamic balance of an organic whole – views the human body and its environment as an organic whole and holds that the various parts and the entire human body, and the human body and its environmental as well, are inseparable and interrelated. When these interrelations are balanced, an individual is healthy, and when the balance is broken, disease occurs.

Many clinical experience and methods accumulated in the practice of traditional Chinese medicine reflect basic holistic theories. For instance, by observing a patient’s pulse and tongue, the doctor may diagnose his or her qi or vital energy and the state of his or her blood, and determine whether the body as a whole has been
weakened by an imbalance. Again acupuncture can also be useful in readjusting
the balance of the human body and in curing diseases and preserving health.

The basic theories and experiences of traditional Chinese medicine are closely
related to the advancement of science. With time, traditional Chinese medicine will
develop, and so will its popularity around the world.

Traditional Medicine Works Wonders
By Huang Shuyun

Traditional Chinese medicine encompasses a veritable treasure – house of information. The Chinese Academy of Traditional Chinese Medicine (ATCM) has achieved some notable successes in recent years based upon its research into and development of the heritage of traditional medicine.

Vanquisher of the Malaria Parasite

Malaria is one of the serious epidemic diseases in the world. According to World Health Organization (WHO) statistics, more than 2 billion persons live in malaria infested areas; 250 million persons contract malaria and about 2.5 million die each year.

Since the early 1960s when it was discovered that the malaria parasite had developed resistance to such frequently used anti-malaria drugs as chloroquine, there has been an urgent need to find new drugs. Since the 1960s nearly 300,000 types of chemical combinations were sifted through in the United States as part of a world-wide research effort again malaria, but satisfactory results were not achieved.

In 1971 a traditional pharmacology research group of the Academy of Traditional Chinese Medicine headed by Tu Youyou discovered that an extract of the traditional Chinese medical herb *Qinghao* (*Artemisiae apiacea*) was markedly effective in treating malaria. The group succeeded in isolating the active component of the herb, which they called *Qinghaosu*. The chemical structure of this new substance was found to be completely different from any of the previously known anti-malaria drugs. Its discovery, therefore, represented the first break through since the discovery of quinine-based drugs. *Qinghaosu* has been used in more than 2,000 clinical effectiveness against both tertian and sub-tertian malaria has been conclusively demonstrated. It has also proved particularly effective in the treatment of heretofore untreatable anti-chloroquine malaria. Characterized by its quick effectiveness and low toxicity, *Qinghaosu* has become a favoured drug for the treatment of severe cases of cerebral malaria, and has saved many lives. The drug has therefore attracted the attention of medical circles all over the world.

Who would have thought the herb *Qinghao* had already been known for its medical qualities more than 2,000 years ago? Its earliest mention appeared in the ancient medical text *52 Prescriptions*, a copy of which was unearthed from the Han Dynasty (206 BC – 220 AD) No.3 Mawangudi tomb at Changsha in Hunan Province.

The use of *Qinghao* in the treatment of malaria was recorded in 340 AD in the *Handbook of Prescriptions for Emergency Treatment* by Ge Hong. This knowledge was handed down over the ages, but the clinical efficacy of the herb was limited due to the traditional method of decocting medicines. Tu Yaoyao used modern scientific processes in extracting and
purifying the herb’s active compound, which greatly increased its effect.

The *Qinghao* plant, a biennial, grows abundantly and easily in China. Conditions for its use as a drug are therefore excellent.

**17 Years and 70 Minutes**

Xu Yumin, an old Chinese gentleman from Singapore, suffered from hemorrhoids for 25 years, during the last 17 years his hemorrhoids were extremely ulcerated and painful. When he approached a doctor to have them surgically removed, the doctor’s diagnosis was that he would have to undergo three to four separate operations. However, since Xu was already 74, the doctor feared the procedure would be too much of a strain on the old man. When Xu learned that there was an ancient Chinese prescription which could cure hemorrhoids, he decided to come to Beijing to seek treatment.

Xu lay on a bed in the ATCM-affiliated Guanganmen Hospital while a doctor gave him six successive injections in the infected area and then bandaged it. The entire procedure took a mere 17 minutes. The next day he was examined and discharged from the hospital. The fourth day after the injection treatment, Xu went off on a trip to southern China. From that time on he ceased to feel pain from hemorrhoids, and was frequently heard praising the “miraculous treatment” he had received in Beijing.

Hemorrhoids are a common affliction. Surveys in China have revealed the incidence to be as high as 70 percent of adults. Clinical treatment of third degree internal hemorrhoids and mixed hemorrhoids has mainly been surgical removal; however, in many such cases patients frequently suffer extreme pain due to post-operative complications and sequelae.

Shi Zhaoqi, the director of the Department of Proctology at Guanganmen Hospital, noticed that the condition known as hemorrhoids and its etiology were mentioned 2,000 years ago in the ancient Chinese medical text *Yellow Emperor’s Manual of Internal Medicine*. In the text the disease was described as being caused by a “a disorder of the arteries and veins”, which is not unlike the modern diagnosis of “pathogenic dilation of the blood vessels”. Then basing his research on the traditional Chinese medical theory that “acid substances can be used as an astringent, and puckery substances can be used to prevent prolapse”. Shi conducted numerous tests and finally came up with a formula for the treatment of hemorrhoids based upon gallnut (*Galla chinensis*) and alum as active ingredients. These substances were mentioned for their clinical uses in the Tang Dynasty (618 – 907) pharmacopoeia *Supplement to the Canon of Herbs* and the Ming Dynasty (1368 – 1644) *Compendium of Materia Medica*. Shi called his prescription *Xiaozhiling* Injection.

Injection therapy for internal hemorrhoids has a history of more than 100 years, but Shi and his colleagues were the first to use an injection based on Chinese traditional medicine. Moreover, Shi devised a four step injection method which stressed the exact positioning and ordering of the injections. This improved injection method infuses the entire infected area with the drug, causes sterile inflammation and promotes thrombosis and complete fibrosis of the hemorrhoidal blood vessels without bacteria as well as sclerosis of hemorrhoidal mesenchyme. The method thus provides favourable conditions for the permanent cure of internal hemorrhoids.
Xiaozhiling Injection is effective in the treatment of all degrees of internal hemorrhoids, especially hemorrhoids in the advanced stage or mild cases of mixed hemorrhoids with varicosity. In most cases, within three to five days after injection therapy, patients are totally cured. The low-cost treatment is simple, safe, quick, painless and involves no danger of complications or sequelae.

The Blind Regain Their Sight

Li Bin was once a skilled driver, but in 1969 he began to lose his vision. By the end of 1970 he was blind in both eyes, and therefore was deprived in his livelihood. Then on April 9, 1971, Li underwent a cataract removal operation by the couching netting extraction procedure, performed by the famous ophthalmologist Tang Youzhi, a researcher at the ATCM. Eleven days later, the vision in Li’s left and right eyes was restored to 1.0 and 1.5 respectively. A week later Li’s vision in his left eye had further improved to 1.2, and he was able to drive again. Fifteen years have passed since the date of Li’s operation and his vision has suffered no change.

At Guanganmen Hospital, the couching netting extraction procedure has been used successfully to treat more than 6,000 cataract sufferers.

Cataracts are a common disease. Ophthalmologists both in China and abroad usually treat the condition through surgery involving incision at the corneoscleral limbus. However, it has always been considered a risky procedure since any injury to the pars plana can easily lead to sympathetic ophthalmitis.

Drawing on the years of experience gained by ophthalmologists in China in performing couching-needle cataract operations on the flat area of the pars plana, the Ophthalmology Department of the ATCM began in 1959, on the basis of previous findings, to carry out research on the corneoscleral limbus incision procedure and the couching-netting extraction procedure. The procedure is simple to carry out and the post-operative vision improvement is good. However, because the crystalline substance causing the cataract remains in the eye with this procedure, there may be certain long-term post-operative complications in some clinical cases. In order to reduce these incidents, in 1968 a new couching-netting extraction procedure and a set of surgical instruments were devised and tested. After making a number of improvements and alterations, the procedure was used clinically in 1969. At Guanganmen Hospital alone, 1,251 cataract couching-netting extraction procedures were performed. During 15 years of clinical application and long-term follow-up of post-operative patients, not a single case of Sympathetic ophthalmitis was observed. The procedure is simple and does not promote bleeding; post-operative reactions are mild, and vision is noticeably improved.

Herbal Drug Treats Kidney Stones

A young worker in a Beijing electric tube factory was found to have a 1.7 by 1.0 mm stone in his right ureter which had not moved in over two years. This had caused a severe case of nephrosis in his kidney. Conventional medical doctors were worried that the kidney was damaged and urged him several times to have an operation. However, the worker refused, being concerned that the large incision necessary
for the operation would later negatively affect his performance at work. In 1972 he came to Guanganmen Hospital.

After Liu Yougang, hear researcher at the Department of Urology, Examined the patient, he knew that such a large stone, having not moved in more than two years, was likely to have caused local tissue inflammation and adhesion. He decided to use a traditional Chinese drug that would “activate the blood and disperse stagnation”, to improve the situation of inflammation and adhesion around the stone. Ten days later the stone worked itself loose and began to move downward. Liu then had the patient take a decoction of Chinese herbs called Huaya Decoction, and the patient at last was able to pass the stone. After the patient left the hospital, his case was followed up for five years; tests showed that his intravenous pyelogram had returned to normal.

For many years it has been common both in China and abroad for doctors to encourage their patients with urinary tract stones to drink ore water to promote diuresis, exercise more and wait to promote diuresis, exercise more and wait for the stone to be passed naturally. Surgery is almost always recommended in cases of kidney stones larger than 0.5 mm in diameter and ureteral stones larger than 0.6 mm in diameter, especially in cases where there has been no movement of the stone in a month or more, and in cases where there are complications of obstruction and hydronephrosis. However, since the etiology of renal stones is not fully understood, the post-operative recurrence rate for urinary tract stones is as high as 80 percent. Effective preventive measures have yet to be developed.

Traditional Chinese medical theory states that long-term tenacious kidney stones which lead to the retention of water are mainly due to the conditions of “obstruction of the impulse function and stagnation of the blood”. Researchers at the Department of Urology experimented with ten kinds of medicinal herbs before finally formulating a prescription named Huaya Urolithiasis Decoction whose main function is to disperse blood stagnation while also increasing ureter muscular contractions. The medicine is also available in granulated form to be mixed with water or as a concentrate. The medicine is convenient for patients to take, highly effective, and renders unnecessary what is for many patients an often risky and painful operation.

The Chinese Academy of Traditional Chinese Medicine was established in December, 1955. Staff at the academy has grown from 424 in the year of its founding to the present-day total of 3,400. Of this, 310 are senior researchers and 424 are assistant researchers.

The academy comprises two separate comprehensive clinical research institutes with which two hospitals – Xiyuan Hospital and Guanganmen Hospital – are affiliated. As the national centre for the study of traditional medicine, the academy also includes the Institute of Chinese Materia Medica, Institute of Acupuncture and Moxibustion, Institute of Orthopedics and Traumatology, Institute of Basic Theory of Traditional Chinese Medicine, and a Centre for Medical Books and Information. In the 30-odd years since its establishment, 302 successful research projects have been carried out at the academy, of which 59 were given awards by the Ministry of Public Health. Apart from the four research successes described in this article, there has been research projects using traditional Chinese medicine or combining Western and Chinese traditional medicine in the treatment of or research into malignant
Tumours, cardiovascular diseases, gynecology, orthopedics, tracheitis, geriatrics, hepatitis, dermatology, paediatrics, acupuncture meridians and Chinese traditional medical theory, in all of which fields great contributions have been made.

**Traditional Characteristics and Modern Procedures**

Traditional Chinese medicine represents the culmination of the experience of the Chinese people since antiquity in fighting disease. It has its own entire set of medical theories and unique diagnostic techniques and treatments. The ATCM not only preserves and develops the ancient medical heritage, but also makes use of modern scientific and technological procedures.

For example, traditional Chinese doctors will diagnose an illness by using two fingers to feel the patient’s pulse at the wrist, and by examining facial colour, the condition of the skin, and the surface of the tongue. The doctor listens to the patient’s cough and breathing, as well as asking the patient in detail about his symptoms.

In recent years a device has been developed at the academy which visually records the fluctuations of the pulse on a fluorescent screen and can replace the measuring of the pulse by hand. The fur on the tongue is now analysed by using biochemistry, microbiology and cytology. Diagnostic tools and devices used in Western medicine have also been adapted for use in Chinese medicine.

The human body is covered with acupuncture points which are lined up on meridians. Recently a device to measure imbalances along these meridians has been developed which can be used to pinpoint the location of diseases within the body. There is also a diagnostic device which measures electrical impedance between the acupuncture points on the ear to determine the locus of infection.

Most recently, a tumour detector has been developed which can locate primary stage tumours by analyzing differences in temperature along the acupuncture meridians. It is very accurate, convenient to use, and is well-suited for tumour screening.

Traditional herbal decoctions, boluses, plasters and powders continue to be used in great quantities. However, unlike many homeopathic medicines, Chinese herbal remedies are used in large amounts in the large dosages that are normally prescribed. Therefore, nowadays many prescriptions are being refined and made into pills or injections which in volume and size resemble Western medicines.

Due to its fame as a research institution and the high reputation of its doctors, the academy is overwhelmed with requests from patients seeking treatment. To deal with the demand, the academy is not only concentrating its efforts on instructing younger doctors, but also has begun storing the systematized results of research in a computer, which is set up to issue prescriptions based on individual patient’s cases. With this service, senior doctors and researchers do not have to spend so much of their time seeing patients, diagnosing illnesses and making out prescriptions. They are now free to carry on with their important research.

**International Exchanges**

Since its establishment, the Chinese Academy of Traditional Chinese Medicine has been involved in numerous international...
academic exchanges. Since the Chinese Government introduced the open policy, academic exchanges with countries worldwide have become even more varied and numerous. The academy and WHO have set up co-operative centers for the study of traditional medicine, acupuncture and moxibustion and Chinese herbal pharmacology. Since the end of 1975 the academy has held 20 international acupuncture training course and 4 Chinese traditional orthopedics training courses, involving more than 400 trainees from 80 countries. Since their return home many of the participants of these courses have successfully set up their own practices which have been well received by their countrymen. Such efforts have advanced the cause of promoting acupuncture and Chinese traditional orthopedics world wide.

From 1978 to 1984, 3,211 persons in 578 groups from 63 countries and areas visited the academy. Altogether 3,566 persons from 28 countries and regions have come to the academy for treatment; 549 scholars in 135 groups from 36 countries have come to lecture or engage in academic exchanges.

The ATCM has sent numerous medical workers and researchers abroad to Asia and Africa as well as other places to develop courses of treatment and train doctors. Many heads of state have had their illnesses successfully cured by Chinese medicine. Altogether 143 groups and 214 scholars and technicians have been sent abroad to 31 countries to teach, engage in research or investigations, or to attend international conferences. The number of Chinese sent abroad by the academy in 1985 exceeded the number sent in the previous year by 40 percent. Of the 30 members of the united preparatory committee for the World Acupuncture Society, four members are from the academy – one is the administrative chairman and another is the secretary-general. The academy has set up co-operative research projects or bilateral relationships with 17 foreign research organizations. Through activities such as these, the friendship between the ATCM and medical circles of other countries has been increased and the development of world academic exchanges has been promoted.

_Courtesy: Reference material Traditional Medicine, No.10, of the Embassy of the People’s Republic of China, New Delhi._