

## ZHANG XICHUN (1860-1933)'S LIFE

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### ABSTRACT

Zhang Xichun (1860-1933) was a distinguish doctor during the late Qing Dynasty and the early Republic of China and a leading proponent of the “school of converging and connecting Chinese and Western medicine (*hui tong xue pai* 匯通學派)”. In 1909, Zhang Xichun had become a famous doctor in China. In 1912, Zhang Xichun was invited and appointed as a military doctor officer. His excellent medical skills were appreciated by many military and political bigwigs. Zhang completed his famous medical works: *Essays on Medicine Esteeming the Chinese and Respecting the Western*. In 1918, Zhang was invited as the director of Lida Chinese Medicine Hospital, the first Chinese medicine hospital in modern China. In 1923, Zhang had to leave Fengtian, returned to Cangxian near his hometown and continued to practice. In 1924, Zhang published the third and forth volume of *Essays on Medicine Esteeming the Chinese and Respecting the Western* at his own expense. In 1926, Zhang was invited to Tianjin as a teacher in a private school (tutor). In the spring of 1927, he officially practiced in a clinic he founded, called “Academy of Integration of Traditional Chinese and Western Medicine”. He also practiced in the concession area of Tianjin and saw foreign patients. In 1930, in Tianjin he founded four-year Correspondence School of Chinese Medicine. In 1931, the sixth volume of *Essays on Medicine Esteeming the Chinese and Respecting the Western* was published. In September 17, 1933, he died of heart disease in Tianjin at the age of 74.

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### INTRODUCTION



Figure 1 Zhang Xichun (1860-1933)

Zhang Xichun (Figure 1), also called Zhang Shoufu (1860-1933), was a distinguish doctor during the late Qing Dynasty and the early Republic of China and was called “the leader figure in medicine throughout the nation” at that time.

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He was a leading proponent of the “school of converging and connecting” Chinese and Western medicine (*hui tong xue pai* 匯通學派)<sup>[1]</sup> and was the author of *Essays on Medicine Esteeming the Chinese and Respecting the Western* (*yixue zhongzhong canxi lu*), which was widely read.

#### Life

Zhang Xichun was born in Yanshan county, Hebei province in February 29, 1860 of the late Qing Dynasty. Like his other peers, Zhang had been studying Confucian classics for Imperial Examination from his childhood. In 1881, he engaged in the Provincial Examination in Suntian (Beijing now) for the first time as a supplemented Doctors’ Student, but failed. For the consolation of his grandfather’s and father’s wishes, he went to Tianjin where he officially entered school. After that, he had taught in countryside private school for a long period of time. In 1885, he cured critically ill patients Gao Luxuan and Mao Xiang, two famous doctors of traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) doctors in the town, couldn’t cure and was commended by the two doctors. From then on, constant patients visited him for treatment. Unfortunately he didn’t again pass the Autumn Imperial Examination in 1893, the 2<sup>nd</sup> time he took. Complying with his father’s order, Zhang Xichun began to study medicine. He studied many classical works on traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) such as *the*

*Yellow Emperor's Inner Canon, Treatise on Febrile Diseases* etc. and theories of different academic sects on TCM by himself. At the same time, Zhang Xichun studied western medicine and other western knowledge by himself as well. He also treated patients and taught Chinese knowledge and medicine<sup>[2]</sup>.

In 1904, China abolished imperial examinations and promoted schools. Zhang Xichun became the only teacher who could teach algebra and geometry in Yanshan. Influenced by the trend of thought at that time, Zhang's thoughts of integrating traditional Chinese and western medicine germinated and became more and more mature.



Figure 2 Zhang Xichun as a military doctor officer

In 1909, Zhang Xichun completed the draft of the first three issues of *Essays on Medicine Esteeming the Chinese and Respecting the Western*. At that time, he, at the age of nearly 50, began to publish medical papers in *Shaoxin Medical Journal* and had become a famous doctor in China. In 1912, Zhang Xichun was invited and appointed as a military doctor officer by Huang Huaxuan, garrison commander in Dezhou, Shandong and went to Wuhan, Daming, Guangping, Handan, Xingtai, Dezhou with the troop (Figure 2). His excellent medical skills were appreciated by many military and political bigwigs. His works were gradually known and copied by many people. Someone in the New Society between Heaven and Earth, a civilian academic society in Fengtian (Shenyang now) red Zhang Xichun's manuscript and marveled it as "an unprecedented works in contemporary medicine" and urged him to apply copyright to the Ministry of the Interior. In 1918, after got Zhang Xichun's agreement, they succeeded in applying copyright to the Ministry of the Interior. Then, Gao Zhenduo, director of the society and Wang Songge, vice director of the society, proofread Zhang Xichun's manuscript by themselves. The first volume of the manuscript was published under the funding of the society. After being published, the first volume of *Essays on Medicine Esteeming the Chinese and Respecting the Western* was sold out of stock soon and had to being republished in spring next year. At the same time the second volume of *Essays on Medicine Esteeming the Chinese and Respecting the Western* was published.

In 1918, Lida Chinese Medicine Hospital, the first Chinese medicine hospital in modern China, was established in Fengtian (Shenyang now). Zhang was invited as the director of the hospital. In 1922, the First Zhili-Fengtian War broke out. The war affected Zhang's life and practice greatly. So, in 1923, Zhang had to leave Fengtian, returned to Cangxian near his hometown and continued to practice.

In 1924, Zhang published the third and forth volume of *Essays on Medicine Esteeming the Chinese and Respecting the Western* at his own expense. Medical community at that time rushed out to buy them so enthusiastically that the two volumes had to be reprinted four times. In 1926, Zhang was invited to Tianjin by Hu Zhenfu, a DaoYin (mayor) during the late Qing Dynasty, as a teacher in his private school (tutor). Bringing his family along, Zhang went to Tianjin, where he practiced while teaching. In the spring of 1927, he officially practiced in a clinic he founded, called "Academy of Integration of Traditional Chinese and Western Medicine", located in Dongmenli, Tianjin. He also practiced in the concession area of Tianjin and saw foreign patients. The fifth volume of *Essays on Medicine Esteeming the Chinese and Respecting the Western* was published. In the next year, *Essays on Medicine Esteeming the Chinese and Respecting the Western* was republished and was reprinted five times to meet the readers' demands. In 1931, the sixth volume of *Essays on Medicine Esteeming the Chinese and Respecting the Western* was published and was reprinted two times<sup>[2-4]</sup>. From 1929-1933, he published 32 papers on medical cases, Chinese medicine in *Xinglin Medical Monthly*. Also he was a contributor to *Fengtian Medical Journal*, *Shanghai Journal of Chinese Medicine*, *Years in Medical Community*, *Hangzhou Sansan Medical Newspaper*, *Zhikou Journal of Chinese and Western Medicine*, *Singapore Medical Journal* and *Shaoxin Medical Journal*<sup>[5]</sup>.

In 1930, in Tianjin he founded four-year Correspondence School of Chinese Medicine, compiled textbooks for the school himself and taught in the school himself. The school trained many Chinese Medicine talents.

In September 17, 1933, he died of heart disease in "Academy of Integration of Traditional Chinese and Western Medicine" located in Qiuzhili, No.24, the French concession Tianjin at the age of 74<sup>[2]</sup>.

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#### Conflicts of interest

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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