

THE REMARKS ON ZHANG XICHUN (1860-1933): A PIONEER IN INTEGRATED TRADITIONAL CHINESE AND WESTERN MEDICINE

Zhai Hailong, M.D.¹, Cen Ruixiang^{2*}

¹Lecturer, Hubei Polytechnic University, School of Medicine, Huangshi, Hubei, China

²Department of Otorhinolaryngology, Huangshi Central Hospital, Affiliated Hospital of Hubei Polytechnic University

ARTICLE INFO

Article History:

Received 4th July, 2020

Received in revised form 25th

August, 2020

Accepted 23rd September, 2020

Published online 28th October, 2020

Key words:

Zhang Xichun, integrated traditional Chinese and western medicine, the late Qing Dynasty, the early Republic of China, remark

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* 匯術學派)”. Although it was his declared goal to incorporate some of the useful mechanics (*yong*) of Western medicine into the traditional mother body (*ti*) of Chinese medicine, his parameters remained clearly “traditional at the core”. He was used to think about medicine and practice with the theories of Chinese medicine. Zhang advocated: “the western medicine used in the local is the focus of the disease.” “By knowing Chinese medicine and Western medicine for help, honesty can complement each other.” Zhang Xichun had made great contributions to the integration of Chinese and Western medicine.

Copyright©2020 Zhai Hailong, M.D., Cen Ruixiang This is an open access article distributed under the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

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.

*Corresponding author: Cen Ruixiang

Department of Otorhinolaryngology, Huangshi Central Hospital, Affiliated Hospital of Hubei Polytechnic University

He studied ancient Chinese medical books and advocated the combination of traditional Chinese and Western medicine. He was a leading proponent of the “school of converging and connecting” Chinese and Western medicine (*hui tong xue pai* 匯術學派)^[1] and was the author of *Essays on Medicine Esteeming the Chinese and Respecting the Western* (*yixue zhongzhong canxi lu*), which was widely read.

Remarks

At the end of the Qing Dynasty, Western learning, western medicine spread very quickly in China. Traditional Chinese medicine lost its rank as the one and only “medicine” (*yixue*) and became “Chinese medicine” (*zhongyi*), defined in contrast to “Western medicine” (*xiyi*)^[2].

At that time Chinese medicine and western medicine attacked each other and rejected each other. Chinese medicine doctors didn't think much of western medicine and dismissed western medicine. They said that westerners were strong. To treat their diseases, purging heat by bloodletting therapy had to be conducted. Chinese and westerners' physiques were quite different. Most western drugs were chemical substances and mineral while most Chinese medicine were herbs. Chinese medicine were used in large-dose while western drugs in small-dose. Western drugs weren't suitable to be used for Chinese. Furthermore, more than half of western drugs originated from China^[3,4].

On the other hand, western medicine doctors said ‘Chinese medicine practice just depends on occasional experience and does not accord with science.’ In February 1928, the first Central Health Commission of Nanjin government even passed the radical proposal “A Case for the Abolishment of Old Medicine to Thoroughly Eliminate Public Health Obstacles” in order to abolish Chinese medicine^[5].

Immediately, however, there developed an early brand of progressive physicians who did not lament this situation, but attempted to integrate some of the paraphernalia of modern medicine into the traditional system. These pioneers are now collectively referred to as the Chinese-Western Integration School (zhong xi huitong pai). Main representatives are Wang Qingren (1768-1831), Tang Zonghai (1851-1908), Zhang Xichun (1860-1933), and Zhang Shouyi (1873-1934)^[2].

Zhang Xichun with open-up mind oppose these and urged “Chinese medicine and western medicine, each of which has its strong and weak points, should learn each other and integrate into one.”

Zhang Xichun’s Chinese-Western Integration Ideas were groundbreaking though they were in an initial stage at that time and seemed quite superficial. He interpreted some physiology, pathology, pharmacology, even some classical theories of Chinese Medicine by integrating the theories of Chinese medicine and western medicine. Especially he interpreted the pharmacology of western drugs with the rationales of Chinese medicine and clinically, he combined Chinese medicine with western drugs to treat some diseases and acquired good efficacy. His ideas enlightened physicians after him to develop integration of Chinese-Western medicine further. He was not a proponent of the hierarchical superiority of Western medicine, but rather tried to embody the traditional ideal of the broadly educated master physician. Although it was his declared goal to incorporate some of the useful mechanics (yong) of Western medicine into the traditional mother body (ti) of Chinese medicine, his parameters remained clearly “traditional at the core” – just as programmatic title of his collected writing, *Chinese at Heart But Western Where Appropriate: Essays Investigating An Integrated Form of Medicine* (Yixue Zhong Zhong Can Xi Lu, 1933)^[2].

Maybe because Zhang Xichun was much more familiar with Chinese medicine than western medicine and his knowledge on western medicine was limited after all. He was used to think about medicine and practice with the theories of Chinese medicine^[6].

Zhang Xichun combined traditional Chinese medicine and Western Medicine Study on communication combining traditional Chinese and Western medicine, according to his statement:

this collection of more than ten years of experience in the party”, “and they say in mining and argumentation phase invention, series, volume eight, named” medical sincerely participate in the West recorded ”. From the book named enough to see the author's thought: sincere, too, not to betray fellow fathers, no objection is the foundation of establishment; participate in the west, the auxiliary also useful, no division, of course, for the development of the wing. In view of the phenomenon that the two Chinese doctors did not cooperate with each other at that time, Zhang advocated: “the western medicine used in the local is the focus of the disease.” “By knowing Chinese medicine and Western medicine for help, honesty can complement each other.”^[2,7-8]

The above shows that Zhang Xichun had made great contributions to the integration of Chinese and Western medicine.

Acknowledgments

The study was supported by the Key Teaching Research Project of Hubei Polytechnic University in 2018 (No. 2018B02).

Conflicts of interest

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

References

1. Scheid, V. The Great Qi: Zhang Xichun's Reflections On the Nature, Pathology and Treatment of the Daqi. *Journal of Chinese Medicine*, 1995, 49 (5): 5–16.
2. Heiner Fruehauf. Chinese medicine in crisis: science, politics and the marking of TCM. *Journal of Chinese Medicine*, 1999, 61(10):6-14.
3. Anonym. On the differences between Chinese Medicine and Western Medicine. Shen Newspaper, July, 31, 1887.
4. Anonym. On hospitals. Shen Newspaper, July, 20, 1883.
5. Wa Zhiya. A History of Chinese Medicine, Nanchang: Jiangxi Science and Technology Press, 1987: 278.
6. Shan Guangzhi. A discussion on Mr. Zhang Xichun’s academic thoughts of medical study and experiences. *Education of Traditional Chinese Medicine*, 1999, 18(1): 56-57.
7. Wang Bangguo. Zhang Xichun’s innovative spirit and practice. *Chinese Medicine Modern Distance Education of China*, 2003, (3): 19-21.
8. Zhang Xichun. *Chinese at Heart But Western Where Appropriate: Essays Investigating An Integrated Form of Medicine* (Yixue Zhong Zhong Can Xi Lu). Beijing: People’s Medical Publishing House, 2006.

How to cite this article:

Zhai Hailong, M.D., Cen Ruixiang (2020) 'The Remarks on Zhang Xichun (1860-1933): A Pioneer in Integrated Traditional Chinese and Western Medicine', *International Journal of Current Advanced Research*, 09(10), pp. 23146-23147. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.24327/ijcar.2020.4581.23147>
