

"Western Medicine Book" and Its Scientific Influence

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Abstract: *As an important medical document in the Kangxi court of the Qing Dynasty, the Western Medicine Book not only reflects the depth of communication between Chinese and Western medicine at that time, but also reflects Emperor Kangxi's emphasis on and exploration of Western medicine. The book was written in Manchu by missionaries Joachim Bouvet and Jean François Gerbillon, introducing the usage and efficacy of Western medicine. Through the compilation and dissemination of the "Western Medicine Book", Emperor Kangxi demonstrated his open attitude and willingness to accept Western medical knowledge, promoted the dissemination of Western medical knowledge, and deepened the mutual understanding and integration of Chinese and Western medicine. The "Western Medicine Book" had a profound impact on the exchange of science and culture between China and the West in the early Qing Dynasty. It not only enriched Chinese medical knowledge, promoted the exchange and integration of Chinese and Western medicine, but also facilitated the dissemination and exchange of science and technology between the two.*

Keywords: *"Western Medicine Book", Early Qing Dynasty, Chinese and Western Science and Culture*

1. Introduction

"Western Medicine Book", as an important medical document in the Kangxi court of the Qing Dynasty, not only reflects the depth of communication between Chinese and Western medicine at that time, but also reflects Emperor Kangxi's emphasis on and exploration of Western medicine. The book is said to have been written in Manchu by missionaries Joachim Bouvet and Jean François Gerbillon[1], introducing the usage and efficacy of Western medicine at that time. The discovery of the "Western Medicine Book" provided valuable first-hand information for studying the exchange of Chinese and Western medicine in the Qing Dynasty.

The compilation and existence of the "Western Medicine Book" itself demonstrated Emperor Kangxi's open attitude and willingness to accept Western medical knowledge. According to the biography of Emperor Kangxi, Joachim Bouvet and others introduced Western medicine to Emperor Kangxi and "completed many pills, powders, ointments, and pills in the palace." [2] They also participated in the production of Western medicine, which may be the background of the book "Western Medicine Book". The book is rich in content, covering 48 types of prescriptions, including oral and external use, and covering various diseases. The prescriptions in the "Western Medicine Book" are mostly like medication guides for patients or doctors, with excellent descriptions of drug efficacy, but less mention of raw materials, similar to the records in the "Biography of Emperor Kangxi".

The pathological descriptions in the "Western Medicine Book" often use Manchu transliterations of Chinese disease names, such as "consumption" and "jaundice", indicating that missionaries need to understand at least some of the diseases in traditional Chinese medicine in order to have a dialogue with readers in the same context. This practice of using traditional Chinese medicine disease names promotes the exchange of Chinese and Western medical theories, although there are differences in their understanding of the causes and pathology of diseases. In addition, by comparing the "Western Medicine Book" with the Qing Palace archives, it can be found that the use of drugs in the Qing Palace was not completely implemented according to the "Western Medicine Book". The appearance and efficacy of some drugs are different from those described in the book, which may mean that some drugs share names or roots but are not the same drugs.

From the perspective of cultural exchange, the compilation and dissemination of the "Western Medicine Book" not only promoted the dissemination of Western medical knowledge, but also deepened the mutual understanding and integration of Chinese and Western medicine. For example, after Emperor Kangxi's trust in Western medicine increased, he ordered the establishment of "medical laboratories", which reflected the influence of advanced Western pharmaceutical technology introduced

into China. The discovery of the "*Western Medicine Book*" "not only provides valuable information for studying medical exchanges in the Qing Dynasty, but also reflects the complexity and depth of the exchange between Chinese and Western medicine at that time." [3] Through this book, we can glimpse a corner of the exchange between Chinese and Western medicine during the Kangxi period, as well as the attitude and application of Western medical knowledge by the Qing court, and even have a profound impact on the exchange of Chinese and Western scientific culture.

2. "Western Medicine Book" Promoted the Spread of Western Medicine in China

The introduction of Western medicine in 17th and 18th century China was undoubtedly a revolution. During this period, China was at a crossroads of ideas and culture, with Western missionaries carrying their faith and knowledge across mountains and rivers, stepping onto this ancient and mysterious land. Their goal is not only to spread the teachings of Christianity, but also to establish deeper connections and understanding with the Chinese people through the universal language of medicine. Missionaries have traveled throughout China, bringing Western medicine into the country through various means such as opening clinics, translating medical works, and training doctors. These activities not only introduced Chinese people to a medical system completely different from traditional Chinese medicine for the first time, but also brought new thinking and inspiration to the Chinese medical community. The scientific and systematic nature of Western medicine collides with traditional Chinese empirical and holistic medicine, sparking many new sparks.

Of particular note is Emperor Kangxi. This enlightened emperor not only had a strong interest in Western scientific knowledge, but also personally studied Western medical knowledge. His admiration and practice of Western medicine made Western medical activities in the court increasingly frequent. Missionaries established pharmacies in the palace, prepared Western medicine, and even conducted surgical demonstrations, which was undoubtedly a huge change at that time. Their efforts not only led to unprecedented promotion and application of Western medicine in the Chinese court, but also brought new insights to the Chinese medical community. The support and promotion of Emperor Kangxi made the development of Western medicine in China more rapid. He not only studied on his own, but also encouraged officials and scholars around him to learn Western medicine. This top-down learning and promotion greatly promoted the spread of Western medicine in China. The activities of missionaries in China are not only the dissemination of medical knowledge, but also the exchange and integration of culture. They combined the concepts and methods of Western medicine with the actual situation in China, creating many treatment methods suitable for China.

The introduction of the "*Western Medicine Book*" further contributed to this process. This book is not only a carrier of Western medical knowledge, but also a bridge for communication between Chinese and Western medicine. The book provides a detailed record of the theory and practice of Western medicine, offering a window for Chinese people to understand and learn about Western medicine. With the passage of time, more and more Chinese people began to accept and try Western medicine, which laid a solid foundation for later medical exchanges and cooperation. It can be said that the unremitting efforts of missionaries and the support of Emperor Kangxi jointly promoted the dissemination and development of Western medicine in China. Their work not only enriched China's medical system, but also made significant contributions to the later progress and modernization of medicine. This history is not only the history of medical development, but also the history of cultural exchange. It reflects the continuous progress of Chinese and Western medicine in the collision, and also demonstrates the important role of cultural exchange in promoting social development.

3. Exchange and integration of knowledge between Chinese and Western medicine

In the work "*Western Medicine Book*", we can observe a very interesting phenomenon: many disease names adopt the Manchu transliteration of Chinese disease names. For example, "loo bing"(consumption) and "hū wang bing"(jaundice). "On the one hand, it indicates that these concepts are not present in Manchu language, and on the other hand, it also involves the exchange of Chinese and Western medical theories." [4] This naming convention not only reflects the author's respect for traditional Chinese medicine culture, but also indicates that missionaries need to understand at least some of the diseases in traditional Chinese medicine when communicating with readers.

Firstly, the use of this transliteration enables dialogue between Chinese and Western medicine in the same context. Missionaries made Western medical knowledge more easily accepted and understood by

Chinese readers by adopting the Manchu transliteration of Chinese disease names. At the same time, this also provides a window for traditional Chinese medicine scholars to understand and learn about Western medicine knowledge, promoting the exchange and integration of Chinese and Western medical theories. Secondly, the interaction and understanding of this language are also reflected in the missionaries' respect and tolerance for Chinese culture. They did not simply impose Western medical knowledge on Chinese readers, but chose a more gentle and easily accepted way to integrate Western medical knowledge into Chinese culture. This approach is not only beneficial for the dissemination of medical knowledge, but also helps to enhance understanding and friendship between Eastern and Western cultures. Finally, the interaction and understanding of this language also provide valuable resources for future medical research. By studying the names of diseases in the *Western Medicine Book*, we can better understand the understanding and comprehension of traditional Chinese medicine by missionaries at that time, as well as the strategies and methods they adopted in disseminating Western medical knowledge. This is of great significance for us to deeply explore the exchange and integration of Chinese and Western medical theories, as well as the study of medical history.

The Manchu transliteration of Chinese disease names in the *Western Medicine Book* not only reflects the missionaries' understanding of traditional Chinese medicine, but also promotes dialogue and exchange between Chinese and Western medical theories. The interaction and understanding of this language is not only beneficial for the dissemination of medical knowledge, but also helps to enhance understanding and friendship between Eastern and Western cultures. At the same time, this also provides valuable resources for future medical research, helping us better understand the process of communication and integration between Chinese and Western medicine.

4. "Western Medicine Book" enriches the practice of court medicine

During the reign of Emperor Kangxi, the enormous charm and profound connotation of Western medicine quietly attracted the attention of this enlightened monarch. Emperor Kangxi's interest in Western medicine was not short-lived, but stemmed from his thirst for knowledge and profound understanding of medicine. This interest prompted him to cross the boundaries of time and space, exploring and practicing Western medicine that he considered novel and mysterious. In order to further study and practice Western medicine, Emperor Kangxi adopted the suggestions of missionaries Joachim Bouvet and Jean François Gerbillon and decided to establish a specialized laboratory. This laboratory is not only a holy land for Western medical research, but also a bridge for the exchange of Chinese and Western medicine. In this laboratory, Joachim Bouvet and Jean François Gerbillon, with their wisdom and enthusiasm, presided over the production of various drugs using Western methods.

They not only introduced Western drug production methods, but also cleverly combined traditional Chinese medical knowledge to conduct a series of experiments and research. These works not only enriched the medical practice of the court, but also provided new ideas and methods for the development of Chinese medicine. Emperor Kangxi's initiative undoubtedly paved a bright path for the integration and exchange of Chinese and Western medicine. In order to better preserve and use these Western medicines, Emperor Kangxi established specialized laboratories and the dew room. The laboratory was requested by Joachim Bouvet and Jean François Gerbillon to be completed before May of the 35th year of the Kangxi reign (1696).[5] The dew room, a place specifically used for mixing medicine, steaming dew, and storing Western medicines, became an important part of the court's medical practice. Specializes in combining medicine, steaming dew, treating rhinitis, and treating sunset pancreas.[6] Here, the drugs are stored more carefully, and it is also convenient for doctors to prepare and use the drugs.

The establishment of the dew room not only improved the efficiency of drug use, but also provided more complete facilities for the medical practice of the court. These activities not only enriched the medical practice of the court, but also provided practical venues and conditions for the exchange of Chinese and Western medicine. With the support of Emperor Kangxi, the exchange of Chinese and Western medicine has achieved unprecedented development. This kind of communication not only promotes the progress of Chinese medicine, but also contributes to the development of world medicine.

The series of measures taken by Emperor Kangxi were not only a simple acceptance of Western medicine, but also a respect for knowledge and an exploration of new knowledge. His enlightenment and wisdom have made it possible for the exchange and integration of Chinese and Western medicine. "This exchange and integration brought emerging medical technologies and treatment concepts to China at that time,"[7] not only enriching China's medical system, but also promoting the global

dissemination of medical knowledge, making an indelible contribution to the development of human health.

5. Promoted the collision and integration of Chinese and Western medical ideas

The "*Western Medicine Book*" is an important medical literature that provides a common foundation for dialogue between Chinese and Western medicine. Although there are significant differences between traditional Chinese medicine and Western medicine in the causes and underlying pathological mechanisms of diseases, missionaries have successfully built a communication bridge by using the names of diseases in traditional Chinese medicine, allowing both parties to understand the same symptoms together and based on this, explain and use drugs. The collision and integration of these ideas not only promote communication and understanding between Chinese and Western medicine, but also drive further development of medical knowledge. In the late Qing Dynasty and early Republic of China, representative figures of the integration of Chinese and Western medicine, such as Zonghai Tang, Peiwen Zhu, and Xichun Zhang, were all influenced to some extent by the "*Western Medicine Book*". They actively explore the exchange and integration of traditional Chinese medicine and Western medicine, cross referencing classics such as the Inner Canon of Huangdi and Treatise on Febrile Diseases with knowledge from Western medicine, injecting new vitality into the development of traditional Chinese and Western medicine.

The efforts of these medical experts not only enrich the theoretical system of traditional Chinese medicine, but also make it more comprehensive and scientific in treating diseases. At the same time, they also drew on advanced theories and techniques from Western medicine, making traditional Chinese medicine more precise and effective in diagnosis and treatment. This exchange and integration of Chinese and Western medicine not only promotes the sharing and inheritance of medical knowledge, but also makes positive contributions to the development of human health. The "*Western Medicine Book*", as an important medical literature, provides a common foundation for dialogue between Chinese and Western medicine. It builds a communication bridge by using the names of traditional Chinese medicine diseases, allowing both parties to understand the same symptoms together and based on this, explain and use the medication. The collision and integration of these ideas not only promote communication and understanding between Chinese and Western medicine, but also drive further development of medical knowledge.

6. Conclusion

As a rare treasure of the exchange between Chinese and Western medicine, the "*Western Medicine Book*" not only provides us with a window to explore the early medical history of the Qing Dynasty, but also serves as a living witness, recording the thirst and exploration of medical knowledge by Emperor Kangxi and his contemporaries. It not only carries a series of drug formulas and applications, but also sparks of wisdom for cultural integration and ideological collision. The compilation and dissemination of this medicinal book highlights Emperor Kangxi's open-minded attitude towards opening up to the outside world and absorbing foreign civilizations, as well as his profound influence on the development of medical science. Through the "*Western Medicine Book*", we can glimpse the efforts and achievements of the integration of Chinese and Western medical knowledge at that time, and feel the power of cultural exchange. The medical laboratories and the dew room established by Emperor Kangxi were not only an acceptance of Western medical technology, but also a tribute to the spirit of medical innovation. The use of Manchu transliteration of Chinese disease names in the "*Western Medicine Book*" demonstrates the missionaries' respect and understanding of traditional Chinese medicine culture, and promotes dialogue and exchange between Chinese and Western medicine theories in the same context. This dialogue foundation provided inspiration and direction for later figures in the integration of Chinese and Western medicine. Their efforts further promoted the exchange and integration of theories between Chinese and Western medicine, enriched the theoretical system of traditional Chinese medicine, and injected new vitality into the development of modern medicine. As time passed, the value of the "*Western Medicine Book*" became increasingly prominent. It not only enriched the practice of imperial medicine, but also became a microcosm of the collision and integration of Chinese and Western medical ideas. Its existence proves the possibility and necessity of communication between Chinese and Western medicine, paves the way for medical progress, and builds bridges for cultural exchange. Therefore, the "*Western Medicine Book*" had a profound impact on the exchange of Chinese and Western scientific and cultural knowledge in the early Qing Dynasty.

They not only enriched China's medical knowledge, promoted the exchange and integration of Chinese and Western medicine, but also promoted the dissemination and exchange of Chinese and Western scientific and technological knowledge. The prosperity of scientific and cultural exchanges between China and the West during this historical period has left valuable cultural heritage and scientific wealth for future generations.

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