

Research on the Development of Japanese Traditional Chinese Medicine under the Background of The Belt and Road Initiative

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Abstract: *Traditional Chinese medicine has a long history in Japan, and it has developed rapidly in recent years, with significant economic value. Several policies have been issued to support the overseas development of traditional Chinese medicine culture since the Chinese government announced "The Belt and Road Initiative" policy in 2013. Against the backdrop of "The Belt and Road Initiative," the development of traditional Chinese medicine in Japan is hampered by issues such as the Japanese government's constant shift in attitude towards participation in "The Belt and Road Initiative" and the Japanese medical community's immortality of "de-Sinicization" of traditional Chinese medicine. At the same time, it has a strong mass foundation of traditional Chinese medicine in Japan, which is in line with Japan's current medical and health needs, as well as a significant market and economic benefits and other opportunities, to investigate the development of traditional Chinese medicine in Japan against the backdrop of "The Belt and Road Initiative" to explore a higher level of growth for traditional Chinese medicine internationalisation.*

Keywords: *Japan; traditional Chinese medicine; The Belt and Road Initiative; Chinese medicine*

1. Introduction

Before the sixth century AD, Chinese medicine was primarily introduced to Japan via the Korean peninsula. After the 7th century, with diplomatic contacts between Sui and Tang envoys, the culture of traditional Chinese medicine was widely imported into Japan^[1], and after the fusion of traditional Chinese medicine and its native culture, modern Chinese medicine emerged after hundreds of years of changes and development. Traditional Chinese medicine has always had a place in the Japanese medical system, as well as some influence and recognition among the Japanese public. Japan has made significant progress in recent years in the extraction of active ingredients of traditional Chinese medicine, the improvement of dosage forms, and the protection of traditional Chinese medicine patents^[2]. China officially launched "The Belt and Road Initiative" policy in the autumn of 2013, which was incorporated into the national development strategy in 2015. As part of the "Belt and Road Initiative," China has signed 86 cooperation agreements on Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) with governments, regional and international institutions from 183 countries and regions. Countries along "The Belt and Road Initiative" have a combined population of nearly 4.4 billion people, accounting for 63% of the world's population^[3]. With Japan's accession to "The Belt and Road Initiative" in 2017, a new era of Chinese medicine in the international arena began, bringing with it new opportunities and challenges.

2. Development of traditional Chinese medicine in Japan

2.1. Historical Development of TCM in Japan

Japanese Chinese medicine originated from ancient Chinese books and the basic theory of Chinese medicine, through the continuous integration of Japanese nationals and physicians developed. Before the 6th century, traditional Chinese medicine was mainly introduced to Japan through Korea. The specific time was controversial in academic circles. Since the Heian Age, the Tang envoy was sent to Japan with a large number of books on traditional Chinese medicine, which aroused the enthusiasm of the Japanese medical circle for traditional Chinese medicine. In the Kamakura era, with the extensive use of printing technology, Japanese traditional Chinese medicine began to develop rapidly. In the Murachi era, Japanese medical scientists went to study the theories of the Four Masters of Jin and Yuan

Dynasties in the Ming Dynasty and brought home the theoretical orientations of Li Tung-yuan and Chu Danxi, known in Japan as “Li Chu Medicine”, which had a far-reaching impact. In the middle and later periods of the Edo Period, Japanese people began to study Zhang Zhongjing’s Treatise on Febrile Diseases. During the Meiji period, the entry of Western medicine had an impact on the Japanese medical community at that time. Japan began to advocate Western medicine, but a small number of people still insisted on Hanfang medicine. For example, Keisichiro Oshida’s Iron Cone in Medicine (Iron Cone in Medicine, 1910) and Yujin Tang’s Huanghan Medicine (Huanghan Medicine, 1927) were among the others. After World War II, in 1976, Chinese formulations were included in the drug price benchmark and the scope of medical insurance and became a member of the Japanese Medical Association in 1991. Japan and China are separated by a strip of water, Hanfang medicine and Chinese medicine are also “of the same ancestry”, the two hundred years of the development history of the track is very similar. Both of them experienced a peak of prosperity, then declined due to the rise of Western medicine, and in recent years, they were revalued and revived.

2.2. Development of traditional Chinese medicine in Japan since modern times

Japan attaches importance to the revival of Traditional Chinese Medicine. In March 2001, Japan published the “Core Course of Medical Education”, which includes the contents of Traditional Chinese Medicine, entitled “Introduction to Traditional Chinese Medicine”.

In Japan in 2004, Chinese medical education in 80 colleges or comprehensive university medical departments with compulsory courses^[4]. Since 2006, Hanfang Medicine has become an assessment content of Japanese doctors’ clinical examination. The examination questions of Traditional Chinese Medicine were included in the examination questions of the Japanese physician qualification examination in 2008. ^[5] Nowadays, due to the importance and emphasis attached to the education of Traditional Chinese Medicine in Japan, the number of doctors majoring in Traditional Chinese Medicine is increasing. Research shows that education in traditional medicine is essential for developing Traditional Medicine in Japan ^[6]. In recent years, Japan attaches importance to the development of the Chinese medicine patent industry. Since 1978, Japan has obtained 271 patents for traditional Chinese medicine (including “Hanfang” and “Pharmacognosy”), and the number of applications from Japanese Jingfang is far more than that from China. Most of the applications from Japanese Jingfang are multinational enterprises. Japan attaches more importance to the development of the international market of traditional Chinese medicine than Chinese medicine enterprises in China which only focus on the domestic market ^[7,8]. Based on this, China only has less than 20% of the global market share of traditional Chinese medicine, while Japan and South Korea are 80% to 90%, and mainly Chinese, most of the original drugs are imported from China ^[2].

3. Dilemma of TCM in Japan under "The Belt and Road initiative"

3.1. The Japanese Government’s Attitude towards “The Belt and Road initiative”

The Japanese government and people are full of complex feelings about “The Belt and Road initiative”. They are ambiguous about whether to participate in “The Belt and Road initiative” or not. In the 11 years since 2005, Japan has put forward the idea of regional cooperation and “The Belt and Road initiative” policy in Southeast Asia, the Middle East, Eastern Europe and other countries and regions along the route, there is a certain degree of geopolitical overlap and economic competition. Japan initially regarded “The Belt and Road initiative” as China’s geopolitical and foreign economic strategy, which most politicians rejected. Since “The Belt and Road initiative” Summit on International Cooperation was held in mid-May 2017, Japan’s attitude towards participating in “The Belt and Road initiative” has changed significantly. Especially after Premier Li Keqiang visited Japan, the Japanese media began to have a positive image of China in the reports on “The Belt and Road initiative”, proposing the possibility of cooperation between China and Japan on “The Belt and Road initiative”, and Japanese politics began to consider the possibility of cooperation on “The Belt and Road initiative”. In March 2018, Japan signed a comprehensive and progressive Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) agreement with the US to isolate China, followed by the US’s withdrawal from the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) and a change in its approach to “The Belt and Road initiative”, which puts Japan under great strategic pressure to cooperate regionally and risks being marginalized from the world. Japan’s choice to participate in “The Belt and Road initiative” is partly because of its relative emphasis on economic gains, and partly because of its strategic anxiousness in the current era. ^[9] Japan has never

firmly chosen “The Belt and Road initiative” policy, the process has always been full of probing games and instability of Japanese policy so the development platform of TCM is full of uncertainty.

3.2. The Heart journey of Japanese Medical Circles to “De-Sinicize” Traditional Chinese Medicine

In the course of the development of Hanfang medicine in Japan, Japan, on the one hand, “select its essence”, on the other hand, on the grounds of “eliminating its dross”, has always persisted in “removing Chinese medicine culture”. In 1989, the World Health Organization (WHO) promulgated the internationally unified acupuncture and moxibustion code and marked acupuncture and moxibustion points in the form of the international code, Chinese Pinyin and Chinese, but the latter two standards were gradually eliminated. Some scholars in Japan and South Korea used the loophole to question the origin of acupuncture^[3]. In the absence of trademark patent awareness in China, Beijing Tongren Tang was preemptively registered by Japanese merchants in Japan, and many Chinese medicine formulas and trademarks were registered in advance for 13 Chinese medicine books produced due to the influence of traditional Chinese medicine culture^[10]. Traditional Chinese medicine education in Japan pays more attention to the study of the classical prescriptions in Treatise on Febrile Diseases and Synopsis of the Golden Chamber, while traditional Chinese medicine education in China pays more attention to the theory of Yin and Yang, Five Elements, Viscera and Meridians. The development of traditional Chinese medicine in Japan has abandoned the most basic foundation and lacks the most core theoretical support. Under the impact of western culture, Japanese Hanfang medicine has declined, while Japanese medical circles have tried many times to “de-sinicize” TCM culture.

4. Opportunities for the development of traditional Chinese medicine in Japan

4.1. Japanese people’s understanding of TCM

The historical background of Hanfang medicine in Japan is very similar to that of TCM in China. In the past 100 years, Hanfang medicine has never completely departed from the vision of the people. After 1970, Hanfang medicine was reintegrated into medical insurance, and Japan began to attach importance to Hanfang medical education again. Japan offers bachelor’s, master’s and doctor’s degrees in Chinese medicine and acupuncture. As of June 2016, there were 108537 acupuncture therapists, 106642 moxibustion therapists, 113215 massage therapists and 63873 judo rehabilitators in Japan^[11,12], according to the 2016 Health, Labor and Welfare Report of the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare. It can be seen that there is still a broad market potential for the widespread development of TCM and its healthcare culture in Japan, whether it is the training of TCM talents, the use of TCM, or acupuncture and health care.

4.2. Traditional Chinese medicine meets the demand for Japanese medicine

Japan has one of the highest levels of population aging in East Asia, and the Japan Institute of Population Issues, based on the number of people aged 65 and over recorded in 2018, forecasts that by 2025 the proportion of people aged 65 and over will rise to 30.3 per cent and the highest level of population aging by 2060, at about 39.9 per cent^[13]. In Japan, the problem of the aging population is becoming more and more serious, Chinese medicine has great advantages in the treatment of chronic diseases of the elderly. The application of traditional Chinese medicine is in line with the current situation of ageing in Japan and in line with the needs of the elderly in Japan. The health industry in Japan covers the whole society and the primary, secondary and tertiary industries. The market prospect is huge. Traditional Chinese medicine can also make use of its huge advantages to effectively meet the needs of the whole Japanese society.

4.3. Relevant policy support of the Chinese Government

Asia is China’s main export market of traditional Chinese medicine. In 2017, the total export volume of Asia reached US \$2.11 billion, accounting for 60.3% of China’s total export volume of traditional Chinese medicine^[14]. Under such economic background, the Chinese government has vigorously supported the development of traditional Chinese medicine and provided corresponding policy support. The Circular of the Ministry of Commerce and the State Administration of Traditional Chinese Medicine on Carrying out the Construction of Backbone Enterprises (Institutions) and Key

Areas under Key Projects of Traditional Chinese Medicine Service Trade was promulgated in 2013, the Vision and Action of Promoting the Joint Construction of the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road in 2015, the Outline of the Strategic Plan for the Development of Traditional Chinese Medicine (2016- 2030) in 2016, the Development Plan for “The Belt and Road initiative” of Traditional Chinese Medicine (2016- 2020) in December of the same year, and the Guiding Opinions of the Ministry of Education and the State Administration of Traditional Chinese Medicine on Deepening the Reform and Development of Traditional Chinese Medicine Education through Collaboration, the Special Plan for Scientific and Technological Innovation of Traditional Chinese Medicine in the 13th Five-Year Plan and the Law of the People’s Republic of China on Traditional Chinese Medicine in 2017 were promulgated. The successive implementation of this series of regulations provided strong policy support and guarantee for our traditional Chinese medicine practitioners to accelerate the development of traditional Chinese medicine towards overseas platforms.

4.4. The industry of traditional Chinese medicine can bring huge economic benefits to Japan

Japan chose to join “The Belt and Road initiative” because it puts economic efficiency in first place. The Ministry of Economy and Industry estimates that the size of the Japanese health industry market is expected to expand to 27.6 trillion yen by 2020. According to the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare, Japan’s output of Chinese medicines in 2015 was 154.7 billion yen, accounting for 2.3% of the country’s total, up 8.3 billion yen from a year earlier. Statistics on the export of traditional Chinese medicine products in 2016 released by the China Chamber of Commerce for Importers and Exporters of Medicines and Health Products show that the export of traditional Chinese medicine extracts and traditional Chinese medicine materials to Japan account for 92.3% of the total export of traditional Chinese medicine products, whereas the export of traditional Chinese patent medicines, health products and other products with high added value accounts for less ^[11]. In 2016, all Chinese medicines sold in Japan totalled about \$1.19 billion. Its products are mainly sold to the United Kingdom, the United States, South Korea, Singapore and other countries as well as the Hong Kong and Taiwan region of China, and some drugs were licensed to be sold in pharmacies in the United States ^[10] at that time. Among them, the Jiu xin wan, which is based on the Chinese classic prescription Liu shen wan, has an annual sales volume of 100 million US dollars ^[3,15]. China’s traditional Chinese medicine culture is a huge treasure house, its resources are far more than Japan, traditional Chinese medicine in Japan, can also bring deeper cooperation and great economic benefits for both countries.

5. Analysis of the TCM Development Strategy of Japan under "The Belt and Road initiative" Strategy

Chinese medicine culture in Japan has a profound historical background and a broad mass base. Under the background of "The Belt and Road initiative" strategy, the promotion and development of Chinese medicine theory, technology and industry in Japan are full of opportunities and challenges. In the process of promoting and developing traditional Chinese medicine culture in Japan, we should have cultural self-confidence. First, we should strengthen the use of scientific and technological means to enhance the core competitiveness of the medical and health industry; second, we should encourage doctors, scholars and enterprises to extensively participate in international competition and cooperation, to globalize the vision, expand the market of traditional Chinese medicine products and enhance the added value of traditional Chinese medicine products. On the other hand, we should guard against Japan's de-localization, enhance the international protection awareness of intellectual property rights of TCM culture, protect TCM intellectual property rights, trademarks and TCM basic core theories, and provide a solid guarantee for China's TCM culture to go global. Under the background of the "The Belt and Road initiative", we should tell stories about TCM culture and develop TCM culture.

6. Conclusions

Chinese medicine plays an important role in safeguarding and promoting the development of human health. In the context of "The Belt and Road Initiative" policy, the development of Chinese medicine culture outside of China is full of opportunities and challenges. Although Japanese TCM culture has a profound history and mass foundation, we should be firm and confident in promoting TCM culture, increasing dissemination efforts, and supporting and strengthening TCM brands. In this paper, we analyze the development of Japanese TCM culture in order to provide some basis and suggestions for the internationalization and high-level development of TCM.

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