EDITORIAL

Where Are We Going?*

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The Chinese government has insisted on developing the career of Chinese medicine and pharmacy (CMP) and raised the policy and guidance of realizing the modernization of CMP and promoting the integration of Chinese medicine and Western medicine. Not long ago, the State Council and 16 ministries of China jointly issued CMP Innovation and Developing Project (2006–2020), and further raised the targets of inheritance, innovation, modernization, and internationalization. It represents for the willingness of the Chinese nation.

Absorbing the Essence and Weeding Out the Obsolete and Worthless

CMP, as a magnificent treasure, has made great contributions in guaranteeing the health of the Chinese people, and promoting the reproduction of the Chinese nation.

Now, the existing CMP ancient books have more than 10 thousand kinds and the Chinese materia medica (CMM), medicinal herbs, and available plant drugs amounting to over 10 thousand kinds or so. The invention of artemisinin has been internationally recognized and adopted, and acupuncture has been spreading in various countries all over the world. Integrated Chinese and Western medicine (ICWM) has obtained significant effects on the scientific study of CMP for half a century and has a bright future. The staff engaging in CMP career should have self-esteem, confidence, and self-renewal; they should learn the strategic thoughts outline on the developing and innovation of CMP recently issued by 16 ministries and the State Council, walking an inheritable, innovative, modernized, and internationalized way. There is no need to have any perplexes or doubts. Due to historical reasons, there is certain amount of feudal and superstitious dross in the traditional academics of CMP, or some reasoning gives a strained interpretation. We should confront them, absorb the essence and weed out the obsolete and worthless. We need not ignore it. Neither are we afraid when they are pointed out. We don't need to have any complaints. We insist on the guidance as "making the past serving for the present, making foreign things serving for China, and bringing

forth the new from the old".

Pure Gold Fears No Fire

The important objective in inheriting and developing CMP is to get rid of pain and diseases for patients using patient-centered CMP technologies and methods and improving the therapeutic efficacy. The safety and effectiveness of relative prophylactic and therapeutic methods should be confirmed. The therapeutic efficacy is a solid foundation for developing medical sciences, and we should have appetite for creation in this aspect.

There are a lot of excellent observatory reports on the clinical efficacy of CMP with good prospective design of clinical trial and rational randomized control, which is able to meet evidence-based medicine and evaluate the therapeutic efficacy and adverse reaction true to the fact. However, there is an essential problem involving the scientific spirits. Now so many clinical articles report only the good news and not the bad. Almost all the recipes and prescriptions show good efficacy after verification. Reports with poor efficacy or negative results are seldom seen. Resorting to deceit cannot report the clinical efficacy true to the fact, even in many doctoral candidates' theses. It is said that the theses cannot pass the examination. Thus, other people cannot obtain the clinical results repeatedly, which greatly affects the opinions on the academics of CMP held by the medical field. So I believe we must advocate seeking the truth from facts as efficacy evaluation, strengthen the scientific and research designs of medical care. Do not resort to deceit. Chinese medicine (CM) and Western medicine (WM) both have their own advantages, but neither is omnipotent; some may be effective in the treatment of some diseases but ineffective in the treatment of some other diseases. It is an inevitable phenomenon

and needs our further study. Negative results might be so excellent, which are similarly of essential reference value for disease prevention and treatment.

Developing in A Multi-element Mode

We should treat the CMP academic developing from an international view, advocate tolerance and harmony, open the door wider. We welcome colleagues from different disciplines, and those in modern medical field in particular. Do not hide your face behind the lute in the arms. Do not be ignorantly arrogant. We should advocate learning from each other and improving mutually. As for ICWM, we should advocate team cooperation between CM and WM, exert the superiorities, promote the organic integration, and improve the service quality for patients. "Promoting the organic integration of Chinese medical system and Western medical system" is clearly stipulated in the Regulations of CMP of the P.R.China on April 7, 2003 issued by the State Council. I think, if only it is advantageous to pain and disease relief and beneficial to the inheritance and development of ICMW. The adoptions of traditional inherited mode, modern scientific research mode, ICWM integration mode, and complex scientific systematic and biological research mode should all be welcomed. The present problem is too few innovative new thoughts and new methods. If slightly different from traditional thoughts, they are believed to change a tune, the so-called "westernized", "out of forming", "another kind", so many comments! Comprehensive study on complex prescription, a suite style therapy, study and medical care by a single drug or chemical compositions should be paid enough attention to, only that they have a sparkle of progressive significance in developing CMP. Surgery is the specialty in WM, while perioperative ICWM intervention is the strong point of CMP. The prophylaxis and treatment by CMP sometimes plays a leading role, and sometimes plays a minor role. It is glorious both as a leading role and a minor role.

The Three Horse Wagons

Actually, CM and WM exist in China, and this is a condition in China. According to the laws for science developing, the crossing progress and innovation among disciplines is an inevitable developing law. For more than 50 years, the Chinese government has been persisting in advocating the ICWM policy, promoting the unification and cooperation between CM and WM, and taking each other's superiorities

for supplement. Great progress has been achieved in scientific connotations of CM and basic studies on the application of recipes and drugs (CM recipes and CMM). The CM, WM, and ICWM exist in China as three medical troops. It is a good thing, better than one central concept. The cooperation of the three troops jointly serves for the medical and health career of China and for the health of the Chinese people as a solid guarantee. This is really marvelous. Someone asks "Will WM substitute for CM?" This is a timid and weak manifestation that is lacking in confidence. The Chinese government is continually strengthening the policy of protecting and developing CMP, as well as the fostering degree. In the WM, it has projects for developing its own medical science, which can be described as "having too full". Where comes the problem of substitution? Premier WEN Jia-bao points out in his inscription that "To carry out the integration of CM and WM, and to develop the traditional CMP". What a feasible proposal!

Guiding Rational and Equal Academic Discussions

There were disputes on the existence and abolishment of CMP academics, and they are and will be present. As for these violet disputes, we advocate handling them calmly. It is good to have academic arguments. However, we advocate discussing in an equal way presenting the facts and reasoning things out. We disagree to being frightened by flinging invective and beating sticks. Actually there are a lot of problems worth discussing or arguing in the CMP academics. However, the key point is to have the concept to assist the CMP progressing and the concept to assist the CMP to serve for the people's health better, creating a harmonious environment for arguing. A review recently published in *Nature* (July 2007) mentioned "hardness to swallow" CMM decoction. From another aspect, I think whether good medicine tastes bitter. It is advisable to view problems in various aspects. Therefore, most discussions are beneficial, and I just hope to lessen negative effects. We really need to enhance the study on the convergence of CM and WM.

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