

A Brief Reading of the Republic of China Era Journal "Chinese Medicine Pillar Monthly"

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Funding: Shaanxi Provincial Natural Science Basic Research Program (Science and Technology Innovation and Entrepreneurship "Double Mentor System") project "Research on Chinese Medicine Health Culture Based on Chinese Medicine Literature" (2018JM7156);

Research on the Inheritance and Development of Characteristic Culture of Traditional Chinese Medicine in the Characteristic Faculty Project of Philosophy and Social Sciences in Shaanxi Universities (Shaanxi Teaching Position [2009] No. 6)

Shaanxi Provincial Administration of Traditional Chinese Medicine Key Discipline of Traditional Chinese Medicine History and Literature (Shaanxi Traditional Chinese Medicine Development [2018] No. 21)

Abstract: As one of the many traditional Chinese medicine journals in the Republic of China (ROC) era, the journal "Chinese Medicine Pillar Monthly" had been published for 11 consecutive years. It has rich content and covers a wide range of topics. It has important reference value for studying the direction of cultural development, political dynamics, and development trends of Chinese and Western medicine during the ROC era, and the journal was intended to spread the classics and clinical experience of traditional Chinese medicine, making it a medical treasure house. This paper mainly introduces the current status of the journal, the date of its inception, and its main content, features and contributions.

Keywords: Chinese Medicine Pillar Monthly; Periodicals of the Republic of China; Chinese medicine; Chinese and Western medicine

Publication date: March, 2021

Publication online: 31 March, 2021

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"Chinese Medicine Pillar Monthly": Founded by Yang Yiya in Beiping (Beijing) in 1937 (the 26th year of the Republic of China), and the association office site was at No. 30 Beigouyan, Xicheng,

Beiping(Beijing)^[1]. The publication was temporarily suspended in 1939 and resumed two years later. It officially ceased publication in 1948. It lasted 11 years and issued a total of 74 issues. Today, only 66 issues are circulating in the market (missing 1 (8-9), 2 (1-2) (9-10), 4 (3-4)). From documentary records, there were 1 (8-9), 2 (1-2) (9-10) according to the "China Modern Chinese Medicine Journal Collection Index" compiled by the National Digital Library of China and Duan Yishan; 4 (3-4) remains to be investigated^[2].

"Chinese Medicine Pillar Monthly" (hereinafter referred to as "Pillar"), as one of the main journals of modern Chinese medicine, contains a lot of precious literature, and is rich in content, including critical comments, famous medical records, famous works annotations, current affairs, and some folk remedies that are close to the public.

1 Main Content

1.1 Maintaining the legal status of chinese medicine

In the early days of the Republic of China (ROC), Liang Qichao and others who advocated Western learning opened the door of China that had been

closed for a long time, and many advanced Western cultures poured into China. While they brought reforms, they also attacked China's traditional culture. The introduction of Western medicine made the development of Chinese medicine precarious. At that time, the Department of Health, which was dominated by Western medicine, promulgated a series of regulations on Chinese medicine, which undoubtedly worsen the situation of Chinese medicine. In order to save Chinese medicine from catastrophe, "Pillar" turned the tide and called on people from all walks of life to resist and collected more than 20 related articles. The contents included a discussion report of the Chinese Medicine Committee and a letter of warning to the Legislators for their statement on Chinese medicine.

The paper titled "Is this the Chinese Medicine Regulations?" mentioned that all traditional Chinese Medicine clinics had to re-apply for their professional certificates again regardless of whether they had received it or not^[3]. This regulation demonstrated the ambition of the Department of Health to 'eliminate Chinese medicine'. Traditional Chinese medicine has existed for thousands of years, and it is the painstaking effort handed down by our ancestors. Over the years, numerous physicians have dedicated their lives to traditional Chinese medicine. First, Emperor Shennong tested with few hundred types of herbs before he came up with "Shennong's Materia Medica" after much hardship. These masterpieces were the results of life-long efforts dedicated by the physicians throughout history, how can their value be lower than that of Western medicine?

1.2 Impartment of classics

Classics are the basis for learning Chinese medicine. "Pillar" included more than 20 medical books, covering many fields. Under the influence of Yu Yan and others, many ignorant people believe blindly in Western medicine, slander the Chinese medicine, equating Chinese medicine with shamans, and think that Chinese medicine is superstition that should be abolished. To alert the world, "Pillar" published "The History of Chinese Medicine" by Yang Shucheng, which explained the origin and development of Chinese medicine in ancient times, and emphasized the important position of Chinese medicine on the health of Chinese people. How can Chinese medicine with four thousand years of history be replaced by

Western medicine which developed more than two thousand years later?

2 Characteristics and contribution

The ROC era was a period of fierce ideological criticism, wars and turmoil. The fact that "Pillar" can have a place in this special era, published for 11 years with a large number of articles, shows that it must have its unique features and contributions.

There were 74 issues of "Pillar". For issues 1~27, there were many categories of columns. The column titles were basically fixed and occasionally new columns were added. For issues 28~38, column categorization was cancelled due to the reduction in content, and only basic catalog information remained. Issue 39 and 40 are missing, awaiting investigation. The catalogues of issues 41~48 were cancelled, and the catalogues of issues 49~74 were replaced with the main articles of the issue. "Pillar" was not only a journal for medical professionals, but also a journal for the general public. Therefore, in the publication of the journal, some articles close to the public were published, and "inexpensive prescriptions" were among them.

The debate between Chinese and Western medicine was becoming increasingly vigorous, and the status of Chinese medicine was not the same. "Pillar" published a large number of articles to compare the similarities and differences between the two from different aspects.

Shi Jiasheng mentioned in the "Plain Discussion of Traditional Chinese and Western Medicine" that "medicine is only classified as new or old not as Chinese or Western, and according to academic progress, it is not limited by national boundaries"[4]. Traditional Chinese medicine began in Qihuang, and Western medicine was established by Asclepius of Egypt. The two places are thousands of miles apart, and thousands of years apart. They seem to be different, but they coincide. Traditional Chinese medicine emphasizes theory, Western medicine emphasizes experiment, theory is the basis of experiment, and experiment is the examination of theory. The two complement each other and serve the same purpose, but each has its own merits. Western medicine has knowledge that Chinese medicine cannot understand, and Chinese medicine also has areas that Western medicine cannot get involved.

For example, Fang Qiangsi's "Traditional Chinese Medicine and Scientific Medicine" mentioned that "the traditional Chinese medicine can treat blockages with dredging methods, so does Western medicine", and "traditional Chinese medicine can treat diarrhea with purgatives, but Western medicine cannot"^[5].

Apart from the suppression of Western medicine and the Nationalist Government, the decline of Chinese medicine has itself to blame. The first is the factional disputes. Huang Ziheng once wrote an article that "Chinese medicine was bright originally; sadly there were too many schools and disputes among them"^[6]. The Chinese medicine schools divided into many sects during the Jin and Yuan Dynasties, the various factions were disputing with each other, claiming their own doctrines to be true while others were false. One would be accused of betraying forebears if he came up with new ideas. It was really scholastic and complacent at that time. The second is the impartment method of traditional Chinese medicine. Since ancient times, the impartment of traditional Chinese medicine has been based on apprenticeship, and the number of apprentices is very small. Especially for secret prescriptions that were passed down in a single lineage, their knowledge would be lost with just minor inattention. With so many adverse factors, how can Chinese medicine improve?

3 Conclusion

"Pillar" not only carries the precious literature on the development of Chinese medicine, but also reflects the difficult situation of Chinese medicine at that time. It also presents the sidereal overview of the political, ideological and cultural development of the ROC era, and provides scholars with important literature materials to study the development of that era from various perspectives.

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