

Marxism Guides the Preservation and Innovation of Traditional Chinese Medicine's Outstanding Cultural Heritage

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Abstract: Traditional Chinese medicine boasts a rich cultural heritage, yet faces significant challenges in its transmission and development in the contemporary era. Guided by Marxism, researching the inheritance and advancement of TCM culture holds both theoretical and practical significance. This paper explores the convergence points between TCM culture and Marxism from the perspectives of holistic thinking and dialectical treatment, analyzing their strengths and limitations. The modernization of TCM should uphold scientific rigor and practicality, integrating modern technology to meet public health needs. The preservation and innovation of TCM also offer new insights for the localization and practical application of Marxism.

Keywords: Marxism, outstanding traditional culture of TCM, inheritance and development, strategies

1. Introduction

As global economic integration accelerates, the TCM system has garnered increasing worldwide attention while facing challenges from modern medicine.^[1] Advances in science and technology have led some to question TCM, and younger generations show declining interest in traditional medicine. Despite strong government support, achieving the creative transformation and innovative development of TCM remains an urgent issue. This paper explores the inheritance and development of TCM culture based on Marxist theory, analyzing its fundamental concepts, characteristics, and values. By integrating Marxist perspectives on culture, it offers insights for the modernization of TCM. It focuses on examining the alignment between TCM's holistic perspective, syndrome differentiation and treatment, and Marxist philosophical thought, aiming to promote the widespread adoption of TCM services and enhance its international influence.

2. Theoretical Foundations

2.1 Fundamental Principles of Marxism

Marxism, founded by Marx and Engels, centers on historical materialism, the theory of surplus value, and the doctrine of class struggle. Historical materialism emphasizes the decisive role of material factors in social development; the theory of surplus value reveals the exploitative nature of capitalism^[2]; and the theory of class struggle identifies class conflict as the driving force of social progress.

2.2 Historical Experience of Integrating Marxism with Chinese Practice

Marxism underwent localized development in China, forming the theoretical system of socialism with Chinese characteristics. From Mao Zedong to Xi Jinping, successive leaders have integrated Marxism with China's realities to advance revolution, construction, and reform, achieving sound economic and social development.

2.3 Cultural Inheritance and Development Theory from a Marxist Perspective

Marxism emphasizes the socio-economic foundation of culture, asserting that culture should serve the people and promote social equity. Culture is not only a vehicle for knowledge but also a source of spiritual strength. Marxism advocates for the creative transformation of culture, which involves both inheriting fine traditions and absorbing the essence of foreign cultures to achieve innovative development.

3. Overview of the Outstanding Traditional Culture of Chinese Medicine

3.1 Fundamental Concepts of Traditional Chinese Medicine

TCM theory is grounded in holistic concepts and the principles of Yin-Yang and the Five Elements, emphasizing harmony within the human body and with nature. Diagnosis integrates the four diagnostic methods of observation, auscultation and olfaction, inquiry, and palpation. Treatment follows the approach of syndrome differentiation and treatment, utilizing methods such as herbal medicine and acupuncture to regulate Yin-Yang balance, with a strong emphasis on prevention and health preservation.

3.2 Characteristics and Value of TCM Culture

TCM culture centers on yin-yang and the Five Elements, emphasizing dynamic equilibrium. It advocates "medicine as a benevolent art," prioritizing medical ethics and humanistic care. It demonstrates strengths in chronic disease management, rehabilitation, and prevention, offering diverse health management options.

3.3 Strengths and Limitations in the TCM Field

TCM excels in chronic disease prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation. National policies support industry development and international exchange. However, challenges persist: insufficient standardization of herbal medicine quality, lack of scientific evidence for certain therapies, and limited international influence due to dominance by Western medical paradigms. Collaborative efforts among government, academia, and industry are essential for sustainable development.

4. Research on the Convergence Points Between Traditional Chinese Medicine Culture and Marxist Theory

4.1 Convergence Points Between Traditional Chinese Medicine Culture and Marxism's Holistic Perspective

TCM emphasizes holistic concepts, viewing the human body as inseparable from nature—aligning with Marxism's principle of "universal interconnection."^[3] The TCM concept of "preventing illness before it occurs" aligns with Marxism's "prevention-first" philosophy, both advocating for grasping the essential laws of phenomena from a holistic perspective.^[4]

4.2 Integration Points Between TCM Culture and Marxism's Concept of Practice

TCM is oriented toward enhancing public health, reflecting Marxism's practical goal of transforming the world. Its principle of syndrome differentiation and treatment aligns with the Marxist principle of "analyzing specific problems in their specific context," emphasizing flexible treatment tailored to individual conditions, consistent with the Marxist ideology of seeking truth from facts.^[5]

4.3 Similarities Between TCM's Differentiated Diagnosis and Treatment and Marxist Theory

TCM's differentiated diagnosis and treatment emphasizes reconciling contradictions and restoring equilibrium, aligning closely with Marxist dialectics.^[6] The dosage and duration of herbal medicine adhere to the law of quantitative change leading to qualitative change, reflecting the Marxist principle of the mutual transformation of quantity and quality.

5. Strategies for Inheriting and Developing the Outstanding Traditional Culture of TCM Under Marxist Guidance

5.1 Adhering to the Principle of Scientific Development in Modernizing Traditional Chinese Medicine

The modernization of Traditional Chinese Medicine should be guided by Marxism, implementing a people-centered approach to meet public health needs.^[7] It should promote the integration of theory and practice, utilizing modern technology to enhance therapeutic efficacy. Strengthening international exchange to absorb advanced achievements will

advance the internationalization and green development of Traditional Chinese Medicine.^[8]

5.2 Upholding the Principle of Dialectical Negation in Inheriting Traditional Chinese Medicine Culture

Adopting a dialectical negation attitude toward Traditional Chinese Medicine culture involves discarding the obsolete while preserving the essence, inheriting outstanding traditions, and embracing innovation.^[9] Integrate modern technology to advance TCM theoretical development and elevate scientific research standards. Adopt an open approach to absorb global medical excellence and enhance international influence.

5.3 Grounding TCM Modernization in Marxism

TCM modernization must adhere to seeking truth from facts and dialectical unity, fostering integration between traditional and modern medicine. Utilize modern technology to study herbal efficacy while preserving holistic perspectives and syndrome differentiation characteristics.^[10] Uphold a "people-centered" approach, leveraging information technology to promote TCM services and demonstrate its social value.

6. Conclusion

Marxism provides theoretical guidance for the inheritance and development of TCM. TCM culture and Marxism exhibit high compatibility in aspects such as holistic perspectives and dialectical negation. Under Marxist guidance, adhering to scientific development and dialectical negation to advance TCM modernization not only preserves its excellent traditions but also adapts to contemporary demands, contributing to both Healthy China and global health initiatives.

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