

China Drug Store with On-site Healthcare Service in Qing Dynasty: from Perspective of City, Architecture and Traditional Chinese Medicine

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Abstract

Traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) drug store is prevalent during the 17th-19th century in China. TCM on-site healthcare service medical mode “*ZuoTang*” emerged in response. The Joint development of them closely related to the traditional Chinese culture, TCM health preserving theory, the medical system and medical policies of that time. This paper takes HuQingYuTang as the most representable example to explain the corresponding site selection, architectural style and building form of the TCM ZuoTang healthcare service mode.

Keywords

Chinese traditional medicine, on-site healthcare service, TCM drug store, architectural form

Introduction

Chinese people have strong inertia in traditional lifestyle. TCM healthcare has significant influence on the whole Chinese population, especially on the mid-ages and the senior citizens, which are the majority of the population. Before China entered the modern society, the TCM level reached peak in 17th-19th century. This paper describes the reality of the TCM medical system, typical medical mode and the corresponding architectural form of this time period. Although the Chinese have already transferred into the modern life, they still cherish and retrospect the traditional living impressions. So the study on TCM and its relative issues is still beneficial for the modern life.

View of health preserving in TCM theory

The Chinese word Yang Sheng (health preserving) originates from Taoism. Yang means preserve, nourish and be nursed back to health; Sheng means life, growth and survival. View of health preserving is one of the core parts of TCM theory, and it first appeared in the earliest existing TCM ancient codes and records *Huang Di's Canon of Internal Medicine*. Health preserving is a continuous process throughout the whole life. It not only forces on the unhealthy people to help them cure disease and prevent relapse, but also emphasizes disease prevention. It advocates

normal people to Xiushen Yangxing (self-cultivation) in daily life, thus extend the length of life, improve the life quality and enhance the life realm. Xiushen requires people keep healthy by taking daily exercise; Yangxing aims at protecting mental health by self-psychological regulating and emotional control.

TCM medical system in Qing Dynasty

Since the Western Zhou Dynasty (1046-771 B.C.), TCM medical system was divided into royal system and social system. The royal system mainly served for the royal family and the officials of royal government. Social system of Qing dynasty include four components: 1) the governmental healthcare facilities served for the society to prevent the epidemic disease spreading, thereby maintain the social stability. 2) Charitable institutions raised money to help the poor and sick, and provided the basic medical service. 3) TCM drug stores rose in selling herbal medicine and later provided On-site healthcare service in the store business lobby. 4) Individual physicians paid visit to the patient's home. (Zhang 2010) This paper talks about the emergences and combination of the TCM drug stores and Individual physicians, and how they co-influence on the TCM ZuoTang medical mode (On-site Healthcare Service) and corresponding architectural form.

TCM ZuoTang medical mode

Definition

The Chinese word, ZuoTang, origins from the allusion of the famous Chinese physician Zhang Zhongjing in Han Dynasty (202-220 B.C.), who provided healthcare service in his office lobby when he was a government official. TCM ZuoTang mode means the TCM drug store also provides on-site healthcare service besides selling the drugs. The physician diagnoses the patients by observation, auscultation, interrogation and feeling the pulse in the business lobby of the store, and do the TCM physiotherapy such as acupuncture and massage in the adjacent space with shelters when necessary, finally the physician prescribes for the patient and the patient pick up the drugs according to the prescription in the same TCM drug store.

Spatial fundamental

Before the Song Dynasty (960-1279 A.D.), the individual physicians had to prepare the drugs by themselves. After the Wang Anshi Political Reform in Song Dynasty, the government established the first drug store called Huimin Yaoju, and this governmental drug store was continue to be

implemented until Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368 A.D.) and Ming Dynasty (1368-1644 A.D.). (TaipingHuiminHejiju; Liu 1985) In Qing Dynasty, there are both governmental and private drug trade, while the latter was the mainstream, hence enables the rapid development of the private-owned TCM drug stores. These stores are widely distributed in the cities and became the potential medical service stations. Finally they transferred to the available space for the individual physicians to provide healthcare service. So TCM drug stores are the spatial fundamental of the TCM ZuoTang medical mode.

Medical policies' influence on the individual physicians

Prior to Qing Dynasty, the previous governments all had strict restrictions in medical education and physician evaluation, and consequently limited the physicians' number and background. TCM medical policies firstly recorded in *Zhou Li* and initially applied in the West Zhou Dynasty. At the same time, the earliest sub-specialization of TCM also appeared, and the physicians were classified in different grades by the annual evaluation. When it comes to Qin Dynasty (221-207 A.D.) and Han Dynasty, apprentice system is adopted in medical education. Ming Dynasty divided and restricted citizens in ten different profession groups and classes, and physicians ranked the fifth, besides the physician profession had to be inherited and only the ones survived in the selective exams and being registered could final become the real physicians. (Chen 1937) In Qing Dynasty, the government abandoned the past retractions and adopted more liberal policies in medical education and administration. Anyone can become a physician by accepting official medical education, being a physician apprentice, learning from the family member or self-teaching. The enlightened medical policies brought more choices to the citizens when they were seeking medical service, at the same time highly promoted the medicine development. The liberal medical education mode increased the number of the physician candidates and also enriched their background. The individual physician population thus made up with various people with the characteristic of mobility, and they became the main component of the on-site physicians in TCM drug stores.

The collaboration of individual physicians and TCM drug stores

TCM drug store is popular in Qing Dynasty. However most individual physicians can't afford to set up their own drug stores. Before the TCM ZuoTang medicinal mode appeared, Qing's individual physicians seldom provide drugs to patients directly unless they were visiting patients at their home in the remote area. Patients or their families had to go and buy the drugs from the

TCM drug stores separately with the physicians' prescriptions. (Zhongchun 2006) As time past, because of the requirement of convenient service and the purpose of more profitable, some TCM drug stores began to contact the individual physicians. At the beginning, they only expected to establish a stable supply-demand relationship with the physicians to sell more drugs, subsequently the TCM drug stores began to invite famous physicians sit in the business lobby and offer the on-site healthcare service, in some situations the owner or pharmacist of the store could also be the on-site physician. In this way, the patient could complete the entire process from seeking medical service to picking up the drugs in the same place.

Summary

In Qing dynasty, the collaboration of TCM drug stores and the individual physicians led to the re-combination of medicine and pharmacy after a long time separate development. TCM drug stores provide the space for on-site healthcare service, the owner or pharmacist of the store as well as the individual physicians acted as the on-site physicians, all these aspects work together contribute to the emergence and widely development of TCM ZuoTang medical mode.

Before the TCM ZuoTang medical mode appeared, most families can't afford to invite a doctor home to help the patient; Besides the slack policies and the irregular curative activities together with the separation of medicine and pharmacy all led to the poor healthcare outcomes. This mode relieved these problems and improved the medical effectiveness. Although the mode ask for a long-term stable place, this requirement also help oversee the physicians to ensure the high quality of the medical level, thereby made up the poor medical service quality to a certain extent. The TCM ZuoTang medical mode highly combined TCM with traditional Chinese pharmacy, therefore guarantee the physicians knew well about the drugs they were using; in return the pharmacist were clearly informed with what will the drugs used for.

Corresponding architectural form relays on dwelling form

The architectural form corresponding to TCM ZuoTang medical mode is evolved from the traditional Chinese dwelling—the courtyard house, in general, the first floor is used for commercial, the second floor is used for living.

In 16th -19th century, The TCM drug store's architecture form was still similar to that of the courtyard house. In the drug store business lobby, as for the medical service, there is only space for diagnose, simple treatment and filling the prescriptions. There is no room for the inpatient

unit in the whole building. The architectural form of the TCM drug store with on-site healthcare service hadn't transfer to a specialized hospital form. There are three reasons:

Reason from production scale, technology and therapeutic approaches of TCM

Compared with the modern pharmaceuticals, in Qing Dynasty, the scale of drug production and storage is relative small; the technology and process of manufacturing are quite simple. The main therapeutic approaches of TCM are acupuncture and massage. Neither the pharmacy nor the medicine requested for complicated specialized space. The workshop and commercial architecture originated from the traditional Chinese courtyard form had already met the requirements.

Chines respect to the family culture

The traditional Chinese daily life always based on the families. The inhabitants prefer the private lifestyle within their own families other than living in large groups. Even though there were infirmaries founded by the government and the religions, they are mainly built for two purposes, firstly take care of the infectious victims to control the spread of the epidemic diseases; secondly provide shelters and basic medical service for the orphans, widows and other homeless. Other regular patients relied on their own families during convalescence because of the better material conditions and spiritual support. The places for convalescence are private houses instead of inpatient rooms.

Reason from TCM health preserving theory

Patients usually recover at home because convalescence should be a continuous process throughout the entire daily life. TCM is not a simple medical concept; it's actually a complex of the Chinese culture. The holistic thinking in Chinese traditional philosophy takes nature, human and society as an integrated system; every element in the system has correlation dependences with the others. (Liu 1990) The theory Unity of Heaven and Man, which means man is an integral part of nature, is the core concept of Chinese holistic thinking, and it's worshiped by both Confucianism and Taoism. After the induction and deduction of *Huang Di's Canon of Internal Medicine*, it finally turned out to be the TCM health preserving theory. The humans, livelihood and environment are always connected; Health preserving process can't be separated from the everyday life. With the influence of holistic thinking, TCM not only aims at curing and recover from the diseases, but also take the prevention as the key issue. Disease prevention in

TCM is actually the sequential health preserving process that neither could be broke away from the families and daily activities nor be limited in a specific room.

Architectural style and building layout

The corresponding architectural form of TCM ZuoTang medical mode is

“*QianDianHouChang*”: in a reduplicate or tripartite courtyard house, the front-yard is the store while the backyard is the workshop. Since 17th century in Qing Dynasty, large amount of TCM drug stores with this mode sprang out. The typical illustrations are the Beijing TongRenTang (1669) and Hangzhou HuQingYuTang (1874). This paper takes HuQingYuTang as example to explain the specific architectural form, because it is the only existing and the best preserved Qing’s workshop and commercial building in China.

Site selection in the city

HuQingYuTang locates in Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province, China, built in 1874 and it covers an area about 2700m². It’s a tripartite courtyard house with the characteristics of the classical garden architecture in the southern Yangtze Rive. It locates at the foot of the Mountain Wu, and adjacent to the Qinghu River Water Channel and the most important Qiantang No.1 Well. The site selection takes both the transportation and water source into consideration, shows the respect to the nature and the theory Unity of Heaven and Man from the aspect of architecture.

Architectural style

Although the TCM drug store layout was relative simple at that time, but it continued the traditional Chinese architectural style. The HuQingYuTang building is enclosed by 12m tall external walls, it adopts the double eave roofs and the courtyard inside is cloistered. All these elements combine together created the spacious bright halls. The superb solid architectural spatial form suggests the solemn attitude to medicine and the respect to the patients. As to the decorative art, there are also aesthetic treatments on the buildings. The carvings on the wood, stones and bricks are mainly about the TCM legends. In this way, the building components are also the aesthetic components, which can enhance the TCM culture atmosphere in the drug store, accordingly create the psychological suggestion, sense of ceremony and the healing environment for the customers. (Ma 2006)

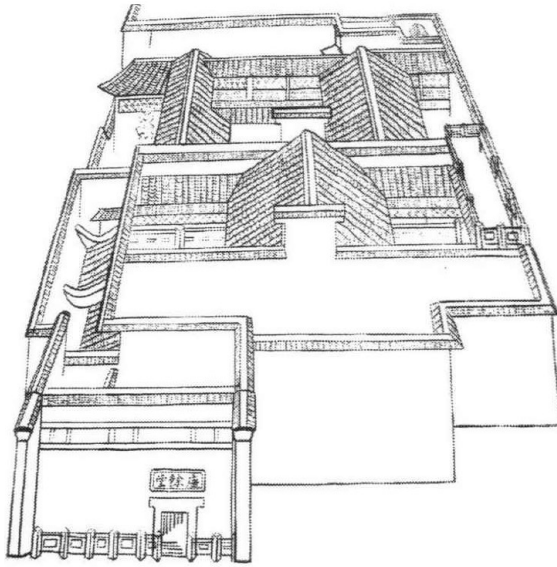


Figure 1. Sketch of HuQingYuTang



Figure 2. Carvings on building components

The whole building cluster of HuQingYuTang face the north, the main entrance is on the eastern façade and connects with the entrance of the store business lobby with a long corridor. The store is in the first entry of the courtyard house, there is a courtyard in front of the business lobby for waiting and rest; The herb-cabinets and counters are on the both sides of the front part of the lobby; the central part of the lobby is for the on-site healthcare service; the accountant and administration are in the backward. (Guan 1989) The second entry of the courtyard house is consisted with herb finishing, medicine manufacture, offices and meeting rooms. The third entry has been dismantled, but it was originally used for deer farming, raw material finishing and extracting as well as storage. (Wang 1989) These three entries got together accomplished the Qiandian Houchang mode, and enabled the whole process of providing medical service, producing drugs and selling drugs in the same place.

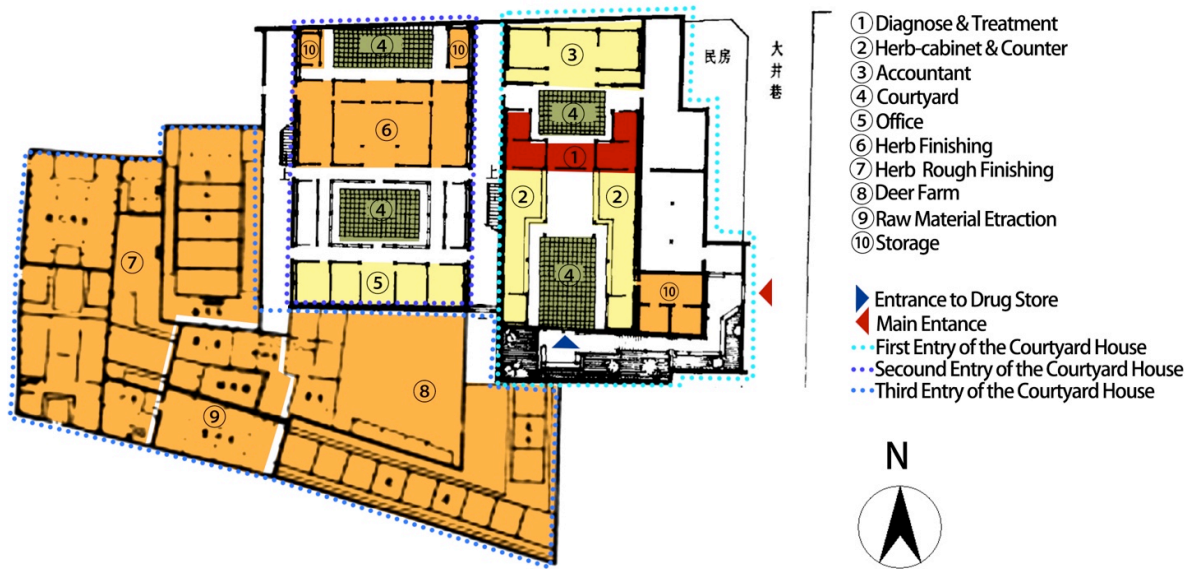


Figure 3. HuQingYuTang layout

Conclusions

In 17th-19th century before western medicine spreads to China, TCM ZuoTang medical mode is the most common medical mode in civil life, and the TCM drug store is the primary on-site healthcare service place. From the perspective of architecture, on the one hand, TCM drug store combines both medicine with pharmacy and manufacture with sale; on the other hand, it inherits the traditional Chinese architecture style and characteristics, and focuses on forming the sense of ceremony and the healing environment. As the core of TCM theory, health preserving is still significantly influencing the Chinese lifestyle; therefore TCM medical mode and the corresponding architectural form, which are still developing with the instruction of the view of health preserving, are always worth discussion.

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