

The Integration Path of Traditional Chinese Medicine Xuanfu and Taoist Health Preservation Theory from the Perspective of Traditional Culture

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Abstract

The Xuanfu theory of traditional Chinese medicine and the health preservation philosophy of Taoism are both important components of Chinese traditional culture, rooted in the cultural core of "unity of heaven and man" and "gasification popularity", and have a natural theoretical compatibility. Traditional Chinese Medicine Xuanfu focuses on the core of "promoting circulation and opening and closing", covering the multidimensional pathways of human body shape, qi, and spirit and intention; Taoist health preservation adheres to the principles of "Dao follows nature" and "dual cultivation of life and soul", pursuing harmony between form and spirit. This article starts from the foundation of traditional culture, sorts out the evolution and core connotation of the Xuanfu theory of traditional Chinese medicine, explains the core and practical methods of Taoist health preservation thought, analyzes the theoretical convergence points of the two in "Qi theory", "holistic view" and "form and spirit view", explores the three-dimensional integration path of "theoretical interpretation", "method complementarity" and "carrier integration", and reveals its practical value for contemporary health preservation and the significance of traditional cultural inheritance. Research has shown that the integration of the two is a return to the integrity of traditional culture and an innovative direction for the traditional Chinese medicine health preservation system, which can provide ideas for modern health management that combine cultural heritage and practical effectiveness.

Keywords

Traditional culture, traditional Chinese medicine Xuanfu, Taoist health preservation, integrated path, unity of form and spirit.

1. Introduction

Chinese traditional culture is the common spiritual foundation of traditional Chinese medicine theory and Taoist thought. Its cosmology of "unity of heaven and man", life philosophy of "qi transformation and popularity", and regulatory philosophy of "yin and yang balance" provide fundamental guidance for the development of the two disciplines. The Xuanfu theory of traditional Chinese medicine, as an important extension of the theory of hidden phenomena in traditional Chinese medicine, originated from the Yellow Emperor's Inner Canon, systematically expounded by Liu Wansu, and supplemented by later medical experts, forming a complete system covering physiology, pathology, and diagnosis and treatment. The core is the "pathway" function of communication between the inside and outside of the human body, which is related to the distribution of qi, blood, body fluids, the regulation of consciousness, and the coordination of organs [1]. The Taoist concept of health preservation originated from Laozi's "Tao Te Ching" and was developed by Zhuangzi, Ge Hong, and others. It constructed a health preservation system based on the principle of "Dao follows nature" and the methods of

guiding, accepting qi, preserving thoughts, and maintaining unity, pursuing both physical and mental well-being and longevity. In the context of diverse contemporary health needs and the revival of traditional culture, there is an urgent need for health preservation methods that combine cultural connotations and practical value. Although the Xuanfu theory has a systematic diagnosis and treatment logic, there is insufficient popularization of daily health preservation; Although Taoism has rich practices in health preservation, it lacks deep integration with the physiological and pathological theories of traditional Chinese medicine. The two have the same source but different streams, and their integration can not only make up for limitations, but also activate the contemporary vitality of traditional culture. The academic research on Xuanfu mainly focuses on pathology and clinical practice, while the emphasis on Taoist health preservation is on literature review and methodological verification. The integration of the two in the traditional cultural perspective is relatively weak. Based on this, this article takes traditional culture as a link, explores the theoretical convergence points between the two, explores the path of scientific integration, enriches and adds new ideas to traditional Chinese medicine health preservation theory, provides theoretical support for the standardization of Taoist health preservation methods, and helps the creative transformation of excellent traditional Chinese culture in the field of health. It has important theoretical and practical significance.

2. The Traditional Cultural Foundation and Core Connotation of Xuanfu Theory in Traditional Chinese Medicine

The Xuanfu theory of traditional Chinese medicine is deeply rooted in Chinese traditional culture, and its core concepts and thinking are in line with the core of traditional culture. The term 'Xuanfu' first appeared in the Yellow Emperor's Inner Canon, *Su Wen*, *Shui Re Xue Lun*, which states that 'the so-called Xuanfu refers to empty sweat'. Although it refers to pores, it contains the attributes of 'promoting circulation' and 'opening and closing'. This concept originates from the interpretation of "Xuan" in traditional culture - in the *Tao Te Ching*, "Xuan is mysterious and mysterious, the gate of many wonders", "Xuan" is a profound connection to all things, and "Fu" is a place for accommodating passage, which not only reflects the questioning of the origin of the universe, but also implies the understanding of the human life pathway.

During the Wei, Jin, Southern and Northern Dynasties, metaphysics was prevalent, and the speculative ideas of "valuing nothingness" and "valuing existence" influenced the cognition of medical practitioners. The connotation of Xuanfu expanded from "sweat and emptiness" to an intangible pathway for communication between the inside and outside of the human body. Liu Wansu of the Jin Dynasty first systematically expounded the theory of Xuanfu in his book "*Su Wen Xuan Ji Yuan Bing Shi*", proposing that Xuanfu "has everything" and is distributed throughout the human body's organs and fur, serving as the "gateway for the rise and fall of qi". If the function is not functioning properly, "qi and liquid cannot flow, and depression leads to illness". This not only inherits the cosmology of "qi transformation and popularity", but also conforms to the thinking of "overall constant movement".

The core connotation of Xuanfu in traditional Chinese medicine is the three-dimensional pathway of "form, qi, and spirit": the "form" level is the channel for the distribution of qi, blood, and body fluids, as well as the excretion of metabolic products, such as sweating through pores and the exchange of organs and body fluids; The "Qi" level is the gateway for the rise and fall of Qi machines. The generation, operation, and distribution of Qi depend on the Xuanfu. If it is smooth, it will be regulated, otherwise Qi stagnation and blood stasis will occur; The "divine" level is a bridge for communication between internal and external mental activities. In "*The Spirit Pivot: The Original Spirit*," "the two spirits fight each other, which is called a god." The

perception and thinking of a god need to be transmitted through the Xuanfu to convey information, which is in line with the "unity of form, qi, and spirit" concept of life.

The traditional cultural concept of "balance between yin and yang" runs through the Xuanfu theory: the opening and closing of Xuanfu follows the growth and decline of yin and yang, with a high level of yang during the day leading to heat dissipation, and a high level of yin at night leading to spiritual nourishment; Imbalance between yin and yang leads to loss of balance in opening and closing, which can cause diseases [2]. Diagnosis and treatment should balance the balance of yin and yang, such as warming yang to aid in opening and closing, nourishing yin and moistening pathways, or blocking the flow of qi, in line with the value pursuit of "harmony is precious", demonstrating the deep integration of traditional Chinese medicine and traditional culture.

3. The core essence and cultural core of Taoist health preservation theory

The Taoist health theory is based on Taoist philosophy and rooted in traditional Chinese culture. Its core is the pursuit of "nature," "life," and "harmony." The core principle of "Dao follows nature" originates from the Tao Te Ching, which states that "humans follow the earth, the earth follows the sky, the sky follows the Tao, and the Tao follows nature." Here, "nature" refers to the natural laws of things. Taoism believes that human life activities should follow natural laws, and violating them will consume energy and damage health, which is highly consistent with the cosmology of "unity of heaven and man" [3].

The "dual cultivation of life and soul" is the core method system, which is in line with the "unity of form and spirit" concept of life. Sex is related to the cultivation of the mind and nature, while fate is related to the maintenance of the body. The two are inseparable and need to be taken into account to achieve both form and spirit. Xiuxing emphasizes "tranquility and non action" and "reducing selfishness and desires" to minimize spiritual exhaustion; Zhuangzi's "The Great Grandmaster" proposes the concept of "mind fasting" and "sitting in forgetfulness", eliminating distractions to return to the original state of mind and spirit, echoing the idea of "achieving the ultimate emptiness and maintaining tranquility".

The cultivation of life revolves around the maintenance of "qi". Taoism regards "qi" as the origin of life, and "Zhuangzi's Journey to the North" has the phrase "the ear that connects the world with qi". The fullness and smoothness of human qi can regulate the rise and fall of life. Based on this, methods such as taking in qi, guiding, and exhaling are proposed: taking in qi through breathing to clear and eliminate turbidity to replenish qi; Guiding through body movements combined with thoughts to regulate qi and blood, such as the "Guiding Diagram" unearthed from the Mawangdui Han Tomb, which contains various guiding movements; Tuna's use of "deep, fine, even, and long" breathing enhances lung function and promotes the dispersion of qi, all reflecting the concept of "qi circulation" in life.

Taoist health preservation also includes the idea of "following the rhythm", which is related to "the growth and decline of yin and yang" and "the generation and restraint of the five elements". Advocate for maintaining health by following the rhythm of day and night (working at sunrise and resting at sunset), the four seasons (spring, summer, long autumn, harvest, and winter storage, with corresponding maintenance priorities for each season), and the life rhythm (shaping for teenagers, nurturing for middle-aged and elderly), reflecting reverence for natural laws and the holistic thinking of "correspondence between heaven and man".

4. The Integration and Convergence Point of Traditional Chinese Medicine Xuanfu and Taoist Health Preservation Theory

The Xuanfu theory of traditional Chinese medicine and the health preservation theory of Taoism are both the crystallization of traditional Chinese cultural wisdom. The core points of convergence are concentrated in the three dimensions of "consensus on qi theory", "holistic thinking", and "unity of form and spirit", forming a solid foundation for integration.

Qi theory is the core theoretical link. Traditional Chinese Medicine Xuanfu uses "qi" as the driving force and defines it as the "gateway for qi to enter, exit, rise, and fall". When the Xuanfu is unobstructed, the qi and liquid are transported and coordinated, and the organs are coordinated. If it is blocked, the qi will block and cause disease. Liu Wansu also emphasized that "if the qi and liquid are not sufficient, stagnation will lead to disease". Taoist health preservation also regards "qi" as the origin of life, advocating that "when qi gathers, it gives birth; when qi disperses, it dies". The core of health preservation is to maintain vitality, regulate qi flow, and the essence of methods such as taking qi, guiding, and exhaling is to promote the generation and dispersion of qi. The two have a highly consistent understanding of "qi" [4].

Holistic thinking is a common way of thinking rooted in the cosmology of "unity of heaven and man". Traditional Chinese medicine Xuanfu is distributed throughout the body, connecting organs, fur, and other tissues to form an internal and external network. Local Xuanfu abnormalities may affect the whole body, such as pore blockage leading to fever and sweating. Taoism believes that the human body is a microcosm of the universe, and life activities are closely related to nature. Health preservation needs to balance the internal coordination of the human body and the harmony of nature, such as selecting the timing for practicing guidance techniques and adjusting breathing according to the seasons. Both abandon isolated perspectives and adhere to a holistic understanding of life.

The unity of form and spirit is a common pursuit of value. The three-dimensional pathway of "form, qi, and spirit" in traditional Chinese medicine Xuanfu regards form, qi, and spirit as a unified entity. If Xuanfu is normal, the form and spirit are harmonious, and blockage can cause mental problems such as insomnia. Taoism takes "dual cultivation of life and soul" as its core. "Cultivation of life" nourishes the body and replenishes vitality, "cultivation of nature" nourishes the mind and spirit, "mind study" and "sitting in forgetfulness" are in line with the Xuanfu's "path of benefiting the mind and spirit", and the guidance and acceptance of qi are consistent with the "path of benefiting the form and quality". Both agree that harmony between form and spirit is the ultimate state of health.

In addition, both follow the principle of "conforming to nature" regulation, with traditional Chinese medicine's Xuanfu opening and closing following the balance of yin and yang, and diagnosis and treatment emphasizing "adapting to the situation"; Taoist health preservation is based on the principle of "conforming to nature", which jointly reflects respect for the laws of nature and further consolidates the foundation of integration.

5. The Three Dimensional Integration Path of Traditional Chinese Medicine Xuanfu and Taoist Health Preservation Theory

Based on the theoretical convergence of the two, combined with the inheritance of traditional culture and contemporary health needs, a three-dimensional path of "theoretical interpretation", "complementary methods", and "carrier integration" can be constructed to activate contemporary values.

5.1. Theoretical Interpretation: Building a Unified Interpretation System in the Context of Traditional Culture

Theoretical integration needs to complement traditional culture as a link. The Taoist concept of 'Dao follows nature' can explain the essential function of the Xuanfu, and its smooth opening and closing is an instinctive response of the human body to conform to the laws of nature; The concept of "tranquility and non action" can deepen the understanding of the pathogenesis of Xuanfu, and the "disturbance of spirit and qi" caused by emotional fluctuations and desire depletion, which echoes the theory of "internal injury of the seven emotions" in traditional Chinese medicine. On the contrary, the theory of Xuanfu in traditional Chinese medicine can standardize the logic of Taoist health preservation. The essence of "cultivating life" is the smoothness of qi and blood flow in Xuanfu, and the tranquility of the mind and spirit in "cultivating nature" depends on the smoothness of the Xuanfu divine intention pathway. The mechanism of action of swallowing and exhaling qi can be interpreted as regulating the opening and closing of the Xuanfu in the lungs and promoting the circulation of qi throughout the body [5].

5.2. Complementary Methods: Formulate a Health Preservation Plan of "Tongli Xuanfu+Life Dual Cultivation"

The practical methods of the two have their own focuses and complement each other to form a systematic solution. At the level of cultivating one's life, Taoist guidance techniques promote the opening and closing of the Xuanfu on the body surface through limb movements, incorporating traditional Chinese medicine meridian and acupoint stimulation, as well as dietary therapy or traditional Chinese medicine regulation to regulate qi and enhance the effect of promoting circulation. At the level of spiritual cultivation, Taoist methods such as "Xinzhai" and "sitting and forgetting" can reduce the impact of "divine disturbance and qi chaos" on the Xuanfu. Combined with the traditional Chinese medicine concept of "tranquility and emptiness, true qi follows", it guides health practitioners to focus on the operation of qi, achieve "harmony between spirit and qi", and enhance the effectiveness of health preservation.

5.3. Integration of carriers: relying on traditional cultural scenes to achieve dissemination and implementation

Integration needs to be promoted through traditional cultural carriers. At the venue level, promote the establishment of Taoist health experience areas in traditional Chinese medicine clinics, introduce Xuanfu theory consultation into Taoist temples, and rely on academies to conduct interdisciplinary lectures to cultivate compound talents. At the scene level, integrating health preservation methods into traditional festivals and daily life, and promoting targeted health preservation methods based on the characteristics of the four seasons; Using new media to create traditional cultural health IP, popularizing simple integrated health preservation methods through short videos and live broadcasts, and bringing traditional wisdom closer to life.

6. Contemporary Value and Practical Implications of Integration

The integration of traditional Chinese medicine Xuanfu and Taoist health preservation provides important support for the inheritance of traditional culture, contemporary health preservation, and the development of traditional Chinese medicine theory, with core values reflected in three aspects.

At the level of cultural inheritance, the integration of the two achieves the overall return and revitalization of traditional culture. Traditional Chinese medicine and Taoism are both branches of traditional culture, and previous research has mostly been conducted

independently, without highlighting their overall value. Integrating traditional culture as a link, breaking down disciplinary barriers, highlighting the characteristics of "diversity and unity", and clarifying the inherent connections of traditional wisdom. The integrated guidance exercises, meditation classes, etc. not only preserve the cultural genes of Taoism and the essence of Xuanfu theory, but also meet the pace of contemporary life and health needs, avoiding "museum style" inheritance and achieving "living inheritance".

At the level of health promotion, integration provides a solution that combines cultural connotations and practical effectiveness for health management. At present, sub-health problems are prominent, such as fatigue, fatigue, insomnia, and anxiety, which are often related to "poor qi flow", "blocked Xuanfu", and "disorder of form and spirit". The fusion plan focuses on "Tongli Xuanfu" and "dual cultivation of life and soul", taking into account the smooth regulation of physiological qi and the maintenance of mental and spiritual well-being, which is in line with the contemporary three-dimensional model of health. Guided by the principles of Xuanfu, meditation and flirting, and dietary assistance to alleviate sub-health, the program does not require complex equipment and is easy to promote at home and in the workplace, helping to improve the health literacy of the entire population.

At the level of theoretical innovation, the integration injects vitality into the theory of traditional Chinese medicine health preservation. There is a problem of "disconnection between tradition and modernity" in traditional Chinese medicine health preservation theory. Taoist health preservation practice methods can provide materials for Xuanfu theory and promote its expansion towards "health preservation orientation"; The physiological and pathological theory of Xuanfu provides support for Taoist health preservation, promoting its transformation from an "experiential" to a "theoretical" approach, helping to build a Chinese style health preservation system, and enhancing the international discourse power of traditional Chinese medicine culture [6].

In practice, it is necessary to adhere to the principle of "traditional culture as the root and practical needs as the soul", deepen research on theoretical integration points, innovate health preservation methods, strengthen interdisciplinary talent cultivation, and cultivate cultural confidence, so that the public can feel the charm of traditional culture in health preservation.

7. Conclusion

The Xuanfu theory of traditional Chinese medicine and the Taoist health preservation theory are both achievements of traditional Chinese cultural wisdom. They have a natural fit in theoretical core, thinking mode, and value pursuit. Their integration is an inevitable requirement for the inheritance and innovation of traditional culture, as well as a practical need for contemporary health preservation practices. This article summarizes the cultural foundations and core connotations of the two, clarifies the three major points of convergence: "consensus on qi theory", "holistic thinking", and "unity of form and spirit", and constructs a three-dimensional path of "theoretical interpretation", "complementary methods", and "carrier integration", providing feasible solutions for integration.

Theoretical interpretability achieves unified interpretation in the context of traditional culture, enriches the philosophical connotation of Xuanfu in traditional Chinese medicine, and standardizes the logic of Taoist health practice; The complementary methods form a systematic plan of "Tongli Xuanfu+Life Dual Cultivation", which combines the precision of traditional Chinese medicine with the practicality of Taoism; The integration of carriers relies on the dissemination of traditional cultural scenes to achieve the dynamic inheritance of traditional culture. The three support each other, forming a complete integrated system.

The integration of the two has significant contemporary value: achieving the return and revitalization of traditional culture at the cultural level; Provide solutions for sub-health issues

at the health level, and help improve the health literacy of the entire population; Promote innovation in traditional Chinese medicine health preservation theory at the theoretical level and enhance confidence in traditional medical culture. In practice, it is necessary to adhere to the principle of "culture as the root and demand as the soul", pay attention to theoretical deepening, methodological innovation, and talent cultivation, and ensure the scientific and practical application of achievements.

Looking ahead to the future, there is still vast space for the integration of the two. Subsequent clinical empirical research can be conducted to verify the effectiveness of the plan, strengthen interdisciplinary cooperation to enrich the theoretical system, promote standardization and internationalization of achievements, and enable traditional Chinese health wisdom to contribute more to human health. In summary, the integration of the two not only inherits excellent traditional Chinese culture, but also innovates contemporary health preservation models, which has important theoretical value, practical significance, and contemporary value.

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