

The Relationship between Literary Development and Traditional Medicine in the Southern Dynasty of China

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ABSTRACT: During the Southern Dynasty of China, the belief that human physiology and temperament derived from innate nature and external influences persisted, leading to a close relationship between personal constitution and literary style. This study investigates the connection between Chinese traditional medicine and literature in the Southern Dynasty. The weakened health of the aristocratic families in the Jiangdong region became a backdrop to showcase their political talents and moral integrity, establishing that a weak physical constitution symbolized high literary excellence, as evidenced by the famous, flamboyant literary style of the time. In this context, physical health was intimately linked to literary creation and style, forming a dynamic cycle through mutual resonance. This research provides a new interdisciplinary perspective for studying classical Chinese literature and is significant for East Asian cultural studies.

KEYWORDS: East Asian cultural studies, classical Chinese literature, the Southern Dynasty, personal constitution, literary style

Introduction

Xie Jiusheng (2018, 113) points out that in the case of China, the relationship between traditional art and traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) characterize by homogeneity, hybridity, and literary nature, which means that medicine has art in it, and art has its medicine. This phenomenon is particularly evident in the artistic biographies of the Wei-Chin and Northern and Southern Dynasties. In other words, during the Wei, Chin, and Northern and Southern Dynasties, traditional Chinese medicine and the traditional arts of calligraphy, painting, and music formed part of the Chinese cultural tradition and had a fundamental commonality. Huan (2014, 89-94) also points out that the ancients believed that art could only benefit physical and mental health and enhance one's spirituality and creativity if it followed the laws of vital activity. Out of this pursuit, the ancients emphasized the harmonious beauty of the sound, rhythm, and word form of literature and art, as well as the purity and gentleness of its main ideas. "Qi" is the meta-category of classical Chinese literature and the core of traditional Chinese medicine. The Wei, Chin, and Southern and Northern Dynasties were a time of transition in the history of the development of the qi of medicine and the qi of literature, and the two showed a certain degree of collusion. The qi of medicine and the qi of literature were symbiotic in origin. In their development, both valued the movement of qi, the transformation of qi, the nurturing of qi, and innate endowment. The qi of literature ultimately had to be expressed through life. As plagues plagued the Wei-Chin, North, and South Dynasties periods, it is easy to see that the qi of traditional Chinese medicine profoundly impacted the development of the qi of literature during this period.

Further, "qi" is manifested in various forms. Wang Bi of the Three Kingdoms believe: "The same sound corresponds to the same, the height does not have to be even; the same qi seeks the same, the body does not have to be the same." Xing Shuang notes: "the first four, two, five, three on, the same sound corresponding to the same does not have to be evenly high and low also, the same qi seek each other does not have to Qi form and quality." His body and quality refer to form and texture, respectively. Moreover, in the Book of Chin - Biography of Wang Bao of Nanyang, it is mentioned that "Bao had a rich and magnificent physique, and tasted himself as weighing eight hundred pounds." Here the term physique is similar to the meaning of physique in traditional Chinese medicine. In Chinese medicine, the constitution refers to the overall quality of the

organism due to the strength and weakness of the internal organs, meridians, qi, and blood, yin, and yang. It is not fixed and is influenced by both genetic and acquired factors. It is not fixed and is affected by both congenital and acquired influences. It can be considered as a reflection of the qi movement of the body. The physique largely influences the individual's style.

In the history of Chinese literature, scholars of the Wei, Chin, and Northern and Southern Dynasties discovered nature outwardly and the deep love of the self inwardly, returning to themselves to rediscover their bodies (Bai 2009, 87-95). In *Metaphysical Immortality*, Liu (2007, 407) summarises, "The so-called Wei-Chin style is, in an essential sense, built on the human body. It includes how one disposes of one's body in the face of death, how one uses bodily imagination to express the desire for self-transcendence, how one uses technical practices to circumvent the advent of death, and how one consumes oneself more fervently in the despair of certain death." Yu (2003, 280) points out that "the style of scholars from the Wei and Chin dynasties onwards, holding powder, practicing clear words with their mouths, and walking prudently, was all initiated in the late Eastern Han Dynasty, and was the result of a high degree of development of individual self-consciousness among the scholars."

The Wei, Chin, and North and South Dynasties period was also a period of rapid development of the science of health and wellness in China. The writings on health care during this period have notable characteristics: the prevalence of the "cold food" and "dissolution" categories; the proliferation of Buddhist medical writings; the gradual systematization of Taoist ideas on health care; and the esteem of the emperors of the time (Chen 2010, 9). Ji Kang made the famous assertion that "there are five difficulties in maintaining health." Ge Hong emphasized the idea of prevention in his "Baopu Zi" and believed that "the essence of health is not to hurt." He used the Taoist theory of Daoism, which originated in pre-Qin Daoism, as the basis of divine and immortal Daoism. He discussed the reality of the divine and the learnability of the immortal way. He took "Xuan, Dao, and Yi" as the theoretical basis for internal cultivation, and "the form and the spirit depend on each other" as an essential principle of health care, requiring the internal practice of qi, channeling, the practice of the house arts, and the external consumption of food, with the building of virtue as a prerequisite for health care. Tao Hongjing inherited Ge Hong's ideas and also pointed out that the essential elements of human life were form and spirit, so he took nourishing form and regulating spirit as the key to nutritional health, and at the same time, proposed a whole set of qigong guidance methods, among which the circumferential massage method applied until the early 20th century. The Taoist philosophy of health care during this period was deeply influenced by the Yellow Emperor's Classic of Internal Medicine; for example, the Taiping Jing inherited the Yellow Emperor's Classic of Internal Medicine, based on the idea that all the five viscera harbor the gods, proposed that "the gods that are in the body" and transformed the body gods into concrete images. The Haunting Jing, based on the concept of the twelve organs of the Yellow Emperor's Classic of Internal Medicine, proposes that the gods of the five viscera and six bowels are the core of the body-god system, and further expands its scope, eventually forming a system of three parts, eight scenes, and twenty-four real gods. Buddhism attaches importance to the transformation of the three karma of body, mouth, and mind, and believes that disease is one of the four great sufferings, which are bound to occur in life, and that health should be based on meditation and quietness but at the same time it is also pointed out that exercise and labor should be done regularly, and that one should "always exercise, always labor, be careful with action, abstain from lust, be careful with food and drink, follow medical advice, avoid calamities and evil play." Thus, the development of traditional Chinese medicine and literature in this period placed the human body in a vital development position and reflected a concern for the physical body in concrete practice.

Further on, this collision was even more pronounced during the Southern Dynasties. It was a period when 'physical weakness' became popular and consequently influenced the creation of poetry and vocal rhythms in the court style of the period, which in turn contributed to the development of the 'weakness' trend, thus creating a fluid cycle. It was not until the end of the Southern dynasty that this cycle was finally broken, not only because of some Confucian literary

critics of the time but also because this trend was highly detrimental to a country in turmoil. Wang Yongping's research also points out that most medical scholars of the highest status and most notable influence in the Northern dynasties came from the Southern dynasties and were mostly from the background of the Jiangzuo scholarly society, which means that there was a deep connection between traditional Chinese medicine and the Jiangzuo scholarly society, which was focused on the physique of both. As a result, both medical developments and literary creations of the period sought physical change. Interestingly, however, the two physique pursuits have taken opposite directions but ultimately formed a cycle of mutual advancement.

Body constitution and its changes

The changes in the physique of the scholars were inseparable from the geographical and social environment of the time. Based on biological research, Mr. Zhu Kezhen (1972, 15-38) deduced that the Eastern Han and Wei-Chin-North and South Dynasties periods belonged to the second cold period. The change in temperature affects a series of climatic elements, such as rainfall. This change led to significant changes in agricultural production during this period, especially in farming practices and food production. At the same time, this climatic change had already significantly affected ecological and agro-pastoral economic regional changes by the time of the Western Chin Dynasty. This led to the entry of the Xiongnu and Xianbei minorities from the north into the Central Plains with the implication of seeking survival. The Five Hu's rebellion against China and the southern migration of the clothed people became logical in the context of the times. To a large extent, natural disasters, warfare, famine, and plague caused by the cold became the underpinnings of survival during the Wei, Chin, and North-South Dynasties. In the pre-Nandu period, the people of Jiangnan relied on abundant wildlife and fish for their survival due to their business's rough and tumble nature. Since Sun Wu, the emphasis has been on agriculture and cereals. Even so, people's eating habits changed considerably. According to Zhang (1998, 15), there was a high incidence of epidemics in our medieval history. All these things inevitably led to the awakening of people's consciousness of life and the importance of the individual in this period. At the same time, as the Southern dynasty was a period of some political stability, but the people were still suffering from war, there needed to be a higher level of adequacy and diversity in the food supply. It can deduce that during the Southern dynasty, the scholars were under high physical and mental stress, mainly contributing to their overall poor physical condition. The addition of the newer scholarly clans did not reverse this.

Further, in the discussion of the classification of physique, there is a classification in terms of the brave and timid nature of nature, which classifies people as brave, timid, and moderate. From this perspective, one can look again at what Cao Pi pointed out in his "Dian Lun - Essay": "Ying yang is not strong, Liu Zhen is strong but not dense." The individual physiognomy that lies behind this could be identified. Another more obvious example is the poetry in the palace style of the Qi and Liang periods of the Southern dynasty and the majestic and powerful poetry of the Northern dynasty of the same period. The Qi and Liang scholars were more refined in their diet, and the natural environment of the south tended to make the local people physically weak, with fire and heat illnesses prevalent. As these scholars worked less physically, their physique was predominantly weak, and their couples were lax, making them very susceptible to external illnesses. The variety of diets, the high calorie and fatty food intake, and the indulgence of the scholars at the time led to the tendency of the southern scholars to gather dampness and produce phlegm. This change in physique influenced poetic style and the political landscape of the time. This is also evident in the majestic and powerful poetry of the Northern dynasty. In addition to war and political turmoil, people in the north were prone to developing a Yang deficiency and dirty, cold constitution, with more physical work and a more substantial, tighter coupled physique. However, at the same time, because they were hungry and full occasionally, they were more mentally resentful and worried and, therefore, more prone to spleen and stomach diseases. People

of this constitution are less susceptible to external illnesses, and their bodies are dexterous and lanky, which is why they have a more exquisite style.

In addition to being a sign of rebellion against the orthodoxy of the Jiangdong scholars, the widespread use of powder (powder taken cold) and wine at the time also aggravated, to a large extent, the liver and spleen pathology of the already coupled southern scholars, resulting in fever. This syndrome was the cause of the strange illnesses of the period and partly the cause of the phenomenon of xingsan, the typical psychotic symptoms of poisoning. A slow onset, a late onset, and difficulty resting characterize this mental abnormality induced by the consumption of gold and stone minerals (Wang 2003, 66-68). During its development or at a later stage, it may lead to personality changes to a large extent. For example, in the biography of Li (2021, 45), it is recorded that "Guang wanted to take a nap earlier, but suddenly he was startled and said to his wife: I was sleeping but not sleeping, and suddenly I saw a person out of my body So he was in a trance and was unhappy, and in a few days, he became ill and could not sleep for years." This is supported by the Censored Prosperity Formula of this period. The Censored and Prosperous Formula locates the root cause of mental abnormalities in the liver, heart, and biliary organs and argues that actual evidence tends to lead to mental exuberance and deficiency evidence tends to lead to mental depression and good grief, which is different from the understanding of the Yellow Emperor's Classic of Internal Medicine and the Nanjing. At the same time, the relationship between mental abnormalities and the brain marrow, as proposed in the Shan Fan formula, further reflects the understanding of psychosis at the time and shows that people were already aware of the enormous impact of drugs on the human mind.

The formula for treating drunkenness after drinking wine for days on end, as found in the "Post-Elbow Precautionary Formula," is a side note to the fact that many people became ill from alcoholism during this period. This is related to the belief that drinking alcohol could help dissolve the body. However, long-term chronic alcoholism could exacerbate internal heat and, as a result, contribute to the toxicity of dissipation. Furthermore, this chronic alcohol abuse was already more than a behavioral disorder and, to a greater extent, would lead to irreversible central nervous system degeneration, with clinical tremors, delirium, and even Korsakoff's syndrome. In addition, the theory of "pancreatic gas disease" causing mental abnormalities was also developed during the Wei-Chin and North-South dynasties. For example, the "Xiao Pin Fang" developed the view of the "Jin Kui Yao Yao" that pancreatic gas is caused by fear and that worry is also a factor. The "Post-Elbow Prescription" further describes the clinical manifestations of pancreatic dolphin based on the "Xiao Pin Fang": "Qi is righteous to both sides of the chest, pain, and fullness under the heart, and Qi rushes up to the chest and wants to die." In the Collection of Experimental Formulae, "deficiencies of the five viscera and cold Qi syncope" are also considered to be a cause.

Physicality and Literature

A prominent feature of the Southern dynasty was that the scholars were particularly frail, and this frailty became a buzzword at the time, leading to the term 'literary frailty' in the Shih-Shuo Hsin-Yu. This term refers not only to physical weakness but also to the flamboyance of the literary style of the time. Thus, there is a strong link between physical fitness and literary style. After the Wei and Chin dynasties, historical records of people who possessed both 'literary' and 'weak' characteristics can be divided into two categories: those who were literary scholars in the Wei and Chin dynasties and those who were scholars in Jiangdong. The former, mainly from the Northern dynasties, emphasize politicians and literati with political aspirations, while the latter, mainly from the Southern dynasties, especially the Southern Liang, show the refined, benevolent, and generous temperament of the Jiangdong scholars (Dong 2014, 43-48). The frailty of this period became a foil for the political talent and temperament of the scholars, who could not stop their talents and political aptitude because of their frailty. For example, in Shih-Shuo Hsin-Yu (Yu 1983, 433), the description of Lu Ji and Lu Yun in Shilong was a man, weak and lovely.

Shiheng was more than seven feet long, his voice was a flood of bells, and his words were generous." Sequel to Jin Yang Qiu (Tan 1989, 256-257): "The emperor was born in the third year of Taixing, weak but wise and different, and Zhongzong deeply appreciated his The emperor in the family of the country's send, with the Zhanzhan, returned, and the self-asserted weakness of the text, no to resist." Song Shu - Yin Yan Zhuan (Shen 1974, 2207): "Xiyou said in a letter to Yan: "You are a weak scholar and have no military ability; you are known from far and near, and you are famous and clear, so you should not be covered." Here the term "weak and civilized" refers to the temperament and appearance of beauty.

The Southern Liang dynasty was crucial in establishing the 'orthodoxy and distinctiveness' of the southern 'Wu' culture (Tian 2010, 74-113). This was partly due to the development of literary criticism during the Six Dynasties, which was based on Confucian standards and criticized the flamboyant literary style of the time. Secondly, the loss of political rights and the change in the mentality of the scholarly clan began to turn to literature (Xu 1995, 89-94). In fact, during the Southern Liang period, Confucian values became the cultural consciousness of literary writing and dominated the development of that consciousness. For example, Xiao Tong's Selected Writings of the Southern Liang Dynasty elevated rhetorical writing to "transforming the world." Liu's compilation of *The Literary Mind* and the *Carving of Dragons* was also based on Confucianism, establishing the standard of rhetoric in writing.

As the Southern dynasty established a sense of incorporating the values of the scholar into literary writing, the notion that the body was 'weak' as a symbol of literary elegance began to take hold, and the 'weak' instrument became the external image that the elegant scholar wished to project. Thus, the expression 'although his form is weak, his writing is powerful,' as Pei Zinye calls it, emerged (Yao 1973, 443). Another example is the *Book of the Southern Qi* (Xiao 1972, 710): "Zi Long was twenty-one years old, but his body was too full and strong, and he used to take pills made of squid bones and madder to damage himself."

It is important to note that this weakness is very different from the licentiousness of the famous scholars of Luoyang in the Wei and Chin dynasties. The social turmoil of the Wei and Chin dynasties led to an ideology of timely pleasure in the arts, with the outward manifestation of licentiousness and some grotesque behavior but the inward manifestation of a cherished sense of affirmation. This led to a tendency for literary scholars to find spiritual support in literature and art on the one hand and to indulge in wine and drugs to numb themselves and find ways to prolong their lives on the other. During the Southern dynasty, due to the decline in the power of the gentry and scholars and the gradual return of power to the imperial family, as well as the influence of the policy of valuing people with low incomes during the Liu and Song dynasties, there were many emerging aristocrats among the so-called Jiangdong nobility formed during the Southern dynasties, most of whom were skilled in the art of prescription and many of whom had been practicing medicine for generations. This, of course, was also very much related to the development of medical hereditary and family-oriented medicine at the time.

As a result, a group of scholars with medical knowledge, either to retain their status or to extend their sphere of influence, chose to associate with the older scholars, who thus became involved in the literature of the period and promoted the inclusion of scribes in the amateur or professional ranks of ancient medicine and health care. The Confucianism and metaphysics prevalent during this period also led to the development of Confucian and Taoist medicine. Thus, the phenomenon of the 'humanization' of medicine emerged. In the pursuit of personal immortality, the 'humanized' medicine developed the arts of channeling and housekeeping or sought the help of elixirs, and in their literary creations, they tried to show their pursuit of immortality and immortality. For example, Gan Bao's *The Book of the Searching Gods* and the famous doctor Tao Hongjing's *The Book of Zhou's Meditations*. It is important to note that Tao Hongjing began to have the ambition to maintain health after reading Ge Hong's *The Legend of the Immortals*, and therefore studied medicine and continued to search for immortal medicines. The indirect influence of literature on the development of medicine is evident here.

The importance of the body and the awakening of individuality led the Wei-Chin scholars to pursue physical beauty, a shiny beauty such as the fairness and tenderness of the skin prompted by food. As far as dress was concerned, the famous scholars of the Wei and Chin dynasties were fond of wearing wide clothes, preferred literary decorations, and used powder on their faces every time. In the Liu and Song dynasties, Zhou Lang reveals that this fashionable dress among scholars had already impacted ordinary people's dress. In terms of literature, the weak southern culture was disliked in the northern dynasties, and the phrase 'and the weak culture of Erzhe' was used in connection with its subservient and flamboyant style of writing.

In fact, during the Liu and Song dynasties, and even earlier, the ruling class had already realized that idle talk would not be able to achieve anything, so in the late Wei, Chin, and Northern Dynasties, when the royal power could restrain the gentry and scholarly clans, the scholars turned more to literature, thus focusing too much on technique and leading to an over-emphasis on literature. As a result, the use of powder taken cold by scholars after this time was no longer an achievement of the so-called Wei-Chin style but a tool for the gentry and the ruling class to manifest their status, escape illness, and even immortality. They could no longer indulge in the same kind of debauchery as the famous scholars of the beginning. At the same time, most of them came from humble backgrounds without deep cultural deposits, thus causing them to lose their interest in metaphysical discourse and thus to turn to the pursuit of formal beauty and the importance of music.

This change in aesthetic consciousness led to a tendency for a stratum of scholars to emphasize the external beauty of women and their appearance (Liu 2009, 17-19). In order to present the noble and superior status of the scholar and the influence of the southern Wu culture, the emerging Jiangdong aristocracy took physical softness as their beauty. It combined it with creating poetry in the palace style, presenting a striking image. In other words, physical weakness had become an important physical feature of the literary style of the time, and because they were weak and noble Jiangdong scholars, the palace poems were not vulgar, not fulsome, but elegant art. This is one of the reasons why the poems in the palace style focus on allusions, vocal rhythm, and the pursuit of rhetoric. The genre and the literary style have become inseparable and are emphasized and valued in this literary style, which was popular among the folk and the scholarly.

Conclusions

The emphasis on personal physique during the Southern Dynasties strengthened the relationship between traditional Chinese medicine and literature. The literature of this period reflects the importance of physical fitness, the pursuit of longevity, and the dislocation of people who, in reality, sought to manifest their status and identity by taking frailty as a sign of beauty and identity. In any case, this dislocation has driven the development of traditional medicine and, to some extent, presupposes it. The same or opposite pursuits of both in terms of physicality ultimately drove their respective developments and resonated and circulated as a whole. This is a characteristic of the development of literature and medicine in this period. However, it also suggests that we must pay attention to an interesting phenomenon in East Asian studies that emerges in different contexts of history. Such phenomena are related to the social context of the time, on the one hand, and to the ancient cultural roots of East Asia, on the other.

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