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RESEARCH ARTICLE

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The progression of moxibustion therapy in Tang and Song Dynasty folk medicine: An analysis on the background of technology choice

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Abstract The changing status of moxibustion therapy in folk medicine from the Tang Dynasty to the Song Dynasty is a reflection of the distribution situation of popular medical resources during these periods. As a feasible therapy with a large popularity, moxibustion played a crucial role in the Tang Dynasty. The Song Dynasty saw some social development as well, because it was an active state power and social force in medical activities. Therefore, people at the lower class gradually benefited from decoction and acupuncture treatments, and the status of the moxibustion therapy began to decline. The changing status of moxibustion therapy in different dynasties embodies the changes in technology and the quality of life.

Keywords the moxibustion therapy, the change of status, folk medicine resources, the Tang and Song Dynasty

摘要 灸疗法在唐宋之际民间医疗活动中地位的浮沉能够反映唐宋民间医疗资源分配状况。灸疗法作为一种具有浓厚“平民化”色彩的疗法在唐代民间起着重要作用。到了宋代，随着社会发展以及国家力量和民间势力对医疗事业的积极参与，使得汤药、针刺等疗法逐渐惠及下层民众，灸疗法的地位开始下降。灸疗法地位的变化，体现了不同时代整体技术水平和民众生活品质的差异。

关键词 灸疗法，地位变化，民间医疗资源，唐宋

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The moxibustion therapy is a unique treatment of traditional Chinese medical science based on the meridian theory, which employs argyi wool or some other combustibles to burn or cauterize some parts of the body for treatment. Moxibustion therapy prevailed in ancient China, but its status gradually declined as time passed by, especially in comparison to acupuncture therapy, which is still widely used. In ancient China, moxibustion therapy was the main treatment while acupuncture therapy was only supplemental; after a period, the two methods were mentioned in the same breath. However, in modern times, the later is more popular. The status change of these two therapies happened between the Tang and Song Dynasty. In the Tang Dynasty, the general public, rather than physicians, mainly employed the simple and cheap moxibustion. Therefore, moxibustion played an important role that could not be replaced by any other therapy in people's daily medical activities in many regions.

In the Song Dynasty, the important status of moxibustion began to decline. Such phenomena cannot be illustrated only by medical science. In fact, people's choice of medical treatment is mainly influenced by life conditions and the distribution of medical resources, rather than "medical theory". Among all factors, the level of social economy, the development of technology, the manipulation of state power and social force are especially crucial. The time from the Tang Dynasty to the Song Dynasty was full of change and transformation, which would inevitably leave some marks in the field of medical treatment. The author of this paper focuses on the commodity of argyi wool and how it was used in order to trace and explore some of the social changes that took place during the Tang and Song Dynasties.

1 Popularity of the moxibustion therapy among folk medicine in the Tang Dynasty

Both based on the meridian theory, acupuncture and moxibustion have many similarities and are mutually complementary although their inceptions and methods are different. This is why "acupuncture" 针 and "moxibustion" 灸 have often been mentioned together as one phrase 针灸. However, they enjoyed very different status in the traditional folk medicine of the Tang Dynasty. In order to explore the reason, we need to begin with the absence of acupuncture in *Waitai miyao* 外台秘要 (Medical secrets from the royal library), a medical book of the Tang Dynasty.

Arranged according to the sort of diseases, *Waitai miyao*, which was composed by Wang Tao, an official interested in medical science, collects diversified opinions and lists different therapies after the name of the diseases. However, it is by no means a copy of the original. The omission of acupuncture is the most

controversial part in this book, but Wang Tao has his own choice. He said, "Acupuncture therapy would probably kill a man and cannot rescue the terminally ill. Afraid of hurting people, I have not included acupuncture therapy in this book, but moxibustion therapy is included."[1]

Therefore, in the book *Waitai miyao*, the moxibustion therapy can be found everywhere while there is almost no record of the acupuncture therapy except for several fragments about using needles. Later generations have criticized Wang for his omission of acupuncture. Sun Zhao, the official of *Jiaozheng yishuju* (Bureau of emendating medical books) in the Northern Song Dynasty, said in the brief introduction to the revised version of *Waitai miyao*, "(Wang Tao) also thought that the acupuncture therapy could probably kill a man and could not rescue the deathly ill. Hence, he included moxibustion and omitted acupuncture. This is one of his shortcomings."[2] Song Lian, a scholar in the Ming Dynasty, said in the introduction to the essay "To Doctor Jia" in Volume 9 of his book *Wenxian ji* (Collected works by Song Wenxian [Song Lian]), "Although Wang Tao was not fair and honorable, what he said in *Waitai miyao* demonstrates the details of moxibustion therapy, which can find its origins in ancient books. However, it is his prejudice to say that acupuncture therapy kills."[3]

However, in author's opinion, it is a common phenomenon for physicians in the Wei, Jin, Sui and Tang Dynasties to emphasize moxibustion and ignore acupuncture. Wang Tao just held an extreme view on this aspect. However, the physicians in the Wei, Jin, Sui and Tang Dynasties did not take acupuncture lightly. According to the medical theories at that time, both moxibustion and acupuncture should be employed on many occasions except for some restricted parts of the body. For example, it is said in Volume 28 "Acupuncture and moxibustion" of *Qianjin yifang* (Supplement to invaluable prescriptions for ready reference), "All diseases are caused by the stagnation of blood circulation. Acupuncture therapy can improve blood circulation and the moxibustion therapy can keep it warm. After the moxibustion, good care should be taken."[4] However, practice is different from theory. In fact, the physicians at that time held an extreme cautious attitude towards acupuncture therapy and they would not use this treatment until it was absolutely necessary. The most obvious evidence for such a phenomenon is that the records of the moxibustion therapy in the medical books of the Sui and Tang Dynasties are much more complete than those of acupuncture therapy. *Waitai miyao* is undoubtedly a good example. Moreover, the author has made a general survey on two medical books written by Sun

[1] Wang Tao, 1077.
[2] Ibid., 24.
[3] Song Lian, 510–511.
[4] Sun Simiao, 1999, 804.

Simiao, *Beiji qianjin yaofang* (Invaluable prescriptions for ready reference) and *Qianjin yifang*. In the first book, there are about 510 passages about moxibustion therapy while 50 articles about acupuncture. The proportion is about ten to one. In the second book, Volumes 26–28 are devoted to acupuncture and moxibustion, in which moxibustion therapy occupies 560 passages while acupuncture has about 90 passages. The proportion is about six to one. The book *Isinnpo* (Prescriptions of ethical physicians) by Tannbano Yasuyori, a Japanese medical scientist from the 10th century, is also worthy of great attention. There are several records about acupuncture therapy in this book, mainly in Volume 2, which focuses on acupuncture points, meridian, the therapy of acupuncture and moxibustion. The records about the acupuncture therapy remained just because they were inconvenient to omit when the author was copying books, such as *Zhenjiu jiayijing* (A classic of acupuncture and moxibustion). There are rarely other records about acupuncture in other volumes. For example, in Volume 15 there is one piece about a hot needling method without the list of acupuncture points, the copy from the book *Qianjin fang* (Composition of *Beiji qianjin yaofang* and *Qianjin yifang*); in Volume 16 there is another one about a stone needling method, also without the list of acupuncture points, the copy from the book *Xiaopin fang* (Familiar prescriptions) by Chen Yanzhi. On the contrary, there are about 360 pieces on the moxibustion therapy in *Isinnpo*, which is nearly the entire book. Therefore, it is safe to say that Tannbano Yasuyori and Wang Tao made the same choice in respect of including moxibustion and omitting acupuncture in their books, which reflects physicians' cautious attitude towards acupuncture therapy and testifies from another perspective the popularity of the moxibustion therapy at that time. Here are historical data to show the astonishing popularity of moxibustion:

Volume 35 "Methods of choosing a wet nurse" in the book *Waitai miyao* tells people how to choose a healthy wet nurse, "*Cui book*: As to the wet nurse…if the physician finds in her body the scars due to moxibustion, it is presumed that she had some diseases before. Therefore, one must be careful to choose such a wet nurse."[5]

The "Cui book" mentioned in *Waitai miyao* meant the book *Cuishi zuan yaofang* (Prescriptions made by Cui Zhiti) written by a famous physician Cui Zhiti in the early Tang Dynasty. Cui pointed out that it is necessary to examine the health condition of a wet nurse by checking for diseases according to the moxibustion scars on their body. We can imagine that if it is not an unusual phenomenon for people to have moxibustion scars at that time, the method Cui mentioned cannot become applicable and popular. In Volume 5 "Prescriptions for babies" of *Beiji qianjin yaofang* by Sun Simiao, the method to choose a wet nurse

[5] Wang Tao, 980.

is the same as that of Cui Zhiti. According to Volume 25 of *Isinnpo*, we can find the origin of this method, which stems from the book *Xiaopin fang* by Chen Yanzhi, a physician from the Southern Song Dynasty. It seems that this method has been applied since the Southern Dynasties. We can conclude from this phenomenon that the moxibustion therapy was a very popular treatment in the daily medical activities of the Northern and Southern Dynasties, the Sui Dynasty and the Tang Dynasty, which was probably applied to most patients.

There are some data that show that the people in the Tang Dynasty had received moxibustion therapy since they were infants. It is said in Volume 5 "Prescriptions for babies" of *Beiji qianjin yaofang*, "A new born baby should not be given moxibustion unless there is some serious illness because the moxibustion therapy could cause pain to the baby and make their channels disordered and arouse epilepsy. The central Shanxi plain and Henan provinces are usually cold so that the baby is liable to have convulsions. The moxibustion therapy is thus used to guard against disease in the first several days after birth…The middle Yangtze valley and Sichuan province are usually warm so that there is no such disease to worry about. However, people often do not know the difference between the south and the north, so they just employ the moxibustion according to the traditional recipe, which might do harm to the baby."[6] The moxibustion therapy keeping baby from diseases was only popular in the Yellow River region, but during the early times of the Tang Dynasty when Sun Simiao lived, it had prevailed all over China.

How about acupuncture therapy? The analysis of the above data has shown that professional physicians seldom employed acupuncture, and without the medical technology the general public cannot use this method easily, just as in Volume 30 "Acupuncture and moxibustion" in *Beiji qianjin yaofang* said, "There are a handful of lower-class people who know how to perform acupuncture."[7]

Therefore, in the periods of Wei, Jin, Sui and Tang Dynasties, the moxibustion therapy was more often used than acupuncture by the general public as well as the physicians. Under such a circumstance, when Wang Tao only included moxibustion in his book and omitted acupuncture, it would have been reasonable to the people of the Tang Dynasty.

2 Reasons for the popularity of moxibustion

In the folk medicine traditions of the Tang Dynasty, the status of moxibustion is much higher than that of acupuncture. Moreover, it even cannot be replaced by

[6] Sun Simiao, 1955, 80.
[7] Ibid., 523.

any other therapies from the perspective of the lower class. There are two main reasons for this phenomenon. One is that it is very difficult for people of the lower class, especially those living in remote districts, to get necessary medical resources. The other is that the moxibustion therapy is simple, feasible and comparatively safe.

In traditional Chinese medicine, boiling medicinal ingredients has always been the most important treatment. Volume 21 "Thousands types of diseases" in the book *Qianjin yifang* said, "If the illness stems from internal organs and bone marrow, only medicine can cure it; if the illness origins from skin and vessel, acupuncture can make it heal. Decoction can expel the illness and make people have more energy. If a man seeks longevity, he would take medicine rather than acupuncture or moxibustion."[8] And then does the popularity of moxibustion among people of the Tang Dynasty imply that people did not believe in decoction? The answer is no. The popularity of moxibustion is only due to the lack of medical resources in the lower class of the Tang Dynasty. To some extent, moxibustion became the substitute for decoction. Although a set of official medical and educational institutions had been established in the Tang Dynasty, they could not satisfy the basic needs of society due to limited resources.[9] As for the folk physicians, in spite of some distinguished physicians coming forth, their overall level was far from high.[10] In fact, in the basic level of that society, especially in the remote districts, the lack of medical resources had always been a serious problem affecting people's livelihoods. For example, it is said in Volume 114 "Edict for promulgating 'Guanglifang'" in the book *Tang dazhaoling ji* (Collected imperial edicts in the Tang Dynasty), "The people in the remote region have no recipes and can not afford medicine. Therefore, many people have died from diseases."[11] The words in Volume 480 "Shilang Zhang asking for a visit to emperor" by Lü Song from the book *Quantangwen* (Complete collection of Tang prose) reflect the lack of medical resources in Guizhou Province during Zhenyuan period, "There is no physician in Guizhou province and medical resources are always lacking. People can not buy medicine in the circumstance of remote mountains and barren valleys. I burden an important duty but have an unworthy life. What can I consider about my illness?"[12] In the "Three letters to Yao Jian", Li Deyu, who was banished to Yazhou, referred to the insufficiency of local medical resources, "I have been ill for more than two months, since the end of October, and even nearly died several times. The medicine here is old and there is

[8] Sun Simiao, 1999, 597.
[9] Yu Gengzhe, 2007, 121–136.
[10] Yu Gengzhe, 2005, 93–100.
[11] Song Minqiu, 545.
[12] Dong Gao, 4909.

no physician. Fortunately I am still alive."[13] Although Li Deyu was banished, he had previously been the prime minister. Even he could not get medical treatment. In the essay "An elegiac address to Mr. Zhou", Du Mu refers to the situation in Muzhou, "The town is surrounded by mountains and only about a thousand families live there. There are crying crows at night and poisonous malaria in the daytime. When people get sick, there is no physician; when they are hungry, they can eat only one meal everyday."[14] In the "Inscription on Madam Guo's tomb tablet and an introduction", there are records about Madam Guo and her husband, who was banished to Tingzhou, "It is sultry and humid here. The madam got a serious disease but there was no physician with superb medical skills and evil spirits haunted her house."[15] In the "Inscription on Master Liu's tomb tablet and an introduction", there are records about Master Liu in Hainan "living in a simple and crude house by the sea, without a good physician and medicine to get through the rest of his life."[16] In the later period of the Tang Dynasty, Liu Yunzhang wrote an essay "Admonition" to speak out the "eight tribulation", in which the eighth type was "no physician when ill and no tomb for corpse".[17]

When people get ill, they will try to collect herbs for medicine. However, there is a close relationship between the quality of herbs and their locations. Moreover, the variety of herbs is limited in a certain place. Under such circumstances, the simple and cheap moxibustion therapy, which is effective in curing many kinds of illness, becomes the dominant treatment for the poor people at the lower class, just as what said in the first volume (p. 2675) in the Dunhung book *Xinji beiji jiujing* (New collected moxibustion prescriptions for ready reference), "The body is composed of four basic elements. Once one of them is out of order, people are likely to get ill. For the people living in the remote areas or the poor villages, medicine is so difficult to get that even a minor disease can take their life. Therefore, I have collected various moxibustion prescriptions for the cure of these diseases."[18]

A question comes up here: why did people depend on the moxibustion therapy when they were lacking medical resources, rather than acupuncture? Acupuncture only requires "needles", which is not expensive and can be re-used. Although it seems feasible in theory, it cannot be used in practice. Because the acupuncture therapy requires complex knowledge and technology, which is difficult for general people, especially compared to the moxibustion therapy. The following is a comparison between the two therapies.

[13] Li Deyu, 169.
[14] Du Mu, 206.
[15] Zhou Shaoliang, 1901.
[16] Qiantangzhi zhai, 1119.
[17] Li Fang, 3482.
[18] Ma Jixing, 1998, 514–15.

Moxibustion came into being at the end of the Spring and Autumn Period or at the beginning of the Warring States Period. It had been theorized and systemized by the end of the Warring States Period while acupuncture did not appear until the later period. The medical books buried in the Mawangdui tombs of the Western Han Dynasty were records on moxibustion and a therapy that used stone needles. The absence of acupuncture in this book may show that the method of metal needles was not very popular until the early stage of the Western Han Dynasty. In this author's opinion, moxibustion was simple and feasible, without any refined instrument or profound knowledge, thus more accessible and intuitive within early medicine. This explains its early adoption and extensive popularity, as compared to acupuncture. The basic ingredient used in moxibustion was argyi leaves which were easy to get. And as to the knowledge needed in moxibustion, it requires little when compared to decoction and acupuncture. Volume 2 "Examples of moxibustion" in *Isinnpo* quoted the words in *Xiaopin fang*, "Acupuncture therapy requires a physician while moxibustion can be administered by anyone. A physician who has training can perform acupuncture and moxibustion treatment at any time; if there is no physician, anyone who is literate can make moxibustion therapy according to the diagrams of acupuncture points; if there are no diagrams or any literate men, moxibustion can be made according to tenderness. These are all effective methods."[19]

Chen Yanzhi points out in the book that acupuncture can not be administered without a physician while general people can perform moxibustion. Where there is no physician, literate men can make moxibustion therapy according to the diagram of acupuncture points; where there is no diagram or literate man, moxibustion with moxa cone can be applied to affected areas.

In the classics on meridian theory such as *Zhenjiu jiayijing*, the view of "regarding the tenderness as the *Shu* point" had been put forward at an early stage. In the Tang Dynasty, people usually applied moxibustion according to tender areas without paying attention to the traditional acupuncture points, which leads to the birth of a special point: the *A-Shi* point. It is said in Volume 29 "Acupuncture and moxibustion" of *Beiji qianjin yaofang*, "Moxibustion was popular in the Wu and Shu. The 'A-Shi' method means that acupuncture and moxibustion therapies are applied in the points where people feel pain."[20] The term "A-Shi point" is explained in *Chinese encyclopedia · traditional medical science*, "A-Shi point, also called tenderness, is where illness reflects on skin…It has no fixed location and usually changes and disappears with illness. Hence it is difficult to name it…Some of A-Shi points are examined and re-examined. After

[19] Tannbano Yasuyori, 243.
[20] Sun Simiao, 1955, 519.

their location and function are confirmed, they are referred to as a *Qi* point."[21] In another word, A-Shi point is juxtaposed with the Shu point and Qi point. It has no fixed location, appearing and disappearing with the disease. Almost all depending on the patient's feeling, such treatment can be called the fruit of the plain medical science among people, "treating the head when the head aches, treating the foot when the foot hurts." Sun Simiao said that A-Shi point is applicable in both acupuncture and moxibustion. However, he said in the former part of that "there are rare people in the lower class knowing about how to make acupuncture". Therefore, we can be ensured that the A-Shi point was probably used in moxibustion among people. Its appearance proves the feasibility and popularity of moxibustion in folk medicine traditions. Besides, some physicians tried to develop the moxibustion therapy made by people themselves. They tried to avoid the uncommon terms of the meridian theory when talking about the moxibustion points, using the names of specific body parts. One of the representative physicians was Ge Hong. He once criticized some physicians of his time, "They often ask people to use acupuncture and moxibustion treatment but they do not tell people the name of the body parts. What they give are the terms of acupuncture points. If the patient is not a literate man who has read a lot of medical books, how can he know where these points are?" Therefore, his principle of writing medical books is "simple and intuitive, terse and testable".[22] And his medical books are unique by using the common names of body parts, rarely employing terms of acupuncture points except a few well-know ones. Carrying on Ge Hong's thoughts, Sun Simiao invented a method of fixing on acupuncture points according to the real body parts. He took people's stature into consideration and illustrated acupuncture points with common and understandable words. Therefore, there was less of a "scholar" taste and more practical contents in their books compared to classics such as *Lingshu* (Pivot) and *Zhenjiu jiayijing*. With the huge influence, these books help promote the popularity of moxibustion among the general public.

Another advantage of moxibustion is that it is safer than acupuncture. The main shortcoming of moxibustion is that it caused sores and scars on the skin, but there is no danger to life. On the contrary, with the metal needle piercing the body, the acupuncture therapy could cause serious damage. It is said in Volume 29 "Acupuncture and moxibustion" of *Beiji qianjin yaofang*, "If the needle hurts the aponeurosis, people will be mentally disabled; if it hurts a blood vessel, people will be agitated; if it hurts the skin and hair, people will lose their wits; if

[21] Compiling committee of Chinese encyclopedia, 428.
[22] Ge Hong, 428.

it hurts the bone marrow, people will moan and groan; if hurts muscles, people's arms and legs will turn stiff. These are five types of harm caused by acupuncture, and what more serious is to lead to death. When the classic says 'Acupuncture therapy could kill a man and does not cure the ill', it means that a patient will certainly die by layman using acupuncture and the treatment cannot cure the disease."[23] In addition, due to the limited technology of metallurgy and forging, the medal needles are easy to break in a person's body. Volume 18 "Prescriptions without acupuncture" in *Isinnpo* quotes from many famous books, such as *Luyan fang* (Recorded prescriptions), *Xiaopin fang*, *Yimen fang*, *Longmen fang*, etc. It is obvious that the harm of acupuncture is a vital issue that has attracted the attention of many physicians. Due to the potential danger of acupuncture, physicians have listed several forbidden acupuncture points, while the forbidden moxibustion points are much fewer. It is said in Volume 9 "Shang Han" (Exogenous febrile diseases) in the book *Beiji qianjin yaofang*, "There are 655 acupuncture points in a man's body. Among them moxibustion cannot be used on 36 points while acupuncture cannot be employed on 79 points."[24] The forbidden points of moxibustion are only half of that of acupuncture. And in Volume 29 "Acupuncture and moxibustion" in the same book, 51 forbidden points of acupuncture are recorded while 24 forbidden points of moxibustion are mentioned. The proportion is also two to one. Moreover, the results of stimulating forbidden acupuncture points are rather serious. Among the 51 points, there are 11 that can lead to death, and others can cause blindness, deafness, lameness, dumbness, distention and enuresis. However, when referring to the forbidden moxibustion areas, it is usually said that moxibustion "should not be" used on some points. There is no moxibustion point that would lead to death and the most serious result would be blindness. Similarly, in Volume 2 "Forbidden points of acupuncture " in *Isinnpo* quoted from *Caoshi shuo* (Cao's words), there are records on the forbidden points of moxibustion and the results it may cause, among which there is no one leading to death. Besides, people at that time thought that acupuncture was inappropriate for old men and children. Only moxibustion and mild decoction are suitable for them. The first volume of *Isinnpo* quotes from *Zhenjiu jing* (A classic of acupuncture and moxibustion), "A ten-year-old child and a seventy-year-old man cannot receive acupuncture. Moxibustion and mild decoction are suitable."[25] Because it is simple and safe, moxibustion therapy enjoyed a higher status than acupuncture among common people.

[23] Sun Simiao, 1955, 518.
[24] Ibid., 175.
[25] Tannbano Yasuyori, 88.

3 Decline of the status of moxibustion after the Song Dynasty

"Decline" here does not mean the declination of moxibustion therapy technology. From the angle of medical science, the technology and theory of moxibustion kept improving after the Song Dynasty. However, from the point of social history, moxibustion had not been as popular as before, especially in the Southern Song Dynasty. The status of moxibustion in folk medicine traditions had declined compared to that in the Tang Dynasty and patients were not willing to receive moxibustion until there were no other methods available. The folk physicians held an indifferent attitude towards moxibustion. In Volume 11 "Introduction to moxibustion of Xiang Guoxin" of *Xunzhai wenji* (Collected works by Ouyang Xunzhai [Shoudao]), Ouyang Shoudao said, "Decoction is more used than moxibustion. Patients will not consider about moxibustion until there is not any other way. Therefore, there are few physicians who are proficient in moxibustion."[26]

In Volume 2 "Acupuncture, moxibustion and decoction" of *Zhenjiu Zishengjing* (A classic of acupuncture and moxibustion for longevity), the author Wang Zhizhong in the Southern Song Dynasty said, "The so-called physicians nowadays only know about decoction, without any knowledge of moxibustion. When they are interrogated, they answer that moxibustion belongs to surgery."[27]

Besides, when reading the historical materials of the Song Dynasty, the author has found an interesting phenomenon, that is, people in the Song Dynasty "suddenly" became "fastidious" about the moxibustion therapy. It is said in Volume 11 "Introduction to moxibustion as a national treasure" of *Xunzhai wenji*, "Moreover, the skin is cauterized and it causes pain…so people are afraid of moxibustion."[28]

Causing pain and risk of infection were the main reasons why people disliked moxibustion. On many occasions moxibustion is juxtaposed with pain and sores. The moxibustion therapy uses moxa cauterization on skin and usually dozens of, or even a hundred of moxa cones burning together. Meanwhile, repeated cauterization in the same point is advocated, which will certainly cause pain. Moreover, physicians think that the infections caused by moxibustion can be cured. It is said in Volume 19 "On 37 pieces of moxibustion" in the book *Waitai miyao*, "Su Gong said…it would be better to have infection due to moxibustion."[29] Volume 19 quotes from *Xiaopin fang*, "During moxibustion, when a sore is

[26] Ouyang Shoudao, 594.
[27] Wang Zhizhong, 260.
[28] Ouyang Shoudao, 595.
[29] Wang Tao, 531.

infected, the illness is gone; vice versa."[30] Volume 2 "Examples of moxibustion" in *Isinnpo* quotes from the book *Yang Xuancao*, "When a sore caused by moxibustion gets infected, the illness is gone."[31] From the examples above, it is obvious that moxibustion will cause pain to people's body. What kind of attitudes did the people in the Tang Dynasty hold toward such a pain?

As far as the author knows, there were few complaints about moxibustion in the historical materials from or before the Tang Dynasty. Even when the pain is mentioned, people showed forbearance with the thought of "good medicine tasting bitter". For example, there are two lines in the poem "Closing the door" by Xu Yin in Volume 708 of *Quantangshi* (Complete collection of Tang poetry), "The bone is cold and before acupuncture, pain is felt; there has not been sore in spite of continuous moxibustion."[32] It is worthy of attention that the author of this poem is complaining about no sore due to moxibustion, rather than the pain of moxibustion. Physicians at that time believed that "when the wounds caused by moxibustion get infected, the illness is gone". Because people in the Tang Dynasty held such an attitude towards moxibustion, although the indirect moxibustion therapy could reduce the pain and sore was invented in the Jin Dynasty, most of the moxibustion therapy in the medical books of the Sui and Tang Dynasties advocated the direct cauterization on the skin, rather than the indirect method. However, in the Song Dynasty, the indirect moxibustion therapy with a partition became more and more popular, having more than eight types. Moreover, anaesthesia moxibustion was invented to reduce the pain of patients.[33] These changes may be the results of physicians in the Song Dynasty trying to cater to the patients who asked for reducing the pain of moxibustion. Meanwhile, they show that people in the Tang and Song Dynasties have very different powers of endurance of the same pain.

In this author's opinion, the "fastidious" attitude of people in the Song Dynasty is a natural reaction. According to psychology, only when there are choices or people can make a choice, people will be particular. People in the Song Dynasty, especially those in the lower levels of society, were provided with more medical treatments, moxibustion was no longer the only choice for them. Under such a circumstance, the disadvantages of moxibustion became prominent. This does not mean that people in the Song Dynasty are more discriminate than people in the Tang Dynasty.

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[30] Ibid., 534.
[31] Tannbano Yasuyori, 245.
[32] Peng Dingqiu, 8145.
[33] *See* Lin Zhaogeng and Yan Liang, 1995, 224–227.

What kind of changes happened in the Song Dynasty lead to such a situation? The author finds out two main reasons illustrated as below. (1) From the perspective of historical background, the level of social development in the Song Dynasty had reached an unprecedented height in Chinese history. It is obvious that the development of business promoted the circulation of medicinal materials all over the country. Meanwhile, the improvements in technology during the Song Dynasty also improved medical treatment, especially the technology of acupuncture. There was a remarkable change in status for acupuncture and moxibustion after the Song Dynasty, especially compared to the Tang Dynasty. The status of acupuncture gradually improved, even surpassed that of moxibustion. The acupuncture therapy was employed on many occasions where moxibustion had been used before. Many physicians held skeptical attitudes towards moxibustion. For example, it is said in Volume 8 of *Zengguang taiping huimin hejiju fang* (Popular prescriptions for the benefit of people by Heji medical bureau), "There are almost no regulations on the moxibustion therapy. People just endure the pain but illness can hardly be cured."[34]

We can see that there is a big contrast between the thought of accurate acupuncture points in the Song Dynasty with the idea of "making moxibustion according to the tender areas" in the Tang Dynasty, which shows the different attitudes of physicians in the two periods towards a free and easy style of moxibustion. It is also embodied in the judicial activities of the two dynasties. Among the laws in the Tang Dynasty on medical obligation, there are no special regulations on moxibustion but specific rules for acupuncture. For example, in Volume 26 "Sundry laws" of *Tanglü Shuyi* (Interpretation of the law in the Tang Dynasty), it says, "If a physician causes the death of a patient due to incorrect prescriptions or acupuncture, he will be sentenced to two and a half years imprisonment."[35] On the contrary, in the same book, there is no rule on the violation of the original recipe of moxibustion. It may be because at that time the method of moxibustion according to the "tender" areas rather than the systematized acupuncture points. In the Song Dynasty, it was regarded illegal in the judicial practice of moxibustion that was not in accordance to meridian and acupuncture points. In Volume 4 "Death caused by acupuncture and moxibustion" in the book *Xiyuan jilu* (Collection of grievance relief stories), it says, "It must be checked that whether the physician makes moxibustion and acupuncture therapy according to the accurate points. If the points are not right, even though the physician is not on purpose to cause patient's death, he will be sentenced to the crime 'due to prohibitive conduct'"[36] It shows that people in the Song Dynasty

[34] Xu Hong, 255.
[35] Zhangsun Wuji, 520.
[36] Song Ci, 70.

did not believe any more in the security of moxibustion and the free way of moxibustion was losing its popularity. After the Song Dynasty, the effectiveness of moxibustion has been challenged by more and more people. For example, in the second half volume "On the lost of acupuncture and moxibustion" of *Yixue yuanliu lun* (On the origins of medical science) by Xu Dachun, a scholar in the Qing Dynasty, the author frankly said that acupuncture was better than moxibustion, "The diseases cured by moxibustion are only one tenth or two tenths of that by acupuncture."[37]

It is mentioned above that the omission of acupuncture in the book *Waitai miyao* has been criticized by many physicians after the Song Dynasty. Wang Tao's choice was natural for people in the Tang Dynasty but it is absurd in the eyes of later generations. The phenomenon shows the uprising status of acupuncture. The most persuasive proof is that when the word "zhenjiu" is mentioned nowadays, the first thing occurs to most people is the long acupuncture needle, rather than moxa cone. The acupuncture therapy has become the representative of "acupuncture and moxibustion" treatments, which is a natural result of the uprising status of acupuncture and the declining status of moxibustion. Why did such a change happen? Every element of scientific technology has always been closely related with each other and big progress in the whole can be realized only by the cooperation of all parts. Besides the improvement of medical theories at that time, the increased popularity of printing in the Song Dynasty has a close relationship with the rise in status of acupuncture. It is mentioned above that the main reason why the acupuncture therapy did not enjoy a high status in the Tang Dynasty was that the operation was dangerous. Physicians could not find the acupuncture points accurately because there were few precise diagrams of acupuncture points. It is said in Volume 29 "Acupuncture and moxibustion" of *Beiji qianjin yaofang*, "If the physician wants to find acupuncture points, a diagram is indispensable."[38]

It is also said in Volume 26 "Acupuncture and moxibustion" of *Qianjin yifang*, "It is so difficult to know about the acupuncture points that a diagram is indispensable. Although there is a copy of illustration on acupuncture of classics, if the physician is not an erudite man, acupuncture can be dangerous."[39]

What was the real situation of acupuncture diagrams in the Tang Dynasty? Volume 26 "Acupuncture and moxibustion" of *Qianjin yifang* quotes the words of Li Xiyu, a distinguished physician in the early stage of the Tang Dynasty, "The physician who is going to make acupuncture therapy must follow the book *Huangdi neijing* (The Yellow Emperor's canon of internal medicine); the

[37] Xu Dachun, 718.
[38] Sun Simiao, 1955, 508.
[39] Sun Simiao, 1999, 730.

physician who is going to use medicinal materials must go by the book *Shennong bencao* (Shen Nong's herbal classic). I found that there were more and more mistakes in medical books after the book *Mingyi bielu* (Collected works by distinguished medical scientists) so that I began to prove the acupuncture diagrams by Qin Chengzu according to *Zhenjiu jiayijing*. Among 649 points, there are 19 points having no specific names, such as Pangting and Canghui; and there are 17 points such as Jiaosun and Jingfeng included in the book *Sanbu zhenjing* (A compilation of three classics on acupuncture). However, there are still 49 points omitted from Qin's diagram and many points are in the wrong position, straying from their original position from *Zhenjiu jiayijing*. It is said that an error of the breadth of a single hair can lead you a thousand *li* astray. For example, there is only one *cun* distance between the *Shimen* point and the *Guanyuan* point, which are both part of the *Dai* channel. An appropriate acupuncture in *Guanyuan* point can cure women's inability of bearing children; a mistaken acupuncture in *Shimen* point will make men have no offspring. The *Shenting* point is on the forehead, and treatments here can cure deliria, while moxibustion can heal the disease of epilepsy. The way of acupuncture points is so profound and abstruse that no one can make light of it. Although people know about the value of life, there are few proficient in the classics. They often ask underlings to make a copy of the classics, resulting in more and more mistakes. Even wise men who can not find the original classics believe in these copies. One should be concerned."[40]

The words above point out numerous mistakes in the meridian diagrams handed down from ancient times by Qin Chengzu. We believe that these mistakes are not caused by Qin Chengzu himself. In fact, there was no printing at that time so that the diagrams handed down were painted by hands by later generations according to the original. It is natural that mistakes happen during the process of copying. The way of "asking underlings to make a copy" is probably what the nobles did at that time. As to the folk, there were professional copiers (many Buddhist scriptures of Dunhuang come out of their hands). Medical books were certainly among their works. Because they did not have enough medical knowledge and the transcriptions they followed were probably handed down by several generations, the mistakes were inevitable in their copies.

The Tang Dynasty officials once organized people to edit Mingtang diagrams (acupuncture points diagram) with Li Xiyu as the chief director, and at last *Mingtang zhenjiutu* (Acupuncture point's diagram) was finished on the basis of the diagram by Zhen Quan.[41] Sun Simiao used this diagram in his works. For example, there is one piece about "Method of curing jaundice with acupuncture

[40] Sun Simiao, 1999, 729–730.
[41] Wang Xuetai, 214–216.

and moxibustion" in Volume 10 "Shang Han" (exogenous febrile diseases) of *Beiji qianjin yaofang*, with the beginning of "the first front view is…", and then "overlay view", "side view" and so on are followed in the later part. However, in the extant version, only the words have been reserved while the diagrams were lost. It is a copy of the version from the Northern Song Dynasty by Japanese Edo medical science press, which had been used for four hundred years after the time of Sun Simiao. The diagrams in the book are gone, which is a common thing when printing was rare. Therefore, we can imagine how hard it was for general people in the Tang Dynasty to get a diagram of the meridian and acupuncture points. Even if there was one, it was probably full of mistakes. Xia Song in the Northern Song Dynasty once wrote about the careless drawings of acupuncture diagrams, "The illustrators often have shallow knowledge about medical science, hardly gaining the quintessence of the former classics. Although there is a version for copy, the words become faded and similar words are liable to cause confusion." Under such circumstances, free and casual acupuncture was absolutely dangerous: "The common people were cheated and suffered injury; the quack made mistakes but had no regrets or guilt."[42]

Maybe some one would ask: the printing technology had been invented before the Tang Dynasty, hadn't it? Why was it not used in the medical books? It is true that there was printing in the Tang Dynasty, but it does not mean that it was popular. In the first volume (p. 2675) of the Dunhung book *Xinji beiji jiujing*, there are some remnant manuscripts on the back of the document, with an inscription from the second year of Xiantong of the Tang Dynasty (861). We can speculate that the book was probably written during this period. What is worthy of attention is that there are words in the document such as "it was printed in the eastern market of Chang'an by Li family". Because the document is definitely a hand-written copy, it shows that the original version it follows must be the printed copy produced in Chang'an. Maybe Dunhuang was so remote and secluded without any printing technology that the local people who wanted to get this book could only copy it by hand. Therefore, it turned back to the times when there was no printing and the mistakes were probably handed down. This phenomenon shows that in the times when printing was not popular enough, it had very limited function of promoting the spread of medical knowledge.

In the Song Dynasty, the printed medical books were gradually popularized. Nowadays we can find many acupuncture diagrams from that time period. Such printed diagrams are much more accurate than those of hand drawings and they undoubtedly benefit physicians who were learning acupuncture therapy. Moreover, manikins were used to instruct acupuncture at that time. In Volume 2 "Acupuncture and moxibustion" of *Yishuo* (On the physician) by the physician

[42] Zhu Su, 2.

Zhang Gao in the Song Dynasty, it says, "Nowadays physicians learn to remember the acupuncture points by experimenting on puppets."[43]

There are small pottery figurines from the Han Dynasty with dozens of needling points unearthed in the Yisheng ancestral temple in Nanyang of Henan Province. They are referred to as the "acupuncture pottery figurines of the Han Dynasty" in *Chinese encyclopedia · traditional medical science*. However, it is not very convincing because the figurines are crudely made with disproportioned bodies and the needling points are irregularly disposed with no trace of meridian or acupuncture points. Some scholars put forward an assumption that these pottery figurines were used in sympathetic witchery because witchcraft and sorcery were popular in the Han Dynasty.[44] In addition, a grave from the early Western Han Dynasty was unearthed in the Shuangbao Mountains of Sichuan Province (Number. YSMZ), a "meridian lacquer-painted wood figurine" of 28.1 centimeters height was unearthed. However, there are only red meridian outlines drawn on the lacquer surface, without any trace of acupuncture. Moreover, the meridian outlines on the figurine are very different from later meridian systems.[45] It is said that there were figures made according to a human body from the Tang Dynasty's structure. In Volume 6 "Superexcellent craft" of *Youyang zazu* (Miscellanies of Youyang), it says, "There was a Buddha figure without dust in the small hall of Bao Xiang Temple in Chengdu, which seemed brand new even after many years. It was said that when the figure was made, the craftsman first made the inner organs according to the diagram of acupuncture points, and then made the limbs and joints. This is why there has been no dust on this figure for hundreds of years."[46] However, there are no words to show that this figure was used to guide acupuncture and moxibustion. As far as the author's view, there is no record on human figures marked with acupuncture points in the Tang Dynasty. According to Volume 4 "Records on emperor Taizong" in the book *Liaoshi* (History of the Liao Dynasty), in the first year of Datong (947) when the Liao Dynasty exterminated the Jin Dynasty, some bronze figures were found, but with no records on their use. If it is a little dangerous to say that the teaching method of using human figures marked with acupuncture points originated from the Song Dynasty, at least it is safe to say that such a method was not widely used until the Song Dynasty. Scholars of medical history studies have paid great attention to the human figure marked with acupuncture points of the Song Dynasty, however, their focus has been always on Tiansheng bronze figures, which were made in the fourth year of Tiansheng during Emperor Renzong's reign (1026). Two exquisite bronze figures marked with acupuncture points were made at the same size of a

[43] Zhang Gao, 41.
[44] See Ma Jixing, 1993, 5.
[45] See Ma Jixing, 1997, 1–57.
[46] Duan Chengshi, 39.

human body, which were respectively posited in the Medical Bureau and Daxiangguo Temple. Many experts hold the view that these two figures were used for teaching acupuncture at that time. For example, in her book *The Story of Medicine*, Roberto Margotta says, "(In the Song Dynasty) teachers usually guided students to learn acupuncture by using metal figures. There were tiny holes of acupuncture points in the figure so that students could learn in a visual way."[47] It says in the book *Zhenjiu yixueshi* (The medical history of acupuncture and moxibustion) by Lin Zhaogeng and Yan Liang, "The main use of the bronze figure marked with acupuncture points was for acupuncture teaching, learning and testing."[48] In the book *Guobao chonghui*: *chongzhu songdai tiansheng zhenjiu tongren* (Revival of the national treasure: the recast of Tiansheng bronze figures marked with acupuncture points in the Song Dynasty) mainly written by He Baoyi, it says, "A bronze figure marked with acupuncture points was a teaching aid, which was used by students to learn acupuncture."[49] However, according to historical materials, it seems that the bronze figure marked with acupuncture points was just used to test physicians at that time, rather than as a teaching aid. One of the Tiansheng bronze figures was once found in Xiangzhou after the calamity during the years of Jingkang. Someone made a careful observation and description of this figure and its use. In Volume 14 "Metal and stone needling therapy" of *Qidong yeyu*, Zhou Mi, an author in the Southern Song Dynasty says, "I once heard from my uncle Zhang Shugong that he got a bronze figure marked with acupuncture points in Xiangzhou. The figure was made by refined bronze with all inner organs. Every acupuncture point had its name on the other side. The ancient people used such figures to test physicians. The figure was cerated on its surface and affused with water inside.[50] The physician then placed a needle in a certain point. If he made a right judgment, the needle would pierce the figure and water would come out; if there was any mistake, the needle could not puncture the figure. It was really a peculiar and artful craft."[51] The words above clearly show that the use of the bronze figure is to "test physicians". The figures after the Song Dynasty have been all mainly used in such a way. In Volume 42 "Crafts" of *Yuan wenlei* (Collected literary works of the Yuan Dynasty), it says, "Sacrificial utensils are used for showing revere while bronze figures are for testing acupuncture."[52] In Volume 299 "The story of Ling Yun" of *Mingshi* (History of the Ming Dynasty), it says, "Emperor

[47] Roberto Margotta, 25.
[48] Lin Zhaogeng and Yan Liang, 206.
[49] He Baoyi, 4.
[50] Ma Jixing thinks that the bronze figure was affused with hydrargyrum rather than water. Ma Jixing, 1993, 10.
[51] Zhou Mi, 251–252.
[52] Su Tianjue, 559.

Xiaozong heard that Ling Yun was very famous so that he called in him. When Ling Yun came, Xiaozong asked the imperial physician to show the bronze figure with cloth covering on it. Ling Yun made an accurate needling every time and became the court physician."[53] After Zhang Xianzhong occupied Sichuan Province in the end of the Qing Dynasty, he once used the bronze figure to test physicians. It says in Volume 10 of *Shubi* (Elegy for Sichuan Province), "There was an old bronze figure in the court physician bureau in Sichuan. Zhang Xianzhong wanted to know about how the figure was used so that he called in many physicians to test their skill of acupuncture. If there was one mistake during needling, the physician would be sentenced to death at once."[54] The reason why the bronze figure was not used as a teaching aid may be that it was rather difficult to make a well-proportioned bronze figure with accurate points and complete inner organs. Except Tiansheng bronze figures, the author has not found records on any other bronze figure with acupuncture points made by officials in the Song Dynasty. In the 1980s, a bronze figure was remodeled in our country, but it took a very long time.[55] Because the bronze figure is so difficult to make in the present day with advanced science and technology, it must have been very precious during that time. According to Volume 23 "Records on Emperor Qinzong" of *Songshi* (History of the Song Dynasty), in the calamity during the years of Jingkang, when the Jin army held the emperor under duress to the north, the bronze figure (different from the one in Xiangyang) was one of the treasures with the army. Other treasures included guard of honor in imperial procession, eight kinds of precious ingredients, legendary altars made by Emperor Yu of the Xia Dynasty, sundials, armillary spheres, etc., which shows the importance of the bronze figure. Because the figure was easy to be destroyed due to much friction if it was used as a teaching aid, there is a limitation to say that the figure promoted the teaching of acupuncture therapy directly in the society at that time, although it is safe to say that the figure is a demonstration of the rather advanced medicine technology of the Song Dynasty. The real important tool should be the "puppet" mentioned in the book *Yishuo* (which was made of clay and wood[56]), but it is

[53] Zhang Tingyu, 7651.

[54] Peng Zunsi, 161.

[55] The whole process can be found in He Baoyi's book.

[56] In Volume 8 of *Shuowen jiezi* (Origin of Chinese characters) by Xu Shen in the Han Dynasty, it illustrates the word "Ou": "figure made by wood". In Volume 3 "Primary chronicle of the Yin Dynasty" in the book *Shiji* (Historical records), it says, "There was no rule during the reign of Emperor Wuyi. Hence puppet was made to be called god of heaven." In the book *Zhengyi* (Proofing the meaning of Chinese characters), it says, "Ou means a double. The figure was made of clay and wood, compared with the real human body." Therefore, puppet at that time means human figures made of clay and wood.

unfortunate that there has not been enough attention to it in academic circles. The use of "dummies" together with engraving printed diagrams of acupuncture points in the teaching and learning of acupuncture therapy was unprecedented in the Song Dynasty. Therefore, physicians at that time had more advanced acupuncture skills than before. Under such circumstances, it was natural that the status of acupuncture therapy gradually improved.

(2) The official and social medical organs in the Song Dynasty were much more efficient than before so that people could get medicinal materials and therapies in a more convenient way. Therefore, moxibustion therapy and substituting treatments with decoctions gradually lost their importance. The officials in the Song Dynasty paid more attention to their medical careers. Although a set of official medical management and education organs were founded on the basis of the system of the Tang Dynasty, they were much more effective than the official medical organs in the Tang Dynasty. On this issue there are two reference papers: "Songyuanming de difang yiliao ziyuan chutan" (On the local medical resources in the Song, Yuan and Ming Dynasty) by Liang Qizi[57] and "Liangsong de yishi zhidu jiqi shehui gongneng" (The medical system in the Song Dynasty and its social function) by Chen Yuanpeng.[58] There are two main changes of the medical organs of the Song Dynasty compared with that of the Tang Dynasty. First, the arrangement of local medical officials is more reasonable. The lowest level of the local medical officials in the Tang Dynasty was in the subprefecture and the scale was determined by the rank of the subprefecture. In the Song Dynasty, the local medical officials had spread throughout the counties with population density becoming the standard of management, "(during the years of Yuanfeng) there are ten physicians in the main prefecture and three pediatricians. Seven physicians in the subprefecture, two pediatricians. One to five physicians among ten thousand residents, one pediatrician."[59] During the reign of Emperors Qianlong and Daoguang, "There is one physician and one teacher in the prefecture, and in the high-rank and middle-rank subprefectures. Eleven physicians in the prefecture and seven in the subprefecture. Three physicians for every ten thousand residents, two in each county."[60] Liang Qizi points out, "It is very rational, even somewhat 'modern', to distribute physicians according to population density."[61] The channels where people in the Song Dynasty could get medicinal materials from official organs also increased. The foundation of Huimin Bureau and Heji Bureau was the first national official

[57] Liang Qizi, 219–237.
[58] Chen Yunpeng, 263–316.
[59] Li Tao, 8084.
[60] Cheng Jiong, 2.
[61] Liang Qizi, Vol. 3, 220.

medical system in Chinese history and their patients were mainly common people. It was an effective complement to the medicinal materials sale system according to profits. There had been more than seventy official medical bureaus after the twenty-second year of Shaoxing in the Southern Song Dynasty (1152)[62], which did not include bureaus founded by some local officials. For example, in the second half volume of *Zhufan zhi* (Records of foreign countries), the author Zhao Rushi recorded the lack of medicinal materials for the army in Hainan island, "Huang Houshen founded a medical bureau as a pioneer, and then people began to know about the benefit of taking medicine."[63] Besides the official organs, Liang Qizi illustrated the local medical resources on stress, "In the Song Dynasty, the government carried out active policies to increase the local medicinal staff. In addition, some warmhearted local officials founded medical organizations spontaneously". She listed some kinds of the local medical organizations: Bingfang, Jiangliyuan, Anjifang, and Yangjiyuan, etc. Then she pointed out, "These examples show the effective policies that the central and local government carried out in medical career in the Song Dynasty. Meanwhile, we can see the developing strength of traditional medicine."[64]

It should be pointed out that the abundance of medical resources from the official organs reached its peak at the end of the Northern Song Dynasty and the early stage of the Southern Song Dynasty. In the end of the Northern Song Dynasty, Emperor Huizong was so zealous in Daoism[65] that he did an abundance of charity. In the first year of Chongning (1102), Emperor Huizong gave orders to "make proper arrangements for the placement of the poor and the sick all over the country".[66] There are some words on this phenomenon in Volume 2 of *Laoxue'an biji* (Jottings from the hut of everlasting learning) by Lu You, "During the years of Chongning…many charity bureaus were founded such as Juyangyuan, Anjifang, Louzeyuan, which caused a large cost to the government. Therefore, the taxation from the central government reached its peak and then subprefectures and counties must try their best to deal with it. A proverb goes like this, 'The healthy man can not get enough food while the beggar can; the living man is ignored while the dead body is cared.' In this way, the government did not care whether the army provision was in lack or the common people were poor. As long as there was something wrong with charity things, the relative officials would be condemned."[67]

[62] Zhen Zhiya, 195.
[63] Zhao Rushi, 288.
[64] Liang Qizi, Vol. 3, 228.
[65] See Ren Jiyu, 1990; Qing Xitai, 1992.
[66] Tuo Tuo, 364.
[67] Lu You, 27.

It is probably a unique phenomenon in the history of China that a charity organization can get better treatment than the army. Although such phenomena did not last for a long time, it is enough to show how important the medical organs were during that period. As for the Southern Song Dynasty, as mentioned above, the foundation of local medicinal bureau had reached its peak during the years of Shaoxing. Therefore, it was by no accident that the folk moxibustion therapy came down at this time. People could choose other therapies except moxibustion when they got ill. And when they could get decoction, they would certainly abandon the moxibustion therapy which would cause pain to the body.

However, the historical experience tells us that it is unavoidable for the official departments in a despotic regime to produce bureaucratism and corruption. There is no exception of the official medical organs in the Song Dynasty. Professors Liang Qizi and Chen Yuanpeng have had excellent discussion on this topic, which is a very good reference. In all, the official medical organs in the Song Dynasty, especially the local medical organs which had the closest relationship with the common people, were much more perfect than before. However, the nature of the bureau determined their limitation. Among the medical resources people got in the Song Dynasty, the official organs made their contribution, but it was far from the most important. The improvement of the folk medicine resources mainly lied in the whole improvement of the economy and technology in the society at that time as well as the improvement of medicine.

4 Conclusion

As an old therapy, moxibustion is easy to handle. Its materials were cheap and widely available. Therefore, it is safe to say that the moxibustion therapy was naturally “popular” since its birth. It had been the main form of medical treatment until the Tang Dynasty. In the Song Dynasty, with the social development, the medical resources that common people could get became richer and richer and the medical treatments more and more diversified. Under such circumstances, the important status of moxibustion began to decline and acupuncture became more important, even surpassed the status of moxibustion. This situation has remained till today. At present, herbal medicine is the foundation of traditional Chinese medical science and acupuncture therapy is also a vital part of it as well. Comparatively speaking, moxibustion occupies a less important role. If we draw a graph to show the importance of different medical treatments among common people in ancient times, the moxibustion therapy would have a high starting point, but a declining trend line. On the contrary, the acupuncture therapy would gradually uprise from a comparatively low starting point. During the time of the Tang and the Song Dynasties, moxibustion and acupuncture would meet together

at one point and then continue on their respective, but opposite, trends. The herbal medicine has followed a relatively balanced trend. With a high starting point, it had progressed before the Song Dynasty and then began its rise in the Northern Song Dynasty, surpassing acupuncture and moxibustion. It is not the medical science itself that determines the trend of these treatments. On the contrary, as to the medical history, decoction, acupuncture and moxibustion have been all in a process of improvement since their birth. Therefore, if we draw another graph to show the historical development of different medical treatments, we will see that from different starting points, decoction, acupuncture and moxibustion go through a gradually increasing way (the status of acupuncture and moxibustion once declined in the Qing Dynasty), which is totally different from the first graph. The differences between these two graphs probably show the differences between social history of medical treatments and history of medical science. When experts on history of medical science pay much attention to the development of some medical theory or treatment, we should cast our eyes on how such theory or treatment is applied among common people in society as well as the significance behind the phenomenon. From the analysis of the changing progress of the moxibustion therapy, we can see the development of common people's life from the Tang Dynasty to the Song Dynasty. In this sense, these little argyi wool implies enough information to explore this phenomenon.

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