

## The inheritance path research of the processing of Chinese materia medica in Anguo herbs market

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### Abstract

Anguo, known as Qizhou in ancient time, its herbs industry began in Song Dynasty, boomed in Ming, and flourished in Qing. During the development of Qizhou herbs industry, a number of special processing techniques of Chinese Materia Medicine were produced. "Qizhou's Four Uniqueness", of which, the most representative medicine includes "Hundred pieces areca", "Cicada feather of Qingxia", "Yunpian deer antler" and "Pound Rhinoceros unicornis L". To investigate the present inheritance situation of the traditional processing technology of Chinese Materia Medicine in Anguo herbs market, we will consult literature including the ancient books and records, Anguo local chronicles and visit the inheritors of the traditional processing technology in Anguo, and research the processing technology historical origin. This study aims to create the Anguo herbs cultural card, and enrich the cultural heritage of Chinese medicine industry of Anguo country even Hebei province.

**Key words:** Qizhou's Four Uniqueness, Processing of Chinese Materia Medicine, Anguo Herbs Market, Inheritance Path

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## Background

The processing technology of Traditional Chinese Medicine in the drug-market of Anguo is exquisite, in which decoction pieces are of high quality and good curative effect, and enjoys a good nationwide reputation. The representative medicine "Qizhou's Four Uniqueness" has a core position in the research of Traditional Chinese Medicine processing in Anguo, so that "Qizhou's Four Uniqueness" has become an important part of the research on the processing technology of Traditional Chinese Medicine in Anguo. The slices for chewing are intact, well-proportioned, beautiful, bright, but not curled and deformed. Therefore, the effect is improved as well. By collating and analyzing the processing technology articles of Traditional Chinese Medicine in "Qizhou's Four Uniqueness", we will research the history and inheritance of the processing of Traditional Chinese Medicine in Anguo, and create the label of it.

### 1. The historical research of drug-market in Anguo

#### The Medicine King and the Medicine King's temple

When it refers to the forming of drug-market in Anguo, an important background is the legend of the Medicine King and his temple. The Medicine King's Temple is located in the south of Anguo County, with a long history and unique architecture, which is a combination of the architectural features of Song, Yuan, Ming and Qing Dynasties. Now it is a national cultural relic protection unit. The significant cultural representative of the drug-market of Anguo is the Medicine King's Temple rebuilt according to the peat of the king's Pavilion in Jiaqing year of the Qing Dynasty: "The temple was established in the Qing Dynasty and expanded in the Song Dynasty. And when the temple was not built, there is a King's Pavilion." According to Chinese Traditional Medicine Record of Qizhou [1]: "The king is a native, and being a medical Epiphany since Song Dynasty. Patients can be healed through prayer, Qin Wang in Song Dynasty once got sick and no doctors had

ideas. But the emperor immediately recovered after eating several pills given by one doctor. When the emperor asked his name, he said: I am from outside the South of Qizhou. The emperor dispatch someone to look for him, but only to know that he is a god, and order to establish temples to worship". Since then, the emperors of Song, Yuan and Ming Dynasties conferred title upon the one constantly. Song Huizong conferred him up as a spiritual marquis, later changed into the Duke; Duzong of the Southern Song conferred him up as Ming Zhao Hui Xian Yu Wang, commonly known as the Pi King in the folk. Subsequently, the Pi King's temple was maintained and built by the Yuan, Ming and Qing Dynasties, of which the scale was expanded continuously and the influence was more widely. It was used as the Medicine King's Temple gradually, and at the same time the god of temple was named as the Medicine King. Therefore, Liu Yong, a scholar in Qianlong year of Qing Dynasty, wrote a plaque for this temple, saying that "The Temple of Medicine King", which is even more famous in the world.

There are many different opinions about the origin of Medicine King in history. Some people think it is Shennong, some think it is Zhang Sen, and others think it is Pei Tong, but the most popular version is the legend of Pei Tong. According to *The Book of Later Han* records [2], "Pei Tong, named Weijun, was the native of Xindu (now Jizhou, Hebei). He held the post of Hecheng Zuzheng for Wang Mang at the beginning. Shizu (Emperor Guangwu of Han, named Liu Xiu) visited Hebei, Tong surrendered with all the people in the city, and was conferred upon as satrap again, changed into Shouling marquis in the first year of Jian Wu". When he was in the county of Quyang County, he loved the people as he loved his son. He often taught the people the medical principles and healed the sick, so he was widely loved by the people of Qizhou. He was addressed respectfully as the Medicine king of Anguo by later ages.

#### The formation of drug-market in Anguo

Due to the establishment of the Medicine King's Temple, from the Taiping Xingguo Period in the Northern Song Dynasty to the middle of the Ming Dynasty, Anguo gradually became a

local herbs market. After more than 200 years of development, the size of Anguo herbs market has gradually become the tendency that is "the confluence of medicinal materials in the north of the Changjiang River". In the Ming and Qing Dynasties, Anguo herbs market, which became the only medicinal material distribution center of Huaxia herbs industry, entered into its heyday, the important symbol of which is the emergence of the thirteen states and five conferences. According to The Hebang's New Monument of Zhangde House of Wuan County in Henan: "All the people, who carry goods to sell, are divided into provinces, and the provinces are states, the number of which is thirteen in total". The states are Jingtongwei State, Guandong State, Shandong State, Shanxi State, Northwestern State, Gubeikou State, Zhangwu State, Zhangzhou State, Ningbo State, Huai State, Jiangxi State and Guang State. The states of Zhangzhou, Huangqi and Qizhou were added later. With the rise of various herb states, many local pharmacy merchants concerning both the big herbs market and the small herbs market in Anguo, the silver money banker, the grocery store, the industry of leather goods estimation and so on were organized and became the Five Conference. In order to solve all kinds of disputes arising in the operation of the herb market, the local gentleman and celebrities in Anguo constituted an organization named "An Ke Tang" to resolve the disputes. The above is the main body of Anguo Herbs Market. According to the records and statistics of Xuanton in the second year, Anguo Herbs Market has 2,218 merchants and 13,281 employees, with a total of 112.7 million silver dollars [3], which shows the prosperity of Anguo Herbs Market.

**The decline and revival of Anguo Herbs Market**  
Warlords' melee and the Anti-Japanese War were the period of the decline of Anguo herbs industry, especially the Anti-Japanese War. In 1938, the Japanese invaders carried out two large-scale sweeps on Anguo, which made the Anguo Herbs industry suffered a crippling blow. The formerly prosperous herbs industry disappeared. Under the ravages of the Japanese, Anguo herbs industry was on the verge of

extinction. According to the Anguo Archives, after the Japanese occupation of Anguo, the number of merchants dropped from 2,668 to 75, and the number of employees dropped from more than 18,000 to more than 230. 2,300 households were reduced to 30 households, only about 100 employees and 70 brokers were left [4]. In this case, the employees of Anguo Herbs Market had moved to all parts of the country. Taking Tianjin as an example, Anguo druggist were mostly engaged in herbs industry in the areas of Zhen Street, West Head Bay, Hebei Guan Shang and Bei Men Li. Some of the regulations of Tianjin Traditional Chinese Medicine Industry were also complied with the traditional regulations of Qizhou Herbs Industry. During the War of Liberation, Anguo Herbs Industry received the strong care and support from his government of the Shanxi-Chahaer-Hebei Border Region and the Hebei Center Military Region, and gradually revived. After the founding of New China, Anguo Herbs Market gradually restored its glory. Since 1956, the national medicinal materials communication conference has been held twice a year. Although it was hit during the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, it quickly recovered after Chinese economic reform. Nowadays, it is an important strategic base of "Traditional Chinese Medicine Strengthen Province" in Hebei province, a digital Chinese medicine building capital, Modern Chinese Medicine Park in Anguo and other key projects.

## 2. "Qizhou's Four Uniqueness"

### The birth of "Qizhou's Four Uniqueness"

In Anguo Herbs Market, the "Thirteen States" mainly managed Chinese Materia Medica (raw medicines), while the local business in Anguo was mainly based on processing, repairing, decoction pieces processing and composite processing (cooked medicine), focusing on the South and North Conference and the South Gate of Anguo. More than 200 merchants in the North Conference, such as Wan Shengkui, Hengjitai, Rongqinghe, Zhichengrui, were mostly large-scale merchants; there were more than 200 merchants in the South Conference, but most of them offered for sale by building

"slices sheds" and making "slices", which were sold on a smaller scale; during the herbs market, some villagers near the South Gate of Anguo had brought their own tools to cut the herbs into pieces and sell out [5]. Chinese Materia Medicine processing in Anguo has high technology, good grade and great quality. The pieces produced are neat and tidy, the craftsmanship is fine, the quality is pure, and the curative effect is remarkable. The representative is "Hundred pieces areca" produced by the "North Conference Wan Shengkui", *Pinellia ternata* cooked like Cicada feather produced by the South Conference, the product of the competition between the South and North Conference Associations, which are "deer antler cooked like cloud" and "Rhinoceros horn cooked by sword", the above compose "Qizhou's Four Uniqueness", are processed high-grade Chinese Materia Medicine decoction pieces.

#### Processing skills and key points of "Qizhou's Four Uniqueness"

The main points of the cutting process of the "Qizhou's Four Uniqueness" decoction pieces are "softy, cut, and the methods". "Softy" means softening. After sprayed, moistened with sand, sowed and so on, the medical materials are softened, the excessive dissolution and the loss of active ingredients caused by contacting with water excessively are reduced [6]. "Cut" refers to the tools for cutting. The knives for cutting drugs, which are mainly used by the drug workers in Anguo, come from Fusheng Furnace in Ming Wan year and its derivative is the North Fu Sheng medicine knife furnace and the South Fu Sheng medicine knife furnace. The design of the knife is reasonable and easy to use, and it has solved the cutting, medicine processing, flaker and other difficulties. The "three means" refers to the method of cutting. When cutting the Materia material, workers should sit on the stool with legs crossed, press with the part of the hand between left thumb and index finger, the other fingers clench the medicine tightly, and block the end of the medicine with a square. When the left hand forced the medicine, the medicine was pushed to the sickle slowly, the right hand held the knife, cut down the knife with the power of the wrist and arm, the blade

adheres to the medicine, and the two hands must be coordinated to cut out thin, beautiful and complete herbs. The high-grade decoction pieces represented by "Qizhou's Four Uniqueness" are not only for the pursuit of skill, but more importantly, they can better exert their medicinal property.

#### Hundred pieces areca

"Hundred pieces areca", that is, after moistening the areca, the workers cut out more than 100 pieces of thin sheets which are as thin as cotton paper [7]. Since areca is small and hard, it must be assisted with areca tongs. Holding the middle of the areca with an areca tong and placing it with the big head to the right, then hold the tong with your left hand and control the force. The left thumb and forefinger lean into the knife's bridge and slowly push it to the right. Hold the knife by the right hand and uses the wrist and arm power to cut. The left and right hands cooperate with each other to cut out thin, beautiful and complete areca pieces [8]. "Hundred pieces areca" skill fully demonstrates the charm of the culture of traditional Chinese medicine's processing in Anguo.(Fig. 1)



Figure 1 Hundred pieces areca

#### *Pinellia ternata* cooked like Cicada feather

"*Pinellia ternata* cooked like Cicada feather", that is to say that the size of horsebean-like *Pinellia ternata* need to be cut into slices with a knife after being cooked with alum, which are as thin as a cicada feather and light like snowflakes [9]. The cutting process of "*Pinellia ternata* cooked like Cicada feather" is worth studying. It is required to be washed with 8% alum solution until the center of the piece is dry. After the *Pinellia ternata* is washed and dried without numbness, it is cut into irregular circles by a knife, which is translucent and

white in appearance, hard and brittle, thin as a cicada feather, and it can project light when pinched to the light. It can reveal the words on the paper and you can take it off with a light blow when you put it in your palm. Basically, the size of horsebean-like *Pinellia ternate* can be cut out 108 pieces of decoction pieces just like cicada feather. The raw usually takes 6 months of preparation time to be cut [10]. It shows the quality and credibility of the processing of Traditional Chinese medicine decoction pieces in Anguo, as well as the operators' self-discipline and hardship.(Fig. 2)



Figure 2 *Pinellia ternata* cooked like Cicada feat

#### "Deer antler cooked like cloud"

"Deer antler cooked like cloud", that is to say that is a piece of deer antler which is cut into a shape like a cloud after heating, and it is as thin as silk, when placed on the tip of the tongue, it is instantly melted [11]. The processing technology of "Deer antler cooked like cloud" is a normative method. Take the deer antler, fire to the deer fur and scrape, wrap the body with a cloth bag, continuously pouring in hot liquor from the small hole in the surface of the saw. When it is filled and infiltrated thoroughly, we steam it slightly, then cross-cut into thin slices, and make them flatten and dry [12]. The processing of the piece making is shortened, the deer antler is easy to steam to softy, and it should be cut together with the moistened *Magnolia officinalis* while hot, the processed piece is flat, the piece is even, and the skin is not peeled off. The technology reduces the time for wrapping or twine. And the cut pieces are like cloud, thin as silk. When placed on the tip of the tongue, it can be melted instantly [13].(Fig. 3)

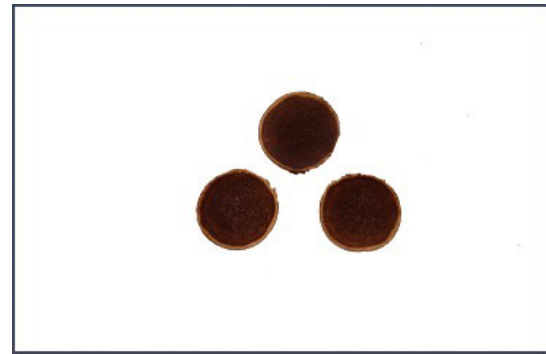


Figure 3 Deer antler cooked like cloud

#### "Rhinoceros horn cooked by sword"

"Rhinoceros horn cooked by sword", that is to say is to make the Rhinoceros horn that is as hard as iron cut into a thin piece with a special steel shovel knife, shaped like shavings of wood. Rhino horn is a national banned drug. Because the effect of rhino horns and buffalo horns is similar, now the buffalo horn instead of Rhinoceros horns [14].(Fig. 4)



Figure 4 Conventional pilose antler

### 3.The exploration of the inheritance path of "Qizhou's Four Uniqueness"

#### Literature study

Ancient books and local chronicles, originating from the National Library, Baoding Fangzhi Museum, Anguo Library, Anguo Traditional Chinese Medicine Culture Museum and other places, including "Anguo County Chronicle" and so on; the literatures, originating from China National Knowledge Infrastructure, World Wide Database, including "The Introduction of Areca Processing Tools - Crab Clamps", "Commonly Used Processing Methods and Clinical Application Research in *Pinellia ternata*" and so on. We organized and analyzed the contents of the "Qizhou's Four Uniqueness" recorded in the above literatures, and analyzed

the characteristics of the processing technology of Anguo Traditional Chinese Medicine.

### Field investigation, interviews and comparative analysis

The people who have the ability of processing "Qizhou's Four Uniqueness" decoction pieces currently are only a few in Anguo. By interviewing with the inheritors of Anguo traditional Chinese Medicine processing technique, we sorted out the narration and demonstration materials of Traditional Chinese Medicine processing, and compared with the traditional process techniques such as Jingbang, Chuanbang, Qibang and Jianchangbang, and untangle the Traditional Chinese Medicine processing and processed products of Anguo. Among them, "Pinellia ternata cooked like Cicada feather" is a typical processing of Jingbang. Chinese crude drugs mainly involve areca, Pinellia ternata, deer antler, and Ligusticum chuanxiong Hort.

### The training class of inheritors

The inheritance education of Traditional Chinese Medicine lies on the command of basic skills, the study of traditional culture, and the accumulation of practical experience. By inviting the experienced medical workers to be the inheritors of the Traditional Chinese Medicine processing, the lectures will be taught in the form of Apprentice to Master. The learners master the essence of Traditional Chinese Medicine processing technology culture, that is, "The processing is complicated, but it will not save labor. The material is expensive, but it will not be reduced". It provides theoretical source for modern Traditional Chinese Medicine processing technology by comparing with modern processing technology.

### Discussion

Traditional Chinese Medicine is the material basis for the inheritance and development of Traditional Chinese medicine business, and it is strategic resource which contacts with the national economy and the people's livelihood. In 2015, the State Council of the People's Republic of China issued the "Chinese Herbal

Medicine Protection and Development Plan (2015-2020)" to strengthen the protection of Chinese herbal medicines and promote the scientific development of the Chinese herbs industry [15]. The traditional Chinese Medicine processing technology is the first batch of intangible cultural heritage in China [16]. In 2018, the Health Commission of Hebei Province, the Science and Technology Bureau and the Chinese Medicine Administration jointly issued the "Hebei Province Traditional Chinese Medicine Strengthening Province Construction Talent Support Plan (2018-2030)", it specifically mentions the establishment of the Traditional Chinese Medicine processing base of Hebei Province in Anguo [17]. The traditional Chinese Medicine processing technology represented by "Qizhou's Four Uniqueness" is Chinese unique pharmaceutical technology, and it has a unique position, taking a role in the history of Traditional Chinese Medicine processing. The arrangement and inheritance of Traditional Chinese Medicine processing technology in Anguo Herbs Market will protect and inherit the Traditional Chinese Medicine culture of Anguo, and provide cultural heritage for the creation of Anguo special Traditional Chinese Medicine business label.

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