



## Herb and Social Context in Anguo City: Integration Health and Traditional Medicine Part of Cultural Life

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### Abstract

**Background and Aim:** Chinese herbal medicine culture is an important part of the excellent culture of the Chinese nation, represents the core concepts and values of Chinese civilization, and embodies the wisdom of Chinese philosophy and the essence of Chinese civilization. The development path of Chinese herbal culture in Anguo since the Song Dynasty is a microcosm of the development of Chinese herbal culture. By studying the historical background and current situation of Anguo's Chinese herbal culture, analyzing the impact of changes in traditional Chinese culture on Anguo's Chinese herbal culture, promoting Anguo's Chinese herbal culture and social life, and providing support and assistance for further research on the future development of Anguo's Chinese herbal culture.

**Materials and Methods:** This study will use the literature review method for research. The aim is to understand the development path of Anguo's traditional Chinese medicine culture through a literature review and to explore the reasons and foundations for its development through induction and organization.

**Results:** The Chinese herbal medicine culture in Anguo bloomed its unique charm under the precipitation of history, which is the reflection of the real life of Anguo's traditional culture. Zhu "yaofang", chi "yaoshan", Guang "yaoyuan", and kan "yaoxi" have become the daily life, which is the concentrated embodiment of the typical "Chinese lifestyle". Studying its development path is conducive to discovering its value and connotation, and laying a good foundation for in-depth study of Anguo's Chinese herbal medicine culture.

**Conclusion:** Regional culture is one of the sources of culture, and health and well-being are important components of sustainable human development. The natural integration of Anguo Traditional Chinese Medicine culture has been fully integrated into daily life. Living culture provides a broader space for future development, further elucidating the value and significance of its research.

**Keywords:** Anguo; Chinese herbal medicine culture; Modern development path; Life activation

### Introduction

Anguo City is a county-level city in Hebei Province, northern China, formerly known as "Qizhou". In the early years of the Han Dynasty, Emperor Gaozu Liu Bang adopted the meaning of "An Bang Ding Guo" and conferred the title of "An Guo Wu Hou" on Wang Ling; Anguo County was established in the sixth year of the Yuanshou reign of Emperor Wu of the Western Han Dynasty. Anguo Pharmaceutical has a long history, originating from the Han Dynasty, starting from the Northern Song Dynasty, and flourishing in the Ming and Qing Dynasties. It has the only imperially bestowed Medicine King Temple in China to commemorate the ancient medical saint (the fifth batch of national key cultural relics protection units, 2001), and "Anguo Pharmaceutical Market" has been designated as a national intangible cultural heritage (Ministry of Culture, 2016). It is one of the birthplaces of traditional Chinese medicine culture and is known as the "Millennium Medicine Capital" and the "Number One Medicine Market in the World". For thousands of years, Anguo has been renowned for its excellent planting quality of the "Eight Qi Medicines" and exquisite processing techniques of the "Four Wonders of Qizhou", enjoying the reputation of "The herbs become medicine when they arrive at Anguo, and the medicine begins to emit fragrance after passing through Qizhou."

Chinese herbal medicine culture is an important component of the excellent culture of the Chinese nation, and it is a concentrated manifestation of the core philosophical ideas and material civilization of the Chinese nation. (Shen et al, 2013) Chinese herbal culture mainly includes the formation of social environment, thinking mode, philosophical thinking, etc. Overall, Chinese herbal culture is the humanistic



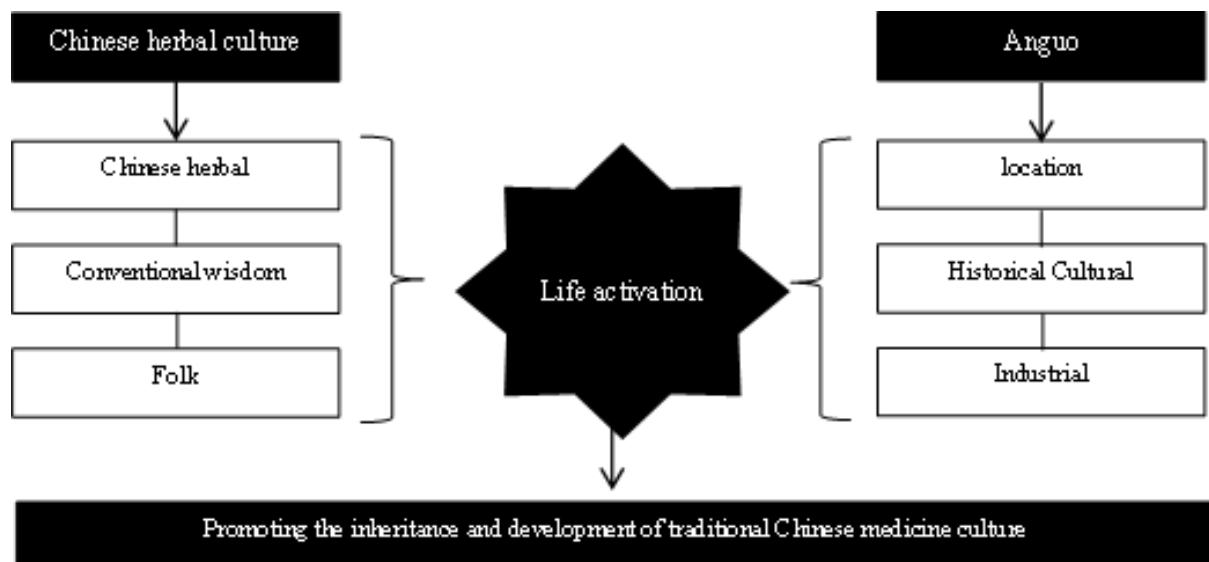
value and characteristic culture reflected in the social background. (Wen, 2014) Chinese herbal medicine culture has long been a prevalent and enduring cultural and social phenomenon in China, a concentrated reflection of the "Chinese way of life" and a unique treasure that the Chinese nation has contributed to world medicine and human health and longevity.

As the birthplace of traditional Chinese medicine culture in northern China, Anguo is closely connected to the local people's lives, beliefs, and emotions, gradually forming a unique development system in the cultural and social environment. Therefore, in-depth research on the development path of modern and contemporary Chinese herbal culture in Anguo can help us better understand Anguo's culture and history, explore the scenarios of Chinese herbal culture and life revitalization, protect this precious regional cultural resource, explore directions for its sustainable development in the new era, clarify development ideas, and provide suggestions and references.

## Objectives

1. To study the historical background and current situation of traditional Chinese medicine culture in Anguo;
2. To analyze the impact of changes in traditional Chinese culture on the traditional Chinese herbal medicine culture in Anguo;
3. To promote the culture of traditional Chinese medicine and social life in Anguo.

## Conceptual Framework



**Figure 1** Conceptual Framework  
**Note:** Constructed by the researcher

## Literature review

Shang (2023) in "Sustainable Development Study of the Chinese Medicinal Material Industry in Anguo City" mentioned: "During the 'Thirteenth Five-Year Plan', the Chinese medicinal material industry in Anguo City developed rapidly with significant advantages in the entire industry chain. It not only promoted income growth for farmers and the prosperous development of rural areas but also earned recognition as a national pilot area for integrated development of the primary, secondary, and tertiary industries in rural areas. Anguo City comprehensively advanced the construction of 10,000 mu of seed breeding bases and 100,000 mu of standardized planting bases, effectively driving the planting area of



Chinese medicinal materials in surrounding counties and provinces. Moreover, the construction of the modern Chinese medicine industrial park in Anguo attracted 126 companies, generating a main business revenue of 62 billion yuan and ranking 12th in the province. These measures not only enhanced the economic benefits of the Chinese medicinal material industry but also strengthened the cluster effect and innovation capability of the city's characteristic Chinese medicine industry."

Kou et al (2024) in "From 'Capital of Medicinal Materials' to 'Capital of Health'" mentioned: "As the largest distribution center for Chinese medicinal materials in northern China, Anguo City successfully hosted the 26th International Medicinal Material Festival and Chinese Medicinal Materials and Pharmaceuticals Health Products Exchange in 2024. The event attracted over 230 Chinese medicinal material production and planting enterprises and more than 110 pharmaceutical companies. During the meeting, Anguo showcased the heritage and innovative achievements of traditional Chinese medicine and successfully signed numerous cooperation agreements. This not only enhanced Anguo City's national and international reputation but also promoted the high-quality integrated development of the entire Chinese medicine industry chain. By standardizing the planting of medicinal materials and strengthening foundational support, Anguo City is transitioning from the 'Capital of Medicinal Materials' to the 'Capital of Health,' laying a solid foundation for the sustainable and healthy development of the medicinal materials industry."

Che (2022) in "Integrating Traditional Medicinal Knowledge into Daily Life: The Active Use of Traditional Medicinal Knowledge" mentioned: "Traditional medicinal knowledge is an important part of China's intangible cultural heritage, but it is gradually disappearing from people's daily lives under the impact of modernization. To reverse this trend, Che Yuechuan proposes enhancing community involvement and public education to achieve the active use of traditional medicinal knowledge. The article emphasizes that under productive protection measures and guidance on daily life concepts, traditional medicinal knowledge can not only supplement the modern medical system but also play an important role in daily life. Through field research and case analysis, the author demonstrates how traditional medicinal knowledge can be reintegrated into the daily lives of modern Chinese people through education, policy support, and community activities, thereby ensuring its transmission and development."

## Methodology

### 1. Literature Selection

The study adopts a systematic literature review approach, aiming to compile and synthesize existing research on the development and impact of Chinese herbal medicine culture in Anguo. Sources directly address aspects of Chinese herbal medicine, its cultural implications, historical development, or its integration into the social and economic structures of Anguo. This includes peer-reviewed articles, government documents, historical records, and previously conducted studies.

### 2. Data Collection

Data will be collected from the following types of sources:

Academic Journals and Books: Key for theoretical frameworks and previous research findings.

Government and Institutional Reports: Useful for statistics, policy analysis, and the current status of herbal medicine in cultural practices.

Archival Material: Historical texts and records from Anguo archives that offer insights into the long-term cultural practices surrounding Chinese herbal medicine.

### 3. Analysis Methods

Thematic Analysis: This qualitative analysis will be used to identify, analyze, and report themes within the collected data. This method is particularly suited to ascertain patterns of cultural impact over time, as documented in the literature.

## Results

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Citation



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Understand the development path and current situation of Anguo Chinese herbal medicine in modern times, and acquire relevant knowledge system of Anguo Chinese herbal culture. Comprehensively explore the interactive relationship between traditional Chinese medicine culture and local social, cultural, and economic development, explore the historical evolution and cultural inheritance of Anguo's traditional Chinese medicine culture in the context of the new era, and reflect on its current development status and future protection and development.

## 1. Overview of Anguo

Anguo City is located in the hinterland of the Beijing Tianjin Hebei Urban Agglomeration, with a total area of 486 square kilometers and a population of 403600. It is an important thoroughfare for business and tourism in the north and south. Since ancient times, it has been known for its reputation as the "Capital of Medicine" "Medicine Prefecture" and "Number One Medicine Market in the World" (Anguo City, 2023). In recent years, it has been successively evaluated as a national demonstration unit for traditional Chinese medicine health tourism, a national-level green manufacturing park, a national foreign trade transformation and upgrading base (traditional Chinese medicine and health products), a hometown of Chinese medicinal materials, an advantageous area for Chinese characteristic agricultural products, and a leading area for the integrated development of rural industries in China. (Zhao et al, 2016)

### 1.1 The Cultural and Historical Origins of Anguo

Anguo has been inhabited by human activities since over 5000 years ago. In addition to Anguo, other names used include Yifeng, Lijie, Puyin, Qizhou, and Qixian. The oldest name of Anguo is "Qi", which originated from the period of Yao, Shun, and Yu, and is renowned worldwide as the "Qizhou Medicine Market".

The Tao Tang tribe once resided in the central and southern parts of Hebei, and during the reign of Yao, they moved to the Fenshui River basin in southern Shanxi. The Yao surname is Qi, also known as Yiqi, and the name is Fangxun. Because both Tao and Tang were fiefs of Yao, the Tao Tang family or Tang Yao were both the titles of Yao. During the Tao and Tang dynasties, there were a total of nine provinces in the world, with the Qi region belonging to Jizhou. During the Yu and Shun dynasties, there were twelve provinces, and the Qi region belonged to Youzhou. So the activities of Yao and Shun were both in the North China region. During the Yin and Shang dynasties, Qi belonged to the Fengguo Yi. During the Western Zhou Dynasty, the territory belonged to the state of Marquis Xing. During the Spring and Autumn Period, it belonged to the Xianyu State, which later became Zhongshan State. During the Warring States period, Qi territory was under the jurisdiction of Zhao State. According to the "Qizhou Annals" (Luo Yogui et al., the Qing dynasty), "Zhang was located on the northern boundary of Zhao, which is also known as Qi territory." In 201 BC (the sixth year of Emperor Gaozu's reign), Wang Ling (?-181 BC), a prominent official of the Han family, was granted the title of Marquis of Anguo for his contributions to the founding of the country. His fiefdom was located in present-day Anguo. In 117 BC (the sixth year of Emperor Wu's Yuanshou reign), he enjoyed the profound meaning of "A Bang Ding Guo" and established Anguo County, which belonged to Zhongshan State. In October, Anguo County was established. Anguo City, located in present-day Guocheng Village in Xi'an, appeared in the historical scroll under the name Anguo.

### 1.2 Anguo and Chinese Herbal Culture

One of the origins of culture is regional culture, which is a cultural manifestation in different regional environments. Anguo is the largest distribution center for traditional Chinese medicine in China, named by the State Council as the "Hometown of Traditional Chinese Medicine" (1996), and one of the first batch of pollution-free production demonstration bases for traditional Chinese medicine cultivation in China. It is the largest distribution center for traditional Chinese medicine in China, and together with Bozhou in Anhui, Yuzhou in Henan, and Zhangshu in Jiangxi, it has become one of the four major medicinal capitals, earning the reputation of "obtaining the world's medicine with just one step".

As a medicine capital, Anguo plays an extremely important role. Anguo has a long history of medicine and has accumulated a unique culture of Chinese herbal medicine. In 2006 numbered 508-X-60



"Anguo Medicine City", with the support of the Anguo government and the efforts of the broad masses of the people, was successfully included in the first batch of China's national intangible cultural heritage representative projects list. As early as five years ago, that is, on June 25, 2001, Anguo Yaowang Temple became the fifth batch of national key cultural relics protection units announced by The State Council.



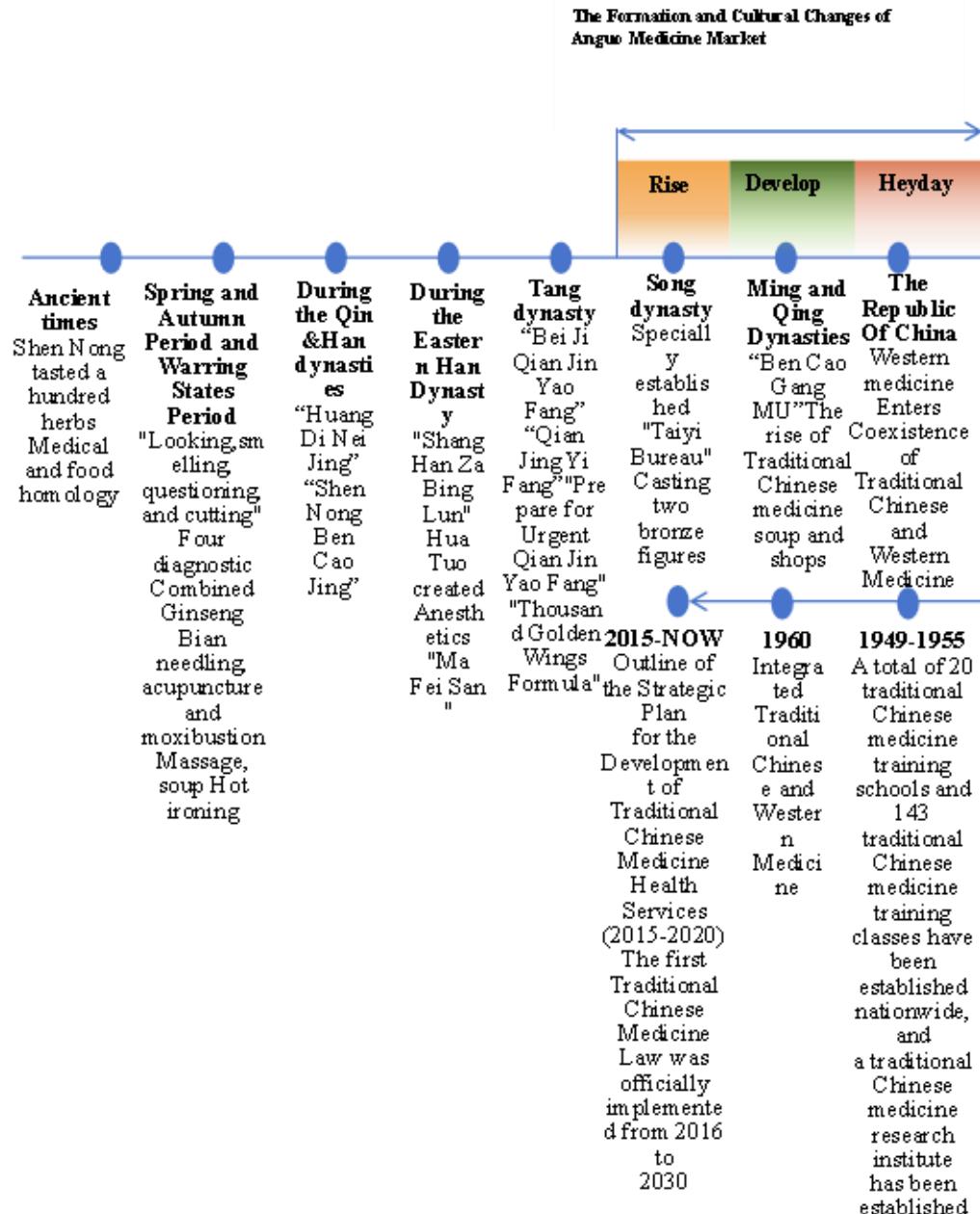
**Figure 2** The Main Gate of Anguo Yaowang Temple

**Note:** Photographed by the researcher

In terms of intangible cultural heritage protection, emphasis is placed on protection and inheritance, excavation, and utilization. Anguo Yaoshi and Anguo Laodiao have been listed as the first batch of national intangible cultural heritage, and the ceremony for the restoration of the Medicine King and the opening ceremony of the Ming and Qing dynasties Yaoshi have been restored. Organize the Qing Dynasty's "Medicinal Drawing" and bring it to the stage for screenplay, rehearsal, and presentation by An Guo Lao Diao Art Communication Company. He has successively created and published books such as "The Legend of the First Medicine Market in Anguo - Yaowang Temple" (Qing, 2016), "Chinese Festivals Annals of Anguo Yaowang Temple" (Liu, 2014), and "Qizhou Traditional Chinese Medicine Annals" (Yang et al., 1987). Collaborated with the crew of "Da Zhai Men" (Zhao, 2001-2014) to complete the filming of Anguo content, and cooperated with CCTV's "Exploration and Discovery" program to complete the discovery and exploration of "Qizhou Medicinal Opera".

## 2. The Formation and Cultural Changes of Anguo Medicine Market

Anguo Medicine Market, a traditional folk custom in Anguo City, Hebei Province, is one of the national intangible cultural heritages. Since the Xianchun period of the Southern Song Dynasty, Anguo Medicine Market has a history of over 700 years. The Anguo Medicine Market evolved from the Xianghuo Festival and Yaowang Temple Fair during the Northern Song Dynasty. Therefore, the Anguo Medicine Market originated in the Northern Song Dynasty, flourished in the Ming Dynasty, and flourished in the Qing Dynasty. In the early years of the Daoguang reign of the Qing Dynasty, the peak period of the Anguo Medicine Market developed to "five in spring and seven in autumn", with five months in spring and seven months in autumn, and continued throughout the year. According to the different development histories of the Anguo Medicine Market, it can be divided into three stages from a historical perspective: rise, development, and peak period.



**Figure 3** Formation and Cultural Changes of Anguo Medicine Market

**Note:** Constructed by the researcher

## 2.1 Rising period

The Chinese herbal culture in Anguo was formed and developed based on the Chinese herbal medicine distribution market. For a long period after Anguo was established as a country, traditional Chinese medicine was not the main content of social life. Until the Northern Song Dynasty, it was rumored that during the Taiping Xingguo period of the Northern Song Dynasty, Emperor Taizong's younger brother, King Qin Zhao Tingmei, fell ill and invited famous doctors, but none of them were able to cure him. He then posted an imperial list to seek medical help. One day, a doctor revealed his name and



entered the palace, claiming to be from Nanguan, Qizhou. He took several pills and asked the King of Qin to drink them. After taking the medicine, the King of Qin recovered from his illness. Send someone to follow up with the doctor to express gratitude. The doctor thought it was causing trouble and hanged himself. Local officials said that the "Pi Wang Shen Ge" deity in Nanguan, Qizhou, cured the illness of King Qin, rebuilt the temple, and widely promoted it. From then on, the "Pi Wang Shen Ge" incense gradually flourished, driving the exchange of materials and information in the local and surrounding areas. In the Southern Song Dynasty, the worship of the Medicine King became popular, and the temple was renamed the "Medicine King Temple". The incense festival gradually evolved into a temple fair mainly focused on medicinal material trading. Anguo as an important distribution center for traditional Chinese medicine trading in northern China, has begun to take shape.

### 2.2 Development period

In the Ming Dynasty, traditional Chinese medicine seeds and cultivation techniques entered Anguo with the trade of traditional Chinese medicine. People continuously learned various cultivation techniques for medicinal materials, and combined with the geographical and environmental conditions of the local area, explored domestication and purification cultivation of wild medicinal materials. Suitable medicinal materials were introduced, propagated, and selected for seedling cultivation. We have accumulated rich experience in improving the quality of medicinal materials and increasing the variety of medicinal materials. Not only has it enriched the variety of medicinal herb cultivation, but it has also cultivated a batch of high-quality local medicinal herbs, which have been exported to various places and received high praise. The four unique traditional Chinese medicine processing techniques in Qizhou, including "Betel nut is cut into hundreds of thin pieces like paper, *Pinellia ternata*, as thin as cicada wings, Deer antler is cut into thin pieces like clouds, and Cut rhinoceros horns into thin slices" (Zhao, 2021), which have made the traditional Chinese medicine processing techniques in Anguo world-renowned, praised as "The herbs become medicine when they arrive at Anguo, and the medicine begins to emit fragrance after passing through Qizhou." (Zhang, 2023) Anguo people have also created rich experience and technology in traditional Chinese medicine identification, processing, and processing. These outline the basic lines of Anguo Yao culture from the physical layer.

### 2.3 The heyday

In the Qing Dynasty, the scale of the Anguo pharmaceutical market rapidly expanded. In addition to merchants from all over the country, there were also foreign pharmaceutical merchants from Russia, India, Japan, Vietnam, North Korea, and other countries who came to Anguo to buy and sell medicinal materials. The variety and quantity of medicinal materials traded in Anguo were numerous. The expansion of scale has extended the trading time from once a year to twice a year, and a considerable number of pharmaceutical companies have set up medicinal herb stores in Anguo to conduct regular traditional Chinese medicine transactions. The vast market requires a more specialized division of labor and stricter management. The emergence of guild organizations represented by the "Thirteen Gang" and "Anketang" is a reflection of this need. The "Thirteen Gang" was spontaneously formed by merchants from various regions who came to Anguo to do business. Each gang concentrated on managing some bulk medicinal materials with regional characteristics, forming a certain degree of monopoly operation to protect the interests of local pharmaceutical merchants. Each gang has its leader, rules, and customs. Anketang is an organization established through consultation between Rich people and famous people and pharmaceutical companies in Anguo, responsible for receiving customers, mediating disputes between customers, managing agents, handling loan disputes, and so on. Anketang is a management organization in the form of a guild, with many clear texts regulating transactions and high authority. Anketang verified the license of the local pharmaceutical broker. Punish brokers who violate regulations, and even have the right to sell their industry loans to repay debts. The institutional culture represented by industry organizations and management norms marks the maturity of Anguo Chinese herbal medicine culture.

## 3. The "Temple Fair" in Anguo and the Revitalization of Life Scenarios





The Chinese herbal medicine culture in Anguo has gone through thousands of years. From ancient times to now, whether the cultural evolution from the earliest "Medicine God" to the "Medicine Merchant", or the modern earnest "fragrance of medicine" integrating into people's lives, such as living in the pharmacy, eating a Tonic Diet, visiting the medicine garden, and watching the medicine play, the cultural genes have been permeated into all aspects of life, forming a vivid picture. In the future, the Chinese herbal culture in Anguo will be interpreted with strong vitality to demonstrate the value and significance of Chinese herbal culture.

### 3.1 From "Medicine God" to "Medicine Merchant"

From the worship of the legend of the Medicine King by the people, to the offering of incense and worship by the people, it developed into a large-scale temple fair and finally formed the medicine market that continues to this day. The grand temple fairs throughout history can be traced back.

According to the reconstructed inscriptions of the Medicine King Temple during the Wanli and Tianqi periods of the Ming Dynasty, because people in various places believed in the miracle of the Medicine King's compassionate salvation and prayed for the Medicine King's blessings for their safety and health, the incense at the Medicine King Temple was never interrupted. Especially during the Qingming Festival every year, people gathered in front of the Medicine King Temple, with a constant flow of vehicles and horses. Donating money and currency to the Medicine King Temple is a spontaneous act of the people, while from a religious perspective, it is a superstitious belief in divine protection to ward off evil and eliminate disasters; From a social perspective, similar to the act of pharmaceutical merchants donating to rebuild the Medicine King Temple, to gain social prestige. It must be mentioned here that by the late Ming and Qing dynasties, the Anguo Yaowang Temple Fair had developed into a medicinal material distribution center with commercial trading functions.

The historical records of the development of Anguo Temple Fair into a pharmaceutical market can be traced back to the Qi Yang Fu in the Qi Zhou Zhi (Luo, Qing) of the 21st year of the Qianlong reign. After the temple fair developed into a market for medicinal herbs, it gradually expanded from the Qingming Festival during the Tianqi period of the Ming Dynasty and before the Spring and Autumn seasons. Not only during the Qingming Festival but also on October 15th of the Xia Yuan Festival, it became the time for temple fairs to worship the Medicine King and engage in commercial transactions. Afterward, it reached the "Spring and Autumn Two Sessions", where the Spring Temple lasted for five months and the Autumn Temple lasted for seven months, which can be said to be continuous throughout the years.

From this, it can be seen that the medicinal herb trading in Anguo has a long history of inheritance and has gained a great reputation. Both pilgrims and medicinal herb merchants dress up to attend the ritual of the Medicine King and participate in the trade of the Medicine King Temple Fair, which has become a market. The temple fair is fundamentally different from ordinary urban markets, as it is built in the physical space of temples with a certain scale, and has a certain social worship group that worships gods. Under this premise, the function and purpose of the Anguo Yaowang Temple Fair have been expanded, and the religious culture of worshiping and rewarding gods, the consumer culture of commercial exchanges, and the folk culture of entertainment and interaction constitute the grand scene of the "Number One Medicine Market in the World".

The historical evolution of Anguo Pharmaceutical City from the belief in the Medicine King to the Medicine King Temple Fair and then to the herbal medicine market highlights the dual characteristics of Chinese herbal medicine as both a culture and an industry.

### 3.2 The "Yao Xiang" integrated into life (It refers to the imagery expression of the integration of traditional Chinese medicine culture and daily life scenarios.)

The people of Anguo live a "slow life" as we see it now. They can't live without a word of "medicine" everywhere. They live in "pharmacies", eat "Tonic Diet", visit "medicine gardens" and watch "medicine shows" (Hao & Chen, 2020). These vivid life imprints are an important component of Anguo's traditional Chinese herbal culture.



3.2.1 Zhu "yaofang" (It refers to the unique lifestyle and business model of Anguo Pharmaceutical City that integrates sales, production, and daily life functions)

There are several alleys around the herbal medicine trading market, with two-story small buildings connected by walls on both sides of each alley. In the early morning, filled with the strong fragrance of medicine, people can be seen from the alley entrance opening their doors to clean, store goods, and tally. The air is mixed with the medicinal dust raised by the tally, and people's busy figures are faintly visible, welcoming a new day with vitality. Walking into the pharmacy's room, one will find that it is a pharmacy where the pharmacy resides. I was fortunate enough to visit the houses of several families. In a two-story small building, the second floor is a place for residence and living. On the first floor, there is a combination of warehouse and storefront. White woven bags are used to store sample goods of different varieties, neatly displayed together. On the side next to the wall, inventory is stacked to prepare for the need for large quantities (which buyers can purchase in tons). There will be a room in the corner of the house for people to rest and receive guests so that Anguo Pharmaceuticals can open the door at home to welcome customers and discuss business without leaving their homes.

A "yaofang" integrates the life and business of the Anguo people, becoming an indispensable presence for the Anguo people. On the one hand, it is because the residence and store are very close to the medicinal material trading market, which can be used as storefronts to sell medicine or as warehouses for storage. Whenever encountering large orders in the pharmaceutical market, it only takes 3 minutes to take customers to their homes to see "bulk goods". This convenience maximizes its characteristics. Another important aspect is that this approach is a mark of historical inheritance and a vivid portrayal of the lives of the people of Anguo Medicine. The "root" of Anguo Medicine lies here, and everything originates from it. The "yaofang" has an irreplaceable emotional attachment.



Figure 4 Street View of Anguo Medicine Market

Note: Photographed by the researcher

3.2.2 Chi "yaoshan" (It refers to the delicious food with a certain color, fragrance, taste, and shape made by strictly following the Tonic Diet formula, matching Chinese herbal medicine with some food with medicinal value, and adopting China's unique cooking technology and modern scientific methods.)

Anguo is a small town with a total area of only 4.86 million square kilometers and a population of approximately 370000. Among these populations, about half of them are engaged in the herbal medicine industry, while the rest are more or less woven into this "medicine circle" and influenced and influenced by traditional Chinese medicine in their daily lives.

Food is the paramount necessity of the people. The people of Anguo value health preservation and tailor their food to local conditions. Many dishes, using inconspicuous ingredients, have become a delicacy on earth after careful consideration. Lily roots can be dried in the sun to cook porridge, and lily flowers and leaves can be used to wash and taste cold dishes; Yam can be processed and used as medicine, but unprocessed and edible; When the golden needle blooms, it can be used to make braised noodles, but after blooming, it can only be placed in the park for viewing. If tourists from other places come, they can eat more Tonic Diet in the restaurant. The main courses include sweet and sour Chinese yam fish, cordyceps elbow, Sichuan shellfish stewed plow, Cornu's meatballs, lotus seeds, astragalus tea eggs, sweet almonds, etc; The staple food includes barley sweet rice, tuckahoe stuffed bun, yam Wonton, sea cucumber Shaobing (Baked cake in griddle), yam roll meat; There are also lotus seed soup, Broth of white fungus, Shiquan Dabu soup, etc; There are various types of medicinal wines, including yellow wine, chrysanthemum liquid, safflower dew, and tangerine peel tincture. Anguo Tonic Diet gathers the essence of a hundred medicines, gathers natural beauty, and combines cooking skills. Regular eating can nourish the blood and strengthen the body. People often describe Anguo people's proficiency in medicinal materials by saying "The herbs become medicine when they arrive at Anguo, and the medicine begins to emit fragrance after passing through Qizhou." At the same time, we have to admire the Anguo people's tact in "eating" and integrating the Tonic Diet into life.



**Figure 5** Booth of Hebei Baixiaodan Pharmaceutical Co., Ltd. in the Second National "Pitong" Cup Tonic Diet Competition

**Note:** Photographed by the researcher

3.2.3 Guang "yaoyuan" (It refers to botanical gardens and garden landscapes mainly planted with Chinese herbal medicine.)

Although the city of Anguo is not large, there are numerous parks, and the greening and beautification of the city are very distinctive. "A garden in a city, and a city in a garden." It is lush and colorful, filled with the fragrance of flowers and medicine everywhere, like a living museum of "Chinese herbal medicine".



There are dozens of common medicinal herbs in parks and urban green belts. In addition to the "Eight Qi Medicines", there are also salvia miltiorrhiza, Belamcanda chinensis, White Peony, Golden Needle, Platycodon, Hibiscus, Lily, Acacia, Daqu Mai, salvia chinensis, Semen Pharbitidis, and so on.

Although the people of Anguo Medicine are familiar with traditional Chinese medicine, they may not necessarily be completely familiar with it. Whenever they encounter new or unfamiliar varieties, they habitually discuss and inquire with others to continuously increase their knowledge, and match their identity as a "medicine person".



**Figure 6** Scenery sketch of Anguo Pharmaceutical Expo Park

**Note:** Photographed by the researcher

3.2.4 Kan "yaoxi" (It refers to the form of traditional Chinese opera that mainly focuses on traditional Chinese medicine culture and related knowledge.)

Anguo is the hometown of Guan Hanqing, one of the four great masters of Chinese Yuan Opera (Yuan Opera family, late Jin dynasty, died in 1279). The "Xiwozi" culture is very popular in the local area, and Anguo people love opera. Even opera must have "medicine". "Yao Hui Painting" is a characteristic representative of the old tune in Anguo, commonly known as medicinal drama, but it is very popular among the elderly and young people in Anguo. "Yao Hui Painting" involves more than 90 characters, all named after the personification of traditional Chinese medicine, covering more than 90 types of Chinese medicinal materials such as Chinese herbal roots and whole herbs. Among them, the king of medicine, ginseng, is the emperor, other medicines are subordinates, and lilies are young students. They compare purple aster, orange-red, and pollen to young girls, which is both vivid and in line with the profession of traditional Chinese opera. The whole drama takes "ginseng as a tonic and resveratrol as an antiemetic medicine with opposite properties" as the starting point, telling the story of resveratrol rebelling against ginseng, causing sharp conflicts between the two sides, and finally, the Medicine King trying to reconcile (Wang, 2024).

"Yao Hui Painting" was once lost, but it was later restored after receiving a handwritten version from an old Chinese medicine practitioner. Nowadays, people are deeply aware that this is a culture. When watching medicinal dramas, they unconsciously learn the eighteen contraindications of medicine, and it also helps people learn traditional Chinese medicine knowledge through watching dramas.





**Figure 7** The 1914 woodblock version of "Yao Hui Painting" discovered in Anguo, Baoding

**Note:** [https://baike.baidu.com/item/%E8%8D%AF%E7%BB%98%E5%9B%BE/1153302?fr=ge\\_ala](https://baike.baidu.com/item/%E8%8D%AF%E7%BB%98%E5%9B%BE/1153302?fr=ge_ala)



**Figure 8** A still photo of Baoding " Yao Hui Painting"

**Note:** Photographed by the researcher

## Discussion

### 1. Historical Context and Cultural Significance

Throughout its 5000-year history, the Chinese nation has seen traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) deeply ingrained in its cultural fabric, contributing significantly to both societal well-being and national prosperity. The vibrant tradition of TCM not only encapsulates the philosophical depth of ancient Chinese civilization but continues to evolve, serving as a bridge between historical practices and contemporary



health innovations. Anguo's unique embodiment of TCM through its integration into daily life provides a vivid example of how traditional practices can persist and adapt in a modern context.

## 2. Comparative Global Analysis

Anguo's practices, such as Zhu "yaofang" (the integration of pharmacies into homes), Chi "yaoshan" (medicinal foods), Guang "yaoyuan" (medicinal gardens), and Kan "yaoxi" (medicinal dramas), reflect a lifestyle that is uniquely intertwined with herbal medicine. These practices are not isolated phenomena but part of a global trend where traditional medical systems, such as Ayurveda in India and Kampo in Japan, similarly integrate into the fabric of daily life and national health systems. Drawing parallels to these systems helps underscore the universal value of traditional medicines in enhancing health outcomes and maintaining cultural heritage in the face of globalization and modern challenges.

## 3. Cultural Sustainability and Adaptation

The preservation of TCM in Anguo highlights broader themes of cultural sustainability and the dynamic adaptation of traditional practices. Like other regions with a rich heritage of traditional medicine, Anguo faces both opportunities and challenges in preserving this heritage while innovating for contemporary relevance. Strategies observed globally include the formal integration of traditional remedies into healthcare systems, educational initiatives to pass on knowledge, and international collaborations that enrich both the practice and understanding of traditional medicine.

## Conclusion

This study has obtained the following main research results and conclusions through literature review and analysis:

1. Chinese herbal culture is the foundation and soul of the health cause, and it is the dual carrier of its spirit and material. Only by understanding the existence basis and development path of excellent traditional Chinese culture from a development perspective and dimension, and truly realizing the life and practice of cultural attributes, can it inject contemporary connotations into the inheritance and development of excellent traditional Chinese culture, and fully realize its role in safeguarding people's physical and mental health, and play its value.

2. This study conducted an academic review of Anguo's traditional Chinese medicine culture through literature collection and theoretical research. It contributes to the inheritance and development of traditional Chinese medicine culture and provides reference and guidance for subsequent research.

3. This study conducted an in-depth investigation into the formation and development of Anguo's traditional Chinese medicine culture, showcasing the cultural landscape of Anguo's traditional Chinese medicine. The Anguo Chinese herbal culture integrates the historical legends, religious beliefs, folk wisdom, and other contents of the Anguo region into its unique cultural form, showcasing its charming regional characteristics. Provide valuable references for cultural protection, management, and research.

## Recommendation

General recommendations:

1. Consider interdisciplinary cooperation with traditional Chinese medicine experts, government administrators, local chroniclers, practitioners in the Chinese herbal medicine industry, and cultural scholars to explore the historical, artistic, and cultural values of Anguo's Chinese herbal culture in greater depth.

2. Compare the similarities and differences between the traditional Chinese medicine culture in Anguo and other countries or regions, and understand the process of exchange and integration.

3. Examine the economic value of traditional Chinese medicine culture in the Anguo region, as well as its impact on the local tourism industry and the improvement of health literacy.

Further research recommendations:





Collaborate with local communities or educational institutions to offer Chinese herbal culture experience courses. Encourage more people to participate in the research, understanding, and inheritance of traditional Chinese medicine culture, ensuring its sustainability. At the same time, consider studying the application and promotion of Chinese herbal culture in modern society, and how to protect its tradition while adapting it to the development and functional demands of modern culture.

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