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Have you ever found yourself in a situation where your personal beliefs clash with those of your family's cultural heritage? This is a common struggle for many people, including myself. Growing up in a traditional Chinese family, I was exposed to the belief that traditional Chinese medicine was the only form of medicine that was effective and safe, while Western medicine was seen as something to be used sparingly.

In “Paper Tigers”, facing the challenges of reconciling Asian-American identity with American identity, Yang questions how cultural heritage shapes individual. Just like him, as I gained a better understanding of the differences between traditional and modern medicine, I began to question the validity of traditional Chinese medicine and its reliance on ancient remedies rather than scientific research. Despite this, I have come to appreciate the cultural heritage and positive aspects of traditional Chinese medicine while recognizing the importance of using modern scientific methods to make informed decisions about health and well-being. In her speech at the white house, Amy Tan also acknowledges the importance of embracing understanding our own cultural heritage. The understanding of the positive and negative aspects of traditional Chinese medicine has shaped my personal beliefs and narrative.

Traditional Chinese medicine plays a role in structuring my story, given its

cultural heritage and the conflict it presents with modern medicine. One major flaw in traditional Chinese medicine is its lack of scientific evidence. As philosopher Karl Popper states, "A theory that explains everything, explains nothing." This applies to traditional Chinese medicine, which attempts to explain all aspects of human health through the concept of yin and yang. However, there is limited evidence to support this theory, and much of it is based on subjective experiences and observations rather than controlled scientific experiments. As I grew older, I gained a better understanding of the distinction between "Chinese medicine" and "Western medicine". I realized that "Chinese medicine" should actually be referred to as "traditional medicine" and "Western medicine" as "modern medicine". My skepticism towards traditional Chinese medicine only grew as I aged. The lack of rigorous scientific testing and the heavy reliance on anecdotal evidence is a significant flaw in traditional Chinese medicine, which makes it difficult to evaluate the effectiveness and safety of these practices. As the field of modern medicine continues to advance, it is essential to use evidence-based practices that have been rigorously tested and proven to be effective. The conflict between "traditional" and "modern" medicine came to a head when I argued with my parents about the efficacy of herbal remedies, in which I argued that Chinese medicine lacked scientific evidence, versus Western medicine, which has benefited from significant progress over the past thousands of years. They argued with "this is the wisdom of our ancestors, this is our important heritage" and "this is the sum of thousands of years of experience", completely ignoring the fact that the progress of modern medicine in these thousands of years has significantly reduced human mortality. Just like Wesley Yang said in his essay, "I don't believe our roots necessarily define us" (Yang), I scoff at my parents' view that our ancestors did not define today's values versus who is right and who is wrong. This conversation ended badly, and it caused me

the same struggle that Wesley Yang did. I was educated in science, but coming from a more traditional Chinese family which really values Chinese tradition, and this made my values and perceptions diverge from those of my family.

(restructured) This struggle between cultural identity and personal perception lasted for a long time, until I took the initiative to try to resolve it. At the time, I didn't yet know about my parents' life. "I didn't know so many things that were the reasons for the warnings." (Tan) At the time of my parents' birth, China's "Cultural Revolution" had not yet completely passed, society was still in turmoil, all teaching and learning activities were at a standstill, and people's understanding of "science" was still at a very low level. When they were growing up, China was recovering from the "Cultural Revolution" and everything was still in its infancy. It was difficult for them to be exposed to the kind of education in "philosophy of science" that I am exposed to today. It was difficult for them to understand the philosophical definition of science and to use Chinese medicine as a treatment for minor injuries and illnesses in their own upbringing, which gave rise to their blind trust in Chinese medicine and traditional medicine. I no longer blame them for their seeming inability to understand what I am trying to explain- it is their heritage, the heritage of my family, and the heritage of Chinese society. I still don't think traditional Chinese medicine is scientific, but I am slowly beginning to accept that traditional Chinese medicine as a traditional Chinese culture has a positive meaning, symbolizing the Chinese nation's own traditions, and that they are an important part of the process of shaping the Chinese nation. On the one hand, it has allowed me to understand the importance of respecting the cultural heritage of my ancestors and my country. On the other hand, it has also made me realize the limitations of traditional Chinese medicine and the importance of using modern scientific methods to make medical decisions. "There is something salutary in that proud defiance." (Yang)

This heritage has taught me to always be critical of information and to seek knowledge from various sources.

In conclusion, the conflict between traditional Chinese medicine and modern medicine has played a significant role in shaping my personal beliefs and narrative and it has both positive and negative aspects. Just as Tan said, "Those tears are part of my heritage," (Tan) Those traditional Chinese medicines are part of my heritage. While the cultural heritage of traditional Chinese medicine has taught me to respect the traditions of my ancestors and country, it has also made me realize the importance of using evidence-based practices and being critical of information. Despite the limitations of traditional Chinese medicine, it remains an important part of my heritage, and its positive and negative aspects have helped me to develop a more nuanced understanding of the world. By critically evaluating different sources of knowledge and remaining open to new perspectives, I hope to continue to grow and learn as a person, and to use the knowledge and wisdom of my ancestors to contribute to the world in meaningful ways.

#### Works Cited

Tan, Amy. "Amy Tan Performs at the White House." *YouTube*, 30 May 2013, [www.youtube.com/watch?v=cihZKJRj8AA](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cihZKJRj8AA).

Yang, Wesley. "Paper tigers." *New York Magazine*, vol. 8, 6 May 2011.



