

# Science and Modernity in 20th century China

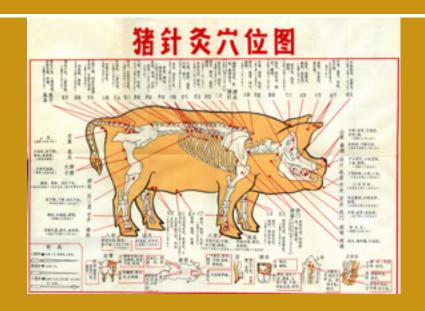
The Renaissance of Traditional Knowledge and Practice Revisited





# **Promoting Scientific Thinking in Communist China**





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University of Erlangen-Nuremberg



## Omnipresence of Science in Chinese discourse of Modernity

"The world of the twentieth century is a scientific world. We need a scientific China for the scientific world. A superstitious nation will find it difficult to survive in a scientific world."

Tao Xingzhi 陶行知 (1891-1946)



## **Eurocentric notion of science?**

Superstition as a counterforce to modernization is a result of the Eurocentric formation of academic disciplines starting in the late Qing era.

Europan idea of science is deeply permeated by the binaries of rationality/irrationality, modern/traditional, objective/subjective, or science/technology.

——binaries shared by Soviet modernity!



## **Dissolution of binaries?**

Dissolution of binaries pursued by Joseph Needham, Benjamin Elman and Nathan Sivin:

Example: Technological achievements in Chinese past prove that science is no longer exclusively of European origin, or: efforts to prove premodern science.

Problem here: S&T become obscure categories that are simply seen as means to achieve (economic) progress.

Proposal: understanding the function and significance of S&T via their epistemology



# Bruno Latour: We have never been Modern (1991)

- modernity and science both have an ontology problem
- Knowledge is constructed independent of matters, thus continuing Plato's distinction between fact and value that has emerged as the most striking element of modernity by construing dichotomies such as that of rationality/irrationality, modern/traditional, objective/subjective, or science/technology

Hypothesis: Maoist China solved this problem by a social turn in the epistemology of science



## Maoist epistemology of science

Core texts: On Practice (1937) and Where do correct ideas come from? (1963) where Mao Zedong develops a dialectical materialist theory of knowledge:

"Marxists hold that man's social practice alone is the criterion of the truth of his knowledge of the external world. What actually happens is that man's knowledge is verified only when he achieves the anticipated results in the process of social practice (material production, class struggle or scientific experiment)." (*On Practice*, 1937)



# Producing Knowledge on the Countryside

- Selection of Farming Tools' Blue Prints (农具图选), 1958
- Serial on Experiences in Revolutionizing Agricultural Technology (大搞农业技术革命的经验丛书), 1958
- Construction and Use of improved Farming Tools (改良农具的制造与使用), 1955
- Introduction to the Improvement of Farming Tools (改良农具介绍), 1956
- Selection of new farming tools in Shanghai City (上海市新式农具选辑), 1960

Here: Peasant as the primary producer of scientific knowledge during the Great Leap Forward, in 1960 the expert returns to the scene.



## Indigenous knowledge as alternative form of science?

The emphasis on social epistemology meant also to turn against Soviet modernity.

Example: rejection of Lysenkoism at the Genetics Symposium in Qingdao organized by Yu Guangyuan 于光远 in August 1956

Aim: to restore the autonomy of science by emphasizing that natural science is a universal language:

- the authority of defining science rests not with the (Soviet) experts,
- practice is the criterion of truth

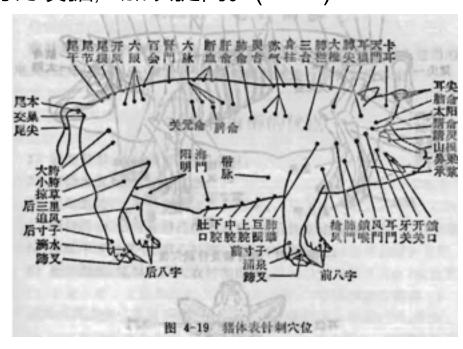


# Chinese Veterinary Medicine 中国兽医学

中国医药学是一个伟大的宝库,应当努力发掘,加以提高。(1958)

Handbooks and manuals on CVM operate without referral to science, or 科学, except by calling it a science derived from experience (经验科学).

The accumulated wisdom of the peasants should contribute to socialist construction.

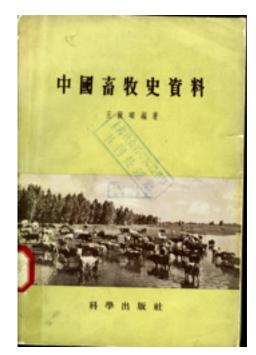




## **Publications of TCVM**

Collection of Materials on the History of Animal Husbandry in China (1958)

Yuan-Heng Therapeutic Treatise of Horses, Oxen and Camels (1963)







## Science of Experiences (jingyan kexue 经验科学) and the cultural turn

TCVM and TCM are result of several thousand years of experience which in Maoist China were justified by the social epistemology of knowledge.

In post-Maoist China the cultural turn has replaced the social epistemology, thereby reproducing Latour's binaries that had been absent during the first three decades of the PRC



# Learning from the Masses: Traditional Knowledge in the 1950s and 1960s

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# Mass Science (qunzhong kexue 群众科学) in 1950s

Conception and implementation of mass science assume an interaction between top-down dissemination of scientific knowledge and thinking and a bottom-up surge of knowledge production that is inspired by the former yet shows its own agency by contributing its knowledge originated from first-hand, empirical experience.

Most exemplarily: 1958 collection of *Texts on Research of Mass Science* (*Qunzhong kexue yanjiu wenji* 群众科学研究文集)



# Mass Science during the Great Leap Forward

Idea of mass science canonized in the *Red Flag* (*Hongqi*) by Zeng Xisheng 曾希圣 in *Talking about Foreign and Local Methods alike* (*Tan yangtu bingju* 谈洋土并举, 1959) discussing the advantages of foreign and indigenous techniques of iron and steel production.



## **Knowledge and Science interrelated**

Liu Xianzhou 刘仙洲 (vice-president of Qinghua University) stated in his 1959 article "Science and Economic Production":

"The term science originally meant 'knowledge' in European languages. And knowledge comes from the practice of activities of production."

Aim: to valorize professional science by the notion of practice – the production of knowledge via practice and the practical use of knowledge – and by incorporating non-expert knowledge.



# **Inventing White Steel**

Rediscovering indigenous methods(土法)of production and technology dating from the pre-modern era for achieving the ideal of self-reliance (*zili gengsheng* 自力更生), as emphasized in *Journal of Metallurgy* 冶金报, *Newsletter of Heavy Industry* 重工业通讯, and *Steel and Iron* 钢铁.

"White steel" – to use ceramics to make machines and facilities – is an effort to resort to Chinese traditional craft, hence an indigenous technological innovation.

An 1958 article in *Science Pictorial*, supported by pictures of products made from ceramics, such as ball bearings, pumps, and blast blowers for native blast furnace, claimed that the science of ceramics has developed to such a level that ceramic can be used in place of steel in some areas of machine-building.



## **Inventing White Steel**

### People's Daily reports:

"The Chinese industry of ceramics which has had thousands of years of glorious history has now entered the new field of mechanical ceramics."

The pragmatic approach to technological innovation is a result of an epistemology of science which consciously did not see the dichotomy between traditional and modern, or foreign and indigenous, production techniques as relevant.



# Redefining Fengshui: Academic Discourses in the PRC From the 1990s to the Present Day

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Luo, Xiu 罗修. 1988. *Investigation Of Good and Bad Luck By Using Dwelling Fengshui*.



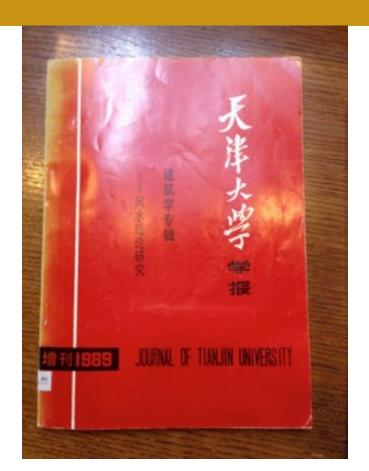


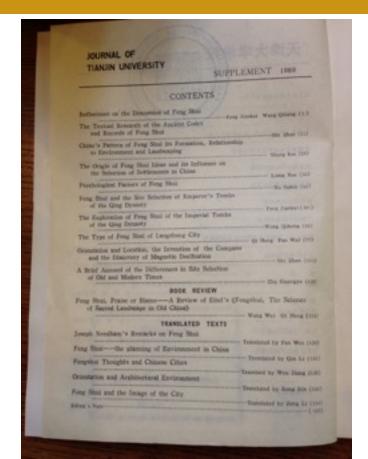
"Notification About Prohibition of Publishing Books Promoting Ignorant Superstitions" by the State Administration of Press and Publication (89) No. 338, 新聞出版署關於不得出版宣揚愚昧迷信的圖書的通知 (89) 新出圖字第338號, 1989.04.12.

"Publishing houses should not publish books that promote superstitions but contravene sciences, such as physiognomy, fate calculation, and Fengshui. Scholarly works that truly investigate popular customs and culture but concern similar contents can be published..."



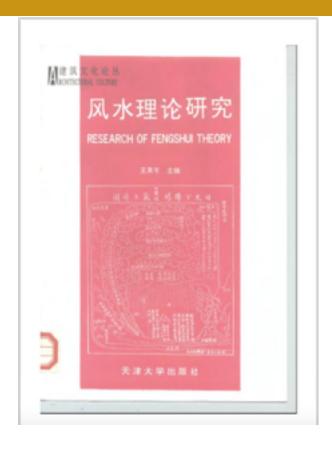
# "Research of Fengshui Theory." 1989. *Journal of Tianjin University* (Supplement: Architecture Study).







Wang, Qiheng 王其亨 (Ed.). 1992. Research of Fengshui Theory 風水理論研究, Tianjin: Tianjin University Press.



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Wang Yude 王玉德. 1991. The Mysterious Fengshui – Research on the Traditional method of Qualifying the Earth 神秘的風水 – 傳統相地術研究. Nanning: Guangxi People's Press.



医方、核氏、山经、地志、字书、圆典、九流百家、关人之书。及王 浮图、老子、外国之说、皆所详悉。"

种和文化是一座变的专册的库府,治学者从中窥见则智慧的闪光;很事者从中总结到构政的权谋;生意人从个投取到深深的财源;连信者从中析水则特身的绳索。给现在代世风,中外忙碌于神秘文化者大者人也,不必有益的成果,遗憾而可恨的是,唯偏声中促逐了一些市井无赖之徒,他们不学无水,和满写了五是人门的油印小册子,宣传运信,混淆视听,毒害民众,一能和童。小人作者,君子或处?一些能学之去视神秘文化为"非学术""致文化",甚至认为"驹肉不能上正孝",情影响自己情高的声誉。任小人甚器尘上,君子我巍然不动。于是于,神秘文化变得爱玄学了,更支持了,更不可理喻了,甚至目且赞人沉厚。

有辜于此,我们开始了神秘文化的研究工作。

神秘的色彩最怕事实冲落,退信的取描需要料学清扫。思 想的事偶不能靠利异驱散,历史的现象需要从历史角度解释。 显现在我们面前的神秘文化,是老怪结构的复杂共同体,是精 华与糟粕交融的意识形态。它有框深等固的传统,有是孔不入处 的市场,有展荣再生的能力。新中国建立以来,神秘文化一度 受到高语。但它由地上转入地下。由泛滥智处保职。一旦开致 的历史史期奔腾向前。这股潜波取与海岸及港台的民俗风气 相呼应,乘机涌出,四处波布,传说的水质调入了现代的色彩。 情波难合。如果不考情湮溢,不明解是非,不正确引导解众,保 旧的风气和封建的习俗相重新在民间恢复,我们经过四十多 年建业起来的社会主义民俗解被潜移取化,取而代之,这是相 当危险的。为了配合社会主义精神文明建设,配合抽除六省, 应当积极行动起来,研究神秘文化,特别是高等学校的社会概



He, Xiaoxin 何曉昕. 1990. The Source of Fengshui 風水探源. Nanjing: Southeast University Press.





#### ◆展展史特殊後長No.4、1990

#### 中国风水地理的起源与 发展初探

于 着 贸

发源于中国,几千年来影响着东方文明的风水地理,不仅对中国的文明与发展有着广泛的影响,而且对汉文化图的目本、朝 研、东南亚一带的文化形成也曾起过一定的作用。而今,"风 水"像中国的气动、针灸一样也引起类国、英国、新商兰、西德 等国一些地理学家和建筑师的故厚兴趣。风水地避是产生于东方 文化土壤里的一种利用地理环域的综合概念系统。它包涵了对自 然与社会环境进行区域分析与规划的思想。它具有科学的内涵与 占卜、积极感应等迷信的外衣。新西兰美克兰大学地理学家产弘 基教授议。"如果对风水没有深刻的了册,要研究中国和朝鲜的 历史地理是不可居议的"①。

近几十年来, 风水地理在中国被认为仅是一种"封建途信" 的东西, 风水学同被称为"无稽之谈", 风水书籍被 称为"妖 书", 其中的科学巡观反而被人们忽略。

其实, 风水地理是在古代哲學思想支配下, 生长于东方文明 土壤星的使自然与文化环境互相协调的独特而复杂的知识系统。

(Ph. D. Depart of Geography of Auckland, Auckland, New Zealand) Geologram1/4,4 342-348/2880.

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Yu, Xixian 于希贤. 1990. "A Tentative Exploration of The Origin and Development of the Chinese Fengshui Geography中國風水地理的起源與發展初探." Chinese Historical Geography中國歷史地

#### 风水观与莫斯科城的选址布局研究

于 希 贤 (也宗太母成市与环境母系)

#### 一、中国古代的风水思想

在中国古代、人们认为"风"和"水" 的动力。该形成了对象操作、生物繁制的标 设、建筑的一切生态收象 都27 不 "风" (中混构者的变化) 均 "水"(区、网、图、 海均编版之知) 的动力。人的生态技术开写 以、选择与右口可见的知识系统。这叫政省 "风水"。实际上。中四古代的"风水"思 起。是由当时每个现金文配之下。选择与右 订生的环境(包括电位、漏场、多材、成市、 都)的战程中准衡实验起来的边境评分系 都)的战程中准衡实验起来的边境评分系

 文章行機等所以業務的人力運動等的最近以外 +衛行業的數數數數。 由於如何可,其人可以完成立 有行。以下數的成立的行為因此之。 在 可能的等級以下。 

#### 二、风水的速度与科学之争

风水的迷信与科学之争。在中四自含有

#### was and

#### 三、城镇保养发展展

**岩类铁路涡薄口的传建。库县城市的** 起。区域被装体系布用。克赖格改变水区域 域装体系布用并影响其职能。

在滋期。 排補 辦 建 议 起步。 國教活役 小 对区域被镇康果鄞帕不产。 操绳布司格 聯那不会有较大的变化。 治州市的是本地区 的中心城市。 河南市、 澳新市、 能大市、 任 互市是该区域内的四个员业市。

加集到限刊报准的2000年。 黄柠油碱定 到为94万人口的建订开放城市后, 有可能成 到为94万人口的建订开放城市后, 有可能成 为证的中心城市。 附何, 青杏、黄柳市, 迫 为市, 但正市为区域小城市。

海港城市的频模与共标进结构、职能及 经进载地大小有关。以遵口为单一职能的城

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Yu, Xixian. 1992. "Research on Fengshui and the Site Selection and Arrangment of the City Moscow風水觀與莫斯科城的選址佈局研究".

Economic Geography經濟地理, 12 (3): 80-84.

理論叢 4: 83-95.



Ruo, Wu 若無. 1990. "Fengshui – Landscape Design 風水一環境的設計." *Time Architecture* 時代建築 2: 33-36, 23.

"總括起來,有如下一些重要原則。一,座(坐)北朝南,面迎陽光。二,背依大山或丘陵,左右兩側有小丘陵。三,靠近河流和水塘,但忌諱背水" Generally speaking, [Fengshui] contains following important principles. First, sit in the North and look toward the South, facing the sunshine; Second, lean on big mountains or hills with smaller hills on both left and right sides; Third, be close to rivers and pools, but avoid rivers in the back.

"實際上,中國的風水就是尋找適於建造建築的用地一'明堂'和'龍脈'." Actually Chinese Fengshui is the search for the sites that are suitable for building architectures -- the "bright hall" and the "dragon vein.

"風水實際上是:地理學,天氣學,生態學,景觀學,規劃學和建築學的一種綜合的自然科學. Fengshui is in deed a comprehensive natural science containing geography, meteorology, biography, landscape study, study of planning, and architecture.



Mao, Tse-tung 毛泽东. [1937] 1967. "On Practice 實踐論." Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung, Vol. 1. Beijing: Foreign Languages Press. P. 303-304.

"Fully to reflect a thing in its totality, to reflect its essence, to reflect its inherent laws, it is necessary through the exercise of thought to reconstruct the rich data of sense perception, discarding the dross and selecting the essential, eliminating the false and retaining the true, proceeding from the one to the other and from the outside to the inside, in order to form a system of concepts and theories -- it is necessary to make a leap from perceptual to rational knowledge [... ] Whatever has been scientifically reconstructed in the process of cognition, on the basis of practice, reflects objective reality, as Lenin said, more deeply, more truly, more fully [...] Rational knowledge depends upon perceptual knowledge and perceptual knowledge remains to be developed into rational knowledge — this is the dialectical-materialist theory of knowledge [...] If the dialectical-materialist



movement of knowledge were to stop at rational knowledge, only half the problem would be dealt with. And as far as Marxist philosophy is concerned, only the less important half at that. Marxist philosophy holds that the most important problem does not lie in understanding the laws of the objective world and thus being able to explain it, but in applying the knowledge of these laws actively to change the world [...] The knowledge which grasps the laws of the world, must be redirected to the practice of changing the world, must be applied anew in the practice of production, in the practice of revolutionary class struggle and revolutionary national struggle and in the practice of scientific experiment. This is the process of testing and developing theory, the continuation of the whole process of cognition."



# **Traditional Chinese Veterinary Medicine in Maoist China - Horse Health Care between 1949 and 1966**

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## **Some Terms**

Western Veterinarian Medicine WVM xishouyi 西兽医, shouyi 兽医

Chinese Veterinarian Medicine CVM
jiuyi 旧医, zhongshouyi 中兽医, minjianshouyi 民间兽医, zuguo shouyi 祖国兽医
(zhongshouyi (ren)yuan 中兽医(人)员)



## **Government Directives**

1956

Guowuyuan guanyu jiaqiang minjianshouyi gongzuo de zhishi 国务院关于加强民间兽医工作的指示

1959

Nongyebu guanyu zhongshouyi "caifeng" he bianji zhongshouyi yaowuzhi de tongzhi 农业部关于中兽医"采风"和编辑中兽医药物志的通知

1963

Guowuyuan guanyu minjianshouyi gongzuo de queding 国务院关于民间兽医工作的决定



## **Increase in Practitioners**

Gansu: 1949: 2.000 CVM practitioners

1956: 4.700 CVM practitioners

1959: 6.200 CVM practitioners



### 看 炭 疽 病

炭疽杆菌热性病, 舌色紫紅豚数洪, 有色紫紅豚数膊, 有的胸前和两膊, 发热疼痛两天亡, 立刻倒地腿抽筋, 剖检脾脏特别肿。 体溫高热精神昏, 这是一般炭疽病, 还有后腰两臁旁, 起臥不安类肚痛, 老紫气喘眼泪紅, 肉頭气喘水草停, 大概七天就要命, 发生黄肿硬变軟, 发生黄肿硬变軟, 二便带血病加重, 死后九窍血不凝,

### 看鼻疽病

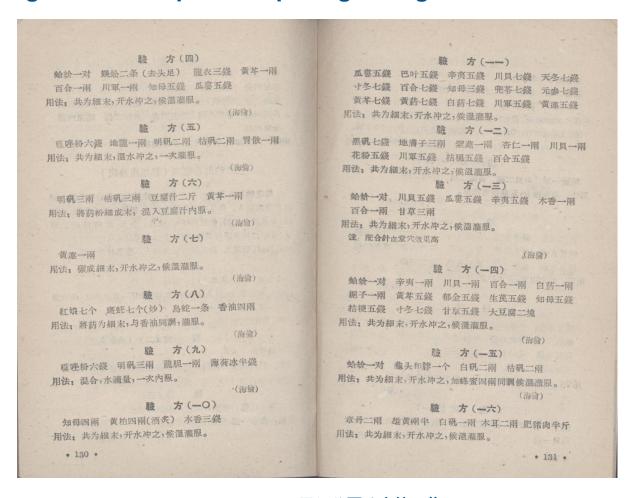
鼻疽杆菌是肺病, 腮骨两旁連珠形, 急性槽口淋巴肿, 最后鼻流黄臭脓, 干咳声哑后腿肿,

慢性毛焦少精神, 豆腐渣样味臭重, 一捏流出稠白脓, 有的鼻孔流血紅,

Zhongshouyi zhenliao jingyan di er ji 中兽医诊疗经验第二集, 1958



### **Knowledge of the People: Recipes against glanders**



Minjian shouyi yanfang di er ji 民间兽医验方第二集, 1959



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一、治馬冷痛症(驗方八个)(1)	四、治馬心經壅極、限如沙、不吃水草症…(驗方一个)(22)
一二、拾馬結症(	五、治馬陰虚盜汗、夜間出汗不止症(驗方一个)(23)
三、治馬洛陽濱濱底(驗方五个)(6)	泌尿系統病
四、治馬伤水不愛吃草症(驗方二个)(7)	一、治馬尿血症(驗方九个)(23)
五、治牛馬便血症(驗方七个)(7)	二、 治馬外腎腫及小便淋漓症 (驗方一个) (25)
六、治牛便血症(驗方五个)(8)	三、治馬腎寒遺尿症(驗方一个) (25)
七、治小馬拉豨症(驗方六个)(9)	四、治馬胞轉症(驗方二个)(25)
八、治馬木舌釜築症(驗方六个)(10)	生殖系統病
九、治馬牌青寒症(驗方一个)(11)	一、治馬陰腎癀症(驗方五个) (26)
1、治牛急、慢性鼓脹症(驗方五个)(11)	二、治馬滑精症(驗方三个)(27)
· 一、治馬气脹症····································	神經系統病
十二、治馬陽廣症(驗方一个)(12)	- 、治馬腦延症····································
十三、治牛干混症(驗方一个)(12)	二、治馬頸癎症(驗方一个)(28)
十四、治牛不倒嚼症(驗方一个)(13)	三、治馬心热風邪症(驗方二个) (28)
呼吸系統病	四、治馬牌虚濕邪症(驗方一个) (29)
- 、治馬肺壅鼻膿症······(驗方九个)(13)	五、治馬吊斜風症(驗方四个) (29)
二、治馬劳伤肺热鼻膿不止症(驗方四个)(15)	六、治馬黑汗風症(驗方一个)(30)
三、治馬久啄不止症	七、治馬心風驚悸症(驗方一个)(30)
四、治馬肺火慢草症(驗方一个)(16)	八、治馬陰莖麻痺症(驗方一个)(30)
五、治馬三喉症(驗方七个)(16)	九、治舌麻痺症(驗方一个)(30)
六、治馬鼻如血症(驗方二个)(18)	代謝系統病
七、治馬肺出血症(驗方三个)(18)	一、治馬爬窩症(驗方四个)(31)
八、治馬肺熱喘急症····································	飼料 (毒草) 中毒病
九、治馬風火鼻子症	一、飼料中毒症(驗方一个)(32)
十、治馬鼻腔儲護症····································	二、治羊食毒草中毒症(驗方一个)(32)
、治馬斯热咳嗽症····································	三、治大麻籽中毒症(殿方二个)(32)
十二、治馬肺火鼻升症(驗方一个)(21)	

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# Glanders *Biju* 鼻疽



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# New veterinarian medicine Combination of Western and Chinese veterinarian medicine

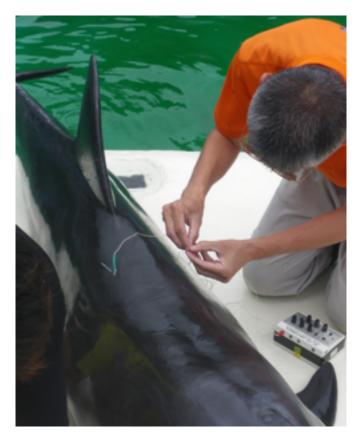
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