

History and progress of Japanese acupuncture

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Since the year 562, when Chiso first brought it to Japan from Wu (China), Japanese acupuncture has continued to flourish. *Ishitsu-rei*, the first medical law of Japan was established in 701, and provides details of the medical system of acupuncture at that time. It suggests that acupuncture was administered by authorization of the national government, and continued for 1200 years as a public form of medicine.

From the Azuchi-Momoyama period through the Edo period, there was active exchange with China. People who had studied in China developed new styles of acupuncture treatment in Japan, and organized their own private schools or *ryuha*. Often new techniques that did not exist in China were devised. The “hammer” insertion method or *dashin-hou* was developed by Isai MISONO. Development of the insertion tube or *kanshin-hou* by Waichi SUGIYAMA enabled insertion of a needle without any pain and use of a thinner needle. Today, *kanshin-hou* is the primary method used in Japanese acupuncture.

In 1635, the Edo government isolated Japan so that it was cut off from exchanges with foreign countries for over 200 years. This national isolation promoted the development of *ryu-ha* that was particular to Japan. In addition, acupuncture filtered into people's everyday lives, especially moxibustion, a technique in which a cone or stick of mugwort is burned over an acupuncture point, which became popular for health reasons and was a treatment that ordinary people could practice by themselves.

Also during this period of national isolation, western medicine was imported from Holland, which was the only country allowed to exchange with Japan. This novel modern medicine had a great impact on Japanese medicine, which had its foundation in Chinese traditional medicine. Japanese acupuncture was first introduced to Europe via Holland in the Edo period. During the Meiji period, the new government was eager to accept western culture. Although progress of Japanese acupuncture was prohibited for a period of time, it has succeeded to this day due to the efforts of many people as well as strong public demand. Evidence-based scientific studies of acupuncture are currently in progress, respecting the traditional treatment with classic thought.

We will introduce the history of Japanese acupuncture with some materials owned by the *Harikyu Museum* at the Morinomiya College of Medical Arts and Sciences.

Key words: Japanese acupuncture, history, moxibustion, kanshin-hou, Harikyu Museum