

The historical genesis of chinese medicine

Toshihiro Togo

Department of Acupuncture Medicine, Faculty of Oriental Medicine, Suzuka University of Medical Science

In this session, I will discuss the formation of medicine in ancient China, introducing some of the most important medical texts in Chinese medicine.

Early silk, bamboo and wooden manuscripts excavated from the Mawangdui Tomb, in which a woman from the Li family was buried in the 2nd century BCE, provide us with a wealth of information about ancient Chinese philosophy, astrology and medical knowledge including the meridian system and moxibustion treatment. One of the manuscripts, ***Moxibustion Canon of the Eleven yin and Yang Vessels*** 陰陽十一脈灸經 refers to the symptoms and signs caused by disorders of the eleven qi channels, which later developed into the twelve channel system in ***Huandi neijing Lingshu*** 黃帝內經靈樞.

Huandi neijing 黃帝內經, also known as *The Yellow Emperor's Inner Classic* is a collection of medical articles written in the period between the Age of the Warring States and the Han Dynasty. Despite lacking uniformity in style or explanation, it summarizes the physiological and pathological theories required for acupuncture/moxibustion therapies as understood during this period. From the text we learn much about how ancient Chinese physicians considered the human body. They thought it not a static, but a highly dynamic system, putting much emphasis on physiological accountabilities, rather than on anatomical accuracy.

Huandi Neijing Suwen 素問 and ***Lingshu*** 靈樞 put emphasis on physiological and pathological theses, while ***Huandi Neijing Mingtang*** 明堂 focused on the relation between each disease or symptom and the treatment acupoint. Although the original text of Mingtang has been lost, articles from it were later cited in ***Zhenjiu Jiaoyijing*** 鍼灸甲乙經, which provides us with information regarding the therapeutic value of each acupoint. ***Ishinpo*** 醫心方, the first medical encyclopedia compiled in Japan in late 10th century CE, depends upon quotations from these medical texts for its description of acupuncture and moxibustion therapy.

Chinese medical knowledge was brought to Japan in the 6th century CE via the Korean peninsula. It is worth noting that Chinese medicine has changed over time as social and historical contexts evolved, and that in neighboring countries like Japan and Korea, medical knowledge and practice were transmitted in different cultural contexts.