

Common Trends regarding Originalization of Traditional Medicine in Japan, Korea, and Vietnam

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Abstract

Chinese characters have been used in Japan, also had been used in Korea and Vietnam. Therefore, these three countries have been influenced by Chinese medicine and have formed their own traditional medicines in the early modern period. Their starting point was medical comprehensive books compiled by medical scholars in each country. Those are the *Keiteki Shuu* 啓迪集(1574) by Manase Dousan 曲直瀬道三 in Japan, the *Tong-ui Bogam* 東醫寶鑑(1611) by Heo Jun 許浚 in Korea, and the *Y tông Tâm lĩnh* 醫宗心領(1770) by Lê Hữu Trác 黎有倬 in Vietnam.

There are many commonalities in the compilation of each book. 1. All three books have a common sense of emphasizing their own country. 2. They are medical comprehensive books compiled by one medical scholar: Manase Dousan, Heo Jun, and Lê Hữu Trác. 3. They cited a number of medical comprehensive books compiled by a Ming Dynasty medical scholar. 4. Among the highly cited medical texts, typical characteristics were found in the *Yixué Zhèngzhuàn* 醫學正傳(1531) and the *Yixué Rùmén* 醫學入門(1575). 5. The authors of the two books were 虞搏 Yú Tuán and 李梴 Lǐ Yán, both from southern China, belonged to the Zhū Dānxī 朱丹溪 school. 6. Both books may have been considered models for the originalization of medicine in each country. 7. They were also reprinted in three countries.

By the way, the Ming Dynasty moved its capital to Beijing in 1421, and Nanjing, which had been the capital until then, became a secondary capital. However, Jiangnan's academic and cultural superiority continued until the late Ming Dynasty, and the sense of cultural and economic independence of the southerners was clear compared to the northerners. Therefore, Japanese, Korean, and Vietnamese medical scholars did not simply use the system of medical books compiled by southern Chinese people during the Ming dynasty as a model. It should be understood that medical scholars in these three countries read a claim about the uniqueness of southern medicine over northern Chinese medicine, and used it as motivation to form their own systems distinct from China.

However, why did the traditional medicine of each country that continue today were formed between the 16th and 18th centuries? By the way, the Age of Discovery, when Western powers expanded overseas, lasted from the mid-15th century to the mid-17th century. There is no doubt that medical scholars in Japan, Korea, and Vietnam were aware of the existence of Western culture and science that were different from China's. They probably used this as motivation to form their own traditional medicine. It is possible that similar phenomena can be seen in other fields of the cultural sphere of Chinese characters.