

“Korean Medicine in East Asia”
Panel Organizer CHA Wung-Seok

Until the 19th century, China was the center of East Asia. Countries like Korea, Japan, and Vietnam were actively incorporated into the globalization centered around China, which is why they have a traditional culture based on Chinese characters. Medical technology of these countries went through a process of reformation for their own use as did the other aspects of culture. Today Chinese, Korean, Japanese, and Vietnamese traditional medicine share a similar intellectual structure. Although it is true that Chinese medical technology was one that was advanced, it was not directly incorporated without filtration. It was accepted selectively, and in the process of doing so there was sharing of medical technologies among the neighboring countries. Influence back to China also took place. Through such processes the individual medical technology of each country came to form a body of medical technology; today's East Asian Traditional Medicine. The three papers presented here focus on how Korea's traditional medicine spread to the neighboring countries since the generalization of print.

“The Documenting and Writing of “HyangYakJipSungBang” (향약집성방, *Xiangyao ji chengfang*) and Medical Exchanges between East Asian Countries during the 15th Century

Yeon-Seok Kang

The MJ Medicine News, 401, Hyundai-building, 248-16, Sangdo4-dong, Dongjak-gu, Seoul, Korea
yeonkang@mjmedi.com

Abstract

Since at least the late 12th century, medical herbs grown naturally or cultivated in Korea have been referred to as 'HyangYak' (향약, XiangYao). Herbs from other countries are referred to as 'DangYak' (당약, TangYao). Some senior historians claim medicines made solely from HyangYak are purely Korean, since they originated and were developed fully within Korea. However, these localized medicines became abundant as the result of exchanges between Korea and other countries.

Originally published in 1433, “HyangYakJipSungBang” is the authoritative result of earlier writings of medical books using HyangYak. It has three notable characteristics. First, comprised of a total of 85 volumes, it was large in scale and divided into three main sections: 1) a detailed description of the 703 kinds of HyangYak, 2) explanations of the 10,706 different herbal formulae and 959 types of symptoms or diseases, and 3) descriptions of the 1,416 various acupuncture and moxibustion formulae.

Second, almost all herbal formulae were comprised of either one or a combination of up to no more than a few different herbs of the 703 different kinds of HyangYak. Because the Korean doctors using HyangYak thought that HyangYak was said to be more effective than DangYak for a variety of reasons, and the formulae using a small number of herbs were more powerful than those made from many.

Third, it was published in order to increase the effectiveness of the medical system for the entire

country during the early Chosun Dynasty, i.e., through obtaining herbs more easily, quickly and cheaply.

It's noted that "HyangYakJipSungBang" was not written all at once. In the process of its writing, the number of formulae increased through medical exchanges between East Asian countries in the early 15th century.