

Medical History in Japan

Dosan Manase and his Medicine (1)

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According to one man who contributed greatly to the revival of Kampo medicine in the current age, Keisetsu Otsuka (1900-1982), "The 'Japanization' of Chinese medicine began with Dosan Manase (1507-1594) and was completed by Yoshimasu Todo (1702-1773)." [1] This is an accurate summary of what happened in Japan between the last half of the 16th Century, when Manase began his work with Chinese traditional medicine, which had been imported virtually unchanged into Japan, and the mid-18th Century, when Chinese medicine was modified into a significantly different and uniquely Japanese treatment modality by Yoshimasu Todo. In the next two issues I will introduce the work of Manase, who built the foundation for Kampo medicine in Japan.

Dosan Manase's life story, and the context of his work in Japanese medicine

Chinese medicine first entered Japan in the 5th century, and after many generations of imitation, began to evolve into an independent medical tradition in the 15th Century. This was due to the genius of Dosan Manase. During the first half of the century, the Ashikaga Shogunate formally opened trade with Ming China. Communication flowed freely and trading ships imported large quantities of goods into Japan. Some of the most important imports were medical texts and medicinal ingredients. This was the situation when Dosan Manase entered the scene.

Dosan Manase (1507-1594) was born in Kyoto. After studying in a Buddhist temple, he headed for the seat of learning in east Japan, the Ashikaga Gakko (Ashikaga school) for further studies (the

Ashikaga school was introduced to the world in 1550 by Francisco de Xavier as the "largest and most famous general university in Japan").

Koga, located close to this school, was the seat of the Ashikaga Shogunate regional government in East Japan. In its vicinity lived excellent physicians together with many intellectuals. Manase studied first under physicians in charge of important government officials, as well as priests who had returned from studying medicine in China and later the most contemporaneous advanced medicine of the Ming period. Because he was exceedingly sagacious he understood almost all of the material. As a result he acquired a level of medical learning and skills that matched the physicians of the Ming dynasty.

Following his return to Kyoto in 1545, he applied this knowledge, referring to a large number of books, to create his own unique medical system. The fruit of his labor culminated in his main work, the "Keiteki Shu". The purpose of this compilation was to unify the process from diagnosis to therapy based on traditional medical theories. This structure resembles very closely the current form of TCM. A school building, the "Keiteki In", was erected in which the medical system he had founded was taught to students gathering there from all over the country. This system became the Japanese medical standard of the day and spread throughout the country.

Approximately sixty-four references were quoted by Manase in Keiteki-shu which were clearly influenced by the ideas of Zhu Danxin, one of the four great physicians in the Yuan period in China. A great many of Manase's references refer to Zhu Danxin, and this suggests that Manase belonged to the Danxin school.

Manase's Theoretical Approach

1. The Physiological and Pathological Theory

At the beginning of each chapter of Keiteki-shu, the pathological appearance of each disease is described. The theories of yin and yang and the five phases are put to full use and the theory of how diseases develop through ataxia of the viscera and bowels, and an imbalance of Qi, blood, and fluids are fully described. These theories are based on the classics *Hangdi-Neijing Suwen* and *Lingshu*³⁾. In many cases he also tried to explain symptoms based on the ideas expressed in this classical text, although he refrains from direct quotations. However, none of Manase's works are limited to physiological and pathological theory.

2. Theory of Disease Causation

Since *Sanyinfang*(1174) is one of the texts quoted by Manase, we can assume that he had a good understanding of its general ideas, including postulated internal factors, external factors, and “way of life” in disease causation. Moreover, in a compilation of Manase's notes, *Kirigami*, a collection of his lectures, there is a chapter describing the three elements, Qi, blood, and mucus. The importance of these three elements had already been pointed out by his master, Sanki Tashiro, and it is thought that this later exerted a major influence upon Nangai Yoshimasu in his work *The Theory of Qi, Blood, and Fluids*.

It is fully explained in the chapter on Qi, the chapter on blood, and the chapter on phlegm in *Keiteki-shu* how Qi, blood, and fluids can exert a harmful influence and cause disease when they become abnormal.

3. Diagnosis

Of the four traditional methods of diagnostic

examination (looking, listening and smelling, asking, and touching), Manase attaches most importance of taking the pulse. This is apparent from how Manase explains the relationship between pulse patterns and the condition of diseases, and devotes a section of a chapter to pulse patterns for every group of diseases, and gives directions for treatment.

Manase divides the pulse condition into six pulse positions. His diagnoses give a detailed account of each of them. In *Kirigami* he says, “In order to cure a deficient kidney, I take the pulse on both cubits (a pulse position) and distinguish whether water or fire should be supplied.”

The causes of a coating on the tongue and its treatment are briefly mentioned in the chapter on *Shanghan* in the *Keiteki-shu* under “Patterns and Treatments of the Coating of the Tongue,” however this problem is rarely mentioned in the chapters on general disease groups. It seems that Manase paid little attention to an examination of the tongue except in cases of *Shang Han* (Cold Injury). In contrast to later practice, in Chinese medical texts of that time, only a few descriptions of tongue examination and its significance are mentioned, although examinations of the tongue were undoubtedly carried out in some form or another. *Shanghanshejian* by Zhang Deng, written in 1688, first mentions tongue diagnosis in detail.

Abdominal diagnosis, commonly regarded as one of the characteristics of *Kampo Medicine*, is not mentioned at all in the writings of Manase

4. Pharmacological Theory

Manase wrote a book on pharmacology entitled, *Nodoku (Efficacy and Side Effects)*. It was heavily influenced by descriptions in the classical Chinese text entitled *Yixuezhengchuan* such as the

following : “Each medication brings about positive effects and unwanted side effects. If the medicine is effective against a disease, the patient will be cured, if not, it becomes worse.” The original Chinese book is simply a kind of memo in which the nature and taste of each medicine are itemized and described, and only those diseases against which the medicine is effective are described. In contrast, in Keiteki-shu⁸⁾, Manase puts his great wealth of knowledge of medicines to full use. He seems to have developed a huge pharmacological system, though this is not included in Keiteki-shu. However, as a compendium for everyday treatment, Nitiyo Yakusei Nodoku is quite convenient, and the physicians of those days apparently used it and added various addendum.

Its wide use is also suggested by the fact that in 1603 Manase's adopted son, Gensaku⁹⁾, reissued an enlarged version of the text, referring to the most recently imported book on pharmacology, Bencaogangmu(1578).

In Nodoku, the minimum information necessary is described in idiomatic phrases, which must have been widely known if we are to assume that each concept was readily understood. Manase did not mention the medicines by their original names, but adopted a method designed to simplify the description by creating a single character for each medicine, which he called “a single-character name.” He might have intended to protect his own school by the adoption of such a method since rival schools would not know exactly what medication was being prescribed. This is one of the characteristics of the Dosan Manase school.

5. Treatment Theory

It was mentioned above that Keiteki-shu is a text designed to aid in observing symptom patterns and in making treatment decisions. In other words,

it is an aid to understanding what is happening inside the patient. Treatment is based upon these observations. The method is almost the same as the distinguishing of symptom patterns and treatments adopted in modern traditional Chinese medicine.

Manase changed his method for distinguishing symptom patterns depending on the type of disease, and adopted specific measures according to the circumstances. For example, in the chapter on edemas, he describes how it is caused by a malfunctioning of the spleen and kidney, and he also mentions the influence of the lung. Treatment is based on these observations. In other words, distinguishing patterns of the viscera and bowels are most important. In addition, he made use of the “analysis of the eight principles”¹¹⁾ (including the concepts of yin and yang), and he integrated these principles into the ideal case presented in the Shokan-ron¹²⁾, where the progression of shokan¹³⁾ through six stages is described.

The concepts of Qi and blood are found throughout his writing and are also made use of in the Keiteki-shu. In “Fifty-seven articles” which appear at the beginning of Kirigami¹⁵⁾, Manase mentions the importance of distinguishing patterns of Qi and blood, stating, “It is most important first to discern whether Qi and blood are in excess or deficient in diagnosing various symptoms.”

At the very beginning of each disease group mentioned in Keiteki-shu, the causes of the disease are explained, and the various influences leading to the disease are described. Moreover, as mentioned above, the idea that Qi, blood, and fluids can exert a bad influence once they lose their normal condition was well accepted. With Manase's work, the method of distinguishing symptom patterns and relating them to the causes of diseases was perfected.

From the above, and considering the time that

Dosan lived, it seems that he was in almost perfect command of the concepts and theories which we use now in kampo. However, it was impossible for him to know Xue Ji¹⁾(1488-1558), Zhao Xianke²⁾ and Zhang Jingyue's³⁾ ideas (Zhang Jingyue disagreed with the theory of superfluous yang and insufficient yin [which is used by some people today). On the other hand, he mentioned a disease which indicates insufficiency of genuine yang, which is considered to be one of the fundamental ideas of present day traditional Chinese medicine. These ideas appeared after Xue Ji and the same thing could be said for the epidemic febrile disease⁴⁾ theory which appeared much later, indicating the foresight of Manase and his master Tashiro.

However, over and above his theoretical contribution, Manase's work allowed theories created in China to become well known and suitable for use in Japan. His contribution due to his own initiative is remarkable. In addition, he was well able to grasp the differences between Japanese and Chinese medical ideas. He pointed out the impossibility of simply adopting Chinese methods of treatment in Japan, stating, "It is desirable to give different kinds of treatment depending upon the country." He also made an attempt to establish and write a chapter on the subject of gerontology in the Keiteki-shu, a topic which had not been considered in China, where he described the pathology of old people and indicated some methods of treatment.