

## Medical History in Japan

*"Historical Significance of the Standardization of Acupoint Locations", the Second Japanese Acupoint Committee (2)  
"Detailed Guide to the Location of Acupoints" from the classics to the WHO standardization", pp 411-422, Tokyo, Ishiyaku Publishing, June 2009 (partially revised)*

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(continued from KAIM Journal vol.6 no.1)

### **2. Secondary standardization – unification on the level of meridians and acupoints**

The meridian concept has developed and been fused during the above described circumstances, but there were differences between schools etc., so that the progressive spread of acupuncture and moxibustion therapy made a unification of the concepts necessary. And approximately one century after the forerunner of the "Su Wen" and "Ling Shu" had been edited, the concepts pertaining to meridians and acupoints were unified. The form of the "Su Wen" and "Ling Shu" we see today is not a document of that time, but rather the product of extensive modification and from a considerably later time. However, some of the contents have unmistakably be transmitted from entries in the Mawangdui medical texts and thus can definitely be traced back to before the common era.

Astronomical knowledge was adopted to render the concepts of meridians and acupoints in the original form of the "Su Wen" and "Ling Shu" from the first century absolute. At that time it was accurately recognized in astronomy that there are 12 cycles of waxing and waning of the moon and about 365 days in a year and these figures accepted as absolute truth. From those absolute figures of heaven the figures of man were deducted and thus the unification of the meridians and acupoints planned. The astronomical concept of the yin-yang theory and the five element theory were used as the theoretical basis for this work. Moreover, the "heaven-earth-man" (tian-di-ren) trinity theory was also used and thus the figures 6, 12 and 360 put on a logical

foundation. During that process yin and yang were further divided into three yin and three yang resulting in a concept found only in medicine but not elsewhere in Chinese philosophy or thought. In this way the concept of the six viscera and six bowels from the "Su Wen" and "Ling Shu" and the corresponding concept of the twelve regular meridians were unified and standardized. Moreover, because this was important in order to create a yet another system also comprising the conception and governor vessel explaining the production of their offspring, those were placed on the same level as the twelve regular meridians and now form the basis of the modern meridian concept.

On the other hand, since the modern form of the "Su Wen" and "Ling Shu" refer repeatedly to the number acupoints as being 365, the forerunners of both texts from the first century most likely mentioned these too. However, the actual number of points given in both works does not exceed 132 points [5]. This reveals that by the first century only about 130 points had been developed, but based on deductions from the numbers of heaven the figure 365 was standardized into the ideal concept.