

Medical History in Japan

"Historical Significance of the Standardization of Acupoint Locations", the Second Japanese Acupoint Committee (3) "Detailed Guide to the Location of Acupoints" from the classics to the WHO standardization", pp411-422, Tokyo, Ishiyaku Publishing, June 2009 (partially revised)

Makoto Mayanagi
 Graduate School of Humanities
 Ibaraki University

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5. Acupoint charts up to the Tang period and changes in acupoints

Since acupoints are located on the body surface their visualization through illustrations undoubtedly started from an early point in time. Therefore, the "Ming Tong Illustrations" have probably been drawn around the creation of the original "Ming Tong Jing". Because no directly derived drawings exist, there are no concrete clues, but it can be imagined based on acupoint illustrations up to the Tang period.

The oldest extant text with acupoint charts currently known is the Yellow Emperor's Toad Prohibitions for Moxibustion & Cauterization (Huáng Dì Xiā Má Jing) (Figure 7). Based on the works listed in the Record of the Bibliographic Catalogs of the Sui dynasty it seems likely that the roots were established in the 3rd century. Not surprisingly, similar to the "Ming Tang", these have been scattered and lost in China and have been preserved and handed down only in Japan. The old manuscripts were discovered during the late Edo period by Mototsugu Taki of the Shogunate Medical School. Figure 7 shows a replica of the Shogunate Medical School's copy and names of acupoints along the hairline or Renying (ST9) can be seen. Moreover, it includes a description that like the imaginary toad and rabbit on the moon moxibustion treatment of some acupoints should be avoided in correlation with the waxing and waning of the moon.



Figure 7 Huáng Dì Xiā Má Jing

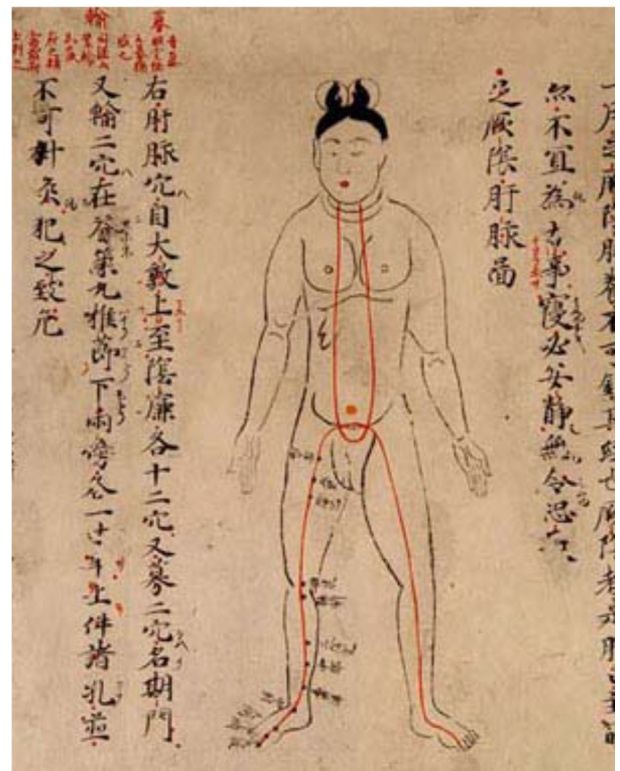


Figure 8 Ishinpo

In the Heian period Yasunori Tamba compiled the text "Ishinpo" based mainly on works from before the Sui and Tang periods and presented this to the emperor in 984. In the 22nd volume are illustrations for each of the 10 months of pregnancy, for each an illustration of a naked pregnant woman, fetus, viscera and bowels, meridians and acupoints all of which are derived from the Chang Jing. Among these the contents related to the correlation between fetal development and viscera-bowels-meridians originates and has been transmitted from the "Tai Chan Jing" (text on fetuses and birth), placing its origin extremely far into the past. The date of creation of the Chang Jing quoted in the Ishinpo is not clear, but considering the 5th century appears to be acceptable and most likely. Figure 8 shows a reproduction of the "National Treasure Seikido Library [12], but the book of the Seikido library is an associated book that has diverged from the Nakarai's national treasure book during the Edo period. It cannot definitely be concluded, that the red lines indicating meridians are actually derived from the "Chang Jing".

A text with acupoint charts of the Tang period was unearthed in Dunhuang. Figure 9 shows the Stein Text No. 6168 from The British Library in London and is called the "Illustrated Moxibustion Technique" of the "Moxibustion Scripture". Like the Xia Ma Jing no meridians are drawn and only points not used today like "Shou Suikong" or "Wuzhou" have been marked. Also, the Pelliot text No. 2675 [13], which is in the possession of the La Bibliothèque nationale de France, mentions at the beginning a "First Volume of the New Adorned Scripture of Moxibustion for Acute conditions". In other words this text was a reproduction of the one volume work "Xinxiu Beiji Jiujing" published by the Li family living a business area in the eastern market of the capital (today called Xi'an). On the backside of the paper the second half of this book

describes the location of the "human-spirit" elements correlated to the suitability for treatment as regulated by the oriental zodiac signs characteristic of the birth year, seasons, months and days, while at the end there is a transcription of the year 861. Thus, this book shows clearly that during the Tang period prior the year 861 textbooks about moxibustion had already been published in Xi'an. At the same time this is also the oldest extant medical book publishing record.



**Figure 9 Stein Text No. 6168
(London, The British Library)**

On the other hand, paying attention to the hair style shown in Figures 7-9 reveals that although only Figure 8 shows a woman, all are very much alike. The drawing style of the bodies too is strikingly similar. This shows, that until the Tang period the acupoint charts adopted a standardized style. Also of significance in Pelliot's text No. 2675 there is a large

inscription of "Ming Tang" above the body, revealing that acupoint illustrations have been called "Ming Tang". If that is so, the "Ming Tang Tu" prepared in the third century too was drawn in this style and later presumably followed until the Tang period.

Yet, changes occurred in the acupoints. The points "Shou Suikong" or "Wuzhou 2" shown in Figure 9 are not found in the "Ming Tang", and in Pelliot's text No. 2675 the point GB21 jianjing (肩井) is called bo jing (膊井), the point TE20 jiaosun (角孫) is recorded as yin hui (陰会), the point GV23 shengting (神庭) is called zhu shen (住神) and the point between the eyebrows EX-2 yin tang is called guang ming. During the time following the "Ming Tang" too different names for acupoints and new acupoints appeared and different schools and theories using those names continued to be established.

6 Tertiary standardization – unification on a national level

After the Tang period and through a period of 5 generations of confusion, China was reunited under the Northern Song government, and maybe also due to the emperor's pursuit of a civilian controlled policy, attached great importance to medical policies. On this foundation "Su Wen", "Ling Shu" and similar medical classics were revised, books on herbology also enlarged and revised a large portion of medical encyclopedias newly compiled and using the woodblock printing technique that had spread at that time governmental editions were published. The effects of acupuncture and moxibustion too were acknowledged by the emperor himself, so that he ordered the medical officer Wang Wei Yi to correct the confusion about meridians and acupoints. By imperial command Wei Yi prepared his "Illustrated Meridians" (illustrations and descriptive text) and in

the following year based on that work created a 3-dimensional figure, that was "newly cast" and he revised the 14 meridians and 354 acupoints in 1026, publishing the "Illustrated Meridians" as the 3-volume work "(Newly casted) Tong Ren Shu Xue Shen Jiu Tu Jing [14].

The Northern Song editions of the time used characters of coin size and even B4 paper size large characters, were mostly luxury books for the court and government officials and consequently too expensive for ordinary people or physicians. Therefore, subsequent publishing of small print editions for the general population was common for medical books. Yet, trying to create a small printed version of the "Tong ren shu xue shen jiu tu jing" makes it difficult to contain the bronze figure illustrations. Presumably this seems to have been the reason why there has been no small print edition of this work, but the government had this book carved as a stone relief that was then erected in the capital of Bianjing (today's Kaifeng) and spread by having people make rubbed copies of it. The casting of this bronze figure and publishing of the book, and again the rubbed copies obtained from the stone relief were used as a means for the careful spread of this knowledge and had the purpose of achieving unification on a national level. It is no exaggeration to call precisely this the tertiary standardization.

Incidentally, quotations in the "Xia Ma Jing" or "Ishinpo" derived from the "Chang Jing" or Pelliot text No. 2675 show that the discourse pertaining to the determination of the type of meridian or the acupoints to be avoided depending on the location of the human spirit was very popular until the Tang period. Whether this view already prevailed from the stage of the "Ming Tang" is unknown, but they are referred to twice in the "Illustration of the Brass

Man Acupuncture and Moxibustion". Apparently, the widespread discourse could not be neglected.



Figure 10 Bronze figure (Tokyo National Museum)

Figure 10 shows the bronze figure at the Tokyo National Museum, which had originally been cast in Northern Song and had been called "Tensei dojin". This originates according to Chen cunren theory to the joining of the Japanese army when the allied forces of eight countries attacked Beijing during the Boxer Rebellion and carried it away from the old palace in Beijing. However, Professor Hiroshi Kosoto from Kitazato University showed beyond any room for dispute that this particular bronze figure had been cast by the acupuncture medical officer Jizen Yamazaki upon order from the shogunate during the Edo period by the end of the 18th century and been in the possession of the Edo Medical School [15].



Figure 11 Rubbed copy of a gravestone

Figure 11 shows a rubbed copy of the stone relief immediately after it had been set up in Bianjing [16] and "First Volume of the Newly Cast Bronze Figure Illustration of Acupuncture and Moxibustion" is found in the left lower corner. This stone relief was moved during the Yuan period to Beijing and had there been preserved until the Ming period. This particular stone remnant was discovered during excavations at Beijing's castle wall and a portion of it is now on display on the 6th floor of the The Chinese Academy of Sciences in Beijing. Further, the Ming government also completely replicated the Northern Song stone relief because of damage and wear and allowed to make rubbed copies of it to spread the knowledge. The library of the Imperial Household Agency is in the possession of a complete rubbed copy

from the Ming period that originally had been together with the bronze figure shown in Figure 10 in the possession of the Edo Medical School.