

Foreword

What is Kampo Medicine

Kampo medicine, practiced in Japan, is TCM which has been modified incorporating Japanese culture and proven scientific and medical knowledge. At first, Kampo medicine, which began as an imitation of China's TCM, was organized as a system in the 16th century. At this time, medicine of Ming-China was introduced and widely spread. After that, in the 17th to 18th centuries, the basic concept of TCM was already articulated in "Shang han lun" and "Chin gui yao liu". Individuals in Japan applied these treatments based on these classical prescriptions. This became a major force and helped establish a Japanese tradition. This tradition which experienced a decline due to political causes after 1868, remains today, even after the reconstruction period in the 1930's.

Kampo medicine, compared to Chinese TCM, does not differ only in theoretical interpretation, or use of prescriptions; but it also differs in the way it is incorporated within the medical system. First of all, this medicine is dealt with in the unitary medical system based on European Medicine. The second, is the fact that 148 kinds of traditional prescriptions processed in extraction are approved for medical insurance. This large number is due to the scientific study of Kampo medicine which helped develop new prescriptions.

In countries other than East Asia, TCM and its family are treated as complementary and alternate medicine (CAM). However in Japan, the idea is heterodox. While the Japanese medical system used today is based on European Medicine, Kampo Medicine, which supported Japanese health for over 1500 years, is neither European Medicine nor CAM. It is recognized as an independent form of medicine, unique to Japan.

As mentioned above, this issue refers to the current form of Japanese traditional medicine which has Chinese origins. Therefore we named this issue "Current Kampo Medicine". Kampo medicine differs from traditional Chinese medicine in other countries practicing this form of medicine. Kampo medicine has antecedents with Chinese history since the 18th century and now has begun to demonstrate its own configuration which is unique to Japan.

In a word, we use a few excellent prescriptions (in particular, prescriptions of "Shang han lun" and "Qin gui yao liu") for various disorders. It will be demonstrated that the accumulated experience of Kampo in Japan is different than TCM in other countries.

Our intent is to provide knowledge so that readers may understand the special role that Kampo medicine holds in the Japanese medical system. We hope the contents in this issue are useful for the understanding of Japanese Traditional Medicine and will promote its use in other countries.

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*** Kampo Medicine**

Kampo's "kan (han)" means "Ancient China", and "po (fang)" means "technique". Translated in English, this means "Technique of Ancient China". This name was established in the 18th century when Dutch Medicine (called Rampo=Technique of Holland) was introduced in order to distinguish it from Kampo Medicine, and spread for general use.