

The Wave of Korean Manupuncture :
Interfaces of Traditional Medicine in Contemporary Practice

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Introduction

Oriental medicine, based on thousands of years of experiences, has gained worldwide recognition and flourished in Korea. Traditional Korean medicine has been practiced for more than two thousand years and based on classical theories and techniques. The medical history of Korea clearly proved that Koreans developed their own native medicine : the medical system and education encouraged the advances in medicine ; and many important medical records, including *Tongui pogam* (東醫寶鑑)¹ as reference of Korean medical science, also contributed to the transmission of knowledge.

Oriental medicine continued to evolve until Western medicine was introduced into Korea from the end of the 19th century. The socio-cultural changes and scientific policies under Japanese colonial control aroused the new era of Oriental medicine : after a period of decline for traditional medical practices, OM reasserted itself at the end of the Second world war and eventually coexists with Western medicine.

In view of the influence of modern science and technology in Korea, the medical system has been adapted and modified. Modern practitioners use a variety of healthcare therapies, including acupuncture and herbal medicine. They were considered as integral part of Oriental medicine in the past but today as well. Since 1971, moreover, a complementary therapy has expanded in South Korea.

Korean Manupuncture : A new medicine between tradition and modernity ?

One may be surprised to find that over three million people all over the world have turned to Korean Manupuncture, making it the complementary treatment of choice for everyone. It has actually spread to Japan, Canada, United States ; and also to France, Germany and Austria.

How comes this phenomenon in the context of medical modernization ? Considering that KM has developed its educational system and published many research reports or advanced medical theories since last two decades, it has obviously revealed distinctive features of considerable value. This paper intends to discuss a new healthcare system distinguished by traditional medical knowledge and modern practices.

An elaborated micro-system

Adapted from Doctor Yoo Tae-woo (유태우), Korean Manupuncture (고려수지침) is based on traditional concepts in common with Oriental medicine and acupuncture, such as the fundamentals of Yin and Yang (陰陽), the Five Elements (五行) (Fig.1) or Sa Am therapy and also the theory of meridians (經絡). These theories are used to determine symptoms of diseases, diagnosis and treatment plans.

How practitioners apply these theories in modern practice and treat diseases through the hand ?

The original feature of KM is certainly its microsystem specified by meridians and points (기맥) located on the hand. It differs from acupuncture in numbers and functions of these points and meridians. KM counts 14 meridians and 345 points ; each meridian corresponding to a couple of organs and each point to an area of the body (Fig.2).

The skilful practice of KM depends particularly on the practitioner's use of the sense of touch that plays a more important role in diagnosis and treatment than with traditional schools of acupuncture. Palpatory findings in diagnosis consist in any anomalies of the skin, such as colors, roughness, induration or lesions, and may be needed to understand the many subtle aspects of the patient's physical and emotional state. The Yin Yang pulse diagnosis (음양맥진), based on traditional theories, aims to analyse syndromes and symptoms, to control the flow of energy Qi (氣) in meridians and also to examine carefully the hands in order to locate corresponding points on the hand for treatment (Fig.3). This specific method of diagnosis seems to be the most precious discovery of Dr. Yoo.

¹ Written by Ho Chun (許浚) in 1613.

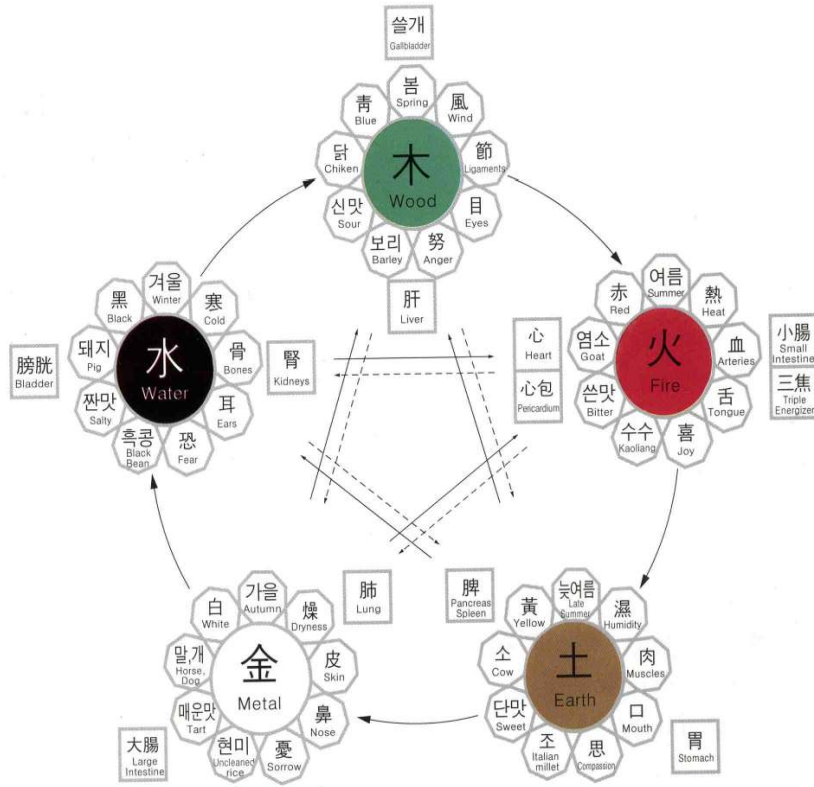


Figure 1. Theory of Five Elements (五行)

Correspondance entre les organes et les points de manupuncture. (1)

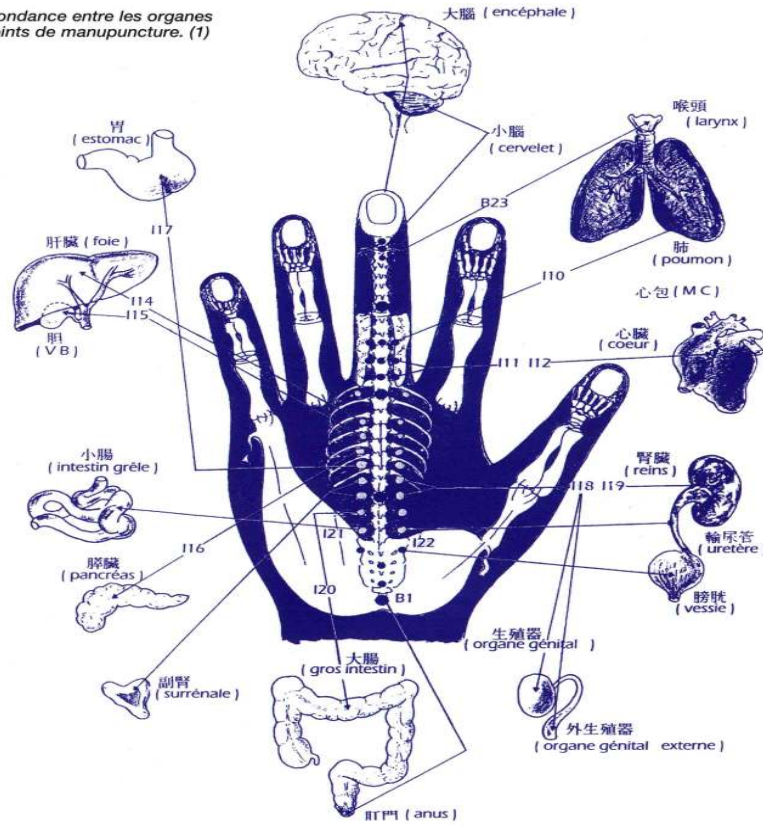


Figure 2. Correspondances between the hand and organs in Korean Manupuncture

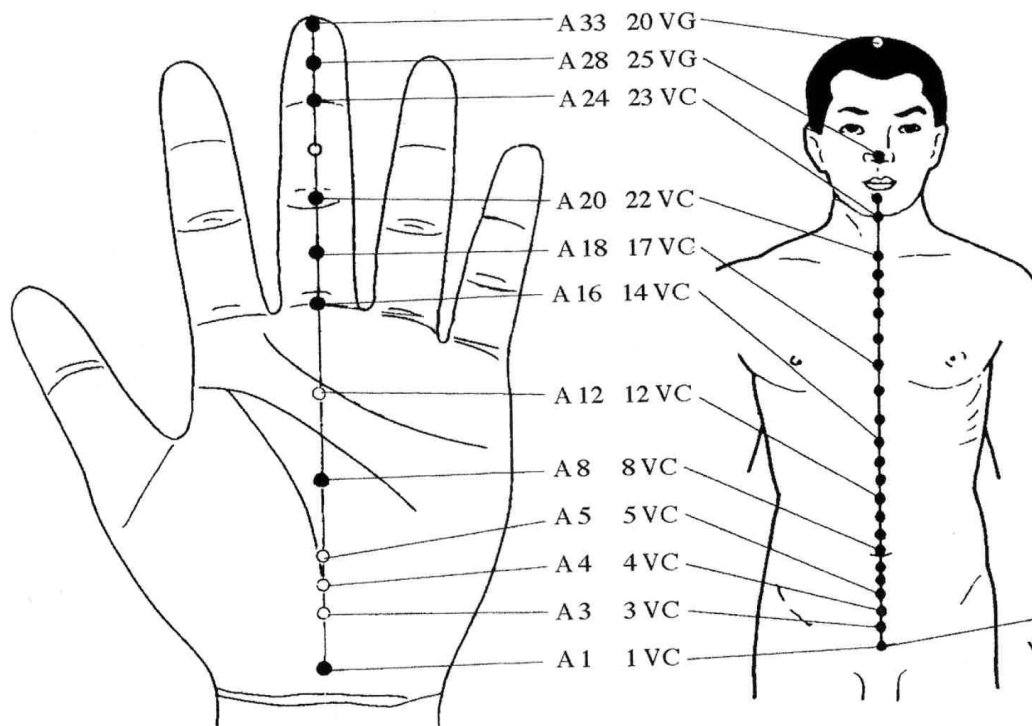


Figure 3. Points correspondances in Korean Manupuncture

A natural medicine

Once a diagnosis is made, Korean Manupuncture seeks to combine the new treatment with the corresponding therapy in order to maintain harmony of body function and to expel pathogens.

From the pathological point of view, Korean Manupuncture, following Oriental medicine, considers numerous sources of diseases :

- external sources (exogenous pathogens) such as hot, cold, damp, dry, fire, summer-heat ; whereas Western medicine categorizes them quite differently (bacteria, viruses, etc.)
- internal sources (endogenous pathogens) associated with the seven emotions (joy, worry or pensiveness, grief, fear or shock, anger)
- imbalances of the mechanisms (Yin-Yang)
- disturbance (full, empty, stagnant) of vital energy Qi (氣), blood (血) and body fluids (津液)
- other sources including lifestyle choices (food, drink, substance use, unclean conditions), trauma or physical accidents, poor constitution...

As disorders manifest in a wide variety of ways patterns, any pattern of relationships to time, meals, or season may hold the key to treatment. This is why KM may include nutritional recommendations and mental therapy as mind-body exercises (Qigong, meditation...) that will help prevent the disorder from moving to a more serious organic level. In this way, KM is often considered as a natural and preventive medicine. As the mind-body is defined as the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual aspects that make up the complete human being, KM has developed treatments for each type and requires individualized treatment plans. KM can simply stimulate to treat the patient by strengthening immune system and restoring harmony in keeping with natural rules. Its effectiveness is often astonishing, as it can occur very promptly. Treatment in the traditional mode may also require frequent visits for evaluation and to make changes in diet and therapy. Some patients will respond to minimal therapy, whereas others may require a complex and prolonged treatment.

This view of disease and the resulting method of treatment have been extremely successful in many areas. (Actually my research concerns various diseases treated by KM and clinical cases adapted to different pathologies.)

In some cases, the therapies of KM can work well alone but in other cases, KM is combined with other medical therapies. Special clinical diseases are evaluated how they can be treated alone by KM or if herbal medicine is necessary as well.

As with other traditional Oriental medicines, KM may not completely help all conditions and syndromes and it is common to hear of KM referred to as an alternative to Western medical practice. Often, patients seek this type of care late in the course of their disease, after unsuccessful surgery or years of neglect. Occasionally, KM is used to counteract other therapies, such as alleviating the side effects of radiation or chemotherapy in the treatment of cancer. It is common to find that patients with the same Western diagnosis will have different illnesses when diagnosed by Oriental methods as KM. This is why they may require a different therapy. One person may respond to KM and need no other treatment, and another may need a complex combination of Western and Oriental medicine as KM to achieve the best health. It is believed that modern and traditional systems are complementary in their view of disease.

The science behind Korean Manupuncture

Although diagnosis used by KM is quite different from other traditional medicines, such as herbal medicine and acupuncture, moxa or Soam ttum (瑞岩灸) is traditionally used by practitioners, among various methods of treatment. The herb *Artemisia vulgaris* (wormwood) is placed on the hand and heated to treat yang deficiencies (Fig.4). In Korea, moxa has been used in parallel with needling techniques over two thousand years.

KM however has developed needling techniques, the most used method of treatment. Needles are made specially for KM and adapted to its microsystem : they are fine, short and light by comparison with needles traditionally used in acupuncture. These are stainless steel needles of high quality. KM uses several types of needles, such as Suji ch'im (手指針) (Fig.5), Soam ch'im (瑞岩針), T pong (鋒), Soa ch'im (小兒針), Ch'urhyol ch'im (出血針). This method is simple and easy to use but requires specific techniques. Owing to their small size (about 7 mm), they are barely inserted into the skin with Suji ch'im kwan (手指針管) (Fig.6).

Moreover KM does not only use needles, but also other new effective techniques, for all the ones who do not like needles very well.

- pellets or Soam pong (瑞岩鋒) (Fig.7) are commonly used for both ear and body points The patient may be reminded to gently press or stimulate these pellets occasionally.
- the astonishing ring therapy or Soam panji (瑞岩班指) (Fig.8) is used through the pressing of points.

As all the points for treatment are located on the hand, KM needs more scientific research on aspects of efficacy technique to treat many diseases effectively through the Corresponding Point Therapy. An electronic instrument or Suji chonja beam (手指電子빔) (Fig.9) enables to find corresponding points on the hand. This higher technique is very effective and used quickly in practise as a complementary tool for other healing methods. (I learnt this approach from Doctor Jung Yung-hwan in 2004 and have since visited the Institute of Korean Manupuncture founded by Professor Yoo Tae-woo in Seoul, where I met students and practitioners, and shared their knowledge).

This subtle method raises questions about the use of these techniques. A practitioner may choose one of them according to their precision and reliability, location and number of corresponding points for treatment, and also diseases. They have been tested and proven by constant use or amended by criticism and dynamic discussion from within its practitioners. Such different treatment possibilities have also been introduced as a major medical progress.



Figure 4. Moxa (灸)



Figure 5. Suji ch'im (手指針)



Figure 6. Suji ch'im kwan (手指針管)



Figure 7. Soam pong (瑞岩鋒)



Figure 8. Soam panji (瑞岩班指)

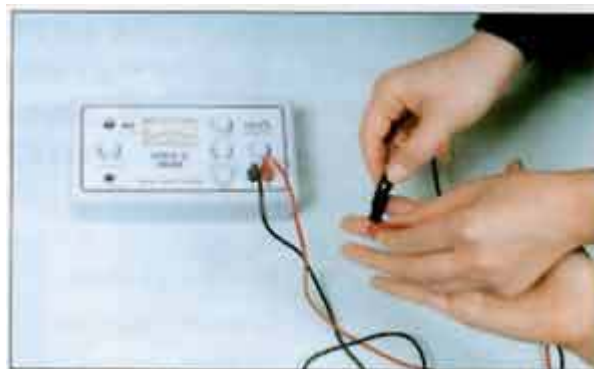


Figure 9. Suji chonja beam (手指電子빔)

Conclusion

The most common usage of the term *traditional medicine* is to describe medical practices traditionally used within previous societies and developed before the era of modern medicine. Nevertheless Korean Manupuncture, discovered in 1971 and derived from acupuncture, is nowadays an integral part of traditional medicines. KM respects all the basic principles of Oriental Medicine and uses them in practice.

In view of the advances in science and technology in Korea in the 20th century, KM has also developed its own modern techniques. These techniques have stood the tests of time and patient acceptance in a new Korean industrialized society. Due to their unwillingness to countenance other approaches, many modern practitioners were skeptical of Oriental Medicine's healing capabilities. Traditional treatments have increasingly been subjected to scientific study ; some have been discarded as mere superstitions, while others have been adopted to varying degrees in mainstream medicine. Modern practitioners may be seen as "traditionalists" for their attachment to established techniques actually originating in the modern era.

However, KM has renewed traditional interest with new techniques. Research in KM has been conducted using both the traditional and scientific models. This traditional medical approach differs from other traditional medicines. Finally *traditional medicine* is used with a different meaning.

From many experimental studies that proved clinical effectiveness, KM is accepted as a curative therapy efficient against various diseases and become a valuable resource for primary health care. As traditional basis became better understood, it was easier to integrate the ancient philosophy and modern science of KM into Korean conventional Medicine.

This paper on KM reflects on how traditional medicine is still deeply rooted in Korean culture and evolves, but also Korean society has developed its own modern (not *western*) medical system. This presentation will illustrate precisely that Korean Medicine in the 20th century has very distinctive features and the application of modern scientific method in KM may have a great impact on practice of traditional medicine in Korea and also throughout the world in the 21st century.

Brief history of Korean Manupuncture

1971: Started to develop new concept of hand acupuncture.

1975: Discovered 14 micro-meridian system on the hands and published it in the journal of "the Korean Acupuncture & Moxibustion Association".

1976: The 1st edition of "Koryo Hand Acupuncture and 14 micro-meridians" was published.

1977: The Koryo Hand Acupuncture Therapy Institute was established.
Yin Yang Maek Jin Publishing Co. was founded.

1978: The Research Association of Koryo Hand Therapy was inaugurated
The 1st Korean-Japanese Koryo Hand Acupuncture Symposium was held at Seoul.
In the Japan University, the Research Institute of KHT was founded.

1980: The name for the textbook of "Koryo Hand Acupuncture" was changed into "Koryo Hand Therapy".
The word "Suji ch'im" appeared to the Korean dictionary by Mr. Hee Sung Lee.

1981: The monthly newspaper of "Koryo Hand Therapy" was first published.
The 1st edition of KHT Clinical Experience was published by collecting various kinds of clinical treatments that were revealed since 1976.

1982: Dr. Yoo awarded honorary doctor of medicine from Gabon International University.
The 1st edition of "Yin Yang Pulse Diagnosis & Tonification and Sedation" was published.

1983: Koryo Hand Therapy was first introduced in Beijing.

1985: The enlarged Korean edition of "Koryo Hand Therapy" was published.
The effect of treatment using Koyo Hand Acupuncture was proven in a scientific experiment at the Dentistry Department in Japan University.

1986: Principle and Application of Koryo Hand Therapy was published in Japanese edition.
Advanced Research of Koryo Hand Therapy was published in the 1st edition.

1988: The English version of Koryo Hand Acupuncture was published.
The monthly newspaper “Sooji Chim” was authorized as a periodical publication from the Public Information Bureau of Culture.
Dr. Yoo was awarded Honorary Doctor of Oriental Medicine from South Baylor University in the US and was appointed to a research professor.
The 1st Nationwide Koryo Hand Acupuncture Symposium was held.

1994: The Enlarged Korean Version of “Yin Yang Pulse Diagnosis & Tonification and Sedation” was published.
The French and German Versions of Koryo Hand Acupuncture were published.

1995: KHT was selected as a required course in a domestic university.
A decision was passed from the Supreme Court on April 17th that it is not illegal that the lay-people insert the needles to the others if it is performed without any pay, even though they are not practitioners.
A KHT Volunteer Group for Charity was dispatched to treat the people who were injured in the collapse of a department store.

1996: KHT Member's Club was inaugurated.
The 1st Koryo Hand Acupuncture Symposium was held at Barcelona, Spain.
A Spanish Version of Koryo Hand Therapy was published.

1997: Sooji Food Therapy was published and Dr. Yoo started to give a special lectures on the importance of nutrition in nationwide. KHT Treatment for Obesity was published.
The 1st Domestic KHT Volunteer's Service for Charity was held.

1998: A KHT Hand Model that shows 14 micro-meridian and 345 points was developed.
The Russian Version of Koryo Hand Acupuncture was published.
A report on the original medicine of KHT was reported on the CNN News.
Dr. Yoo gave a special presentation on New Approach to Correspondence Therapy in International Oriental Medicine Symposium held in Spain.

1999: KHT was selected as the representative medicine of Korea by Korea Tourism Organization.
Dr. Yoo taught Yin Yang Pulse Diagnosis and Cyber Hand Therapy to Canadian acupuncturists in Canada.

2000: Dr. Yoo was appointed to Honorary Chief of the German Association of Western Medicine.
He presented his thesis on the relief of pain through Koryo Hand Therapy in Austria.

2001: The Japanese Version of Koryo Hand Acupuncture was published.

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These are recent publications by Dr. Yoo Tae-woo on Korean Manupuncture.

However, numerous basic primers and practical guidebooks were published on the theoretical correspondence model of the hands, classification and utilization of prescriptions, practical applications...