The Ming Dynasty 明朝
medical development (part 1)
1368-1644
The Ming Period 明朝


Medicine in the Ming dynasty

- The Ming dynasty witnessed many achievements in science, technology and medicine.
- The government of the Ming dynasty worshiped Confucianism and advocated the activities of loving one’s parents and brothers. In such a circumstance, undertaking medical occupations was seen as an important way to fulfil that purpose. Many intellectuals abandoned the road of being a government official, and engaged in medical careers. As a result, the cultural quality, and the structural knowledge of physicians were greatly improved, and the social status of practitioners increased.
Medicine in the Ming dynasty (cont.)

- Zheng He’s 7 missions to “the West” improved scientific and cultural exchanges, including medicine between China and Southeast Asia, India, and more than 30 countries in the Middle East and Africa. After the 16th century (Middle Ming), those exchanges between China and Europe had been more frequent.

- In the later period of the Ming dynasty, the development of materia medica had been sped up. There came forth many far-reaching works, like *Ben Cao Gang Mu* 本草纲目 (*Compendium of Materia Medica*), and *Shi Liao Ben Cao* 食疗本草 (*Materia Medica of Diet Therapy*).
There were great developments in disease diagnosis, case-writing format, compilation and dissemination of medical books, discussion of medical ethics, and exposition of medical history. Meanwhile, academics in miscellaneous diseases underwent a comprehensive development, and achieved unprecedented prosperity. These achievements made the academics of miscellaneous diseases more and more mature. This had great impact on the academics of miscellaneous diseases in later generations.

(History and development of traditional Chinese medicine)

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Li Shizhen 李時珍
1518 – 1593

courtesy name: Li Dongbi
assumed name: Li Binghu
was from a family lineage of physicians in Qizhou (present Qichun County, Hubei Province).
Li Shizhen 李時珍
1518 – 1593

Li Shi Zhen failed the imperial exam, and determined to engage in the ritual and discipline of medical and herbal knowledge. At his 30, he won great fame after curing prince of the Chu State’s “worm disease”.

He completed the *Ben Cao Gang Mu* when he was 60 (1578).

He could not find anyone to publish it until 3 years after his death.
A year before his death, he made a copy of the text as a gift for the emperor, hoping that he would publish it for the welfare of people, but nothing happened.

3 years after his death, the publisher in Nanjing finally came out with the first edition of Ben Cao Gang Mu (1596).

Second edition came out in 1606. It was also published in Japan, and later translated into many European languages.
Li Shizhen’s Pub: 3 publications

1. Ben Cao Gang Mu (本草綱目, Compendium of Materia Medica)
2. Bin Hu Mai Xue (瀕湖脈學  A Study of the Pulse)
3. Qi Jing Ba Mai Kao (奇經八脈考 An Examination of the Eight Extra Meridians).
Ben Cao Gang Mu (本草綱目，
Compendium of Materia Medica )

- The entire book consists of 52 volumes including 6 parts and sixty categories. Through Li Shizhen’s identification and classification, the number of the Chinese medicinal plants reached 1892 species of which 374 kinds were newly added.

- 1,100 herb illustrations and 11,000 prescriptions.

- It described the type, form, flavour, nature and application in disease treatments of 1,094 herbs.

- It has been translated into many different languages, and remains as the premier reference work for herbal medicine.
Ben Cao Gang Mu (本草綱目, Compendium of Materia Medica)

Li Shizhen’s work is a valuable addition in the treasure-house of ancient Chinese culture and technology. This book is:

- A summary of traditional Chinese pharmacology before the sixteenth century.
- An interesting account of a more advanced and scientific classification system of medicinal herbs at that time.
- Correction of some mistakes in records about medicinal herbs in previous books on materia medica.
- A good compilation which preserved a vast amount of literature of medicine.
- Enrichment of the treasure house of world medicine.

(History and development of traditional Chinese medicine)

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Research articles

- Li Shizhen and The Compendium of Materia Medica

Ben cao gang mu dictionary :
Chinese historical illness terminology

Title: Ben cao gang mu dictionary : Chinese historical illness terminology.
Volume 1

Variant Title: Dictionary of the Ben cao gang mu

Author: Zhang, Zhibin, 1953-, editor.

Publisher: Oakland, California University of California Press, 2014

ISBN: 9780520283954

Physical Description: 764 pages

Personal Subject:
Li, Shizhen, 1518-1593. Ben cao gang mu-Dictionaries.

Subject Term: Medicine, Chinese -- History -- 16th century.

Chinese medicine -- History.

Herbal medicine -- History.

Drugs, Chinese Herbal.

Materia medica, Vegetable -- China -- History -- 16th century.

Added Author:
Zhang, Zhibin, 1953-,

Unschuld, Paul U. (Paul Ulrich), 1943-

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2. Bin Hu Mai Xue
(瀕湖脈學 A Study of the Pulse)
Li Shizhen’s pulse studies

**Title:** Li Shi-zhen’s pulse studies: an illustrated guide
**Author:** Li, Shen-qing, 1952-
**Publisher:** Beijing: People’s Medical Publishing House, 2011.
**ISBN:** 9787117137621
**Personal Author:** Li, Shen-qing, 1952-
**Physical Description:** xix, 170 p. : ill. ; 26 cm. + 1 folded table at back of book.
**General Note:** Some Chinese text.
**Subject Term:** Pulse diagnosis.
Medicine, Chinese -- Early works to 1800.
Chinese medicine.
Medicine, Chinese Traditional.
**Added Author:** Morris, William.

Li, Shizhen, 1518-1593.
**Subject Code:** CMPR121

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Li Shi Zhen's Pulse Diagnosis


3. Qi Jing Ba Mai Kao
(奇經八脈考 An Examination of the Eight Extra Meridians).

This book presents a full examination of the eight extraordinary meridians from the texts of the Neijing, the Nanjing, and their commentaries.
Acupuncture Development in the Ming Dynasty 明朝 (1368 – 1644)
A climax of acupuncture and moxa

- In the Ming dynasty, acupuncture continued developing. During the Ming dynasty, acupuncture and moxibustion were work up to a climax that many problems studied deeper and broader.

- There were more famous doctors specialized in this field, i.e.,
  - Chen Hui of the early stage of Ming Dynasty,
  - Ling Yun of the middle stage, and
  - Yang Jizhou of the later stage,

They were exerted a tremendous influence upon the development of acupuncture and moxibustion.
A new phase of acupuncture and moxibustion

- Main characteristics in the new phase based on the previous achievement (esp. the Song, Jing, and Yuan dynasties):
  - **Needling techniques** came into duplex manipulation from simplex manipulation.
  - **Moxibustion** with a moxa roll developed from a moxa cone.
  - A large number of **compilations** in acupuncture and moxibustion came forth.
  - **Formation of a new category of extra points by** sorting out the previous records of acupuncture sites located away from the Fourteen Meridians.

*Besides these publications, many medical charts of points had been published during this period.*
Imperial Bureau of Medicine 1443
(Medical University of Ming Dynasty)

In 1443, the Ming government specially appointed someone in charge of casting more bronze acupuncture figures like the Son’s. In the mid-16th century, the Acupuncturist Gao Wu 高武 designed casts for bronze acupuncture figures of a man, woman and child, which were used as the respective standard of fixed points.
The Main Compilations in Acupuncture & Moxibustion during Ming Dynasty

- **Li Shizhen 李时珍**: *Qi Jing Ba Mai Kao* (奇經八脈考 An Examination of the Eight Extra Meridians).

- **Gao Wu 高武**: *Zhen Jiu Ju Ying* (A Collection of Gems of Acupuncture and Moxibustion);

- **Yang Jizhou 杨继洲**: *Zhen Jiu Da Cheng* (Great Compendium of Acupuncture and Moxibustion)
Li Shi Zhen 李時珍 (1518 – 1593) &
Qi Jing Ba Mai Kao (奇經八脈考 An Examination of the Eight Extra Meridians)
see slide 18
Gao Wu (高武) 1529

- Gao Wu, calling himself Meihu, was from Siming in Zhejiang province. He passed the imperial military exam and had a good mastery of acupuncture and moxibustion though he studied medicine in old age.
- Gao Wu’s representative work of acupuncture and moxibustion is *Zhen Jiu Ju Ying* (针灸聚英 *Gatherings of Eminent Exponential Acupuncturists*)
Gao Wu (高武) 1529

Zhen Jiu Ju Ying (针灸聚英 Gatherings of Eminent Exponential Acupuncturists)

- Compiled mainly for beginners, it extracts the important discussion on acupuncture and moxibustion from Nei jing, Nan Jing, etc.
- In 1592 he wrote another representative work for this book which gathers the important theories and experiences (cases) from previous acupuncture and moxibustion texts, and recording learned views of Gao Wu himself criticising blind faith.
- It is an important monograph on acupuncture and moxibustion.
Summary & Discussion

- Summarize this session learning
- What could be the influence of those masters’ work / theory (i.e., Li Shizhen, Gao Wu, etc.) on present day Chinese Medicine practice?
- Other questions?
Main References


