

Chapter 3

Transplanting Chinese Medicine in Early Modern Japan: Immigrant Doctors in Nagasaki and the Flourishing of a Japanese Clinic in Osaka

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1. Introduction



Early modern Japanese medicine had a close relationship with the medicine of the Ming and Qing Dynasties. Given this relationship, the first phase was the migration of medical practitioners during the Ming-Qing transition [Nakamura,1914; Li, 1999], and the second was during Yoshimune Tokugawa's regime [Oba, 1980]. First, during the 40 years of turmoil that followed the fall of the Ming Dynasty in China, many doctors came to Japan to escape the war [Xu, 2018]. They worked in Nagasaki and other places. It was suggested that

Fig.1. Harbor of Chinese Boats in Nagasaki (Painted by Hiroshige Utagawa II)
Source: National Diet Library Digital Collections <<https://dl.ndl.go.jp/info:ndljp/pid/1309786>>

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there was a network that made this possible.

Yoshimune Tokugawa 徳川吉宗, who became shogun in 1716, actively introduced books and other Chinese cultural relics to Japan from 1720, and sent a variety of orders to Nagasaki. Thus, many doctors came to Japan during the Kyoho Era (1716–1736) based on Yoshimune's order, which attracted Chinese doctors who were excellent in both learning and treatment [Oba, 1980: 35–36; 184–186].

In addition, it should be noted that during the Ming and Qing dynasties, as well as the period of the Yoshimune administration, most of the doctors came from Suzhou, Ningbo, and Fujian which were the ports from which Chinese ships set sail.



Fig.2. Chinese Settlement

Source: National Diet Library Digital Collections <<https://dl.ndl.go.jp/info:ndljp/pid/1307088>>

2. Shanghan Lun

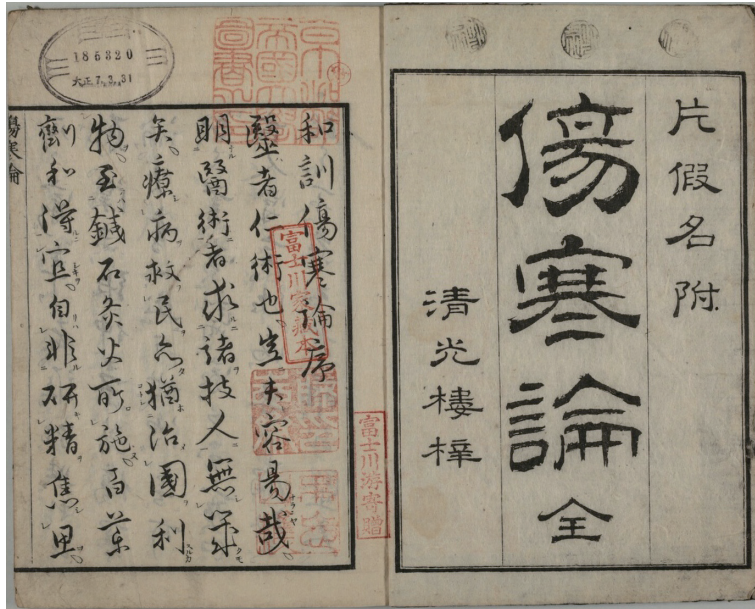


Fig.3. Title Page of *Shanghan Lun* Published in the Edo Period

Source: Kyoto University Rare Materials Digital Archive <<https://rmda.kulib.kyoto-u.ac.jp/item/rb00003125>>

Among the ports from which Chinese ships embarked, Suzhou and Ningbo were the most advanced areas in medicine at that time.

Many famous doctors worked there and focused on the research of *Shanghan Lun* (*Treatise on Cold Damage Diseases* 傷寒論), a famous Chinese medical Masterpiece edit by Zhang Zhongjing 張仲景 [Wu et al., 2000: 16–17].

This book was brought to Japan and had a great influence on Japanese medicine and pharmacology [Mayanagi, 1997]. It is no

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exaggeration to say that *Shanghan Lun* is one of the most important medical books for Japanese Kampo medicine even today.



Fig. 4. Zhang Zhongjing
Source: Baidu Baike

For example, Tsumura Corporation, a pharmaceutical company formulates many of its current products, including the popular *Kakkonto*, based on *Shanghan Lun*.



Fig. 5. *Kakkonto*

Presently in Japan, a clinical trial of Kampo medicine is being conducted for the treatment of Coronavirus disease (COVID-19),¹ and it is said that many of the herbal medicines used for the treatment of mild cases are also based on the *Shanghan Lun*.

From the above, in early modern Japan, Zhang Zhongjing's works were propagated by these people, which led to the flourishing of the study of *Shanghan Lun*. Consequently, early modern Japanese medicine was established under these communications in East Asia.

The Chinese doctors first landed in Nagasaki and began their medical practices. They not only discovered drugs and interpreted Chinese medical books, but also devoted themselves to medical treatment and communicated with Japanese doctors. In this way, the Ming and Qing doctors left behind significant achievements in the history of medical exchange between China and Japan. They played an important role in the development of medicine in early modern Japan.

3. Yushoshi Kitayama's Research of *Shanghan Lun*

Let us examine the impact this movement of doctors and medical books had on Japanese medical thought. As an example, I will make a basic study of the medicine of one of the children of a Ming physician, Yushoshi Kitayama 北山友松子 (1640–1701), the son of Chinese medical family who promoted original medical research by using this network. He studied in Nagasaki and built a clinic in Osaka.

Yushoshi Kitayama, also known as Juan 寿庵, was the son of Ma Rongyu 馬榮宇 (?–1654) and a prostitute in Maruyama, Nagasaki. Ma was an exile from the Ming's Fujian Prefecture who came to Japan

1 <https://www.yomiuri.co.jp/medical/20210729-OYT1T50443/> Viewed October 23, 2021.

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Fig. 6. Yushoshi as a baby with his mother

Source: *Kinsei Kijinden*, 212

between 1624 and 1627 to avoid the war and chaos at the end of the Ming Dynasty [Hong, 2017: 132]. He was active as a herbalist and stayed in Japan for around thirty years, where he engaged in importing Chinese medical books and Chinese herbal medicine, and providing medical treatment to the public.

In 1627, he was appointed to the post of Totsuji 唐通事 by the Shogunate. In the process of building the Sofuku-ji Temple 崇福寺 in Nagasaki, he traveled between Fujian and Nagasaki several times, and made great efforts to build this temple.



Fig. 7. Sofuku-ji Temple in Nagasaki

Source: © NPTA <<https://www.nagasaki-tabinet.com/houjin/photo/284>>

Being born into such a bilingual family environment, Yushoshi was fluent in both Chinese and Japanese and also used the Fujian dialect fluently. From an early age, he visited many Chinese immigrant doctors in Nagasaki to learn from them. In the spring of 1660, he met the Fujian monk Shoei Kerin 化林性僕 who was naturalized in Japan, and as he was impressed by Shoei Kerin's medical skills, he decided to study *Shanghan Lun* under him [Asada, 1880].

Besides Kerin, Yushoshi also learned *Huangdi Neijing* 黄帝内经 and herbology from Shoei Dokuryu 独立性易. He was also learning Japanese traditional medicine from Japanese doctors. It can be inferred that Yushoshi was also taught the Fujian local medicine by his father Ma, as well as his teacher Kerin. In this way, he would have been able to interact smoothly with the Chinese doctors who came to Nagasaki, and would have grasped the situation of the latest medical science and medical books in China at the same time [Asada, 1880].



Fig. 8. Shoei Dokuryu (Painted by Nobumitsu Kurihara)

Source: National Diet Library Digital Collections <<https://dl.ndl.go.jp/info:ndljp/pid/1287846>>

After mastering various medical techniques, Yushoshi settled in Doshomachi 道修町 in Osaka, where he opened a clinic and was well known in Osaka for his erudition and knowledge at that time. In addition to helping the daimyo of each clan to cure their diseases, he also helped the poor people to treat their diseases for free. In addition, he gave rice to the poor people. For this reason, he was called the “physician sage” at that time.

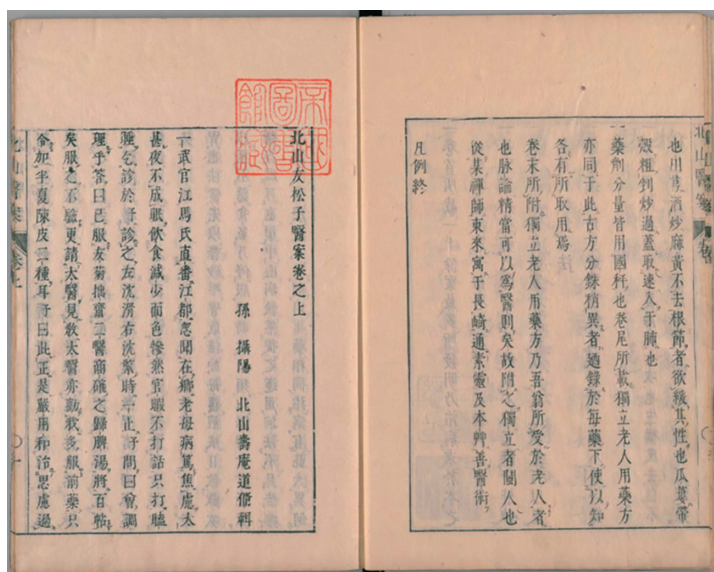


Fig. 9. Text page of *Kitayama Ian*

Source: National Diet Library Digital Collections <<https://dl.ndl.go.jp/info:ndljp/pid/2567920?tocOpened=1>>

Before his death, he installed a life-size stone statue of Fudo Myoo 不動明王 at Taiheiji 太平寺 in Tennoji-ku, Osaka, where he was buried after his death. He left many professional works, including *Kitayama Ian* 北山医案, etc. In particular, *Kitayama Ian* is a representative work of his own clinical trials. After his death, this work was edited by his grandson, Doshu Kitayama 北山道脩 and published in 1745. This book

is considered as a great collection of Yushoshi's actual clinical skills. Moreover, Yushoshi also added his commentaries and supplements to medical works written by Japanese and Chinese doctors. According to his books, he cited and emphasized the medical practice of Four Great Medical Experts In Jin & Yuan Dynasty,² and he placed particular emphasis on the prescriptions in Zhang Zhongjing's *Shanghan Lun* [Yasui, 2014].

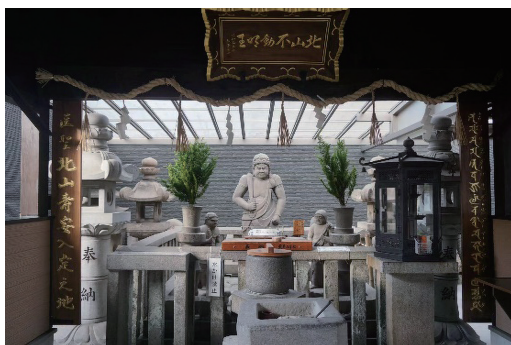


Fig. 10. A life-size Stone Statue of Fudo Myoo with Yushoshi in Taiheiji Temple
Source: Photo by author



Fig.11. Taiheiji Temple in Tennoji-ku, Osaka
Source: Photo by author

2 Zhu Danxi 朱丹溪, Li Dongyuan 李東垣, Xue Ji 薛己, and Yu Chang 喻昌.

The studies of *Huangdi Neijing* were widely read among the Japanese doctors at that time, but the *Shanghan Lun* did not attract much attention. At that time, the medical science of Li Dongyuan 李東垣 and Zhu Danxi 朱丹溪 was extremely influential. However, Yushoshi never stuck to contemporary Ming medicine techniques; he actively studied the *Shanghan Lun* and tried to set Zhang Zhongjing's medicine as the standard.

From the sixteenth to seventeenth century, there was a boom in the study of *Shanghan Lun* in China, and many research books were written and published. Among them, for example, such as *Shang Han Shang Lun Pian* 傷寒尚論篇 and *Shang Hanlun Houtiao Bian* 傷寒論後條弁 were brought to Nagasaki through trade and the arrival of Chinese doctors. Due to their relationship with his father Ma Rongyu, Yushoshi had a lot of contact with the Chinese doctors who came to Nagasaki during the time he was living there, and he would have been able to obtain information on the new medical books imported from China at the earliest possible time. In addition, according to the research of Hiromichi Yasui 安井廣迪, the number of reference books that Yushoshi listed among his books was enormous, and he often read even the latest medical books at that time [Yasui, 2014]. In this way, he paid attention to *Shanghan Lun* earlier than other doctors of the Original Chinese Medical Treatment. According to his records, he treated diseases such as fever, pox, and syphilis, and most of his patients were from the Kinki region, including Ki-shu, Osaka, Kyoto, Hyogo, and Kawasu.

As we have seen above, Yushoshi's medicine incorporated the latest Chinese medicine of his time in China. In particular, it can be said that his emphasis on the *Shanghan Lun*, which Japanese doctors at the time had not yet emphasized, was revolutionary. This was deeply related to his early understanding of the research situation of the *Shanghan Lun* in the Ming Dynasty and the research books on the *Shanghan Lun* that had

come to Nagasaki, as well as the background of the communication on medicine between China and Japan.

4. Conclusion

As we have shown in this article, when considering the relations between Ming and Qing medicine and early modern Japanese medicine, the role played by doctors, Ming vassals, and Qing Chinese doctors who came to Japan during the Ming-Qing transition and Yoshimune period, in addition to the arrival of medical books, are worthy of attention, especially the existence of this network between Chinese doctors and Japanese doctors. Yushoshi's medicine, which is presented in this chapter as an exploratory study, was cultivated through a close network with Ming vassals.

Furthermore, the results of these Sino-Japanese medical exchanges were not completed only in Japan. Interestingly, Chen Cunren 陳存仁 (1908–1990), a modern Chinese physician, traveled to Japan and collected 93 Japanese books on Chinese medicine, which he published in China in 1936 as *Huanghan Yi Xue Cong Shu* 皇漢医学叢書, and *Kitayama Ian* 北山医案 was included in this book. In other words, Yushoshi's medicine was returned to China.

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