

FRESH ACHIEVEMENTS
IN
KOREAN MEDICINE

1963

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Foreign Languages Publishing House
Pyongyang, D.P.R.K.

CONTENTS

MEDICAL SCIENCE IN THE SERVICE OF THE PEOPLE . .	5
GREAT DISCOVERY OF THE SUBSTANCE OF KYUNGRAK	11
NO MORE MEASLES	17
NEW SUCCESS IN THE CURE OF THE AFTER EFFECTS OF INFANTILE PARALYSIS	22
NEW RESULTS IN RESTORING LOST EYESIGHT	26
HUNCHBACK STRAIGHTENED	30
BRAIN DISEASE CONQUERED	35
PULMONARY DISTOMIASIS COMPLETELY ELIMINATED . .	39
GLORIOUS MEDICAL HERITAGE OF KOREA	43

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MEDICAL SCIENCE IN THE SERVICE OF THE PEOPLE

People want to enjoy good health and live to a great age. In carrying this earnest desire of the people into reality, the public health services play an important role.

Since Korea's liberation from the yoke of Japanese imperialist rule on August 15, 1945, our public health services have registered great successes. Compared with 1944, the previous year of the fall of Japanese imperialism, in 1962 the number of hospital beds increased 41.6 times and the number of doctors and assistant doctors 18.6 times.

In the pre-liberation days 60 per cent of the sub-counties in our country were without a doctor, but at present there is no doctorless ri (the lowest administrative unit) in the northern part of the country covered with a vast network of medical institutions, prophylactic and curative.

Remarkable progress has been made in health protection of women and children, too.

In our country all the pregnant women are given free medical assistance in childbed, and the working women are granted 77 days of maternity leave without reduction in their wages. They leave their children in the care of the nurseries and kindergartens during the work hours. Our country ranks among the leading countries in the world in respect of the accommodation capacity of the nurseries—573.3 beds per 10,000 of the population.

Our public health services reflect the humanitarian nature of the socialist system under which human life is valued before anything else: medical treatment is available to all free of charge; stress is laid on prophylactic measures; and health services have become a matter of nation-wide concern.

Shortly after liberation the system of free medical treatment was introduced in our country as a measure for promoting people's health. In 1953 general free medical treatment was effected in our country for the first time in Asia, in spite of the

then difficult circumstances in which our country had many tasks to tackle—the tasks of rapidly rehabilitating and developing the war-ravaged national economy and improving the deteriorated people's livelihood.

As a result, our people, who were so poor under the cruel Japanese colonial rule that 95 per cent of them could not afford medicine even when died of disease, have now come to enjoy the benefit of free medical treatment at the expense of the state. They pay not a penny for medical treatment and diet given them in case of hospitalization, not to speak of the medical assistance they receive as out-patients.

Thus our people are now free from such worries as are experienced by people in the capitalist world who cannot consult doctors when ill because they have no money.

With the consolidation and development of the system of free medical assistance, the prophylactic lines are carried through with greater consistency.

Under Japanese imperialist rule the sanitary conditions were appalling in our country, and the disease incidence rate was very high. Various acute infectious diseases were rampant every year, taking a heavy death toll. Even various endemics such as "distomiasis" took lives from thousands of people.

In view of this it was of particular importance to step up the prophylactic work after the liberation. Therefore, the people's government established large numbers of sanitary-anti-epidemic centres, and saw to it that the entire people were inoculated against infectious diseases every year.

Besides, thanks to the powerful nation-wide struggle and various other measures the sanitary and cultural standards in our towns and rural areas have been enhanced, and we are now well on the way to the elimination of various infectious diseases, distomiasis and other endemics. Their attack rate has been considerably reduced.

The production of medicaments has also made rapid progress. In recent years, our pharmacutists have produced 200-odd new medicaments of high efficacy by using medicinal herbs abundant in our country and by drawing on the rich experiences of **Donggeuihak**.* Among them are "Chungsainggo" and "Mansamgo," both specific cures which heal tuberculous fistulae only in a few months.

* Eastern medicine, or traditional Korean medicine. For further information, see page 46.

Under the advanced system of public health services and with the living standard rising constantly, our people's health has been remarkably promoted. Compared with 1944, in 1960 the death rate showed a 50 per cent drop and the natural increase of population was 2.7 times. Our people's average span of life has lengthened by 20 years.

Under our advanced health service system an army of medical workers of a new type who devote their all to the promotion of our people's health have been trained.

Their motto is: "Doctors should be more friends of patients than professional doctors and they should possess a real idea of life."

Today the Communist traits of sacrificing everything they have to save men from death are taking shape among our public health workers. There are innumerable moving stories about the lofty deeds performed by them. Here is a story about the staff of the hospital attached to the Heungnam Fertilizer Factory and the students of the Hamheung Medical College. They rescued a boy named Bang Ha Soo who had got third degree burns over 48 per cent of the body. The medical staff of the factory hospital and the students of the college who valued human lives more than anything else transplanted their skins and gave blood transfusions to the boy several times. Thanks to their selfless devotion for several months, the boy was at last rescued from death in spite of his serious burns which the most experienced doctors might have never been able to heal by the ordinary methods of treatment.

One more example: One stormy day Choi Moon Hi, a woman assistant doctor at the clinic of the Jangjin-gang Power Station, received word from the village across the river that there were a woman in hard labour and a serious case of a visible injury in the village. She set out immediately. But she was blocked by the flooding river; the swelling water was threatening to wash away the bridge. But there was no time to lose, there were lives to be saved.

Now she decided to cross the river at all hazards. She tied a rope around her waist and ran across the precarious bridge for all she was worth. And the moment she set foot on the opposite bank, she hurried to the village and fulfilled her duty, thus saving the three lives—the mother and baby and the wounded man.

You will find many heroes distinguished for such noble deeds everywhere in our country.

Our public health workers not only cure the patients of diseases. They are playing a great role as Communist educators of the people in rectifying the patients' old way of thinking and breaking their conventionalities.

Here is a story illustrating this.

There was an orphan named Kim Yong Bai among the pediatric inpatients at the Hamheung Medical College Hospital. He was always in a depressed mood in spite of the tender care taken of him by the medical workers. He did not get better, but remained in a serious condition. Having learned that he was separated from his father and sister during the Korean war and heard nothing of them ever since, that he was thinking of them in the depths of his heart, the medical workers reached the conclusion that it was more necessary to remove his mental trouble than to treat his physical disease.

Thus, the doctors in charge set out for his native village where he had once lived to seek his father and sister of whom they did not even know the names. They went from door to door, from village to village until at last they succeeded in locating them after walking through 200 villages. After seeing his father and sister he had longed for so earnestly, the boy got well very quickly and soon left the hospital.

The love of the people and a high moral sense of responsibility for their lives on the part of our public health workers is bringing about innovations in the development of medical science and skills of treatment, too.

In recent years achievements of epoch-making significance have been attained one after another in our struggle against diseases, making a great contribution to the development of modern medicine.

Especially, the discovery of the substance of Kyungrak by Professor Kim Bong Han, M.D., and his associates marked a turning point in the development of modern biology and medicine.

The discovery of the substance of Kyungrak, a third system of regulation in the human body which provides the theoretical basis for Dongeuihak, has put an end to the incorrect approach to Kyungrak and placed the theory of Dongeuihak on a sound scientific ground.

The immeasurable scientific value and significance of the discovery of the substance of Kyungrak has been fully proved by the rapid progress made in clinical practices, especially in the healing art of acupuncture and cautery, since its discovery.

Already in our country many diseases are cured merely by acupuncture, and it has been confirmed that even stubborn diseases hitherto regarded as incurable can be healed by acupuncture.

Among the great successes attained in recent years by our medical scientists are the active immunization of children from measles and the successful treatment for the after effects of infantile paralysis, successes made possible by drawing on the experiences of Dongeuihak.

Our doctors worked out original methods of operation and prepared new medicaments for the treatment of stubborn maladies. As a result, many cases of the tuberculosis of the spine, one of the inveterate diseases, have already been cured completely.

Blindness is no more a scourge past remedy in our country. Eyesight is restored to the blind who lost it from atrophy of the optic nerve and corneal opacity.

Besides, research into the methods of treatment for various chronic diseases is successfully conducted and excellent results have already been attained.

Numerous rheumatic cases have been cured and definite results have been achieved in the treatment of glaucoma, protracted mental diseases, idiopathic gangrene, liver troubles, stomach and duodenal ulcers.

These innovations and achievements attained in the field of public health services and medicine are closely connected with the consistent policy of the Workers' Party of Korea for establishing **Jooche*** in the public health work.

From the start the Party adhered to the line of inheriting and developing our valuable medical heritages and of closely combining Western medicine and Dongeuihak in the work of public health services and in the research of medical science.

* By "Jooche" we mean that in carrying out revolution and construction we should creatively apply the general truth of Marxism-Leninism to the specific realities of our own country, and precisely and fully take into account our own historical and actual situation, our own capacity and the traditions, requirements and the level of the consciousness of our own people.

This means that in settling any given problem we should not lean upon any ready-made formula or proposition, but should understand it correctly and precisely on the basis of a scientific analysis of the realities, and then take appropriate measures for it.

Since thousands of years ago the Korean people have had their own traditional medicine and developed it from generation to generation.

Donggeuihak is the sum total of the Korean people's experiences in battle against diseases; it has attained a high level of scientific accuracy and has a unique system of its own theories. That it enjoys full appreciation and trust from the people is because it contains scientific truth in many respects and brings unquestionably good results in clinical practices.

Especially, our experiences accumulated after liberation show that many diseases which modern Western medicine cannot cure are successfully treated by Donggeuihak.

Therefore, our Party and Government have exerted much efforts for the development of Donggeuihak: a number of measures have been taken for the doctors of Donggeuihak to display creative initiative, and consistent guidance has been given for the doctors of Western medicine and Donggeuihak to effect close co-operation between the two schools.

What is more, as the Jooche has been firmly established in the public health services and medical science, dogmatism and mystery have been smashed by the medical workers, and work has been actively conducted to give theoretical elucidations to Donggeuihak by methods of modern science. As a result, our medical workers have broken fresh ground in developing the country's medical science. Their recent successes speak volumes for this.

Having achieved remarkable successes, our public health workers and medical men, like all the workers in other branches of the national economy, now see before them yet brighter prospects of progress for their future work.

During the Seven-Year Plan for Development of the National Economy (1961-1967), the number of doctors will reach 17 for every 10,000 of the population and the system of section doctors taking charge of each district will be introduced to give better medical assistance to the entire population.

By following unswervingly the line of developing Western medicine and Donggeuihak side by side, effective solutions will be found for the outstanding problems of public health and medical science. And many inveterate diseases with a high attack rate will be thoroughly eliminated, and our people will be able to enjoy the happiness of longevity.

GREAT DISCOVERY OF THE SUBSTANCE OF KYUNGRAK

Professor Kim Bong Han, M.D., and his associates in the Kyung-rak research group of the Pyongyang Medical College discovered the substance of **Kyungrak**, a third system in living bodies, which had remained so far unknown. The discovery has opened a new avenue to the development of biology and medicine at home and abroad.

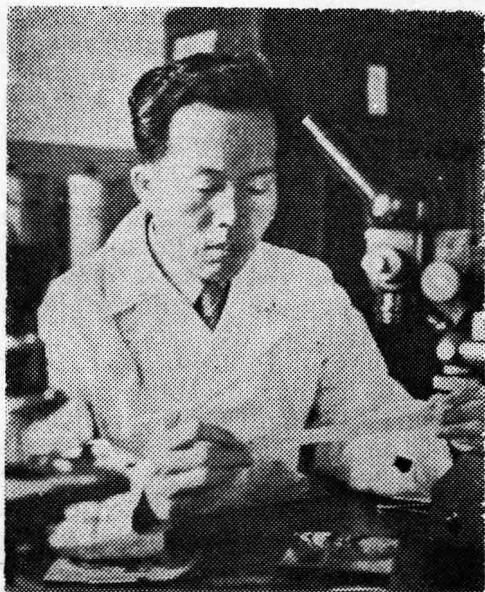
Up to now modern biology has accepted the notion of only two regulation systems—the nervous and vascular systems—in living bodies. Accordingly, all physiological changes

have been construed only as resulting from the changes taking place in the two systems. Clinical practice, too, has been based on the above-mentioned theory.

But the basic theories of modern biology and medicine have been unable to solve many problems arising in prevention and cure of diseases.

There are many cases of patients suffering from diseases regarded as incurable by modern Western medicine, being successfully remedied today by Dongeuihak.

Not a few scholars, however, regarding the theory of



Professor Kim Bong Han

Dongeuihak as mere accumulations of therapeutic experiences, have maintained that the theory was a hypothesis suggested by ancient scholars and so it was unscientific. Some even attempted to adjust the theory to that of Western medicine.

Professor Kim Bong Han and his research group thought it was necessary to dispel such misconception. Regarding Dongeuihak with its long tradition as a science with a perfect theoretical system, they concluded that by developing it in combination with modern medicine a new sphere could be explored to remedy the deficiencies in modern biology and medicine.

It was from this point of view that they had set about their research work on the Kyungrak system, the core of the theories of Dongeuihak. In doing so, they kept to the standpoint of Jooche with all firmness.

Boldly overstepping the limit of the accepted conception of modern biology, they carried on electro-biological experiments, observation of actual objects with the unaided eye and various other research work in a creative way. At last they established that there is a third regulation system in living bodies, that is, the Kyungrak system so far known only in the theory of Dongeuihak. They gave scientific explanations on the structure, form and functions of Kyungrak.

Results of Professor Kim Bong Han's study on the substance of Kyungrak were described in detail in his two treatises, "Electric Changes in Kyunghyul" (December 1960) and "A Study on the Substance of Kyungrak" (August 1961).

In his treatises a scientific exposition was given on the presence of certain influence gradually conveyed along Kyungmaik (a vas) when a stimulus was given to **Kyunghyul** (a spot for acupuncture treatment) in the Kyungrak system existing in the human body independent of the nervous and blood-vessel systems. Further, it was proved that a stimulus given to the Kyungrak system produced a different effect from that on the nervous system, and that the process of the spread of the effect coincided with the distribution of Kyunghyul as indicated in Dongeuihak, different from the distribution of nerves and blood-vessels. Moreover, it was established that the spots with such characteristics were fixed and stationary. Their distribution coincided as a whole with the Kyunghyul distribution outlined in *Dongeu Bogam* written by Huh Joon, a great medical scientist of our country. He also found that there existed some additional spots in other regions from those already known. He proved that one Kyunghyul is connected with an-

other or with internal organs of the human body by the medium of **Kyungmaik**. The substance of Kyungmaik which keeps connection between them constitutes quite a different regulation system from the nervous and blood-vessel systems.

Some Western medical scientists had been of the opinion that the effectiveness of acupuncture in the Kyungrak system should be explained from the action of nerves. But the error of their view was proved by Professor Kim Bong Han who showed that even though the nerves were cut off it caused no trouble in the working of the Kyungrak system.

Firmly based on the theory of dialectical materialism on the unity of functions and forms of the living organism, he continued with his research work to elucidate the substance of Kyungrak.

As for the substance of Kyungrak, many scholars had denied its existence and regarded all phenomena, which in the classics of Dongeuihak were explained on the theory of Kyungrak, merely as neuro-reflective ones or as simple processes taking place through neuro-humoral connections. Accordingly, they not only failed to find a reasonable explanation of the mechanism of acupuncture, but also argued that the regions of Kyunghyul were such spots as were only slightly different from other spots in respect of the distribution of nerves and blood-vessels.

The results of the experiments carried out by Professor Kim Bong Han and his research group testified to the existence of the Kyungrak system, refuting all the arguments against it; and the existence of the structural parts of the Kyungrak system was established and their morphological characteristics were made known.

Kyunghyul is found beneath the epidermis or in other tissues. It is a small and elliptical, tender structure and clearly differs from the adjacent tissues. (See Fig. 1.) This structure is surrounded by many blood capillaries. All Kyunghyul differ from each other in their sizes and forms. Some Kyunghyul are found to be an assembly of a few structures.

Kyungmaik consists of bunches of tubular structures, (See Figs. 2, 3, 4.) and the cross-section of this tubular structure is round or oval. The diameter of the tubular structure of Kyungmaik ranges from 20 to 50 microns, with walls made up of a very thin membrane. The content of Kyungmaik is colourless and transparent, nor does it contain any bloodcells or other concrete elements.

Each tubular structure of Kyungmaik is covered with con-

nected tissues and Kyungmaik itself is also surrounded with connected tissues. The tubular structure of Kyungmaik branches off from Kyunghyul to form Kyunghyul.

Each Kyunghyul is linked with several tubular structures of Kyungmaik, and the thickness of a tubular structure of Kyungmaik is almost the same all along the structure's entire length.

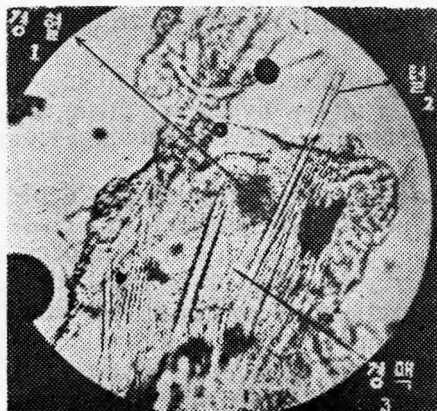


Fig. 1. Kyunghyul and Kyungmaik connected with Kyunghyul.
1. Kyunghyul 2. Hair 3. Kyungmaik

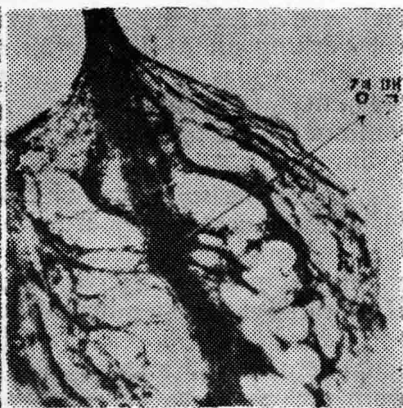


Fig. 2. Kyungmaik

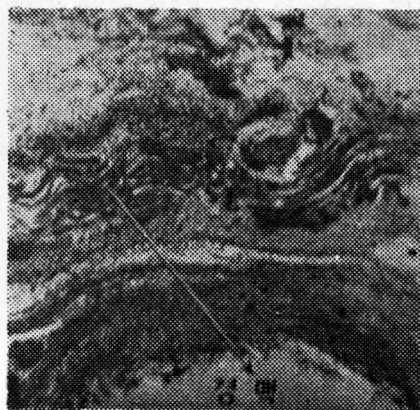


Fig. 3. Forms of Kyungmaik (slightly magnified)

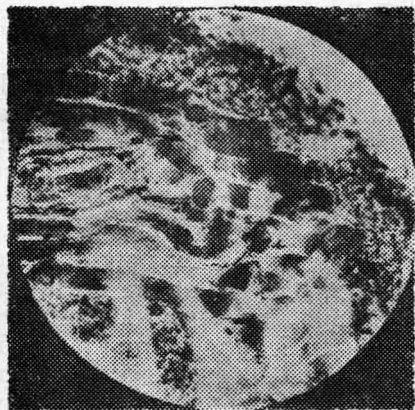


Fig. 4. Forms of Kyungmaik (magnified)