

# “Healing” in Korea

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## 1. Introduction

The use of the term ‘healing’ is widespread in society. The word “healing” is also copiously used in our daily lives, in expressions such as the “healing diet”, “healing herbs”, to “healing society”, “healing recipe”, “healing money management”, and “healing coffee”.<sup>1</sup> This phenomenon reflects how frequently we experience healing or how we live expecting it in this generation.<sup>2</sup> Since the balance of our daily lives is so easily broken, we suffer from physical and psychological ailments, thus we are in need of healing. When an individual loses control of his body and mind, it affects communication and interaction with others and leads to the loss of balance in speech.

‘Healing’, as an act of treating diseases, translates to ‘*chiryo*’ in Korean, or ‘*chiyoo*’, focusing on the psychological aspect of healing. However, the word has been overused, whereby the media uses ‘healing’ in association with the latest fads; consequently, the word ‘healing’ is now not being used as it was originally intended. ‘*chiryo*’ (treatment) and ‘*chiyoo*’ (healing) have different meanings. The dictionary definition of ‘*chiryo*’ (treatment) is “a medicinal act or means to cure diseases, wounds and abnormalities of body function”, and the Chinese character meaning of the word is “to cure by keeping a disease or wound under control”. There seems to be little difference between their dictionary meanings. Nevertheless, if we are physically wounded, we say that we seek treatment, not healing, while if we become sick mentally, the word ‘healing’ sounds more appropriate than ‘treatment’. Treatment (‘*chiryo*’) has come to mean a simple surgical treatment to cure a disease or to tend to a wound, while healing (‘*chiyoo*’) has come to mean to restore a person to the previous condition before the disease by removing the underlying cause.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, ‘healing’ seems to be a better choice of word than the Korean equivalent, ‘*chiyoo*’, and the word ‘treatment’ or ‘therapy’ can be used in place of ‘*chiryo*’.

Generally, ‘*chiyoo*’ (healing) is used more comprehensively than ‘*chiryo*’ (treatment). Treatment refers to an activity performed under a concrete and transparent system, and healing is understood as a term referring to a fundamental healthiness.

In this way, this study shall propose a practical method for building a society where people

heal each other, first by seeking healing for themselves and then sharing healing with others.

## **2. Healing through the humanities and speech therapy**

### **2.1 Healing through the humanities**

In this age of healing, an appropriate role of the humanities is called for as well as the cooperation between humanities fields. That is, in terms of psychology, the healing power of the humanities has already been proven. The concept of healing or therapy through the humanities (which are represented by literature, history and philosophy) is in the way these fields attempt to prevent and heal psychological, emotional, and social problems of individuals. In other words, the unique healing capability of each field (i.e., literature, history, and philosophy) enables the diversification of the humanities into specific and individualized branches of learning, such as the study of philosophical therapy, literary therapy, historical therapy, and so on.<sup>4</sup>

A search on a public site for colleges shows a varied number of subject names with the word ‘therapy’, such as departments of physical therapy, work therapy, speech therapy, psychotherapy, psychiatric therapy, music therapy, art therapy, and literary therapy combined courses, etc. Some department names also use the word ‘healing’, such as the Healing and Counseling dept., Holistic Healing dept., Healing Missionary Work dept., Forest Healing dept., and so on.

### **2.2 Speech therapy**

The purpose of speech therapy, in general, is the diagnosis and improvement of speech impediments. That is, to find and remove problems impeding communication. Speech therapy deals with a variety of communication problems on different levels.<sup>5</sup> The various types of communication impediments can be classified depending on the various standards: cause, symptom, level, age, degree, time of occurrence, etc. Symptoms can be divided as follows.

Dysarticulation is a disorder which occurs during the course of the sound-making (pronunciation) process. Proper control of breathing, vocalization, and sound-making organs is essential in making a speech sound; but this disorder prevents such functioning. Dysarthria (motor speech disorder) is a type of disorder in which sounds cannot be properly made due to problems in the vocal cords and larynx, where either throaty or hoarse sounds are made, at an uneven timber or level, or it is difficult to control tone and volume. Fluency disorder indicates a stutterer. This disorder is mainly caused by psychological factors, with symptoms as severe to the sufferer as making conversation with other people difficult. Because of the variety of underlying causes and types, elaborate diagnosis according to an individual’s experience and specifics, as well as professional advice is necessary. The hardship an individual with a communication disorder must experience in society is a crucial matter, because speech disorder

causes many impediments on the level of social relationships.

### 3. Character-building of the body, mind, and its methodology : Toegye, Lee Hwang (1501-1570)

In Korean, ‘*mom* 몸’ (pronounced *mɔm*: body) and ‘*mam* 맘’ (pronounced *mam*: mind) are similar in their morphologic construction. That is, the origin of both ‘*mom*’ and ‘*mam*’ is ‘ ㅁ ’. Both, as monosyllables, start with a consonant ‘m’, connect with a vowel, either ‘o’ or ‘a’, and end in ‘m’. These two words are intricately related to each other. They have the same origin in Indian Sanscrit; when words share the same origin, they become difficult to distinguish (here, ‘*mom*’ (body) is difficult to distinguish from ‘*mam*’ (mind)) and to identify the role of one from the other. The two words form a union similar to that of *Yin* and *Yang*, co-existing and interrelating with each other as the material (‘*mom*’) and immaterial (‘*mam*’). ‘*Mom*’ (body) and ‘*mam*’ (mind) are also closely related to ‘*mal*’ (speech). Out of ‘body’ and ‘mind’ comes ‘speech’. Therefore, it can be sufficiently reasoned that an utterance of speech depends on the conditions of the body and mind.

Toegye’s method of character-building of the body and mind suggests the increased importance of healing for modern people who want to receive healing and share it with others.

Toegye (added name), Lee (family name) Hwang (Given name)’s ideology of well-being, as the life of ‘*Ji-haeng-byung-jin*’<sup>6</sup> and ‘*kyung*’<sup>7</sup>, is based on a model of a positive life in which a person always stands firm, is vigilant, does not behave in a self-indulgent way, accommodates nature, and is not lazy in exercise and discipline.<sup>8</sup>

#### 3.1 ‘*Kyung*’

Toegye considered that the cultivation of the mind is very important, and the core of his ideology on cultivation of the mind is expressed in the term ‘*kyung*’. He explains it as follows, by quoting from the *Kyung-jae-jam-do*, in reference to the *Kyung-jae-jam* of Zhuangzi. The concept of ‘*kyung*’ is consistent with the elements of ‘Ethos’<sup>9</sup> which an orator must have, as suggested by Aristotle (384-322 B.C.).

(1) “Straighten your attire, maintain a dignified facial appearance. Calm down and live as though before the King of heaven. You must put your foot down heavily, use your hands respectfully. You must watch your footsteps so as not to trample even on an ant’s nest. When you leave your house, behave as though you’re seeing an honorable guest. Tend to your work as if you’re holding a memorial rite to your ancestors, being extremely careful not to be careless by any means. Keep your mouth shut like a ‘*byung*’,<sup>10</sup> defend your intention like a castle. Be diligent, not be quick on anything. Do not go to East when you say West, and North when you say South. When you’re at work, concentrate at it, not straying into the other things.

Let your mind not be split in two, or in three. Preserve your mind and keep a watchful eye on every changes around you.”

(*Korean translation of the Toegye collection I, 155p*)

As seen through his daily routine, Toegye’s ‘*kyung*’ is a stern attitude toward life, and a specific methodology. It is a training course in how to sustain complete quietude of body and mind. As expressed in the phrase, ‘Keep your mouth shut like a “*byung* (jar) ”’, it demands practicing extreme discretion when opening the mouth. It is a stern admonition about how to watch the tongue and keep the mouth shut.

### 3.2 Practice of *Hwal-in-sim-bang* (Method of saving body and mind)

Toegye suffered from various illnesses throughout his life, and he repeatedly accepted and resigned from public offices, while almost dying several times. He hand-copied *Hwal-in-sim*<sup>11</sup> to make a *Hwal-in-sim-bang*’ (a multiple-panel screen with the ‘*Hwal-in-sim*’ writing. The ideology of well-being,<sup>12</sup> of *Hwal-in-sim-bang*, is a well-being method of life that controls the mind, puts life in order, prevents diseases before they manifest, and preserves health through sound living and proper exercise. ‘*Hwal-in*’ means ‘to save and give life’. ‘*Hwal-in-sim-bang*’ refers to a psychological means<sup>13</sup> through which healthy, righteous, and active living is ensured.

For the training methods, it is suggested that trainees take symbolic medicine such as ‘*joong-hwa-tang*’ and ‘*hwa-gi-hwan*’, and apply the method of mental health that controls the seven feelings. Also, for emotional stability, it suggests listening to good music, and so on. For righteous living, the ideology suggests 44 virtues to follow, such as abstaining from alcohol and indulgence in food, and practicing unselfish living, and so on. For the proper exercises, 6 different ‘*gigong*’ (Chinese exercise) methods (‘*do-in-beop*’,<sup>14</sup> ‘*geo-byung-yeon-soo-yookja-gyeol*’, the four seasons training method, exercises for the internal organs, ‘*yeon-jeong-beop*’, ‘*bo-yang-jeong-sin-beop*’) were proposed.

The training method presented in *Hwal-in-sim-bang* is a method of attaining health that combines the body and mind as one, and is not too difficult to pursue while meditating, in everyday life. Even the six ‘*gigong*’ postures are not too difficult, and can be practiced while sitting or lying down. Also, ‘*cham-dong-gye*’<sup>15</sup> and ‘*nae-dan*’<sup>16</sup> are mentioned.

*Hwal-in-sim-bang* consists of a total of 11 paragraphs. The themes and contents are as follows:

Paragrph	Title	Contents
1	<i>Hwal-in-sim-seo</i>	Purpose and ideology of hwal-in-sim
2	<i>Hwal-in-sim-sang</i>	Preface of volume I : proper lifestyle
3	<i>Joong-hwa-tang</i>	Symbolic mind soothing tonics
4	<i>Hwa-gi-hwan</i>	Virtue of patience
5	<i>Yang-seng-ji-beop</i>	Adaptation to nature, exercise and freedom from greed
6	<i>Chi-sim</i>	A method that mind rules over emotion
7	<i>Do-in-beop</i>	Receiving nature’s energy
8	<i>Geo-byung-yeon-soo-yookja-gyeol</i>	Breathing method using voice
9	<i>Jang-bu-woon-dong</i>	Exercises strengthening inner organs
10	<i>Bo-yang-jeong-sin</i>	Controlling body energy
11	<i>Bo-yang-eum-sik</i>	Nourishing body with food

This training method is a health method that involves both the body and the mind. Its effectiveness, particularly to those scholars who spent long hours studying in sitting positions, has been proven by Toegye, who pursued practical Taoism and suffered from various diseases, yet lived to be 70, which was then considered a long life. Togye’s training method for well-being may prove to be useful as lessons for most modern people who live in polluted cities and live with many stresses in a materialistic and meritocratic age.

**Notes**

- 1 A search of ‘healing’ on the internet reveals hundreds of related publications.
- 2 The wounds from wars and accidents all around the world have left grave scars in every society, which require unlimited healing.
- 3 For definitions of the terms, refer to Eom Chanho (2010, 2)
- 4 For healing through the humanities, therapy status and classification, refer to Eom Chanho (2010)
- 5 On the purpose and contents of speech therapy, refer to, Lee Kiwon (2013).
- 6 ‘ Ji’ means learning or knowledge, ‘haeng’ means action or practice, and ‘byung-jin’ refers to ‘going together’. Therefore, ‘ji-heng-byung-jin’ is to know the principles of the universe and all things correctly,

and also to practice what one knows or has learned.

- 7 A hieroglyphic character refers to ‘a man on his knees silently pleading’.
- 8 On Toegye’s ideology of well-being, refer to Lee Hyeonsoo (2007).
- 9 The three elements of persuasion named by Aristotle are Ethos (reliability), Logos (logicality) and Pathos (emotivity).
- 10 Bottle, rice steamer, jar or well bucket.
- 11 Hwal-in-sim is a book on well-being, edited by Joo Kwon, 16<sup>th</sup> son of Joo Wonjang, the first Emperor of the Ming Dynasty. He was engaged in political activities in his early days, but in later years, he devoted himself to Taoism, writing Hwal-in-sim. He collected common knowledge and methods good for the health in China at that time. In many places of the book, the opinions of scholars such as Hwata (?-208) and Son Samak (581-682) etc. and the ancient breathing training methods are introduced. The contents of this book were transmitted to Korea in the early Joseon Dynasty, to be adopted as a textbook on character-building principally among dignitaries and noble families (Lee Hyeonsoo, 2007, 45). On medical well-being of Son Samok, refer to Lee Wonkook, translated by Kim Nakpil (2006 : 485-511). Most training methods in Hwal-in-sim-bang originated from Son Samak.
- 12 The dictionary meaning of character-building (or, well-being) is ‘being free of diseases and enjoying greater longevity’ or an effort to live long without catching diseases. (New Korean language dictionary 1994, 1382)
- 13 Lee Hyeonsoo (2007, 49)
- 14 An exercise, centered on the trunk, concentrates on breathing and specific parts of the body or specific functions.
- 15 A Qigong text compiled by Wibaekyang of the Former Han Dynasty. He compared its training process to an alchemy.
- 16 Disciplining mental energy and strength, centered on breathing and mind power which are the fundamental life forces. ‘Dan’ signifies the energy being lumped into a round object, which is a ball of energy formed through disciplinary training, and is capable of moving.

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