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### **HISTORY OF MEDICINE AND PHARMACY IN JAPAN**

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Medical systems, like social systems in general, are embedded in a cultural matrix form which is derived from the coherent body of ideas of which the system is composed. The practice of all medicine has evolved as a result of its setting in a unique cultural context. Medical and pharmaceutical techniques and therapies are all modified by cultural values. Medical and pharmaceutical techniques, even those that are scientifically established are culture bound in the sense that the questions raised by theoreticians and the methods used to answer them are products of a particular historical period.

Ancient medical practices of Japan combined Japanese indigenous folk medicine with medicinal herbs and indigenous faith healer religions characterized by a special value on cleanliness and a fear of contamination. The impetus for medical technological change has mainly been introduced from other societies, first from China and Korea, later from Europe. Therefore, there is a “multiple medical system” in Japan.