

# Study on the Medical Relief Institution System of the Goryeo Dynasty

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## Abstract

**This paper delves into the history and structure of the medical relief institutions during the Goryeo Dynasty, focusing on key establishments such as Jeonuisi, Hyeminguk, Daebiwon, and Jewibo. Through detailed analysis of historical records such as the "History of Goryeo," this article reveals the functions and development processes of these institutions in handling public health issues, disaster response, and social relief. It specifically notes that the Goryeo medical system, based on the ancient Chinese medical system, was adjusted and developed according to the specific socio-cultural background of the Korean Peninsula. This not only reflects the complexity and diversity of the system but also demonstrates how the Chinese medical relief model successfully expanded to other regions of Northeast Asia, further strengthening the trans-regional influence of Chinese culture and its guiding role in regional medical practices.**

## Keywords

**Goryeo Dynasty; Medical Relief Institutions; Spread of Chinese Culture.**

## 1. Introduction

All The medical relief institutions of the Goryeo Dynasty (918-1392 AD) were developed by emulating ancient Chinese relief organizations, tailored over time to suit the local conditions of Korea. This system represented a significant innovation in the Korean medical administration, initiated during the era of Taejo, the founder of Goryeo, and evolving through nearly 500 years of the dynasty's history.[1] Initially forming an institutional framework that included disaster relief, epidemic prevention, and social welfare, these institutions underwent substantial development and change. By the end of the Goryeo Dynasty, as the governance system of the Yuan Dynasty on the Korean Peninsula collapsed, followed by repeated invasions by Japanese pirates and internal strife within the Goryeo ruling class, the dynasty eventually perished amidst domestic and external troubles, and its medical relief institutions also faded from the historical stage. The succeeding Joseon Dynasty inherited and further refined Korea's medical relief system, ultimately creating a structured and comprehensive relief system that left a significant mark in the ancient history of the Korean Peninsula.

## 2. The Emergence of Medical Administration in the Korean Peninsula

The medical administration system in ancient Korea originated during the ancient Korean period, a time characterized by a scarcity of medical resources and minimal medical exchange with the Chinese dynasties, where shamanic practitioners held significant influence.

During the Three Kingdoms period in Korea (427-660 AD), the successive introductions of Chinese medicine along with Buddhism and Taoism gradually supplanted the dominant roles of Shamanism and other indigenous religions. During this era, the level of medical knowledge in Korea remained relatively low. The status of shamans diminished as monks acquired significant political influence, thereby diversifying the authority in medical discourse. Monastic medicine continued to be prevalent throughout the Goryeo Dynasty, with the Medicine Buddha

venerated as the Great Medical King and the establishment of a Medicine Buddha Institute. Additionally, this period saw the formation of early medical administrative bodies; the "Samguk Sagi" records that Silla established a pharmaceutical bureau known as the Yakjeon, serving as a management agency for medicine. During King Gyeongdeok's reign (742-765 AD), the Yakjeon was temporarily renamed to the Bomyongsi (Life-Preservation Bureau), but later the original name was restored. The bureau also appointed an indefinite number of officiating physicians and diviners. Furthermore, Silla introduced formal medical educational institutions, appointing instructors to teach texts such as the "Classic of Herbs," "Jia Yi Jing," "Su Wen," "Classic of Acupuncture," "Classic of Pulses," and "Mingtang Classic." [2].

After the unification of the Korean Peninsula by the Silla dynasty following its conquest of the other two kingdoms, the medical administrative system continued to be passed down. Toward the end of the Silla period, paralleling the chaos of the late Tang dynasty in China, the Silla dynasty also began to fragment. Regional strongmen established successor states, such as Later Baekje and Later Goguryeo, marking a period of political unrest known as the Later Three Kingdoms.

### 3. Medical Relief Institutions of the Goryeo Dynasty

The establishment of Goryeo by Wang Geon, who overthrew the Later Three Kingdoms and unified Korea under a new dynasty, marked a significant period of development in Korea's medical administration. The Goryeo Dynasty, while retaining traditions from Silla, heavily adopted the bureaucratic systems of the Tang and Song dynasties in its early phases; and later, during its interactions with the Mongol-established Yuan dynasty, it absorbed numerous administrative practices, including those related to medicine. By the late Goryeo period, the medical administrative institutions and their affiliated medical relief organizations had matured considerably.

In detail, the primary medical institutions of the Goryeo period included Jeonuisi, Hyeminguk, East and West Daebiwon, and Jewibo. Jeonuisi served as the central medical administrative institution overseeing medical treatments, whereas Hyeminguk, East and West Daebiwon, and Jewibo each performed distinct functions in medical relief, contributing profoundly to the social medicine landscape of the time.

#### 3.1. Jeonuisi

The original name of Jeonuisi was the "Grand Medical Bureau" established during the reign of King Mokjong of Goryeo (reigned 997-1009 AD), with designated official positions. Jeonuisi served as a comprehensive medical administration, medical education, and clinical institution, acting as the central authority responsible for health affairs in the Goryeo Dynasty.

According to "Goryeosa" (The History of Goryeo), Jeonuisi is in charge of medical treatment. During Mokjong's reign, there were the Grand Medical Bureau, Bureau, Vice Bureau, Assistant Bureau, Doctors, and Medical Officers. In the reign of King Munjong, the structure was established with the following ranks: one Head from the third rank, one Director from the fourth rank, two Vice Directors from the fifth rank, two Doctors from the eighth rank, two Assistants, one Doctor of Incantations from the ninth rank, one Doctor of Acupuncture, two Medicine Boys, two Incantation Masters, and two Incantation Workers. In the 34th year of King Chungnyeol's reign (1308 AD), King Chungseon renamed the Grand Medical Bureau to the Bureau of Medicine, changing the official positions: two Overseers holding concurrent positions as Third-rank officials, one Chief as a Third-rank official, one First-rank official as a Third-rank official, one Assistant Chief as a Fourth-rank official, one Assistant as a Fifth-rank official, one Senior Secretary as a Sixth-rank official, one Head as a Seventh-rank official, two Doctors as an Eighth-rank officials, two Medicine Inspectors as Ninth-rank officials, and two Assistants as

Ninth-rank officials. Later, it was renamed Jeonuisi, and the Overseers were dismissed, changing the Chief to the Director and the Senior Secretary to the Registrar. In the fifth year of King Gongmin's reign (1356 AD), it was again called the Grand Medical Bureau, changing the Director to the Head, the Assistant Director to the Vice Director, and eliminating the Medicine Inspectors. In the eleventh year of King Gongmin's reign (1362 AD), it was again called Jeonuisi, renaming the Head to Director, the Vice Director to Assistant Director, and reinstating the Medicine Inspectors. In the eighteenth year of King Gongmin's reign (1369 AD), it was once again called the Grand Medical Bureau, changing the Director and Assistant Director to Head and Vice Director, respectively. In the twenty-first year of King Gongmin's reign (1372 AD), it was again named Jeonuisi, renaming the Head and Assistant Director." [1].

During the reign of King Munjong (1046–1083 AD), Jeonuisi underwent significant development, expanding its official positions and functions, and clarifying the ranks of officials, indicating the maturity of the institution. The inclusion of doctors and workers for incantations, and doctors of acupuncture and medicine, highlighted the importance of these practices within the medical system. In the 34th year of King Chungnyeol's reign (1308 AD), King Chungseon renamed the Grand Medical Bureau to the Bureau of Medicine, altering some official positions. During the reign of King Gongmin (1352–1374 AD), a period of internal and external turmoil, frequent reforms were made to Jeonuisi. In the fifth year of King Gongmin's reign (1356 AD), it was renamed the Grand Medical Bureau; in the eleventh year (1362 AD), it was renamed Jeonuisi; in the eighteenth year (1369 AD), it was again called the Grand Medical Bureau; and in the twenty-first year (1372 AD), it was renamed Jeonuisi. [1].

After King Gongmin was assassinated by eunuchs, two dubious monarchs, King U and King Chang, ascended to the throne. During King Chang's reign, the military leader Yi Seong-gye took complete control of the government, eventually establishing his own dynasty and ending the Goryeo Dynasty. The medical administration system of Goryeo, including Jeonuisi, was inherited and further developed by the succeeding Joseon Dynasty.[3].

### 3.2. Hyeminguk

The Hyeminguk was one of the medical relief institutions of the Goryeo Dynasty. According to existing historical records, the exact founding date is unclear, but it was established no later than the seventh year of King Yejong's reign (AD 1112). As documented in the "History of Goryeo," "In the seventh year of King Yejong's reign, four judges were appointed who alternated between their primary roles and additional duties as needed, under the authority of the Medical Affairs Office during King Chungseon's reign. By the third year of King Gongmin's reign, it was renamed to Hye Min Jeon Yak Guk." [1] The records indicate that the Hyeminguk was later transformed into Hye Min Jeon Yak Guk, an institution modeled after the Song Dynasty's Bureau for the Welfare of the People, tasked with selling low-cost medicine to commoners as a means of providing medical relief.

### 3.3. Daebiwon

Daebiwon was established at an unknown date, with the earliest records dating back to the second year of King Jeongjong of Goryeo (1036 AD). It was also known as the Eastern and Western Daebiwon, indicating the division between the "two aristocratic classes" of ancient Korea, with the Eastern class being the civil officials and the Western class being the military officials. According to the Goryeosa (History of Goryeo), "Daebiwon was established to provide food and clothing to those suffering from hunger, cold, and disease who had no place to turn." [1] The specific relief functions of Daebiwon included sheltering and providing for those suffering from hunger, cold, illness, and homelessness by offering food and clothing.

During the reign of King Munjong (1046-1083 AD), the regulations and official systems of the Eastern and Western Daebiwon were established. The Goryeosa records: "Munjong decreed

that each Daebiwon would have one head official, one deputy official, and one registrar, all classified as third-class officials. Additionally, there were four clerks, including two medical clerks and two record keepers." [1]In the eleventh year of King Munjong's reign (1057 AD), it was recorded that Daebiwon performed burial services for the deceased found along the roads. In the fifth year of King Injong's reign (1127 AD), reforms were initiated following the removal of the powerful regent Lee Ja-gyeom, who had long controlled the court. According to the Goryeosa, "In the fifth year of Injong's reign, a decree was issued stating: 'As I bear the mandate of Heaven and inherit the legacy of my ancestors, I now rule over the Three Han territories. However, my wisdom is limited, and disasters have been frequent. Last year, a treacherous minister took advantage of a power vacuum and incited a rebellion. Although the plot was discovered and the perpetrators were punished, I deeply regret my failure to prevent such calamities. Thus, I will visit Seowon to reflect on past mistakes and seek renewal. Announce this to the public.'" [1].

The reforms emphasized the importance of rest and recuperation for the people, fiscal prudence, and disaster relief. Orders were given to Daebiwon and other relief institutions to stockpile grain for emergency relief and medical aid. The Goryeosa further notes that in the ninth year of Injong's reign (1131 AD), another decree was issued to continue these policies, including the prohibition of logging and hunting young animals, and the burial of exposed corpses found in the fields. "No logging, no hunting young animals, bury exposed corpses, repair Daebiwon and other relief institutions to aid the sick and needy." [1].

King Uijong favored eunuchs and promoted literary over martial officials, disrupting the balance of power among the aristocracy, which led to political turmoil and affected the relief institutions. The Goryeosa records: "Relief efforts for the poor were hampered by officials unfit for their duties, resulting in hunger and illness among the people. The king ordered capable officials to be appointed to oversee Daebiwon and other institutions, and the rectitude of these officials was to be monitored by the censors." [1].

In the twenty-second year of King Uijong's reign (1168 AD), neglect and malfeasance in Daebiwon and other relief institutions were criticized. Uijong reprimanded the responsible officials and ordered the Ministry of Personnel to appoint qualified officials and the censorate to supervise their performance. The Goryeosa notes: "In the twenty-second year of Uijong's reign, Daebiwon and other relief institutions were criticized for neglecting the poor and sick. The king reprimanded the officials and ordered the Ministry of Personnel to appoint capable officials and the censorate to supervise their performance." [1].

King Myeongjong, installed by military officials after deposing Uijong, ruled from 1170 to 1197 AD. His reign saw the increasing influence of Daebiwon in local disaster relief. According to the Goryeosa, "In the eighteenth year of Myeongjong's reign (1188 AD), the king, upon hearing reports of fires and famine in northeastern regions, ordered local officials to follow the Daebiwon model to provide food and aid." [1] This marked the extension of Daebiwon's disaster relief functions beyond the capital to local areas.

During the reign of King Chungryeol (1274-1308 AD), the functions of Daebiwon expanded to include the care of elderly individuals. The Goryeosa states: "Elderly individuals over eighty years old and those suffering from chronic illness who could not support themselves were to be cared for by Daebiwon, with food and clothing provided by the government." [1].

In the later period of King Chungseok's reign (1313-1330 AD), the institution fell into disrepair due to political instability. King Chungjeong attempted to restore it by repurposing facilities: "In the first year of King Chungjeong's reign (1343 AD), King Chungjeong ordered the repurposing of a former archery field for Daebiwon to house and treat the sick. During King Gongmin's reign (1351-1374 AD), Goryeo faced severe disasters and internal strife. The Daebiwon was no longer effective, and Gongmin ordered local officials to provide relief to the

people independently. The Goryeosa notes: "In the twentieth year of Gongmin's reign, a decree ordered officials to care for the poor and sick, reflecting the institution's decline." [1].

### 3.4. Jewibo

Jewibo was initially established with the primary purpose of responding to sudden disasters and epidemics, providing relief and medical treatment such as food aid during disaster relief efforts. In its later operational phase, it also functioned in conjunction with Hyeminguk and Daebiwon to provide regular relief to the impoverished and sick population. According to the "Essentials of the History of Goryeo," Jewibo was first established in the fourteenth year of King Gwangjong's reign (AD 963), marking the earliest record of the institution in Goryeo historical documents. The "Essentials of the History of Goryeo" records, "In the seventh month of autumn, the Gwibop Temple was founded, and Jewibo was established." In the ninth year of King Hyeonjong's reign (AD 1018), further construction was undertaken. This phase can be summarized as the initial establishment phase of Jewibo, a period when Jewibo was just set up and still in its nascent stage with no clear record of its duties.

Records concerning Jewibo are concentrated in the early twelfth century, a period marked by frequent disasters on the Korean Peninsula and severe famines among the populace. The earliest record of Jewibo's function comes from the sixth year of King Sukjong's reign (AD 1101), which states, "In April of the sixth year of King Sukjong's reign, an edict was issued that those who were poor and unable to sustain themselves were to be aided by Jewibo, with a deadline set at the wheat harvest for relief efforts, and also at the Universal Court in Linjin County, to provide food to travelers for three months." From this, it is evident that at this time, Jewibo was used to distribute grain to aid the impoverished, serving the function of providing food relief to the destitute. Subsequently, during the reigns of Kings Sukjong and Yejong of Goryeo, Jewibo was used multiple times to distribute summer grain to relieve disaster victims and treat their diseases. The "Essentials of the History of Goryeo" records, "In April of the seventh year of King Sukjong's reign, Jewibo was commanded to distribute food to the starving populace until the start of autumn." "In March of the first year of King Yejong's reign, the eastern and western Jewibo were commanded to aid the poor and sick." During the reign of King Injong (AD 1123-1146), it was explicitly stated that Jewibo and Daebiwon had responsibilities for treating the diseases of the populace, and they were involved in repairing houses and stockpiling food. This period can be characterized as the development and perfection stage of Jewibo, specifically manifested in two aspects: first, the relief function was further clarified and applied during disasters; second, the material conditions of the institution were improved, stockpiling food necessary for aiding the populace and enhancing the architectural conditions of the facilities.

In the later period of the Goryeo Dynasty, pirate activities became increasingly rampant, and power struggles and peasant movements occurred frequently. Coupled with several kings being held hostage by the Yuan Dynasty, the right of succession to the throne was completely controlled by the Yuan, significantly diminishing the autonomy of Goryeo's political and bureaucratic systems. Against this backdrop, Jewibo entered a period of gradual decline. In the twenty-second year of King Uijong's reign (AD 1168), Jewibo and Daebiwon were noted for their failure to treat the impoverished and sick. Although King Uijong decisively replaced officials and strictly supervised the process, the entire operation still displayed a rapid trend of institutional functional rigidity and decline. According to the "History of Goryeo," "In the twelfth year of King Chungseong's reign, it was taught that Hyeminguk, Jewibo, and the eastern and western Daebiwon, originally intended to aid people, are now all in disrepair and should be restored to treat diseases." [1]By the twelfth year of King Chungseong's reign (AD 1325), all three major medical relief institutions had been long abandoned, with interiors in disrepair, suggesting that they should be renovated to continue performing their functions of treating the populace's diseases. These records from the Goryeo period are the last explicit references to

Jewibo in official historical documents. As the Goryeo regime gradually declined, medical relief institutions like Jewibo also progressively disintegrated.

## 4. Characteristics of Medical Relief Institutions during the Goryeo Dynasty

### 4.1. Developmental Stage Characteristics

During the Goryeo Dynasty, the level of medical development in Korea was relatively primitive, and the methods for epidemic prevention lacked a scientific basis. The medical administrative institutions, including relief organizations, were still in their early stages of development. During this period, the full body of Traditional Chinese Medicine knowledge had not been entirely introduced; shamanic and monk-led healing practices prevailed, and epidemics were simplistically recorded in the "Goryeo-sa: Five Elements," often addressed through shamanic and Buddhist rituals. The primary official historical records of the Goryeo era- "History of Goryeo" and "Essentials of the History of Goryeo"-were compiled during the subsequent Joseon Dynasty and are notably brief, contrasting significantly with the more mature and detailed official historical system of the Joseon period. Considering the ancient history of medical administration on the Korean Peninsula, the relief systems of the Goryeo era were generally in an early stage of development, laying a solid historical foundation for the mature medical relief systems established in the Joseon period.

### 4.2. Uniformity of Functions

Specifically, there are few historical records concerning medical relief institutions such as Jewibo, Daebiwon, and Hyeminguk. These records often mention all three institutions together, tasked with treating common diseases and providing famine relief, which demonstrates that Jewibo, Daebiwon, and Hyeminguk had similar and partially overlapping responsibilities during the Goryeo Dynasty. Additionally, Jewibo, Daebiwon, and Hyeminguk followed a similar development trajectory: initially modeled after institutions from the Central Plains during the early Goryeo period, adapted and expanded according to the actual conditions on the Korean Peninsula during the middle period, and gradually became obsolete towards the late Goryeo period.

### 4.3. Exploring Functional Differences

It is not difficult to discern from analysis that this phenomenon may be due to the simplistic narration of the original historical materials, resulting in significant differences in the focus of responsibilities among the medical relief institutions. It is evident from the historical records that Jewibo was primarily responsible for relief during sudden disasters, playing a key role in emergency situations such as famines when it would distribute grain and treat diseases of the impoverished, with a particular emphasis on food relief. During normal times, when there were no sudden disasters or epidemics, Jewibo, along with other relief institutions, undertook daily medical treatment tasks.

Daebiwon, which includes the Eastern Daebiwon of the civil bureaucratic system and the Western Daebiwon of the military bureaucratic system, reflects the common bifurcation in the Goryeo bureaucratic system. Daebiwon was a core institution in the Goryeo medical relief structure, responsible for long-term social relief efforts. Unlike Jewibo, the establishment of Daebiwon was not solely for emergency disaster response; it was a permanent comprehensive social relief institution, focusing on daily comprehensive social relief tasks. According to records in the "History of Goryeo," the routine functions of Daebiwon included sheltering the famine-stricken, diseased, and homeless, providing for elderly orphans aged eighty and above, concentrating medical treatment for patients, and burying unclaimed corpses. In contrast to Jewibo, which primarily focused on food relief, Daebiwon concentrated on treating diseases and sheltering the impoverished. Additionally, Daebiwon's institutional functions were more

comprehensive and broad, encompassing disaster relief and the care and burial of elderly individuals.

## 5. Influence of Ancient Chinese Institutions on the Goryeo Dynasty's Medical Relief Institutions.

The medical relief institutions of the Goryeo Dynasty were established by emulating related ancient Chinese institutions, meaning that China's ancient medical administration systems played a crucial role in shaping the corresponding systems of the Goryeo Dynasty. Specifically, each of the major medical relief institutions of the Goryeo Dynasty has a clear prototype in the institutions from the Tang and Song periods of China.[4].

### 5.1. The origins of the Goryeo Dynasty's Daebiwon

The origins of the Goryeo Dynasty's Daebiwon can be traced back to the Beitian Yuan of the Tang dynasty. During the Wu Zhou period, the comprehensive medical charity institution known as Beitian Yuan was established, primarily responsible for the care and treatment of the solitary, elderly, and diseased. The term "Beitian" comes from Buddhist terminology and is one of the "Three Fields of Merit" in Buddhism, meaning to bestow mercy on the impoverished for boundless merit. The Tang dynasty's Beitian Yuan was managed by government-appointed officials and operated by Buddhist temples. This institution was inherited and refined during the Song dynasty, known then as "Futian Yuan." The structure and operation of this institution were emulated by the Goryeo Dynasty, which established similar facilities in the capital to provide medical care, sustenance, and treatment for impoverished groups.[5].

### 5.2. Yangji Yuan and Jewibo

Jewibo was initially established in the fourteenth year of King Gwangjong's reign (AD 962) with the primary intent to provide relief and treatment to disaster victims. In practice, it often collaborated with Daebiwon in the daily charitable tasks of treating and sheltering the impoverished and sick. Like Daebiwon, the establishment of Jewibo was influenced by the Beitian Yuan system of the Tang dynasty. Throughout its development, Jewibo's disaster relief function drew heavily from the Juyang Yuan and Yangji Yuan institutions established during the Five Dynasties and Song periods. Similar to Yangji Yuan, Jewibo not only focused on assisting the elderly and isolated but also placed greater emphasis on providing relief to populations affected by disasters, demonstrating the Goryeo medical institutions' inheritance and development of the disaster relief systems from the Central Plains dynasties.

The initial purpose of establishing Jewibo was to provide relief and treatment to disaster victims, which bears notable similarities to the functions of ancient Chinese institutions such as Yangji Yuan and Juyang Yuan. The earliest instances of Juyang Yuan and Yangji Yuan in China can be traced back to the Five Dynasties period, as recorded in the "New History of the Five Dynasties," which details how Emperor Shizong of Zhou established Yangji Yuan in the capital and various states to provide porridge to the sick and medicine to the healthy: "During the Tianfu era, Emperor Shizong of Zhou established Yangji Yuan in the capital and the states, offering porridge to the sick and medicine to those not yet ill."

Inspired by this, Goryeo's Jewibo was set up to respond to sudden disasters and epidemics. According to the "Essentials of the History of Goryeo," Jewibo was created in the fourteenth year of King Gwangjong's reign (AD 963) primarily for the relief of the impoverished and aid to the diseased. Further in the sixth year of King Sukjong's reign (AD 1101), Jewibo was utilized to aid famine relief: "In April of the sixth year of King Sukjong's reign, a decree was issued that those who were impoverished and unable to sustain themselves were to be aided by Jewibo, by the time the wheat ripened, to provide relief."

This system developed further in the middle and later periods of the Goryeo Dynasty, becoming an important social relief institution. The Yangji Yuan system from the Five Dynasties to the Song Dynasty not only was widely implemented within China but also spread to other parts of East Asia through exchanges with neighboring countries. Goryeo's Jewibo is a prime example of this, reflecting the maturity and perfection of the Song Dynasty's social relief system and demonstrating its successful application and further development in the Goryeo Dynasty. This cross-cultural adaptation and localization of the system represent a significant aspect of the historical relations between China and ancient Korea, showcasing mutual learning and adaptation in addressing social issues.

By utilizing these earlier historical sources, it is possible to more clearly display the exchange and influence in medical relief between ancient China and the Korean Peninsula, thereby strengthening the argument in the thesis regarding cultural inheritance and system adaptation.[6].

### 5.3. The Hyeminguk of Northeast Asia

The Hyeminguk was a medical relief institution in the Goryeo Dynasty, directly inherited from the medical institutions of ancient China. During the reign of Emperor Huizong of the Song Dynasty, the pharmaceutical practices were reformed to establish the "Bureau of Medical Harmony and Preparations," and the local medicine distribution centers were named "Hyeminguk," which is where the name originated. The Hyeminguk of the Song Dynasty aimed to prepare and sell quality medicines at low prices to relieve the ailments of the populace and benefit the impoverished.

The exact founding date of the Goryeo Hyeminguk is unknown, but clear records from the seventh year of King Yejong's reign (1112 AD) indicate its existence: "In the seventh year of King Yejong's reign, four judges were appointed who alternated between their main roles and additional duties as needed, managing affairs categorized under the second order." This institution's establishment was likely heavily influenced by the pharmaceutical bureaus and Hyeminguk of the Song Dynasty, with its primary function being to provide low-cost medicine to the populace, alleviating the conditions of medical scarcity.

The establishment of the Hyeminguk during the Song Dynasty reflects the government's emphasis on public health and social welfare during the Northern Song period. This system not only achieved significant results domestically but also spread to the Goryeo Dynasty through cultural exchanges. The establishment and operation of the Goryeo Hyeminguk not only inherited the Song Dynasty's system but also demonstrated the Goryeo Dynasty's commitment to public health and its development. This transnational inheritance and innovation of medical systems further strengthened the ties and cooperation between China and Korea in the field of public health.[7].

## 6. Conclusion

The medical relief systems established during the Goryeo Dynasty had a profound influence on the subsequent Joseon Dynasty. Through the establishment of institutions such as the Hyeminguk, Jewibo, and the Eastern and Western Daebiwons, not only did the Goryeo Dynasty provide a foundational framework for the development of medical systems in Joseon, but it also shaped the long-term direction of medical and welfare developments on the Korean Peninsula.

Upon inheriting the medical relief systems from Goryeo, the Joseon Dynasty further expanded and refined these institutions. Notably, the establishment of the Ho-in-so (Living People's Office) and the Hyeminseo (Benevolence Agency) were significant enhancements. These new entities not only inherited functions from the Goryeo period but also integrated more systematic medical and social welfare measures to address increasingly complex societal needs. The Ho-

in-so primarily managed and treated the homeless and vagrants, while the Hyeminseo continued the responsibilities of the Goryeo Hyeminguk, providing essential medical services to citizens, particularly to low-income and marginalized groups.

These reforms and the establishment of new institutions during the Joseon Dynasty demonstrated a deep assimilation and localization of the medical systems from the Goryeo Dynasty. These institutions not only improved the quality of national medical services but also strengthened the state's commitment to public health, thereby fostering social stability and welfare. Additionally, the management and operations of medical institutions during the Joseon period became more standardized and systematic, laying a solid foundation for the development of South Korea's future healthcare system.

The medical relief institutions of the Goryeo Dynasty, such as Hyeminguk, Jewibo, and Daebiwon, were integral parts of the healthcare system of the time, serving as fundamental pillars of social governance and public welfare. These institutions not only managed common diseases and health emergencies but also played pivotal roles in social relief efforts, demonstrating the intertwined nature of social policies and medical practices during the Goryeo era.

In-depth analysis of the medical relief institutions from the Goryeo period reveals how Korea's medical administration system was profoundly influenced and shaped through cultural and administrative exchanges with China. This process of localization adapted Chinese medical practices to fit the unique societal and cultural contexts of the Korean Peninsula, exemplifying successful cross-cultural adaptation. This historical interplay provides invaluable lessons for contemporary global health initiatives, particularly in the exchange of medical knowledge and the formulation of health policies in a globalized world.

The development and operational dynamics of these institutions also illustrate the significant impact of internal governance, external threats, and administrative strategies on healthcare delivery systems. During periods of political stability, these institutions thrived, enhancing their capabilities to address public health needs effectively. Conversely, during times of turmoil, such as invasions or internal strife, their operations were often compromised, highlighting the critical relationship between political stability and healthcare efficacy.

Furthermore, in times of major social crises and natural disasters, institutions like Hyeminguk, Jewibo, and Daebiwon were not merely healthcare providers but also crucial for social stability and humanitarian efforts. They exemplified the role of healthcare institutions in providing not just medical relief but also social cohesion and support, reinforcing the government's commitment to its citizens during times of need.

The historical exploration of Goryeo's medical relief institutions also sheds light on the evolution of traditional medical knowledge and practices. It provides a historical framework that informs current public health challenges, offering insights into how ancient strategies can inform modern responses to similar issues. Understanding these historical contexts is crucial in crafting effective and culturally sensitive modern healthcare policies and systems.

The foundational principles established by the Goryeo Dynasty's medical relief institutions, such as Hyeminguk, Jewibo, and Daebiwon, resonate strongly within South Korea's contemporary healthcare policies. During the Goryeo period, the emphasis on making medical care accessible and affordable laid the groundwork for today's health insurance systems, which aim to provide universal healthcare coverage, reducing financial barriers and ensuring equitable access to healthcare services.

This approach has evolved into a highly efficient and universally accessible healthcare system in modern South Korea, characterized by an extensive network of hospitals and clinics that provide high-quality care. The system's design reflects historical values of comprehensive care and accessibility, traits that trace back to the Goryeo Dynasty's commitment to public health.

Furthermore, the holistic strategy seen in Goryeo, which combined medical interventions with broader social welfare initiatives, has informed modern South Korean policies. For example, South Korea's healthcare system integrates preventive care with treatment services, illustrating a modern application of Goryeo's approach to healthcare, which combined direct medical interventions with broader strategies to improve general wellbeing.

In conclusion, studying the medical relief institutions during the Goryeo period not only reveals the adaptive and transformative nature of traditional medical knowledge but also serves as a guide for contemporary global health challenges. In building modern healthcare systems and formulating public health policies today, it is essential to consider the depth of historical experiences and the distinctiveness of cultural factors. Such considerations are key to constructing healthcare policies that are both effective and inclusive, capable of addressing the diverse needs of global populations.

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