



Preparation and Use of Ingredients in Traditional Malay Medicine: A Study on Manuscript Mss 1653

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Abstract

This article will highlight the process of sourcing and using materials found in Manuscript MSS 1653, a manuscript related to traditional Malay remedies and medicine. Its aim is to present the treasure trove of traditional Malay medicine that has been practiced by the Malay community since ancient times. The objective of this study is to analyse the process of material sourcing, the process of material usage, as well as the measurements and weighing methods used in this manuscript. The study is qualitative in nature with an exploratory design. The documentation method is used to gather data from Manuscript MSS 1653, which was obtained from the Malay Manuscript Centre. The data analysis employs an inductive method and content analysis. Through the findings of the study, there is clear explanation regarding the process of material sourcing, such as cooking, soaking, boiling, kneading, crushing, grinding, pounding, and frying. These materials are used in different ways depending on the illness, such as consumption, drinking, smearing, wrapping, applying, dripping, pricking, and adding. Each material is specified with its specific measurement, such as grains, squash, spans, bundles, handfuls, and finger widths.

Keywords: Herbs, kitab tib, Malay medicine, manuscript, remedies.

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1. Introduction

In this advanced technological era, information sharing can indeed be easily obtained and spread widely. This includes the dissemination of traditional remedies and medicines. However, information spread in this manner cannot be verified for its accuracy. Sometimes, it is not provided with the actual methods and steps of usage. There is a concern that this could lead to the misuse of traditional herbs. Over time, Malay traditional medicine may be perceived negatively when there are adverse effects on individuals who use it. Therefore, the process of annotating manuscripts is crucial in developing knowledge to ensure that it aligns with the authentic concepts. Most of the literature in this field is generated from oral sources through field studies, generally involving practitioners of traditional medicine, whether they are bomohs (shamans), professional tabibs (traditional doctors), dukuns (traditional healers), or amateur individuals (Mat Piah, 2015). Knowledge and the administration of traditional remedies are passed down from generation to generation solely through oral tradition. On the other hand, the treasure trove of Malay manuscripts contains a wealth of medical information documented in writing. The lack of exposure to this information further complicates further studies on the efficacy of traditional Malay medical materials. Advanced studies requiring accurate information

on the processes of sourcing, usage, and measurements of traditional Malay remedies. Hence, this study aims to present information from the manuscripts in an easier and clearer manner for the needs of academics, researchers, medical practitioners, and the general public.

Therefore, this study aims to achieve the content analysis of the tib (medicine) and petua (remedies) books based on the following three aspects: (i) the process of sourcing materials, (ii) the process of using materials, and (iii) measurements and weighing methods.

2. Literature

Aspects of materials and preparation of remedies in medicine have been emphasized in studies and book writings over time. Among the well-known researchers in this field is Harun Mat Piah. His writing entitled "Traditional Malay Medicine from Ancient Manuscripts" discusses the content of selected tib (medicine) manuscripts, covering aspects such as the names and forms of diseases, treatment methods, medicines, the process of preparing medicines, materials and ingredients, methods of usage, taboos, and disease prevention. It also discusses the benefits of various types of

remedies, especially those related to herbal medicine and nutrition for general health. Analysis of scientific studies on herbal usage conducted by Rita Nursuhaila Ridzuan, Nurulwahidah Fauzi, Robiatul Adawiah Amat, and Nor Zulaili Mohd Ghazali shows that this field is continually evolving and gaining attention from researchers. The article is a bibliometric study analyzing academic research related to herbs, serving as a benchmark to understand research productivity. This quantitative study aims to examine the bibliometric concept of herb application in academic studies, types of publications related to herb studies, analyze the development of disciplines involved in herb studies, and measure productivity by assessing contributions and roles in producing scholarly works in this field. There are also studies that focus on the discussion of a single manuscript. Siti Fatimah Abd Aziz and Yusmilayati Yunos, in their article titled "The Efficacy of Herbs in the Malay Tib Manuscript (MSS 174)," identified the types of herbs mentioned in this manuscript and explained the efficacy and methods of using these herbs. This writing uses philological methods, involving transliteration from Jawi script to the Roman script. The study presents herbs such as ginger root, lotus root, life-extending leaf, garlic, and black pepper. These herbs are used to treat various ailments, including headaches, eye problems, bad breath, urinary issues, toothache, mouth sores, snakebites and poison, mumps, and fever.

Additionally, there are writings that combine the study of several Malay medical manuscripts based on specific materials that are being examined. This can be seen in the article titled "Ginger (*Zingiber Officinale* Roscoe) According to the Perspective of Islam and Science: Analysis of Selected Malay Manuscripts." Ginger is reported as one of the medicinal herbs in Malay traditional medicine, used to treat vomiting, expel wind, intestinal diseases, and more. This article aims to study the importance of ginger from a religious perspective, analyze ginger found in Malay traditional medicine and manuscripts, and analyze scientific findings and phytochemical content related to ginger. The lives of the Malay community are closely influenced by the teachings of Islam. Therefore, researchers continue to investigate the relationship between Malay medicine and Islamic teachings. For instance, Mohd Azmi and Muhammad Widus Sempo, in their study "Malay Medicine and the Use of Sunnah Foods in Treating Four Major Diseases among the World's Poorest: Preliminary Review of the Use of *Nigella Sativa* (Black Seed) based on Malay Medical Manuscripts in Malaysia," conducted searches to scan relevant Malay manuscripts containing black seed. Using this method, they listed 20 unpublished manuscripts which were later analyzed based on treatments related to four diseases of interest. Moreover, the importance of studying traditional medicine within a particular society has also received attention from researchers in other countries. For example, in Indonesia, there is a study titled "Treatment and Traditional Medicine of the Sasak Tribe in Lombok." This study follows a linguistic-anthropological research framework. A total of 263 types of diseases were obtained from five manuscripts, along with 163 types of plant materials and 11 types of animal materials used by the Sasak people, such as shells for jaundice, koak kao bird meat for smart medicines, and honey for impotence, burns, and acne. The Sasak traditional remedy preparation techniques include grinding, chewing, squeezing, mixing, burning, and grating the ingredients. The methods of usage include smearing, Anuar et al., 2023

rubbing, spraying, pasting, rubbing, dripping, rubbing, drinking, smearing, rinsing, applying, and patching.

3. Methodology

This study was conducted using a qualitative method based on textual data. The data was collected using several methods, such as object determination, data collection, and data classification. The Tib and Petua manuscript MS 1653 were obtained from the Malay Manuscript Center, National Library of Malaysia. This handwritten manuscript uses Jawi script, some Arabic terms, and verses from the Quran. It consists of 38 sheets of paper, totaling 76 written pages on both sides. It is a complete manuscript from beginning to end, with 20 lines per page. The call number for this manuscript at the Malay Manuscript Center is MSS 1653. Content analysis method was used to analyze the collected information. This manuscript only contains traditional treatment knowledge using herbs, Quranic verses, prayers, remedies, and talismans. It does not cover other disciplines such as beliefs (akidah), Sufism (tasawwuf), and Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh). The study also adapted the methodology (Dan et al., 2018) that classifies the textual content according to aspects such as the types of diseases, types of materials, preparation processes, and usage. Subsequently, each piece of information was given a description and thematic analysis. The information was also presented statistically based on these aspects. Adapting (Roza, 2014), this study also classified the overall treatments in MSS 1653 according to treatment methods, selecting only diseases treated using medicinal materials and herbs.

4. Analysis and Discussion

The study findings are categorized into 3 aspects: the preparation process of ingredients for treatment, the method of using ingredients for treatment, and the measurements or proportions.

Preparation Process of Ingredients for Treatment

The treatment materials that are collected need to be processed before they are used. However, there are also remedies that do not require these materials to be processed. The processed materials sometimes need to be mixed with other ingredients, while others do not require any additional materials. The preparation process and frequency of usage contained in this manuscript are as follows table 1:

Table 1: Preparation Process of Ingredients

No.	Preparation Process	Frequency
1.	Cook	1
2.	Soak	1
3.	Rub	2
4.	Pound	7
5.	Boil	1
6.	Crush	3
7.	Grind	6
8.	Fry	1

a) **Cooking** - Among the ingredients that need to be cooked are animal meat, such as beef and lamb. Other ingredients like

rice are cooked until they become rice; or a mixture of various ingredients is cooked, for example, in making makjun or jamu. Other ingredients may also be processed by being mixed with other materials. Below are some examples of usage involving cooking:

Infected ear: Betel nut, garlic, and lenga oil are cooked, and then the oil is dropped into the ear for recovery (MSS 1653, 12).

b) Soaking - Most of the remedies that require soaking in this manuscript are followed by a drinking process. Some of these remedies need to be soaked for a day, a month, or three months. Additionally, some remedies are soaked to facilitate subsequent pounding. For instance, coriander seeds need to be soaked in vinegar first before being dried and pounded into powder. An example from the manuscript is as follows:

Hemorrhoids: Take the contents of the gurah fruit, pound it into a paste, then mix it with a chicken egg and soak it in oil (MSS 1653, 12).

c) Squeezing - Leaves or fruits are pounded into a paste, mixed with water or not, then squeezed to extract the liquid for drinking or applying on affected areas. An example from the manuscript is as follows:

Wind-related illness: Squeeze three ripe kelulut bananas, including their skins, and strain the liquid. Drink it (MSS 1653, 12).

d) Pounding - Ingredients are crushed using a mortar and pestle, either finely or coarsely. For example, in this medical manuscript, ingredients that require pounding include bitter gourd leaves, powdered plank from a burial board, fish bone, nutmeg, garlic, black cumin, cottonseed, and ghost plant leaves. There are seven occurrences of this usage in the manuscript:

Large egg-shaped swelling: To remove this swelling, try taking 10 cloves of garlic, 4 grains of fish bone, and a nutmeg seed. Do not put in a seed, and pound them into a paste (MSS 1653, 12).

e) Boiling - Certain ingredients or mixtures of various ingredients are boiled with water until boiling point, or reduced to one-third, or until two-thirds of the water dries up. Some boiled ingredients are meant for drinking, while others need to be boiled until the water is completely dried. Examples to be observed are as follows:

Stomach bloating: If the skin of pomegranate is boiled in a pot until boiling and reduced to one-third, and when it cools, try drinking it every morning before eating anything else, for three, five, or seven days (MSS 1653, 6).

f) Crush/Paste - The purpose of crushing these ingredients is to apply them to the areas requiring treatment, consume them, or swallow them. The author found that these ingredients need to be crushed together with other materials such as honey, vinegar, or oil. An example of usage is:

Take ghost plant leaves, pound them into a paste, then mix them with a chicken egg and wrap it around (MSS 1653, 14).

Anuar et al., 2023

g) Grinding - Ingredients are ground using a grinding stone, for example, spices, either mixed with water or not, and then drunk or applied to affected areas. The word "giling" appears six times in this manuscript:

Hemorrhoid remedy: Take bitter gourd leaves, turmeric, rice, and grind them all until they become a paste (MSS 1653, 60).

h) Frying - In this manuscript, ingredients that need to be fried include white ginger, red ginger, cooked betel leaves, burnt coconut shells, and glutinous rice. Animal ingredients like leeches and cockroaches are fried until crisp or burnt, with or without using oil. An example from the manuscript is as follows:

Coral disease: Take white ginger, red ginger, cooked betel leaves, burnt coconut shells, and glutinous rice, then fry them all until burnt (MSS 1653, 61).

Process of Using Remedies on Patients

The process of using remedies and their frequency in this manuscript is as follows table 2:

Table 2: Process of Using Ingredients

No.	Process of Using Ingredients	Frequency
1.	Eat / Swallow	2
2.	Drink	6
3.	Rub / Apply	8
4.	Wrap	1
5.	Stick	2
6.	Puncture	1
7.	Ignite	1
8.	Put / Place / Lay	3

a) Eat/Swallow - In this manuscript, most of the ingredients that need to be consumed require mixing with other ingredients first. There are specific conditions to be met before consuming some of these materials. Among the conditions are to eat them in the morning and evening, to eat until healed, to eat only in the morning, or to eat before going to sleep. Some of the materials include a mixture of cooked herbs, fruits, honey, and finely pounded spices. An example is as follows:

Fatigued cough: Take the shoots of ribu-ribu, three handfuls of garlic, a selabu of black pepper, 17 seeds of black pepper, and a little salt. Then wrap them all with banana leaves and roast them over the fire until cooked, then eat (MSS 1653, 51).

b) Drink - Some examples of materials that need to be consumed are milk, water soaked with vegetables, fruits, and spices. There are also patients who need to drink materials mixed with honey or herbs that have been boiled, such as basil leaves. Plant juices such as basil leaves, cabbage, and lime peel are not left out. There are 6 occurrences in this manuscript:

Dysentery: Take a span of black cumin, pound it finely, mix it with water, and then drink it (MSS 1653, 12).

c) Apply/Spread

Uterine pain: Drink one tahlil of good cow's oil every day, mix the cow's oil with cotton seeds after pounding them finely, then apply it to the uterus and private parts (MSS 1653, 69).

d) Wrap - Among the materials used in the wrapping process are leaves such as bidara leaves, bilam leaves, and other materials such as mixed spices with vinegar and juice squeezed from vegetables. An example from the manuscript is:

Swelling: Try taking ghost plant leaves, pound them finely, then mix them with a chicken egg and wrap it around the swollen area (MSS 1653, 14).

e) Apply

Stomachache: Take single snail leaves, betel leaves, pounded rice, and turmeric. Grind them into a paste and then apply it to the stomach (MSS 1653, 11).

f) Drip/Drop

Infected ear: Betel nut, garlic, and lenga oil are cooked, and then the oil is dripped into the ear for recovery (MSS 1653, 12).

g) Insert/Pierce

Tiger sting remedy: Take the heads of 10 matchsticks and pound them finely, then try placing them on the stung area and pierce them, let them catch fire (MSS 1653, 13).

h) Put/Place

Weak teeth: If everything is ground finely and then soaked in sour vinegar, put it on decayed teeth, teeth that constantly bleed, or teeth that are infested with worms (MSS 1653, 60).

Use of Measurements or Proportions

Practitioners of traditional medicine must pay attention to the measurements and proportions for each herbal ingredient used. This is because excessive or insufficient use of these ingredients can be harmful and dangerous to patients. The measurements used in this manuscript are tahlil, labu, jengkal, bungkus, genggam, and bujur tangan. Through this manuscript, Malay treatments are seen to extensively use the pounding process 7 times and grinding 6 times compared to other processes. This is likely because certain ingredients need to be crushed to obtain greater efficacy and optimum results. The same process can also be observed frequently in the preparation of Malay dishes, where similar ingredients are pounded and ground using a mortar and pestle. In terms of application methods, the spread or smear technique is used 8 times, and the drinking method is used 6 times, while other methods are used only 2 or 3 times. The method of application can also influence the preparation process of the ingredients. The spread or smear technique requires ingredients with a

Anuar et al., 2023

fine texture, not too dry, and not too watery. Therefore, we can see that the ingredients in this manuscript are mostly ground to a paste for easy application on the body parts.

4. Conclusions

The meticulousness in the aspect of materials is highly emphasized in traditional Malay medicine. The contents of the manuscript clearly mention the ingredients, preparation process, application methods, and measurements. It reflects the precision of observations in Malay medicine. The Malay society possesses a profound knowledge in studying the efficacy of different parts of plants. These plants have played a crucial role in their daily lives. Thus, this treasure trove of knowledge has been compiled in the Kitab Tib and Petua to receive due attention from future generations. It is recommended that traditional Malay medical knowledge be highlighted. It is hoped that this knowledge can reclaim the role of manuscripts as a guide and reference for everyday life. Transformation of the manuscript texts can be carried out to make them easily understandable in line with the standards of the present generation. Traditional terms should be explained scientifically and practically. The contents of the manuscript can be presented for further studies in various related fields such as biology, chemistry, medical sciences, botany, pharmacology, and more. Currently, traditional medicine that utilizes herbs and traditional remedies is flourishing. Collections of books on traditional Malay treatments should be digitized for better organization and easy access globally.

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