



Materials in Traditional Malay Medicine:

A Study of Manuscript Mss 1653

Khairullah Anuar¹, Mohamad Zaidin Mohamad¹ & Khamsah Suryati Mohd²

¹ Faculty of Islamic Contemporary Studies, Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin, Malaysia.

² Faculty of Bioresources and Food Industry, Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin, Malaysia.

Abstract

This article will highlight the healing practices found within Manuscript MSS 1653, which is a manuscript related to Malay traditional remedies and medicine. Its aim is to showcase Malay traditional healing materials that have been practiced by the Malay community since ancient times. The objective of this study is to analyze the types of diseases and healing materials mentioned in the manuscript. This research is qualitative in nature with an exploratory design. The documentation method is used to gather data from Manuscript MSS 1653 obtained from the Malay Manuscript Center. Data analysis is conducted using an inductive and content analysis approach. Through the research findings, it was discovered that there were 23 diseases and ailments in the manuscript categorized according to body parts, including the head, chest to abdomen, genitalia, and waist to feet. There were 33 types of flora consisting of leaves, stems, fruits, bark, rhizomes, and roots, 4 types of fauna, and 19 other materials used in this manuscript.

Keywords: Herbs, healing books, Malay medicine, manuscript, remedies.

Full length article *Corresponding Author, e-mail: mzaidin@unisza.edu.my

1. Introduction

In general, traditional Malay medicine knowledge can be illuminated through manuscripts, most of which are found in various locations. According to (Kamarudin et al., 2020), the abundance of manuscripts related to this medicine implies that the field of medicine was highly dominant in the discussions of Malay society in the past. The medical knowledge presented was crucial for the community at that time in seeking treatment for various diseases. Therefore, the primary objective of this study is to present information related to remedies for treating diseases found in the Kitab Tib and Petua MS 1653 more clearly and systematically for academic research, book publications, papers for general reading, or as a reference for medical practitioners. This study aims to achieve content analysis of the book based on the following two aspects: (i) types of diseases and (ii) healing materials.

2. Literature

The aspect of materials and the preparation of remedies in medicine has been a focal point in research and book writing over time. One of the well-known researchers in this field is Harun Mat Piah. His work titled "Traditional Malay Medicine from Ancient Manuscripts" discusses the

content of selected manuscript Kitab Tib, covering aspects such as the names and forms of diseases, treatment methods, medicines, the process of medicine preparation, ingredients and formulations, usage methods, prohibitions, and disease prevention. It also discusses the efficacy of various types of remedies, particularly herbal remedies related to both medicine and general health.

Analysis of scientific studies on the use of herbs conducted by Rita Nursuhaila Ridzuan, Nurulwahidah Fauzi, Robiatul Adawiah Amat, and Nor Zulaili Mohd Ghazali [YEAR?] shows that this field is continuously evolving and attracting the attention of several researchers. These articles represent bibliometric studies that analyze academic research related to herbs, serving as a reference for understanding research productivity. This quantitative study aims to examine bibliometric concepts regarding the application of herbs in academic research, assess the types of publications related to herbal research, analyze the development of disciplines involved in herbal studies, and measure productivity levels by examining contributions and the role of scholarly work in this field. There are also studies that focus on the discussion of a single manuscript. In the article titled "The Efficacy of Herbs in Malay Kitab Tib (MSS 174)," Siti Fatimah Abd Aziz and Yusmilayati Yunos [YEAR?] identified the types of herbs mentioned in this manuscript and explained their benefits and various methods of using these

herbs. This writing employs philological methods, involving the transliteration process of text from Jawi script to Roman script. The study presents herbs such as jarak root, lotus root, sambung nyawa leaves, garlic, and black pepper. These herbs are used to treat conditions such as headaches, eye ailments, bad breath, urinary issues, toothaches, mouth sores, snake bites and venom, colic, and fever.

Furthermore, there are writings that combined studies of several Malay medical manuscripts based on specific materials of interest. This can be seen in the article titled "Ginger (*Zingiber officinale* Roscoe) from the Perspective of Islam and Science: An Analysis of Selected Malay Manuscripts." Ginger is reported as one of the medicinal remedies in the Malay medical tradition, used for treating nausea, dispelling wind, intestinal diseases, and more. This article aims to examine the importance of ginger from a religious perspective, analyze ginger's presence in Malay medical traditions and manuscripts, and analyze scientific discoveries and phytochemical contents found in ginger plants. The camphor tree (*kapur barus*) is discussed in a specific article titled "Local Wisdom Regarding Camphor (*Cinnamomum camphora*) from the Perspective of Islam and the Culture of 19th Century Malay Society." The benefits of camphor are analyzed as recorded in Malay manuscripts. The study found that the use of camphor, associated with local herbs in medicine, had long been practiced by the Malay community, especially in the 19th century, and it aligns with Islamic practices that document the virtues of camphor as found in the Quran and Hadith. The lives of the Malay community are closely intertwined with the influence brought by the teachings of Islam. Therefore, efforts to investigate the connection between materials used in Malay medicine and Islam are also being undertaken. In the study titled "Malay Medicine and the Use of Sunnah Foods in Treating Four Major Diseases among the Poorest People in the World: An Initial Review on the Use of *Nigella sativa* (Black Seed) Based on Malay Medical Manuscripts in Malaysia," Mohd Azmi and Muhammad Widus Sempo conducted a search process to scan relevant Malay manuscripts related to black seed. Through this method, they listed a total of 20 unpublished manuscripts. These manuscripts were then analyzed based on treatments related to the four diseases under investigation.

Furthermore, the importance of studying traditional medicine within a particular society has also been given attention by researchers in other countries. As an example close to our society, there is a study in Indonesia titled "Treatment and Traditional Medicines of the Sasak Tribe in Lombok." This study follows a linguistic-anthropological research framework. A total of 263 types of diseases were obtained from 5 manuscripts. As many as 163 types of plant materials were recorded, along with 11 types of animal-based materials used by the Sasak people, such as shells for jaundice, koak kao bird meat for enhancing intelligence, and honey for impotence, burns, and acne. The preparation of traditional Sasak remedies is carried out through methods such as grinding, chewing, squeezing, mixing, burning, grating, boiling, placing in specific containers, adding water, and kneading. The methods of application include smearing, rubbing, spraying, sticking, rubbing, dripping, rubbing, ingestion, applying, rinsing, rubbing, and patching.

3. Methodology

This study was conducted using a qualitative method based on textual data. Data were collected through various methods, including object selection, data collection, and data classification. The *Kitab Tib* and *Petua MS 1653* were obtained from the Malay Manuscript Center, National Library of Malaysia. This handwritten manuscript uses Jawi script along with some Arabic terms and Quranic verses. It consists of 38 sheets, 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 employed to analyze the gathered information. This manuscript exclusively contains traditional healing knowledge using herbs, Quranic verses, prayers, remedies, and talismans, without encompassing other fields of knowledge such as creed (*akidah*), Sufism (*tasawwuf*), and jurisprudence (*fiqh*). This study also adopted the methodology of (Dan et al., 2018), which classifies the textual content based on aspects such as types of diseases, types of materials, preparation processes, and usage. Subsequently, each piece of information was provided with description and thematic analysis. This information was also presented statistically according to these aspects. Adapting from (Roza, 2014), this study classified the entire treatments in MSS 1653 according to treatment methods, selecting only diseases that were treated using treatment materials and herbs as opposed to Quranic verses, prayers, incantations, and talismans.

4. Analysis and Discussion

The research findings are categorized based on two aspects: types of diseases and healing materials.

Types of Diseases

Diseases can be categorized based on specific factors, causes of diseases, internal or external parts of the body, body parts affected, criticality levels of diseases, and others. The researchers categorized diseases based on the specific body parts where the diseases occur. The following is a list of disease categorizations:

Healing Materials

Plants used for the treatment of diseases are selected from specific trees known to have their unique properties. The selection of plants is not limited to their leaves but also includes their fruits as healing materials. Some of these fruits are used for their seeds, peels, and roots to treat various diseases. The selection of plants in Malay medicine is said to meet specific criteria because their contents are believed to have hidden properties for curing illnesses (Ab. Razak Ab. Karim, 2006). This is where the effectiveness and wisdom of the Malay community lie in choosing the appropriate plants for treating particular diseases. Without formal education, they are capable of recognizing various types of plants and the methods of using them (Yunos et al., 2016).

Use of Plant Parts

Plants are rich in various properties, whether in the stem, leaves, roots, flowers, or seeds. Each of these parts has its own unique properties. However, not all parts can be used for treatment. Among these plants, only specific parts provide benefits. Some plants are beneficial in all parts. The author can see that diseases are commonly treated using more than one type of plant, processed into a remedy. The parts of the plants used are explicitly mentioned, such as roots, shoots, tubers, stems, core, bark, leaves, tips, or the entire tree. The following is the division of materials according to the parts of plants:

a) Leaves

Leaves are part of the plant that performs the process of photosynthesis. Additionally, they also store water and nutrients. Leaves are also used as a source of food for humans. Below is a list of leaves and the types of diseases found in this book:

There is the use of plant shoots, which are newly grown and immature leaves. Leaves and shoots each have different implications because their shapes, colors, tastes, and nutritional content are different. Examples of shoots used include bamboo shoots, watermelon shoots, and sweet pumpkin shoots.

Leaves are widely used among traditional medicine practitioners following specific preparation processes. Typically, leaves are boiled, mashed into a paste, or used as wraps for other materials. In terms of usage, patients may be required to consume them, drink boiled leaf extracts, or apply the leaves to the affected area.**

b) Seeds

Seeds are among the reproductive agents of plants. Typically, we discard seeds when consuming fruits. However, in traditional medicine, seeds have their own functions. Here is a list of the uses of seeds found in this book:

Table 3: Plant Part : Fruit and Seed

Two out of the six types of seeds fall into the same category, which is rice. There are several terms related to rice that need to be known. The researchers referred to a study conducted by (Harun Mat Piah and Zawiyah Baba, 2014) on manuscript MSS 2515 and found that in the manuscript, there are other terms such as "beras jaba," "beras jemah," "beras mayang pinang," "beras seneri," and even the term "beras-beras" or "beberas," which refers to a type of plant.

Melukut rice: Fine fragments of rice, rice tips. Used in treating stomachaches. Mata rice: A small part of rice grains that is rich in nutrients. It is processed into a dietary supplement called "tepung mata beras" (rice eye flour).

c) Roots and Rhizomes

Roots are one of the most important organs in plants. The function of roots is to absorb water and inorganic nutrients and anchor the plant to the soil. Upon close examination, it can be observed that roots differ from one

plant species to another, both in terms of function and the respective root systems.

All of these materials are commonly found in the market as cooking ingredients except for "jerangau." Jerangau, or its scientific name *Acorus calamus*, is a flowering plant with long leaves. However, its benefits as an herbal remedy and flavor enhancer in cooking lie in its rhizomes and rootstock. It has a spicy, sharp, and bitter taste (Abdul Ghani Hussain, 2015). In manuscript MSS 2515, this herb is also mentioned as a remedy for diseases such as epilepsy, scabies, hemorrhoids, rhinitis, and conjunctivitis.

d) Fruits

In the field of agriculture, fruits are mature ovaries, along with their seeds, from a flowering tree. However, in the context of cooking, the term "fruits" refers to the edible produce of trees. The following are fruits mentioned in this manuscript:

The pomegranate peel is also mentioned in manuscript MSS 2515 as a remedy for diarrhea (Harun Mat Piah and Zawiyah Baba, 2014). The process is the same, where it is boiled, and the water is consumed. However, for diarrhea, pomegranate peel is boiled along with the peels of other materials such as sentul bark, small and large putat bark, mangosteen peel, geraldam peel, and tang peel.

Cinnamon bark, or *Cinnamomum verum*, is well-known in cooking. However, it also has many medicinal benefits, whether in its leaves, stems, branches, or bark. Some of the benefits of this plant include relieving menstrual cramps, constipation, insomnia, hemorrhoids, expelling body wind, reducing dizziness, drowsiness, and blurred vision. It can also restore nerves, heal postpartum wounds, shrink the uterus, heal scars. It is also used in the production of perfumes and pharmaceuticals.

Use of Fauna

In zoology, the term "fauna" refers to animals such as mammals, birds, insects, and fish. The use of fauna in this manuscript is found to be relatively limited compared to plants and other materials. The following are the uses of fauna mentioned in this manuscript:

Various types of animals, including mammals, reptiles, fish, and insects like "tuma," are used in this manuscript. There are remedies that use the meat of these animals themselves, such as mackerel and gecko, or specific parts like tiger skin and bat heads. Some diseases require fluids derived from animals, such as horse milk and crow blood.

Use of Other Materials

In addition to flora and fauna, there are also other materials used in Malay treatment. Some of these materials are readily available and commonly used in daily life. There are also somewhat unusual materials, such as "serbuk papan keranda kanak-kanak," (Child coffin wood powder) used to treat a condition called "meroyan" (postpartum depression). The following are other materials found in this manuscript:

Table 1: materials

No.	Plant name	Disease
1.	Cotton seed	Uterine pain
2.	<i>Melukut beras</i>	Hemorrhoids
3.	Black Cumin seed	Runny stool
4.	Black Pepper corn	Chest cough
5.	Glutinous rice	Kidney Stone disease

Table 2: Diseases Based on Body Parts

No.	Body Part	No of Disease	Disease and problem
1.	Head	3	Suppurating ear Chest cough Toothache
2.	Chest to stomach	5	Bloated stomach Stomach ache Cyst Kidney stone disease flatulence
3.	Vagina, pubic and uterus	9	Uterine pain Pregnancy tips Fertility testing Testing baby gender in the womb Increase libido Rushes out semen Sexual prowess Tighten vagina Aromatic vagina
4.	Waist to foot	3	Runny stool Hernia hemorrhoids
5.	Unspecific body parts	3	cancer Sembilang fish sting Snake or frog bite

Table 3: Plant Part : Leaf

No.	Plant Name	Disease
1.	Morinda leaf	Postpartum depression
2.	<i>Siput Tunggal</i> leaf	Stomach ache
3.	Betle leaf	Stomach ache
4.	Banana leaf	Chest cough
5.	Non-fruiting Jack fruit leaf	Cancer
6.	Water gourd young leaf	Cancer
7.	Sweet pumpkin shoot	Cancer
8.	Pumpkin leaf	Hemorrhoids
9.	Wild Cleome leaf	Hemorrhoids, Skin itchy, diarrhoea
10.	Matured Betle leaf	Kidney stone disease
11.	Betle and Areca Nut leaf	Teeth strengthen
12.	Red-stem Fig leaf	Postpartum depression
13.	Apiun	Typhoid fever
14.	Lygodium young leaf	Chest cough

Table 4: Plant part: Rhizomes and Tuber

No.	Plant Name	Disease
1.	Sweet flag/Calamus root	Hernia
2.	Galangal	Tighten vagina
3.	Ginger	Enlarge penis
4.	Tumeric	Stomach ache, Hemorrhoids
5.	Garlic	Fertility test, chest cough

Table 4: Plant Part: Fruit

No.	Plant Name	Disease
1.	Kelat banana fruit	Flatulence
2.	Casuarina (Ru) fruit	Strengthen teeth
3.	Gurah fruit	Hemorrhoids
4.	Manjakani fruit	Strengthen teeth
5.	Nutmeg	Hernia
6.	Coconut shell	Kidney stone

Table 5: Plant Part: Bark

No.	Plant name	Disease
1.	Promeganate bark	Bloated stomach
2.	Cinnamon bark	Speedy ejaculation

Table 6: Type of Material: Animal parts

No.	Material	Disease
1.	Talang fish flesh	Cyst
2.	Horse milk	Pregnancy difficulty
3.	Bat head	Contraception
4.	Chicken head	Cyst Hemorrhoids

Table 7: Material Type: Other materials

No.	Material	Disease
1.	Matches head but	Sembilang fish sting
2.	Freshly cook coconut oil	Varicose Veins
3.	Clear butter	Uterine problem
4.	Vinegar	Tighten vagina Strengthen teeth
5.	Salt	Chest cough
6.	Zamzam water	Fever Medicine for severe illness antidote Spiritual attack
7.	Rose water	Fever
8.	Rose water foam	Strengthen teeth
9.	Tobacco water	Snake bite
10.	Rain water	fever Medicine for severe illness Antidote

11.	Warm water	Spiritual attack
12.	Wet cloth	Harden penis
13.	Calcium carbonate	Strengthen teeth
14.	Child coffin wood powder	Mump
		Postpartum depression
15.	Opium waste, Opium	Cancer
		Snake bite
16.	Tobacco waste	Snake bite
		Kidney stone
		Antidote
17.	Honey	Increase ejaculation
		Fragrant vagina
18.	Sesame oil	Produce phlegm
19.	Camphor	Fragrant vagina

4. Conclusions

The criteria for materials in Malay traditional medicine encompass not only the naming of materials but also detailed criteria related to each material. For example, rice with its various properties, the use of plants associated with the stages of leaves, stems, shoots, and others related to the plant's developmental stages. This illustrates the precision of observation in Malay medicine.

The Malay community possesses significant knowledge in examining the properties of different parts of plants. The Kitab Tib and Petua contain a treasure trove of knowledge related to Malay medicine that should be of interest to the community. Among the recommendations that can be considered are:

Firstly, the dissemination of the knowledge of Malay medicine contained in these manuscripts. Efforts should be made to restore the roles of these manuscripts, which served as guides and references for the past generations.

Secondly, the transformation of the manuscript texts to make them understandable in modern, clear language according to current standards. Vocabulary and discourse can be changed without altering the original meaning of the text. The writing should also be rewritten to make it easy to read. Traditional terms should be explained scientifically and practically.

Thirdly, preparing the manuscript contents for further study by researchers from various related fields such as biology, chemistry, medical science, botany, pharmacology, and more. Traditional medicine that uses herbs and traditional remedies has been widely developed in recent times.

Fourthly, transferring collections of books related to traditional Malay treatments into digital formats to organize information more comprehensively and make it easily accessible globally.

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