

Traditional Medicine

Myanmar traditional medicine has flourished over thousands of years and has become a distinct entity. The scope of traditional medicine is very wide. Myanmar traditional medicine covers basic traditional subjects, numerous treatises on traditional medicine, plethora of methods on prescribing enormous varieties of traditional drugs that are potent and effective.

One of the statements in the National Health Policy stated "to reinforce the service and research activities of indigenous medicine to international level and to involve in community health care activities". Traditional medicine has been integrated into the national health care system, inclusive of education, training, registering, licensing and research.

Health care by traditional medicine is provided through 14 Traditional Medicine Hospitals in all states and divisions except Chin State, 43 district traditional medicine dispensaries and 194 township medicine dispensaries extending to the border areas. There are two 50 bedded hospitals and twelve 16 bedded hospitals in various states and divisions.



50 bedded Traditional Medicine Hospital, Mandalay

With the main aim to upgrade the role of traditional medicine and to strengthen the unity of traditional medicine practitioners, the Traditional Medicine Practitioners Conference had been held yearly since 2000.

The Myanmar Indigenous Medicine Act was enacted in 1953. According to this act the State Traditional Medicine Council was formed. It is a leading body and responsible for all the matters relating to Traditional Medicine. In keeping with changing circumstances, Myanmar Indigenous Medicine Act was replaced by Myanmar Traditional Medicine Council Law, promulgated in 2000. At present, there are altogether 5794 traditional medicine practitioners registered under the law. According to the law, licenses for practicing are issued to holders of diploma in Traditional Medicine or Bachelor of Myanmar Traditional Medicine.

There is one Institute conferring Diploma in Traditional Medicine, situated in Mandalay. This Institute was opened in 1976 with the aim to produce competent and qualified traditional medicine practitioners. It is a three year diploma course, followed by one year internship. Till 2001-2002 academic year, the number of students awarded diploma totaled 1924. Yearly intake is 100.



In 2001, University of Traditional Medicine conferring Bachelor of Myanmar Traditional Medicine degrees was established. The degree requires a five year course including one year internship and yearly intake is 175. The University has its own medicinal plant garden for teaching demonstrations.

University of Traditional Medicine, Mandalay

Teaching/learning sessions on traditional medicine lasting 36 hours have been incorporated into the third M.B.,B.S. undergraduate curriculum since 2003 with presentation of completion certification after assessment.

In 1996, the Government promulgated the Traditional Drug Law to control the production and sale of traditional drug systematically. According to the Traditional Drug Law, all the traditional medicine produced locally has to be registered and manufacturers require license to produce their products. There are altogether 3188 items of drugs registered and 697 manufacturers granted license at the end of December 2006. The traditional medicine used in township traditional medicine dispensaries and hospitals are distributed free of charge by the drug factories owned by the department.

In order to produce sufficient raw material for drug manufacturing factories under the Department of Traditional Medicine, 9 herbal gardens with the total land area of 365 acres has been established. All these herbal gardens are located in different parts of the country with different weather and soil preferences. At present, one of these herbal gardens, already established in Nay Pyi Taw, is now being upgraded to the international level National Herbal Park on the extended 196.4 acres of land.



National Herbal Park, Nay Pyi Taw



Scientific research has continuously been carried out at the Department of Traditional Medicine and also in collaboration with the Departments of Medical Research under Ministry of Health.

Traditional Medicine Museum