

TRADITIONAL MEDICINE

The Myanmar Traditional Medicine is one with profound medical treatises, a variety of potent and effective medicines and a diversity of therapies.

With the aim to extend the scope of health care services for both rural and urban areas, health care by Myanmar Traditional Medicine services is provided through Myanmar Traditional Medicine hospitals and clinics in all states and divisions of Myanmar. There are now, two 50 bedded Myanmar Traditional Medicine hospitals, twelve 16 bedded hospitals and 237 district and township clinics and sub-centers. In addition to these public institutions, private Traditional Medicine Practitioners are also taking part in health care provision in township and hard to reach areas.

In 2007, the Department of Traditional Medicine started to provide emergency traditional medicine kits in 3 townships as a pilot project. The objective of the project is to provide easy access to common traditional medicinal drugs for minor illness especially for rural areas. The kits are handed over to the persons who live in rural area and also who have no access to western medicine. The government and private donors supported the initial provision of kits and the replenishment of the medicines is to be accomplished through user charges. The report by evaluation and monitoring team revealed that users benefited from this project as Traditional medicine is more economical, saves time and relieves minor illnesses.

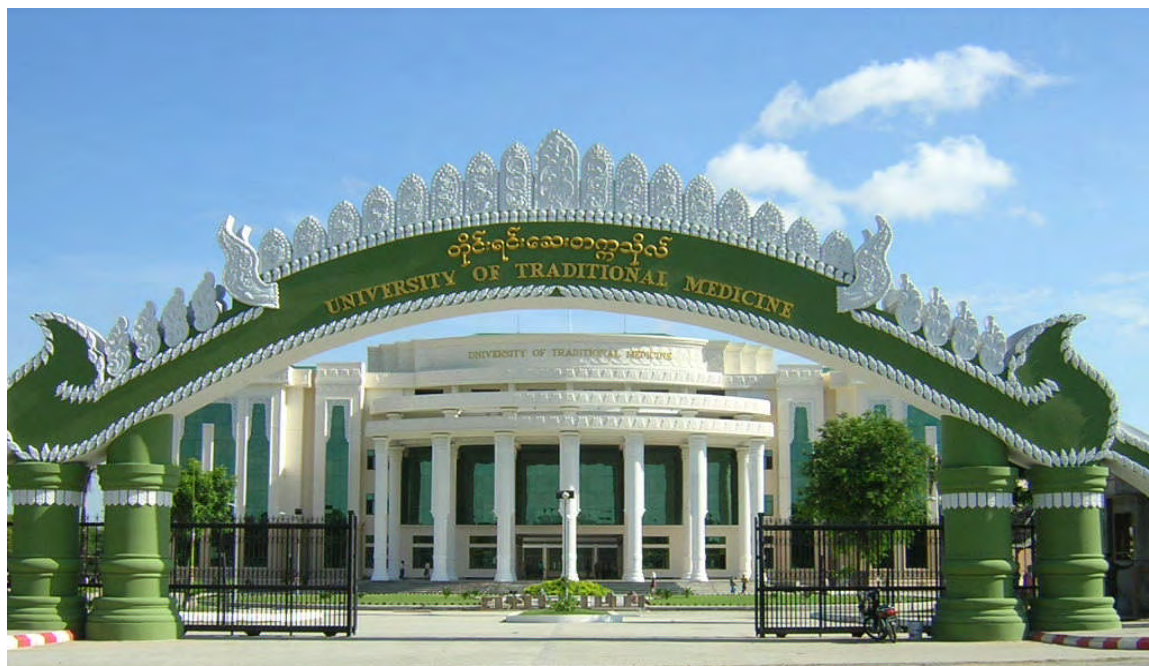
Teaching of Traditional Medicine

Myanmar Traditional Medicine is truly an inherited profession whose development has interrelations with the natural and climate conditions, thoughts and convictions and the socio-cultural system of Myanmar.

Before 1976, the knowledge of Myanmar Traditional Medicine was handed down from one generation to another. In 1976, with the aim to improve the qualification of traditional medicine practitioners, the Institute of Myanmar Traditional Medicine was established and systematic training programmes were started to train and produce competent Traditional Medicine Practitioners. A two year course together with one year internship was conducted conferring, a Diploma in Myanmar Traditional Medicine to successful candidates. The yearly intake of students is about 100. The Institute had already produced (2187) diploma holders.

The University of Myanmar Traditional Medicine was established in 2001, using modern teaching learning methodologies in accordance with the systematic curricula, developed by the joint efforts of Myanmar traditional practitioners and medical educationists. The curriculum covers all the Traditional Medicine subjects of the four Nayas, basic science and basic concepts of western

medicine. It is a four years course together with one year internship and confers Bachelor of Myanmar Traditional Medicine. The yearly intake is 175 persons.



University of Traditional Medicine (Mandalay)

Basic concept of Myanmar Traditional Medicine has been introduced to the curriculum of 3rd year M.B.,B.S medical students since 2003. A module, comprising 36 hours of teaching and learning sessions of traditional medicine was developed and incorporated together with assessment for completion. A certificate was presented to all successful candidates and the main aim of the course is to familiarize medical students with Myanmar Traditional Medicine. This is the first of its kind where traditional medicine is integrated into western medicine teaching programme in the world. It gives opportunities for medical students to explore the concepts of traditional medicine and paves a venue for interested student to venture into the realms of Myanmar Traditional Medicine at a deeper level. Among the first batch of medical graduates three has joined the Research and Development section, of the Department of Traditional Medicine to take up further studies and research in the field of Myanmar Traditional Medicine.

Manufacturing of Traditional Medicine

The government is giving impetus to developing Traditional Medicine systematically reach international standards and to manufacturing potent and efficacious Traditional Medicine based on scientific evidences and practices.

Traditional Medicines have been manufactured by both public and private sectors. The Department of Traditional Medicine takes responsibility for the public sector and has two

traditional medicine factories. According to the increasing demand of users, the department produces more traditional medicine drugs. Medicines are produced according to the national formulary and Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) standards. In addition, these two factories manufacture twenty one varieties of Traditional Medicine in powder form, which are provided free of charge to patients attending public Traditional Medicine facilities, and the factory also produces 12 kinds of drugs in tablet form for commercial purposes.



The private Traditional Medicine industry is also developing and undertaking mass production of potent medicine according to the GMP standards. Some private industries are now exporting traditional medicine which are well accepted.

Due to the encouragement, regulations and assistance of the government, and the manufacturing of standard Traditional Medicine through correct and precise methods which complies with international norms of production processes, storage system and packaging methods using modern machinery, public trust and confidence in indigenous drugs has greatly been enhanced. There is a progressive increase in demand for traditional medicine not only in rural areas but also in urban areas.

Laws

Traditional Medicine Council Law

The Myanmar Indigenous Medicine Act was enacted in 1953. According to the Act, the State Traditional Medicine Council was formed; it was a leading body and responsible for all the matters relating to Traditional Medicine. To keep abreast with the changing circumstances, the department reviewed and updated the Myanmar Indigenous Medicine Act and transformed it into Myanmar Traditional Medicine Council Law, which was enacted in the year 2000. One of the objectives of the law is "to supervise Traditional Medicine Practitioners for causing abidance by the rule of conduct and discipline". At present, there are about six thousand Traditional Medicine practitioners registered under this law. According to the law, the licenses for practicing are issued to the persons who have diploma in Myanmar Traditional Medicine or Bachelor of Myanmar Traditional Medicine.

Traditional Medicine Drug Law

In 1996, the Government promulgated the Traditional Medicine Drug Law in order to control the production and sale of Traditional Medicine drug systematically. This was followed by the series of notifications concerning registration and licensing, labeling and advertising. One of the objectives of the Traditional Medicine Drug Law is "to enable the public to consume genuine quality, safe and efficacious traditional drugs".

According to the Traditional Medicine Drug Law, all the Traditional Medicine drugs produced in the country have to be registered and the manufacturers must have licenses to produce their products. There are all together (8436) registered items of drugs and (1456) manufacturers have already got the licenses for production at the end of 2006. Practices of good manufacturing are considered before issuing the licenses. In addition, the department also takes control of advertisement of these commodities.

Myanmar Traditional Medicine Practitioners Association

Myanmar Traditional Medicine Practitioners Association has been formed since 2002 to promote unity, harmony and adherence to code of conduct of the Traditional Medicine Practitioners. The objectives of the association are to implement programmes through the work of practitioners well-versed in their field, to held seminars in which the physicians themselves can seek means to revive hidden and extinct subjects, therapies and drugs and to unite all the practitioners of the various groups under the banner of Myanmar Traditional Medicine Practitioner Association.

Traditional Medicine Conference

Myanmar Traditional Medicine Practitioners' Conference has been held annually since 2000 in accord with lofty aims for development of Myanmar Traditional Medicine. Every year, Traditional Medicine Practitioners from all over the country assemble at the conference, to exchange knowledge and hold discussions for perpetuation and propagating of Myanmar Traditional Medicine, for the standardized progress of the science and providing more effective and broader health care services through the profession. The practice of convening the annual conference will bring good results not only to the field of Traditional Medicine, but also to the nation and people. The Traditional Medicine Conference was held every year followed by Traditional Medicine Exhibition which is aimed at upgrading the quality of Myanmar Traditional Medicine.

Research and Development

In 1980, Myanmar Traditional Medicine National Formulary has been compiled for 57 numbers of traditional medicine formulations, in each monograph including formulary, therapeutic uses, caution and dosage in Myanmar language. These official Myanmar traditional medicines were



standardized botanically and physico-chemically and evaluated toxicologically and pharmacologically in the period of 1984-1989. This project has been conducted with the assistance of UNDP/WHO. Five volumes of traditional medicine of Myanmar had been published in English and now are being used as references and guidelines where and when necessary such as quality control system, health education and the use of traditional medicine formulation in primary health care.

The monographs of 120 Myanmar medicinal plants had been successfully published in volumes 1 and 2 respectively in 2000 and 2006 will provide basic information relevant to the use of medicinal plants in primary health care.