

Memory of the World Register - Nomination Form India - The I.A.S. Tamil Medical Manuscripts Collection

Abstract

Mostly Tamil Medical Manuscripts preserved at the Institute of Asian Studies reflect the ancient system of medicine, practised by yogis. This system explains the methods of obtaining medicines from herbs, herbal roots, leaves, flowers, barks, fruits etc. The proportions of the ingredients as well as the specific processes are explained in detail.

Identity and Location

Name of the Documentary Heritage: The I.A.S. Tamil Manuscripts Collection

Country: India

State, Province or Region: Tamil Nadu

Address: Institute of Asian Studies, Chemmancherry, Chennai - 600119, India

Name of Institution: Institute of Asian Studies Manuscripts Library

Legal Information

Owner: Institute of Asian Studies

Custodian: -d°-

Legal Status:

Category of ownership: private

Details of legal and administrative provisions for the preservation of the documentary heritage: owned and preserved at the Institute of Asian Studies

Accessibility: only permitted for consultation at the Institute

Copyright status: Vests with the Institute of Asian Studies.

Responsible administration: Preserved in accordance with established principles at the Institute of Asian Studies.

Identification

Description: This collection includes individual manuscripts concerning the nature and symptoms of diseases, methods of cure, methods of preparing medicines following the systems of Siddha and Ayurvedic, animal husbandary.

Mostly Tamil Medical Manuscripts preserved at the Institute of Asian Studies reflect the ancient system of medicine, practised by yogis. This system explains the methods of obtaining medicines from herbs, herbal roots, leaves, flowers, barks, fruits etc. The proportions of the ingredients as well as the specific processes are explained in detail.

These medicines are harmless and cause no side effects. Even today, they are being prepared in the ancient way and are referred to as home-made medicines. These manuscripts have generally been indexed according to:

- The name of the author of the text
- The name of the author and the respective medicine
- The name of the medicine
- The name of the practitioner
- The name of the diseases.

Broadly this collection may be classified on the basis of its contents:

- Preparation of medicines to cure diseases. (309 Mss.)
- Preparation of medical powder and electuary (indigenous medicines) (146 Mss.)

- Medicine and mantiram. This underscores the ancient system of curing diseases through medicine and mantric chanting (57 Mss.)
- Children diseases with remedies (14 Mss.)
- Women's diseases (3 Mss.)
- Alchemy (35 Mss.)

The system of medicines explained by famous yogi doctors like Akattiyar, cattaimuni, cutamuni, Iramatevar, Kamala muni, Karuvurar, Konkanar, Korakkar, Tatinamurti, Tanvantiri, Tirumulor, Nanticor, find place in this collection. A detailed list of manuscripts is provided below to mark the authenticity of the collection. After the names of the ancient medical practitioners figures the number of their works (within brackets):

Akattiyar (137)
 Calliyan (5)
 Catlaimuni (6)
 Cottainatar (2)
 Cutamuni (4)
 Iramatevar (10)
 Karururar (6)
 Konkanat (12)
 Tatunamurti (8)
 Tanvantiri (3)
 Tiru mular (2)
 Nanticar (5)
 Macca muni (2)
 Uromarici (16)

These medical manuscripts have a special bearing in the field of medical sciences. This Institute has already published a descriptive catalogue of these manuscripts (indicated above) to highlight their importance.

Bibliographic details: Descriptive Catalogue Vol. IV (Part I & II) and Vol. V (Part I) published by the Institute of Asian Studies. These catalogues cover descriptions, including bibliographical data of the medical manuscripts.

Visual documentation: A specimen photograph of the collection and a Xeroxed copy of six leaves for reference.

History: This collection is achieved by a systematic collection during a decade of Palm-leaf Manuscripts kept uncared in various places of south India.

Bibliography: Subramaniam, P 1996. Descriptive Catalogue Vol. IV. Chennai : Institute of Asian Studies. Subramaniam, P 1997. Descriptive Catalogue Vol. V Part I. Chennai: Institute of Asian Studies.

Management Plan

This documentary heritage is a collection of Palm-Leaf Manuscripts on Medicine. It provides details about the method of preparing medicines to cure many diseases, which are duly explained. These Manuscripts are not permitted for lending, since handling of the Palm-Leaf Manuscripts would cause damage to the documentary heritage. Microfilming the documentary heritage will help to preserve it as well as to promote accessibility. These manuscripts, applied with lemon grass oil once a week, are kept in

the fumigation chamber in shelves with the chemicals tymol electrically heated in a beaker placed under them. Then, after a stipulated time, the manuscripts will be kept in shelves duly protected by glass-doors. At present, these manuscripts are kept under safe custody. Microfilming will be the permanent solution. The chamber is adjacent to the library, upkeep maintenance is good. The details of the preservation budget are given below:

Preservation staff: 2

Chemicals: Indian Rupees 5000 (per month)

Oil: Indian Rupees 1000 (per month)

Assessment against the Selection Criteria

Influence: Indigenous form of medicine used by doctors.

Time: The collection helps to know about various methods of preparing many kinds of medicines which are quite significant to the world of medicine.

Place: This collection reflects the system of medical practice prevailing in South India.

Subject/theme: This collection exhaustively contributes to Medical Science.

Form and Style: Ancient method of preparing medicine.

Social value: This collection bears social value as it describes the symptoms of diseases and the suitable cure

Contextual assessment: See "Description"

Authenticity: Idem

Rarity: Idem

Consultation

Owner: Institute of Asian Studies

Custodian: -d°-

Independent institutions and experts:

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Dr. K. Jaya Kumar, Associate Editor, Dept. of Manuscriptology, Institute of Asian Studies, Chennai

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Nominator

Name: Dr G. John Samuel, Dr Shu Hikosaka

Relationship to doc. heritage: Director, Institute of Asian Studies

Contact person: indicated above

Contact details: indicated above