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MEDICAL RESEARCH IN SOUTHERN ASIA
AS REVEALED IN ITS CURRENT PERIODICAL LITERATURE

Notes to accompany an exhibit
at the National Library of Medicine
July - August 1958

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Reference Division

Washington, D. C.
1958

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6-237,58

Progress in medical research today depends largely on the world-wide dissemination of its results through the periodical literature of all countries. No longer is it possible for the conscientious medical research worker to base his study on the literature of his country alone. The increased scientific activity of other countries of the world has therefore widened the horizons of medical research today. In the countries of Southern Asia, which extend westwards from Afghanistan and eastwards to the Phillipines, medical research is also advancing at an astonishing rate. Its results can be measured by a significant increase in its medical publications, of which over 220 current periodical titles are received to date by the National Library of Medicine. It is the purpose of this exhibit to focus attention on current medical activities of this region as they are recorded in some thirty selected periodical titles from the Library's collections. Also included in the exhibit are several early manuscripts and treatises to illustrate the ancient Indian traditions which formed the foundation of medicine in the Southern Asian countries.

Origins of Southern Asian Medicine

Due to the lack of documentary evidence, it is difficult to assess the true origins of Southern Asian medicine. It may be stated, however, that ancient Hindu medicine exerted the predominant influence on this region, and its results may be traced in Indochina, Indonesia, Tibet, Central Asia and as far as Japan. Under the ancient Hindu physicians, medicine was empirical and motivated by religious concepts; it was remarkably advanced in diagnostic, therapeutic and surgical techniques. Hospitals and similar institutions were established early under the aegis of enlightened rulers, and by the fifth century B.C., there were already a large number of hospital and charitable institutions.

The body of literature that gradually grew up on the subject of medicine is called the Ayur Veda, "Knowledge of Life," and the most important manuals grouped under this generic name are the Suśruta-samhita ("Compendium of Suśruta") and the Charaka-samhita ("Compendium of Charaka"). Suśruta, the most famous of the early Hindu physicians, flourished prior to the fourth century A.D., and his compilation deals not only with surgery but with medicine, pathology, anatomy, and many other allied subjects. Charaka, the second greatest Hindu physician, lived around 120-162 A.D. and his compendium, the Charaka-samhita, is a closely interwoven treatise on religion, philosophy, and medicine. Vagbhata, the third great name in Indian medicine, lived probably around the seventh century A.D. His chief work, the Astranga Samgraha, is a comprehensive work on medicine, therapeutics, hygiene, and a variety of other medical topics.

Present Status of Medicine in Southern Asia

India, largest of these countries, still leads the way in medicine and in scientific research. Although there are still practitioners of Ayurvedia medicine, 43 medical schools of the western type exist in India and graduate an estimated 3000 graduates each year. Research institutions are multiplying throughout the country, and the body of scientific literature is increasing at a rapid rate. At the present time in this Library some 140 current serial titles are received from India alone.

Increased activity in medicine and allied sciences is also evident in the countries Afghanistan, Burma, Ceylon, Indochina, Indonesia, Malaya, the Philippines, and Thailand. From these countries collectively, 180 current serial titles have been received in the Library since 1951. Although the language of their periodicals, documents, and monographs is still predominantly English, an increasing number are now appearing in the vernacular languages -- Hindi, Bengali, and other dialects in India, Malay in Indonesia, Thai in Thailand, Hindustani in Pakistan, Persian in Afghanistan.

LIST OF PERIODICALS ON DISPLAY

<u>Afghanistan</u>	Afghan medical journal. Kabul.	(Persian)
<u>Burma</u>	Burma medical journal. Rangoon.	(English)
<u>Ceylon</u>	Ceylon medical journal. Colombo	(English)
	Children's hospital. Journal. Colombo.	(English)
<u>India</u>	All India institute of hygiene and public health. Calcutta	(English)
	Indian journal of child health. Bombay.	(English)
	Indian journal of malariology. Calcutta.	(English)
	Indian journal of radiology. Madras.	(English)
	Indian council of medical research. Miscellaneous reports. New Delhi.	(English)
	Indian medical journal. Calcutta.	(English)
	Indian medical record. Calcutta.	(English)
	King Edward VII memorial Pasteur institute and medical research institute. Annual reports. Shillong.	(English)
	King institute of preventive medicine. Report. Guindy.	(English)

<u>India</u>	School of tropical medicine and the Carmichael hospital for tropical diseases. Annual report. Calcutta.	(English)
<u>Indochina</u>	Note technique de spécialité chirurgicale ophthalmologique. Saigon.	(French)
	Institut Pasteur. Rapport sur le fonctionnement technique. Saigon.	(French)
<u>Indonesia</u>	Madjalah kedokteran Indonesia. (Journal of the Indonesian medical assn.) Djakarta.	(Malay)
	Madjalah kesehatan angkatan perang. (Military medical monthly.) Djakarta.	(Malay)
<u>Malaya & Singapore</u>	Malaya (Federation) institute for medical research. Bulletins. Kuala Lumpur.	(English)
	Medical journal of Malaya. Singapore.	(English)
<u>Pakistan</u>	Hamdard-e-sehat. Karachi.	(Hindustani)
	The medicus. Karachi.	(English)
	Pakistan journal of scientific research. Lahore.	(English)
	Sind medical journal. Karachi.	(English)
<u>Philippine Islands</u>	Philippine journal of cancer. Manila.	(English)
	Philippine journal of ophthalmology and otolaryngology. Manila.	(English)
	Philippine journal of surgery, obstetrics and gynecology. Manila.	(English)
	Philippine medical world. Manila.	(English)
	Santo Tomas journal of medicine. Manila.	(English)
<u>Thailand</u>	Pharmaceutical assn. of Thailand. Journal. Bangkok.	(Thai)
	Royal Thai army medical journal. Bangkok.	(Thai)
	Siriraj hospital gazette. Bangkok.	(Thai)

LIST OF MONOGRAPHS ON DISPLAY

Monographs

Bower manuscript. Facsimile leaves, Nagari transcript, romanized transliteration and English translation with notes. Ed. by A. F. R. Hoernle. Calcutta, Supt. Govt. Printing, 1893-1912. 401 p.

Charaka-samhita. The collected works of Charaka. . . Rev. and pub. . . by B. J. Vidyasagara. Calcutta, printed at the Sarasvata Press, 1877. 962 p. (Sanskrit)

Charaka-samhita. Translated into English by A. C. Kaviratna. Calcutta, printed at D. C. Dass, 1888-1897. 508 p. 66 parts.

Sinhalese handbook for Vederals. Olas written on prepared palmyra or talipot palm fronds for native doctors. Over 300 pages inscribed with important extracts from the chief mediaeval medical manuscripts consulted in Ayurvedia practice. . . Kandy, Ceylon, 1640. (Sinhalese)

The Suśruta, or system of medicine taught by Ihanwantari and composed by his disciple, Susruta. Edited by Sri Madhusatana. Calcutta, Baptist Mission Press, 1835-36. 2 v. (Sanskrit)

Vagbhata. Astangahridayam, a compendium of the Hindu system of medicine composed by Vagbhata with the commentary of Arunadatta. Rev. and collated by A. M. Kunte. Bombay, printed at Ganpat Krishnaji's Press, 1880. 2 v. (Sanskrit).

