

Jamu—A Healthy Drink of Indonesia

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Abstract: Jamu is traditional herbal medicine and a healthy drink considered by some Indonesians to be a primary element in their lives. The term of jamu may be derived from ancient Javanese language “Djampi” that means a healing method using herb during the era of Ancient Java emerged since the 9th century AD. Jamu is consumed either in fresh or in processed one. Some jamu sellers still found carrying their wares, in a basket fastened to their torsos using a sling made of fabric, and visit door to door in local neighborhoods. The name is Jamu gendong. The use of the jamu remains the same as the ancestors did. The visible proof is the use of traditional herbal medicine of various type of “medical plants”, either from the leaves, the fruits, the roots, the flowers or the barks, etc. It is truly back to nature. These herbal medicine had been used since the ancient time up to now, it is largely consumed by people of different levels: lower, middle and upper, in the villages and in the big cities. Jamu as a cultural heritage has a big potential asset of Indonesia and is also one of Indonesia’s cultural products based on local resources and the creativity of the nation. Indonesia has natural resources of plants totaling about 30,000 species of flowering plants, which is the third largest in the world after Brazil and Zaire, including 7,000 species of medicinal plants, 940 species one could buy easily readymade jamu packed modernly in the form of powder, pills, capsules, drinking liquid and ointments. Of course there are still jamu shops, which only sell for those have been identified, 283 species are listed as raw materials that are used routinely in the medicine industry. Jamu from time to time has been widely accepted in almost every country in the world. It is not only as a preventive maintenance, but also as a curative treatment for acute and chronic treatment. At present ingredients of jamu and its preparation spot as required by buyers. Some women are roaming the street to sell jamu, which is a common view across the country. At present time, jamu has also been produced in mass by manufacturers for export, and mostly concerns on quality, consistency, and cleanliness either locally or internationally distributed.

Key words: Jamu, medical plant, drinking liquid, species.

1. Introduction

As a cultural heritage, jamu (formerly Djamu) is a potential asset of Indonesian Nation and it is one of Indonesia’s culture products based on local resources and the creativity of the nation. Therefore, jamu needs to be maintained and further developed [1]. Jamu is also predominantly herbal medicine made from natural material, such as part of plants such as roots, leaves and bark, and fruits. It has economic benefits such as the creation of market either domestically and internationally, and also import substitution, creation employment, and in the end it will also has an impact on the improvement of the quality of life such as health, fitness, beauty [2].



Indonesia is formally known as “Spice Island Country” for producing spices in the world since for many centuries. The knowledge of jamu is inherited from Indonesia ancestors and the document of jamu remains trace-backed to the period when Rumphius, a botanical expert of around the year of 1775 wrote in his book “Herbarium Amboinesis” which contained document of the use of plants for health care and treatment [3].

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Jamu can effectively remove dullness from your body, beauty bubble washes away the dirt and exfoliates your face Jawa Delicate Pawashes away the fluid from your private lower part, and keeps it clean. Jamu Scalp Cleanser eliminates the scalp odor. Many Indonesians believe in its effectiveness as health tonic, while men take it to increase stamina and sexual pow.

A holistic therapy based on the notion is that if disease comes from nature, then so must the cure, jamu must be used with a dazzling array of teas, tonics, pills, creams and powders to cure or prevent every ailment imaginable. The ingredients are by definition cheap, widely available and simple: nutmeg to treat insomnia, guava for diarrhea, lime to promote weight loss and basil to counter body odor.

Jamu can be found on the streets of Indonesia, where jamu is consumed regularly by 49% of the population, according to the country's Ministry of Health. Valued at \$2.7 billion annually, the industry covers an incredibly wide gamut of products and regimens, including homemade tonics sold by street hawkers, slimming powders, cosmetics and jamu for babies and postnatal care. There are jamu Brands like Kuat Lelaki (Strong Man), Kuku Bima (Nail of God) and Super Biul Erection Oil. "They have had their own remedies for years."

Charles Saerang, head of the Indonesian Jamu Entrepreneurs Association said that the primary impediment to a worldwide jamu craze is that locally produced jamu products do not meet international manufacturing standards. That has not stopped entrepreneurs from buying raw herbal materials in Indonesia, processing them in India and Malaysia and

selling them in the U.K. Indonesian-made jamu products can not access a market. That is a double whammy for Indonesia, which loses value added by third parties and the chance to promote the *jamu* brand name abroad.

"Back to nature" is not merely a slogan in Java and Indonesia. The visible proof is the use of traditional herbal medicine of various types of "medical plants", either from the leaves, the fruits, the roots, the flowers or the barks, etc. These herbal medicine had been used since the ancient time up to now, it is largely consumed by people of different levels: lower, middle and upper, in the villages and in the big cities.

The traditional methods of making jamu such as by boiling the prepared herbal ingredients (jamu godok) still prevail in Javanese society. The popular traditional tools of making jamu are still available in many Javanese houses such as: Lumpang (small iron Mortar), pipisan, parut (grater), kualu (clay pot), etc.

2. The History of Jamu

Jamu is a complex mixture of herbs that is applied as part of traditional healing and body care. The history of jamu according to experts in Javanese Linguistic is that the term of "Jamu" originated from Javanese language "Djampi or Jampi" which means healing, while jamu is the word used mostly by the common people [2]. Jamu is claimed to have originated in the Mataram Kingdom, some 1,300 years ago and heavily influenced by *Ayurveda* from India [4]. The jamu culture also reached a pinnacle during the era of Majapahit Kingdom in East Java, as a now to be come famous beauty treatments in the Kraton (Palace).

Jamu is an Indonesian terminology or language (bahasa Indonesia) for Indonesian origin of herbal preparation. The word jamu carries the meaning of "guest, hospitality, made from plants", and is the traditional wisdom carried through generations of Indonesian families. Produced with natural ingredients including herb, the knowledge of this traditional soap

is carried from generation to generation. Some are carried by indigenous physiician (dukun), others are given from mother to daughter [2].

The utilisation of herb for medication and beauty care can be found in many cultural and art products such as temple's relief, inscription stones, neolithic stones, paintings, manuscripts, etc. During the Hindu and Budhis Era at the First Century up to 16th Century our ancestors had the tradition of making and drinking jamu.

The knowledge and formulation of jamu had been found in the "Serat Kawruh" manuscript of jamu in Surakarta and Yogyakarta Palaces that was written in year of 1831. It contained 1,166 prescriptions, 922 of which were jamu preparations. In the manuscript "Serat Centhini" was believed to contain the most comprehensive references of medical treatment in ancient Java [1].

3. Jamu from Time to Time

For the people of Indonesia, jamu is hereditary ingredient needed to be maintained and developed. The recipes of jamu collected from the palace and the knowledge of jamu ingredients have grown in the society today. At the present time, the traditional jamu produced from herbs and other natural ingredients can be found in women who sell jamu by carrying etheir product on their back ("gendong"), so this traditionally made jamu is called "Jamu Gendong". The method of using the jamu remains the same as the ancestors did. Some are consumed by drinking it and some are for outside application. However, along with advancement of technology and an efficiency of time the fresh jamu and sometimes processed jamu or packed jamu has been sold by women using bike or motor bike on a large wooden box attached to her motorbike, stocked with several large bottles and a small pharmacy sachet of various cures [5].

Forms of jamu products varied from fresh jamu, boiling jamu, powders, pills, capsules, even later jamu is developed into different types of beverages and

health food, functional food products and spaor beauty products. Functions and benefits of jamu products are also growing well, and not only as a traditional medicine but it has been processed into a variety of products such as standardized jamu, phytoph armaceutical jamu, products for health maintenance, diseases prevention, restoration of health, fitness, relaxation, beauty treatments and jamu for animal or livestock care.

At present one could buy easily readymade jamu packed modernly in the form of powder, pills, capsules, drinking liquid and ointments. Of course there are still jamu shops, which sell only ingredients or prepare the jamu on spot as required by buyers. That some women are roaming the street to sell jamu, is a common view across the country. There are many large companies such as Air Mancur, Nyonya Menir or Djamu Djago, Sido Muncul, Marta Tilaar etc. which is provided by modern machineries for processing.

4. Ingredient and the Culture of Jamu

General jamu ingridients more or less depend on the region, in different regions have been created from a sence of the work that has a great kulinasi derived from herbs typical of each region across Indonesia and they enjoyable in a cup of the warmness of Indonesian flavors. It is called Jamu Nusantara [3]. Here are some of examples of selected jamu products according to region and ethnicity in Indonesia as follows:

(1) Jamu ingridients of *Badui Banten*, it is jamu ingredients derived from the Badui tribe in rural of Banten Province are used for treatment of broken bones, sprains, arthritis or post accident recovery. People believed this jamu to be able to cure diseases, restore fitness and fertility.

(2) Jamu Bali in everyday life apply on spa menus, advertisements and the local apotek. In Bali, herbs has been used and implemented for healing rather than beauty. Jamu traditional spa was the first use in traditional Indonesian treatments in Bali since 1988

serving international travelers. They started a trend for jamu-based products, which makes Bali into the limelight of the world of spas.

(3) General Jamu ingredients of Javanese people, it figurizes some types of jamu widely consumed by the people of the island of Java. Some of them are (a) jamu beras kencur which is believed to be able to cure body that has no appetite and is also able to stimulate appetite, and then increase the appetite body to make healthier; (b) Jamu kunir asem is consumed to nourish the body.

(4) Jamu ingredients of *Madura*, it is well known to keep and care the body such as treatment after childbirth, infant care as well as typical ingredient for health, cleanliness and vitality of man and women such as Tongkat Madura, Rapet Wangi, and empot-empot.

(5) Jamu ingredient of Dayak (Kalimantan Island). Dayak tribe in Borneo or Kalimantan Island is known to have traditional ingredients which are formulated from varieties of medicinal plants that grow in the jungle of Borneo. There are about 41 traditional medicinal plants roots which are believed to be beneficial for treating various chronic or mild diseases and be able to rejuvenate body fitness.

(6) Jamu ingredients of *Papua*. The traditional ingredients from Papua are hunted by the Indonesian people since they believed to cure various diseases naturally and safely especially for cancer and tumor, heart and kidney. The ingredients included the Buah merah and Sarang Semut. These ingredients have been passed down from generation to generation.

(7) There are various kinds of jamu to combat different kinds of illness. In principle there are two types of jamu (a) the first jamu is to maintain physical fitness and health, the locally popular are Galian Singset (to keep women body fit and slim) and Sehat Lelaki (to keep men body healthy); (b) The second is jamu to cure various kinds of illness. Except the above, there are special jamu created with the purpose to maintain a loving family harmony. The popular

products among other are Sari Rapet, which makes a women sexual organ in a good condition, as for the man the matched product is jamu Kuat Lekaki (strong man). The Javanese are also taking great care to pregnant women during pre and postnatal period by producing the related jamu. There are also jamu for the babies.

The herbs for Jamu come from spices, leaves, fruits, barks and flowers. There are hundreds of herbs for jamu prescriptions, among other are:

Spices: Ginger (*Zingiber Officinale*), Lempuyang (*Zingiber Oronticum*), Temu Lawak/ Wild Ginger (*Curcuma Cauteridza*), Kunyit/ Turmeric (*Curcuma Domestica*), Kencur/ Greater Galangale (*Kaempferia Galanga*), Lengkuas/ Ginger Plant (*Elphina Galanga*), Bengle (*Zingiber Bevilianum*);

Leaves: Secang (*Caesalpinia Sappan* Hinn), Sambang Dara (*Rexco Ecaria Bicolor* Hassk), Brotowali (*Tiospora Rumpii* Boerl), dan Adas (*Foeniculum Vulgare* Mill);

Fruits: Jeruk Nipis/ Calamondin (*Citrus Aurantifolia* Sivilge), Ceplukan (*Physalis Angulata* Him), Nyamplung (*Calophyllum Inophyllum*);

Barks: Kayu Manis/ Cinamon (*Cinnamomum Zeylanicum* Glabra);

Flowers: Melati/ Yasmin (*Jasminum Sunbat* Ait), Rumput Alang-alang (*Gramineae*).

It is worth to note that some jamu factories in Java are exporting its products. Besides the export of readymade jamu, 25 kinds of herbal plants and ingredients are also in the list of export to Europe, Australia, USA, Japan, etc. The people like to consume jamu due to: availability in many places, comparatively cheap price, no side effects.

5. Traditional and Modern Cosmetics

5.1 The Natural Beauty of Woman

A Javanese woman concerns very much about her physical appearance to be always slim, beautiful with an alluring bright smiling face. As a Javanese idiom says “Ngadi Sarira” to maintain the body to be always in perfect condition is of prime importance. The way

of life of a Javanese is greatly influenced by the royal culture. Not surprisingly that the art of “Keeping Beauty” is originated from the court palaces.

5.2 The Secret of a Princess Beauty

The Ladies of the Royal Families have a reputation to inherit the beauty of goddesses from paradise. As told in the story of wayang (leather puppet) by the dalang (puppet master), all parts of a princess body are always perfect and alluring: the beautiful black thick hair, a smooth skin, bright eyes, charming eye brows, eye lids and nose, bright reddish lips, white nicely teeth, wonderful built neck and shoulder, beautiful hands and arms, a waist like the one of a bee meanings slim and perfectly built.

5.3 The Use of Traditional Jamu and Cosmetics

Nowadays, some secrets of this Karaton (Palaces) culture of “Ngadi Sarira” are known by many women from outside the Karaton walls. The Jamu is widely used to give an inner beauty, due to a good physical health [6].

Some of the products are consumed directly by eating it, for instance Kepel Fruit (a brown fruit of a chicken egg size), it is a natural deodorant. Eating it that would fragrant the odor of the body even the urine smells the fragrance of that fruit.

Jambu Mawar (a kind of rose apple, mawar means a flower of rose) gives a fresh smell of breath. Some cosmetics are for outside application such as *bedak dingin* (cool powder) and *lulur* (scrubbing powder).

Beauty Care: Every woman is always proud of her hair thick and shining, color and style. For natural shampooing, the ash of rice stalks work as a shampoo to clean the hair. After being washed by water, ingredients consisting of coconut milk, jeruk purut (a kind of citrus fruit smells like a lime) and pandanus leaves are to be applied. It functions as a conditioner to clean the dandruff. The hair then is washed by water again, and dried while vaporizing with ratus fragrance. Finally, hair oil by the name of *cemceman*,

made of coconut oil with pandanus, kenanga flower, jeruk purut etc. is applied.

Skin Care: For face caring, *bedak dingin* (cool powder) is applied. It's made from tendered rice with special ingredients, such as pandanus, kenanga flower etc. For other parts of the body, *lulur* is applied, popularly known as *mandi lulur* (lulur bathing). Lulur is also made from tendered rice, pandanus, some leaves of kemuning (with yellow color) and some medicinal roots. The lulur should stimulate the body to throw out the dead cells, replace it with new ones, stimulate blood circulation under the skin, smooth the skin and at the same time scent it.

Steaming the body of several boiled herbs are applied to ensure body freshness, including the woman organ. The steaming took about a ½ hour.

Producers: Besides the traditional cosmetics made by hand, in the country there are some big and well known manufactures of cosmetics, using modern machinery. These products are used widely across the country, even these cosmetics have been exported to many countries of the world.

6. Roadmap of Jamu Development

President of Republic of Indonesia on his speech on Jamu Exhibition and Movement in 2008, instructed (1) The development of Jamu System has to be integrated with health services system; (2) Increasing on Research and Development of Jamu with a new technology innovation; (3) Pushing Jamu industry into mainstream of a domestic and a global market; (4) Developing jamu as *Indonesia brand*; (5) Pushing of jamu company to get expanded through a credit micro, small and medium scale; (6) Improvement of quality and safety of the products of jamu either for drink or for cosmetics through implementing food safety system such as HACCP, and ISO 22000. To develop a future of Indonesian jamu, he suggested establishing a strategic plan and putting into the Road map. The motto of Indonesia jamu is “Indonesia Jamu for improving quality of life people in the world” [8].

7. Conclusions

Jamu is an Indonesia brand of a healthy drink, either consumed in fresh or processed drink.

(1) Jamu is also used as traditional and modern cosmetic such as for skin care, beauty care and inner beauty, massage, and spa;

(2) Jamu is also what people believe for medicinal herb to cure such kind of diseases such as cancer, leucimia, heart, and kidney;

(3) Government support in the increasing of research and development of jamu, and support the micro, small and medium enterprises to expand their business through micro credit programme;

(4) A sustainability of quality and safety of Indonesian jamu has to implement a food safety management system such as HACCP, ISO 22000, etc.

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