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HISTORY OF THE HUNGARIAN PHYTOTHERAPY



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History of the Hungarian Phytotherapy

The idea and use of herbals go back to a century tradition in Hungary. In the middle ages there were monks who collected herbals and made tea, tincture, salve, pack, bath and essential oil for curing a number of illnesses.

The first institution was founded in 1915 and called Herb Experiment Station.

It controlled the collecting and cultivation of herbs and later scientific issues became one of its main tasks. As a result, Hungarian herb cultivation acquired a world fame. **János Kabay** processed how to turn out **morphine from dry seed box (world patent)** which was used for pain killing.



The methodology of cultivation and processing of chamomile was also founded and spread by a Hungarian scientist.

Today Herbal Research Institute organises and leads cultivation of natural herbs. Essential oils and herbals are cultivated in about 40-42 000 hectare area. Medicine realized the power of natural materials oppositely the poisoning effects of the artificial materials. There is a growing demand of both medical society and the laymen for natural methodologies.

The Healing Memories

We have bare information about the cultivation of conquering Hungarians.

Their beliefs were very close to shamanism of Ural-Altai people. The shaman was the spiritual leader in the community. He was the medicine man as well. In the Hungarian beliefs 'táltos' was identified with shaman.



The counterpart of 'garaboncid' was mixed with 'táltos' and shamans of western mystical traditions. The expression 'garaboncid' came from an Italian word 'gramanza' which means devilry. A garaboncid was game for both good and bad things and he knew the black magic and witchcraft as well. He had got a book and he read incantations out of it. When he knocked at the door you'd better to give him some food otherwise he was able to raise a storm or send a hail over the village by the beliefs.

There were a number of other counterparts in the Hungarian beliefs such as witches, scientist sheperds, millers, coachmen and seeing women or proposal people. They helped the community with their life or they just hampered them. There were not warfs, elves, goblins, fairies, mermaids, giants and home spirits in the Hungarian tradition. They were the characteristics of the people living west of us.

After taking christianity and integration to the order of European states we had to get rid of pagan traditions. Greek and Roman medicine were spread throughout Europe by the convents. Curing and healing were very important tasks for a monk. Monestries had got huge gardens where different kind of herbs were cultivated. Monks knew the effects of natural herbs by **Dioszkoridész, Hippokratész, Galenus-** and they spread them through the country.

The medieval monks also made. charitable work for patients. Their knowledge was based on findings of the ancient medicine (especially "knowledge") and practical experience. One of their current ascertainment today is that health needs harmony of body and soul. Therefore, it was important for them to consider not only the soul of the body and vice versa not only cherish the sick body, but the soul.

They visited very patient people but in general , the monastery has been visited by patients. The monastery was usually built next to a hospital where patients in sick-bed was kept under permanent observation .

Medicinal herbs grown in the monestry garden such as sage, lavender, rosemary but also collected plants from fields.

The first monk healers in Hungary were monks of Saint Benedict. In addition, of course, other orders also dealt with nursing care. First to mention here is 'ispotályos' orders who nursed lepers in Esztergom.

Of course, the female monks have also been dealt with, for example, the order of poor ladies in nursing care so the healers of disease activity was supported by the King, the advantages have been or are donated to them holdings or baths.

So one of the monks became first doctors. However, some areas were under the jurisdiction of secular experts. For example, only midwives dealt with obstetrics.

Miracles and amulets

The weird faith lived in healing: the power of the prayers, weird healings, amulets also gave hope that time. In the history of the legends you can find a variety of wonderful healings: it occurred as a frequent motif that patients and blinds recovered at tombs of saints or at famous pilgrim places.

King Kálmán 'Könyves' of Hungary (1095-1116), for example, wore a protective amulet ring against gout.

Secular physicians appeared in greater number in Hungary, at the reign of King Béla iii (1172-1196). They got most of their knowledge by foreign studies. They attended mostly Italian universities. You can find not only inland but foreign doctors in Hungary in this age of course, primarily at the Royal Court or in the vicinity of the richer lords.

The King and the nobles, paid doctors well: they gave properties and money to doctors, the priests were helped later at a high ecclesiastical subject.

the people had also of course their representatives in nursing care. In areas where doctors have not reached or there was no money to them were such healers.

The herbal plants

Plants played an important role in the medicine. Herbs first were grown and collected by monks. Some plants were primarily obtained by foreign traders through Italian mediation.

The cultivation of monastery gardens became such an activity which made balance between physical and mental work.

The garden emerged as the monastery's library reading also in the intellectual work: the Bible and the spiritual authors, in addition to antique agricultural topics from gardening. Distribution of the four parts in the garden remained, which did not only represent the four elements or the four quarters but the four evangelists as well. The monasteries comprised several buildings, and each building had a separate garden. Besides the indigenous species you can find plants here from abroad naturalized by foreign monks. Lavender, Sage, Rosemary, Oregano and Thyme are raw materials that we use as herbs today but they were decorated pieces of monastery gardens and healing in the Middle Ages.

Healing practice of the upper, wider and lower classes of populations were very close to each other in the middle ages. Since the 13th century a huge number of students had learned in famous universities of Europe. They brought many books and studies home. Vocabulary of the herbal knowledge was quite rich that time in Hungary.

HERBARIUM.
AZ FAKNACFVV
BŐNÉC NEVEKRŐL, TERMÉSETEK-
ről, és hasznairól. Magyar nyelvre, és az
scandic hollra az Doctorec Könyveiből
az Hostia Melius Peter.



Nyomatott Colofónus Helti Gáspárnak
Műhelyében, 4. 5. 78. Éftendőben.

Recipe-books were spread by handwriting. The most famous printed book titled Herbarium by Melius issued in 1578 in Cluj. Melius used contemporary folk names because he wanted to fit his work to the Hungarian flora.

The Hungarian folk medicine had 3 useful suggestions for healthy lifestyle which serve the prevention:

1. Moderation in the whole way of life (diet, physical exercise, adequate protection against cold) relevant folk wisdom: "Everyone must take care for not to lift heavy, and not to get cold." "Be always a good master of your body!" „Be moderate in eating, drinking and working!"
2. Natural way of life: coexistence with nature, following cycles of nature.
3. Inner life: faith, cheerful, hopeful, optimistic mood. Annoyance, anger and anxiety impair the health. A serene and wise conduct of life is the cornerstone of peace and quiet life.

Since the 16th century medical herbal books had contained important suggestions about using natural herbals.

Since the 1600s, renewing contents of home pharmacies and paying salary for women collecting herbs were regular expenses in the noble households. The aristocratic families applied so called 'bathing-women' who put herbs into the bathing water (e.g.: elderflower). Since 17th century medicinal water had been made.

Váli Nedeliczi was one of the most popular woman collecting herbs in the 17th century. She roved most of the European countries as a hawker selling herbs then she graduated as a doctor in the university of Padua and became a doctor of Miklós Esterházy. She kept contact between the upper classes and medical knowledge of the folk people.

Medical books of 17-18th century had almost the same content as the 20th century folk methodologies.

Medical methodologies of 18-19th centuries remained in form of manuscripts in which you can read 'smoking' and 'steaming' as folk methodology for curing. That time garlic was one of the most important folk medicine.

At the end of the 18th century , official medicine based on herbs.

In the early 19th century an appeal was published for collection of folk healing traditions but folk poetry and reform approaches led to the attention of folk healing.

The practice of healing in previous centuries is a significant part of the present life.

Key elements of the Folk Medicine

Magic methodologies

These methods were used when the origine of illness was unknown.

The most common causes of disease:

- God (as a fate controller)
- And the 'bad' elements. They can be supernatural beings, witches or quacks having miraculuous power.

'**Casting**' was a common form of **impairing**. Then 9 grain harvest brew prepared ,and it was poured onto a busy crossing road or in front of the house where the person lived they wanted to be impaired. If someone stepped into the poured brew, got ill. They often made so called 'impairing puppets' or 'curing puppets' : it was an other method for impairing or curing.

'**Giving to the wind**' was another popular folk method for curing (they put the clothes of an ill person in to openair bushes or trees and the wind blew them away).

'**Tunneling**' - when an ill child had to be given through a window or the parts of a splitted tree. It was a symbolic rebirth. In Mezőtúr when a child had a whooping-cough he had to get through a donkey's legs 3 times. In Moldva children got donkey milk for curing whooping-cough. On palm Sunday they smoked the ill patient with dedicated flower or donkey dung.

Ill children were '**cooked**' : an ill child was sat in a cauldron , set fire under it and he was cooked in effigy.

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Vice actions carried out, e.g.: They made '**magic bathing water**' of nine different types of grass and they whipped children with the back side of vests, petticoats after it (Abaújkér).

Role of the left hand: incantations counting **backward**. They wanted to get the desired effect by this method. They thought that they could recruit the order of a disease-reversed life.

The power of word of folk medicine

Many people in the world believed in healing power of a spoken word. This is one of the oldest, easiest and traditional ways for curing. It doesn't need any direct **physical** intervention and it doesn't cause any pain. The main effect of it is only psychological.

The time and place of healing

The time and a place of a curing were not the same by the folk belief. Certain disease prevail in wet or dry weather condition. The list of '**unlucky days**' of the 19th century had survived in manuscripts. Folk medicine retained this belief in some extent which generally associated diseases with health affairs by moving of the sun and the moon e.g.: the beginning of dawn was associated with purity or illness and death were connected to the night. Sunrise can have a helping effect and sunset or moonrise can be connected to sending down of the illness.

The role of celestial bodies: the rhythm of them ruled dates of healing. Sun was usually remembered as a benign, healing factor. After sunset the time of 'wrong powers' and disease lasted until dawn. Changes of moon were associated with the efficacy of the drug or medicine.

Magic numbers: They usually enhanced the healing effects. So called '**holy figures**' are known in all cultures (such as **3, 4, 7, 9**). Number 3 is the most frequently listed in the Hungarian folk medicine. It is usually repeated three times to cure (or take the medicine) the same morning, noon and night, midnight and early dawn or three consecutive days at the same time. Nine is listed as a multiple of 3 (e.g.: they read at barley nine times or nine pieces of puppet made). Nine usually indicates various subjects in medicine (nine types of grass, soil from nine different graves, flour from 9 houses). Repetition of the holy figures provided by the increased impact of psychological healing.

The place of healing: Parts of the house from the **stove and the threshold** is included in the curative action forum for both direct contact with the outside world through the transition between the outer and inner worlds, therefore, was considered particularly suitable for the scene of spells. Such was also the **crossroads and the cemetery** was the site of healing important pilgrimage places in which the traditional village lifestyle played a significant role in most of the pilgrimage was under some kind of "sacred wells" or the healing in **places of pilgrimage** acquired by the people of those objects which can then be attributed to such healing power like the holy water brought home.

The identity of the healer

The medicine is extremely important for the healing of the identity of both body and mind heal the patient to convey the personality of the healer faith healing efficacy of the therapy into confidence, without which there is no improvement, there were no cures for which we have specialist nearly every family was an **elderly woman** who understands herbs to the wounds or other common ailments.

However, in cases which were featured in a special traditional healers had to turn the world of peasant society with no physician required in these various diseases of the fifties about healers operate throughout the country in the so-called scientist, **women dealing with pouring, pasting, collecting grass or osteopaths.**

Our people made a distinction between the various healers and their operational effectiveness, necessarily strengthened the confidence to believe in the folk healers of the community members who were in the language that is understood by the people of the same activities, they will argue that all beliefs are accepted in the environment.

According to popular belief, **they possessed supernatural abilities.** Possession of supernatural abilities have obtained several ways:

1. he was "inherently scientific" who has healed from his ancestors is usually a parent or grandparent is able to transfer his knowledge to young
2. people could acquire knowledge through learning, or someone paid in the teachings of this was the rarest
3. handicrafts were the representatives of the people already healer for example, was a blacksmith in the village midwives in many places some of the shepherds

Healing techniques

In folk medicine for centuries have used a variety of healing techniques are some physical effects (cold-shock or pressure melegatás) based on the experience and daily practice has confirmed some of the therapies such as massage bath.

Bathing:

Bathing in the place of the village was previously a rarity special healing powers attributed to him have been stepped up especially when the impact of two types of herbs can be observed with bath application of Hungarian folk medicine practice

- the elements of magical bath
- bath containing herbs

The warm bath water to keep the heating of a very ancient method used in some areas: heated stones were thrown into the water or hot irons in particular are often used for this form of bathing to alleviate rheumatic pains in the proceedings, the water cure (hydrotherapy) is discovered in the ancient way of bathing accelerates the blood circulation and thus facilitates make easier the evacuation of accumulated toxins from the body.

Besides the warm bath is used to cold baths were known as in places of pilgrimage yet known of the various sulfur gas water "peasant bathing places" - especially in Transylvania - which are primarily skin disorders gout founded useful resources elsewhere, or water wells had medical power.

Smoking:

A steam bath in addition to smoking, there was another well-known and frequently used approach in the rich Hungarian folk medicine for smoking . People have been smoked "fear" or against frightening. The patient has been smoked by seven pieces of sorghum broom took her mother's hair in it not missing any of the herbs such as grass They were given the little dress and tied it lit a little child that was already expanded well beyond the smoke permeate.

the physical effects on healing techniques:

those based on simple **mechanical effects**: the wounds cut open and the phlebotomy venomous snake bite or rabid dog bite, you simply sucked the poison from the wound.

The **massage** and applied to various kinds of diseases such as headaches in the forehead and scalp massage to the temples in the landscape of strong Tapping tonsils and sore all the limbs of rheumatic gout or women dealing with pasting craft was then used to massage a woman in each village was usually the midwife who did the hard work suddenly bad haul from lower back pain massage to the elimination of the minimum or else the seventh child was trampled by a sore back waist.

When somebody had an indigestion (which the fatty foods can cause) **lubrication** of treatment was prevalent throughout the country the 17th century to the present day.



Cover glass: the patient's abdomen a small piece of bread and covered with lit candles and then inserted into a mug or a glass cup under the thinned air is pulled in the area around the navel and eased the pain of fractures and dislocations in the case of mechanical treatments are also used for sprained limbs rural location error of the osteopath was responsible for records showing that these healers could help the individual muscle groups to massage the back button to correct a broken arm in the correct use of wooden rods bound around splint .

Used materials



Hungarian folk healing is almost all the material used: human and animal materials and minerals through herbs, the plants had a well-known therapeutic effects due to almost no attention was paid to other substances such as smoking, use of human hair.

Inexhaustible source of animal life of the people was to be used in the healing substances such materials were available directly from the peasant households, mostly derived primarily from pets.

The cream, milk and butter: the treatment of burns and scalding to the cut wound in the stables across the country are covered with cobwebs from a long time kept by the official pharmaceutical drug cantharides (*Lytton vesicatoria* l) by the Hungarians in the case of a rabid dog's bite is usually used in nine beetle's armor had to be broken up in milk brandy bread with jam.

Form used by our people live through the centuries, medicinal leeches have a 13 century old medical books were presented to the healing effects and suggested use for everyone to use if your blood pressure was a headache. About medicinal leech the officials revealed that the milling vessel spasm relieving analgesic effect and vasodilatory anticoagulant substance in the body and the risk of infection is minimal in our country in the fifties was sold leeches even more in rural towns and markets.

Origin of **mineral and other substances** may be added to the drugs used in folk medicine in the storehouse of minerals such as common salt: magic and evil forces away from long attributed to him but also recognized the real effect of healing (eg wound sliced bread in boiling salted wound, or have a small bag of salt salt were heated to a sore stomach tab).

The people's faith in the healing service led to the simple beliefs of the snakes found in rocks probably of medieval gem therapy and the eastern snake honor the memory of the Hungarian folk beliefs of the tiny thumb-sized pebbles worn smooth power possessed healing sores and boils cancer healing stones used in this lightning formed three times around the stone of heaven was a place of healing hope furuncles found in the nature of the resin material used by mankind since ancient times, the Hungarians are the groups of the resin was kept as a tooth cleaning chewing habit and stomach strength are living near pine forests.

Quinine, iodine, camphor incense mercury petroleum pitch and salicyl alcohol were used for various diseases based on observations and tested the treatment effects.

Herbs:

A folk medicine used for a variety of materials including the use of herbs present long tradition and maintained outside of the actual impact, the fact that the application of herbs on hand were the most common forms: externally - wrap fomentation bath ointment; internally - tea rinse for daily use, the Successful healing again and again confirmed the fact the healing effects.

No coincidence that over the centuries maintained those elements of folk curative medicine that the official one had taken centuries earlier Understandable the scientific interest for the medicinal plants because of the synthetic drugs used today, 40-45% of the plant contains active herbs known, unfortunately, only a small fraction of the investigated with a view that contains **the active ingredient of what we plant trees around 3000 is only about three hundred is used for healing purposes.**

Confirmed by the analysis of modern herbariumától Peter Melius (1578) today to track people's experience (the same as the proposed use of folk medicine in certain herbs such as what is written Melius), the versatile centauriuins are used in natural medicine, herbs are untapped treasure.