

# ***SOCIETY FOR NEW AGE HERBALS***

## ***VIEWS & REVIEWS***

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## **ON-LINE CRUDE DRUG DATABASES**

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The Institute of Natural Medicine, University of Toyama, Japan in its Museum of Materia Medica houses nearly 24000 crude drug samples, used in various traditional and ethno-medicines in the world. The samples collected from around the world, have been preserved and are exhibited in various sections of the museum under the heads

Kempo Formulations, Health Foods, and Sino-Japanese Crude Drugs Sino-Japanese and Rare Crude Drugs  
Tibetan, Mongolian, and Uygur Crude Drugs  
Ayurvedic, Unani, Tibetan, Thai , Indonesian, and Brazilian Crude Drugs

With a view to promote research and create awareness and accessibility to information on these crude drugs, ETHMEDmmm , a bilingual database ( English and Japanese) on crude drugs has been developed at the University. Although only Sino-Japanese crude drugs have been covered so far, work on development of databases on Ayurveda, Unani, Tibetan, and Thai crude drugs is in progress. The database consisting of crude drug samples interlinked with scientific information relevant to the samples cited in various ethno medicines of the world, can be accessed at [www.toyama-mpu.ac.jp/riw/mmmw/index-j.html](http://www.toyama-mpu.ac.jp/riw/mmmw/index-j.html), after registration. The database also purports to highlight the usefulness and safety of traditional and folk-lore medicine.

Another global project, initiated by the Toyota Foundation and being executed by researchers, scientists and administrators from Japan, Nepal and Pakistan, envisages capacity building in applied Ethnobotany of the Asian Communities. The project aims at linking medicinal plant information beyond national boundaries. It includes collection, identification and conservation of Himalayan medicinal plant resources, besides recording utilitarian information regarding them, based on the inherent knowledge of the village communities of the region.

It is perhaps such information in relation to new age herbal health care systems that prompted Dr Foster and Dr Duke to say “-----In our litigious American society, it costs more than \$350m to prove a new drug safe and efficacious. We may need to wait for the Japanese to develop natural medicine for us. In the last decade the Japanese held more than half of the new patents on natural products”.

Purusotam Basnet & Katsuko Komatsu, *in* Proceedings of Bhutan - Japan Joint Symposium on Conservation and Utilization of Himalayan Medicinal Resources, Thimpu, Bhutan, 29<sup>th</sup> – 31<sup>st</sup> August, 2006, p 155.

Takashi Watanabe & Shoji Yahara, *in* Proceedings of Bhutan - Japan Joint Symposium on Conservation and Utilization of Himalayan Medicinal Resources, Thimpu, Bhutan, 29<sup>th</sup>– 31<sup>st</sup> August, 2006, p 160.

Steven Foster & James A Duke , Preface , A Field Guide to Medicinal Plants and Herbs of Eastern and central North America. 2<sup>nd</sup> edn., 2000.