

A Review on *Shalaky Tantra Vaidyatharakam*

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ABSTRACT

Background: *Vaidyatharakam* is a traditional Ayurvedic folklore of Kerala that was written by Vaidyakalanidhi C.N Narayanan. This book has been written with *Ashtangahrudaya*, *Arogyakalpadruma* and many other ancient manuscripts as their primary reference material. This work is now a ready reference for wide collection of simple and short herbo-mineral combinations that were used in the clinical practice by many renowned Ayurvedic practitioners of Kerala. **Materials and methods:** Literature related to *Shalaky Tantra* were studied in detail from *Vaidyatharakam* and *Bruhatrayees*. Concerned topics of the textbook were then compared with *Bruhatrayees*. Differences in opinion among the two groups of textbooks, extra references given a particular literature, modifications in treatment modalities in the context of specific diseases were noted and analysed. **Results and discussion:** *Vaidyatharakam* has unique style of presentation that concises enormous detailings in *Bruhatrayees* by grouping majority of diseases under broad headings of Doshic vitiation. Special formulations mentioned for *Aschyotana* in *Netra Rogas* and the technique of medicine preparation were innovative and simple. **Conclusion:** Ayurvedic folklore books like *Vaidyatharakam* opens up wide arrays of possibilities that can make Ayurvedic practices precised and cost effective. Such books should be identified and subjected to reviews that would add strength to Ayurveda in public health management. **Keywords:** *Vaidyatharakam*, Ayurvedic Folklore, *Shalaky Tantra*, Kerala Ayurveda.

I. BACKGROUND

Vaidyatharakam is a traditional folklore Kerala Ayurvedic literature that was written by Vaidyakalanidhi C.N Narayanan. This work was made by this broad visionary author in 1974, with an aim to compile a wide collection of traditional

and time-tested remedies that were popular in Kerala. Author was a disciple of two legendary paediatric Ayurvedic physicians Sri P.N Appavu Vaidyar, who was *Balachiktsak* of Thiruvithankur royal family and Sri C.K Narayanan Vaidyan, who was also a renowned *Balachiktsak* and himself, the father of the author.

Although the literature is elaborately written upon *Kaumarabhrtya*, author has also included treatment modalities from other specialities and other common prevalent diseases of that time period in this book. This book has been written with *Ashtangahrudaya*, *Arogyakalpadruma* and other Manuscripts as their primary reference material. This work is now a ready reference for wide collection of simple and short herbo-mineral combinations that were used in the clinical practice by many renowned Ayurvedic practitioners of Kerala.

This work is also appreciated widely for its perfection in presentation of *Slokas* in terms of *Vritta*. The total content that is available with us in the present time was completed by two editions of the work. In the second edition, author included some topics as an add on to the first edition like *Rakta-Atimardha*, *Arogya Raksha Vidhis*, and some detailings in *Kaumarabhrtya*. Author himself has stated in the foreward section of this book that this literary work is done to serve the purpose of a handbook for the dull-witted group, who seek for ready references of medicinal combinations. Anyways, this book essentially is a shining star among other folklore Ayurvedic literature, as its name itself suggests.

II. MATERIALS AND METHODS

Literature related to *Shalaky Tantra* were studied in detail from *Vaidyatharakam* and *Bruhatrayees*. Concerned topics of the textbook were then compared with *Bruhatrayees*. Differences in opinion between the two groups of textbooks, extra references given in a particular

literature, modifications in treatment modalities in the context of specific diseases were noted and analysed.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Peculiarity in classification of diseases

This textbook enumerates almost every disease by its name, that are mentioned in *Ashtangahrudaya* and *Susruta Samhita*. But when it comes to the description, majority of the diseases are classified and included in the broader headings of *Doshic* involvement like *Vatika Rogas*, *Paithika Rogas*, *Kaphaja Rogas*, *Rakthaja Rogas*, *Sannipatika Rogas* and *Agantuja Rogas* according to the need in that context of *Rogas*. As exceptions, some particular diseases are also explained with individual headings, that may be owing to their particular importances. Some of the diseases that comes under the latter category are, like *Badhirya* in *Karna Rogas*, *Ardhavabedhakain* *Siro Rogas*, *Dushta Prathishyaya* in *Nasa Rogas* etc. If prevalence and commonness in their occurrence of those diseases were the basis of that kind of elaboration, there also raises the question of why *Abhishyanda* or *Timira* being a common *Netra Roga* was not elaborated in such a way.

The method of broad classification is used for both description of *Roopas* and *Chikitsa* of *Karna Rogas*, *Nasa Rogas*, *Siro Rogas*. In the context of *Netra Rogas*, thus mentioned classification can only be found in *Chikitsa* section. In the beginning of *Netra Roga Adhikara*, *Acharya* quotes the total number of *Netra Rogas* as 95, but then avoids the description of their specific features like their particular name, region of manifestation, *Roopa* etc. by giving the reason of fear of overelaboration. Contradictorily, *Acharya* has explained majority of *Mukhagata Rogas* with distinction on the basis of their sites of manifestation.

This gives a clue about the one of the notions of the author behind creation of such a work, which was probably to concise and simplify the whole content of diseases wherever possible, that can make the particular *Tantra* seem less complex. Elaboration of course can provide clarity of a subject, but when the fundamental of this science itself is about the manifestation of disease based on *Vikrithi* of *Doshas*, such a classification is also right. Exceptions seen in some contexts like in *Mukha Rogas* can be due to diverse nature of

presentation that cannot be generalized or due to relevance and attention that diseases seek.

2. Description of *Nidanas* and *Pathyapathya*

Although author has obviously adapted the content from *Bruhatrayees*, at many sites additions are seen, other than the information available from *Sushruta Samhita* and *Ashtanga Hrudaya*. *Nidana* and *Pathyapathya* are some of the such fields. For example, while describing the *Vatika Karna Roga* context, *Nidanas* are elaborated by the extra mentioning of intake of *Kashaya*, *Tikta*, *Katu Rasas*. Another example is in the context of *Nasa Rogas* where, *Ashtangahrudaya* reference of *Vata Dosh* *Kopais* incorporated in *Vathika Prathishyaya Nidana*. This can be an assertion for signifying the role of *Vata* in *Prathishyaya*. In the context of *Apathyas* for *Netra*, consumption of *Katu*, *Amla*, *Lavana Rasas* are contraindicated for health of eyes.

These mentionings provide the reader with vision and updation in the concept of pathogenesis. Author himself has acquainted this knowledge through years of observation and has contributed greatly by passing on such valuable information to further generations.

3. *Asadhyata* of *Badhirya*

Towards the end of the *Karna Roga*, Author gives the *Asadhyata* of *Badhirya Chikitsa*. According to the author, treatment may won't give desired output in chronic cases, *Bala* and *Vridha*. Throughout the *Sastra*, chronicity of a particular disease is observed as a bad prognosis for the disease. In children, where the majority of deafness has a congenital origin, it will be associated with a structural deformity resulting in the malfunction. When a particular initial phase of active development of senses has passed, conservative measures become incapacitated in providing a desired outcome. In the phase of old age, *Sareera* itself is unable to rejuvenate in proper ways as *Dhatu* has already entered into state of *Kshaya*. This would also result in biasing the efforts to cure the condition.

4. Formulations

i. *Lepana* in *Nasarshas*

A simple, easy to implement was observed in the context of *Nasarshas Chikitsa*. Application of fresh *Kalka* of *Swetha Gunja* seeds over the *Nasarshas* is indicated. *Gunja* is categorized as a *Mula Vishaby* *Susrutha* and as a *Upavisha* by *Bhavaprakasha*. Being *Tikshna* in *Guna*, *Katu* in

Vipaka and *Ushna* in *Veerya*, *Gunja* is expected to have better results by its application over *Nasarshas*.

ii. *LekhanaGulika*

A reference of *Gulika* for the purpose of *Anjana* in *Suklarogas* is given in the text. Ingredients of the formulation are tender leaves of *Karanja*, *Godhanta*, *Sankha*, bone of donkey, *Samdruphena* and *Tamra*. All these ingredients should be powdered and *Bhavana* should be done in *Gomutra*. Majority of the drugs in this combination has *KatuVipaka* and *Tikshna Guna* which will serve the purpose of *Lekhana*. Medium of *Anjana* is *Madhu* which is both *Lekhana* and *Ropana*.

iii. *Aschyotana Yoga*

A combination of *Trikatu*, *Haritaki*, *Yashtimadhu* and *Tuthais* mentioned for *Aschyotana*. These drugs are to be taken inside a *Potali* and the *Potali* should be dipped in *Dhanyam* kept in a vessel made from *Tamra*. After dipping, the liquid should be instilled by squeezing the *Potali*. This way of medicine preparation is unusual and opens up many possibilities for trial purposes. Since the medium is *Amla* and majority of drugs are with *Lekhana* properties except *Yashtimadhu*, they will be more effective in diseases of *Kaphavitiation*.

iv. *VartiKalpanas*

Acharya has mentioned three sets of *Vartis*, one each for one particular dominant *Dosha* dominant eye diseases, ie. *Vatika*, *Rakta-Pittaja* and *KaphajaNetraRogas*. Particular combinations are:

Vatika Netra Rogas- Supernatant part of curd from cow's milk should be taken and spread over silver vessel and thus dried. When this achieves a blue colour, it should be mixed with *Mastu* and made into a *Varti*. This can be applied as collyrium in eyes.

Rakta-Pittaja Netra Rogas- *JatiMukula*, *Sankha*, *Triphala*, *Yashtimadhu* and roots of *Bala* should be subjected to *Bhavana* in *Sudha Thoya* and made into a *Varti*. This would be beneficial for eye diseases with *Rakta-Paithika* dominance

Kaphaja Netra Rogas - *Saindhava*, *Triphala*, *Trikatu*, *Sankha*, *Samudraphena*, *Shala Nirayasa*, *Shilajatu* should be subjected for *Bhavana* in *ShudhaThoya* and made into a *Varti*. This combination would be especially effective for *Kaphaja Netra Rogas*.

v. *Karnapoorana* in *KarnashoolaChikitsa*
For the purpose of *Karnapoorana*, any of *VataharaGana* processed with *AmlaVarga*, *Mutra Varga* and *Maha Sneha* is advised in *Bruhatrayees*. In this text, *BhadradarvadiGana* is specifically mentioned for such processing. This *Gana* along with the other two mentioned with it are sometimes referred to as *VataghnaGanas*, owing to their potency. *Karna* being a *VataSthana*, this *Yoga* suits the best for the particular intervention.

IV. CONCLUSION

Simplicity and uniqueness can be considered as the highlights of *Vaidyatharakam*. Periodic updation in the field of medicines is considered as a lacuna of present era. Ayurvedic folklore books like *Vaidyatharakam* opens up wide arrays of possibilities that can make Ayurvedic practices precise and cost effective. Such books should be identified and subjected to reviews that would add strength to Ayurveda in public health management.

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