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Review Article

VISHA VAIDHYA SARA SAMUCHCHAYA: A BOOK REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

Agada tantra is one of the eight branches of Ayurveda. In olden times, many toxicological books were written by eminent scholars of Kerala. Many toxicological clinics were established at that time in Kerala by adopting the treatment principles mentioned in those books. *Visha vaidhya sara samuchchaya* is one of the books that has explained in detail about the treatment aspect of *visha*. Treatment modalities like *oothu chikitsa* which is commonly practiced in Kerala for unconscious patient for regaining consciousness is available in this book. This book is a valuable reference for academicians, research scholars, practitioners, etc. Emergency management of poison is also explained in this text book.

Keywords: agada tantra, visha vaidhya sara samuchchaya, visha, oothu chikitsa

INTRODUCTION

Agada tantra is one of the eight branches of *ayurveda* which describes animate and in-animate poisons and its management in detail¹. *Agada tantra* is a branch that always demands practical training more than any other branch of Ayurveda as it has to deal with fatal cases and emergency management². Keraleeya *visha vaidhyam* has an ancient and renowned back ground. In this system both vedic and non- vedic schools of thought were present. From the back ground of these schools of thought a tradition that is purely indigenous to Kerala evolved and became very popular³. Kerala styles of toxicology flourished well as familial tradition and as a result, there existed a good number of toxicologist in Kerala. *Visha vaidhya sara samuchchaya* is one of the literary treasure in *agada tantra*, the original text was composed by Cherukulappurath Krishnan Namboodiri in 1961. This book is written in Sanskrit language for the purpose of enrichment with different grammatical styles. His disciple, VMC Sankaran Namboodiri elaborated a commentary on this work which has been compiled and translated into English by his young apprentice Dr. Madhu. Many toxicological clinics were established at that time in Kerala by adopting the treatment principles mentioned in this text book. *Visha Vaidya Sara Samuchchaya* explains clinically relevant aspects of *visha chikitsa*.

About the book

The book is divided into two sections, a *purvārdha* and an *uttarārdha*. The first half of the *purvārdha* discusses about classic matters as determining if a case is curable or incurable, *dhootha lakshanas*, *sakunas*, vital points, levels of envenomation, and types of snakes. The latter half of the *purvārdha*, is focused on treating the bites of the cobras, vipers, and kraits. The first part of the *uttarārdha* (section two in the text numbering) is about healing the bites/ stings of various animals

other than snakes: that of rodent, scorpion, spider, rabid dog, mongoose, cat, etc. The third section in the text (latter part of the *uttarārdha*) describes various multi-purpose remedies and first aid measures.

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About the author

Cherukulappurath Krishnan Namboodiri (1879-1966)

Cherukulappurath Krishnan Namboothiri was born as the second son to his parents in a moderate Brahmin family, in Malabar. After learning the customary vedas, he began to learn Sanskrit under Kurunkad Vasudevan Namboodiri who was a great master of that time. After completing *kavya*, *vyakarana*, and *alankara*, he proceeded to *koodallor mana* to learn *shastras*. *Koodallor mana* at the times was famous as the *Saraswati kshethra* of Kerala as all the family members devoted to *Patanjali maharshi*. Ever keen to tread uncharted territories, *Cherukkulapuram's* next destination was *Thamattor mana*, where he began to learn Ayurveda especially *Bala chikitsa* and *Visha vaidyam* under the famous master, *Thamattoor Narayanan Namboodiri*. Shortly after this he came back to *Peringode* his native place. He began to practice *visha vaidhyam* and also started teaching students at *Poomulli mana*. His other skill remains rather unknown to the general public as he was very unassuming kind of person and never flaunted his knowledge. He has written an *Attakatha* (poems used in the famous dance drama, *Kathakali*) named *Salwa vadha* which remains unpublished till date. He was also famous for his *Alarka visha chikitsa*, he had to treat around 100 people at a time, victims of a rabid dog attack. *Cherukkulapuram* had married from the family of *Padinjare variam* of *Peringode* in which he had two sons, *Rama Varier* and *Krishna Varier* who were learned *vaidyas* themselves.

Cherukkulappuram left a great void in the learned circle when he died in 1966 at the age of 86 but his glorious legacy continues through his countless disciples.

CONTENTS OF THE BOOK⁵ POORVA BHAGAM

The book first gives salutation to Lord Ganesha, Subrahmanya, Goddess Saraswathi and Lord Garuda for the removal of obstacles hindering the successful completion of the work. The author first explains the prognosis of visha, i.e., whether it is sadhya or asadhya. Here he explains amritha kala for the prognosis of the bites. If the bite occurs at the side and area of amrita kala the case is sadhya. It is asadhya if it occurs on the side and the area of visha kala. Then he explains bad prognosis of bite that occur in some places, marma pradeshas, he also explains shubha (auspicious signs) and ashubha lakshanas (inauspicious signs) of dhatus.

Doota vakya: Divide total number of alphabets in the doota vakya (messenger) by 8. If the remainder is one then the bite is darvikara, 2 means mandala, 3 means rajila, 4th means sankara, 5 means mooshika or rat, 6 means scorpion, 7 means messenger is lying. If the remainder is nil, then it means there is no envenomation.

Classification of visha- He classifies visha as *sthavara* and *jangama visha*. Sthavara sources are *Unmatha (Datura alba)*, *Langali, (Gloriosa superba)*, *Pashana, Manashila or Haritala*. Jangama sources such as snake poison, spiders, etc.

SARPA VISHA

Dantha kshatha vivarana (bite mark)

- 1 Laala pariklinna: Snake bite mark smeared with saliva of the snake
- 2 Vakra: Curved fang mark
- 3 Bahava: Many marks
- 4 Udhmija: The snake biting out of poison due to the fullness of its poison glands
- 5 Nirvisha: Not envenomated

Visha vyapthi nirupana (spread of poison)

Immediately after snake bite the poison stays at the site of the bite for 100 matras. Then it spreads to forehead. Later it spreads to the eyes and face. From there it spreads to the nadis and dhatus.

Classification of snake

Snakes are divided into 3 classes viz., Darvikara, Mandala, and Rajimantha as mentioned in samhithas^{6,7}

Smell of bite mark

Darvikara- Kethaki flower (*Pandanus fascicularis*)
Mandala- Pathali flower (*Stereospermum suaveolens*)
Rajimantha- Malli flower (*Jasminum officianalis*)
Vyanthara- Karaveera flowers (*Nerium indicum*)

Marana lakshana vibhaga (different stages of death)

Signs of impending death, nearing death of the patient, signs of death in case of bite is explained. Equal amount of turmeric and freshly drawn blood of the cock is taken and triturated together in to a paste and this paste is applied on the body of the patient. If he feels hotness of the body it indicates that with proper medication he will be cured. If it is cold sensation, then no matter how much the vaidhya tries he is sure to die. He also explains Veganusara lakshanas and treatment of Darvikara, Mandala and Rajimantha.

Visha upadrava chikitsa

Sopha: The fruits of *Datura (Datura alba)* is divided into half, and the seeds are removed from one half and saindava lavana is filled in both halves are joined and tied together again. This is boiled in tandulodaka. It is taken out and is applied over the part of bite.

Ruja (pain) - Ghrita Saindhava dhara

Peetha mootrata in Viper bite: Karanja (*Pongamia pinnatta*) kashayam is to be administered to the patient.

Ratha chardhi (Blood vomiting) - Nimba (*Azadirachta indica*) paste is mixed with milk and administered to the patient
Treatment for *shiroruja* (head ache), *jwara* (fever), *adhmana* (distention of abdomen), *moothra rodha* (obstruction of passage of urine), *hikka* (hiccups) are also explained.

UTTARA BHAGA

The signs and symptoms of the poisonous bites of creature like rat, scorpion, poisonous spiders, etc. and their subsequent treatment are explained in utara bhaga.

MOOSHIKA VISHA

Poisonous manifestation in rat

1. Falling of semen on the body
2. Falling of urine on the body
3. Falling of excreta on the body
4. By the infliction of nails
5. Through rat bites

Table 1: Dhatu gatha aakuvisha lakshanas and treatment

Sl No.	Dhatu	Lakshanas	Treatment
1	Rasa	Pricking pain in the skin, itching sensation	Sirisha (<i>Albizzia lebeck</i>) panchanga with milk
2	Rakta	Burning sensation	Tanduleeyaka (<i>Amaranthus spinosa</i>) and milk
3	Maamsa	Yellowish discolouration of the urine, headache, fever	Ankola (<i>Alalgium salvifolium</i>) with milk
4	Meda	Pain in the joints, circular skin lesions	Sirisha patra swarasa
5	Asthi	Vomiting, burning sensation, pain all over the body	Nasya, pana, etc with Taila
6	Majja	Burning sensation all over the body	Nasya with Sirisha panchanga
7	Shukra	Death	Nasya, Anjana with siddhoushadha

Kashaya yoga for Akuvisha

Neeli Karanjadi Kashaya

VRISCHIKA VISHA

Dhatugatha vrischika visha lakshanas are explained. Takra dhara, Karanja pallava mardana (tender leaves of *Pongamia pinnatta*) should be done to alleviate scorpion sting.

LOOTHA VISHA

There are 7 lootha visha adhishtanas and 3 types of lootha are explained (ugra, madhyama, avara), Sirisha panchanga prayoga, Lodra sevayadhi agada prayoga, dhatu gatha visha lakshanas and treatment are explained.

ALARKA

Ankola (*Alalgium salvifolium*) is one of the drug that is most beneficial in the treatment of alarka visha. It can be administered through different preparations like lehya, taila, ghrita, etc. Internal administration of Neeli Karanjadi Kashayam is also explained.

Alarka visha vishesha Chikitsa

This particular treatment is one of the most radical one for alarka visha. The ability to conduct this treatment was often the parameter by which a visha vaidhya was rated. 7 days after bite without any further delay vibhithaki pramana of triturated unmatta beeja (*Datura alba*) is taken and mixed with swarasa of *Datura patra*. This is administered to the bite victim early morning and he is kept closed in a dark room. Soon he will begin to show the cheshta of the dog. Wait for 3 yama (9 hours). Then the dhara with cold water is done on the moordha (head) until the patient shivers with cold. Strict diet is observed for the next 3 days. Only plain rice gruel is allowed as food. On the fifth day after treatment ghriha which is processed with jiraka (*Cuminum cyminum*) is applied over the head and the patient is bathed. After the bath rice gruel mixed with trikatu samskritha takra is given. This will ensure that the shwana visha lakshanas (rabid dog) will not manifest in the patient. In case of rabid fox bite also the same treatment can be followed.

Other vishas lakshanas and treatment

Nakula visha (Indian mongoose), Maarjara visha (cat), Vaaji visha (horse), Vaanara visha (monkey), Nara visha (humans), Brahmani visha (common Indian skink), Shatapadi visha (centipede), Gouli visha (lizard), Tambula naga visha lakshana (allergic attack on chewing betel leaves with lime and areca nut, very common custom in Kerala), domesticated animals, sthava visha, Gara visha.

Vishathura pathya and apathyas

Vishathura pathya and apathyas is clearly explained in this text book. The apathyas are taila (Gingelly oil), Masha (Black gram), Kulattha (Horse gram), Guda (Jaggery), Lavana (all other lavanas except Saindhava), Madhya (alcohol), Meena (fish), Aamisha (meat), amla (sour substance), Takra (buttermilk), Dadhi (curd), Ahni nidra (sleeping in day time), Rathri jagarana (keeping awake at night), sthree prasanga (indulgence in sex), dhuma (fume), vahni (fire), athapa (sunlight), parusha pavana (wind carrying smoke), dhuma patradi sevana (using tobacco for

smoking). Pathyas are Shashtika shali, Kushmanda (Ashgourd), leafy vegetables, milk product other than curd.

Sadhyo dashta chikitsa

Like arishta bandhana, hrdayavarana and vama are explained as emergency management in visha chikitsa

Special treatments explained in Visha Vaidhya Sara Samuchchaya

Oothu Chikitsa

Sunthi (*Zingiber officinale*), Maricha (*Piper nigrum*), Eshvari (*Aristolochia indica*), Dushsparsha (*Tragia involucra*) in equal amount are cut into small pieces and chewed by three persons. Then they should blow air through their mouth to the two ears and head of the patient. Generally it can be done for 150 times. This is effective treatment for blocking the upward spread of visha and its symptoms

Tankana prayoga

Tankana is roasted and powdered and is mixed with water. It can be used as nasya and lepa.

Gutika yogas

Trimurthi agada, Ashwagandadi gutika, Mrutha Sanjivani agada, Hinguvadi gutika

Vishahari lehya

1 Kudava (192 ml) of fine paste of Mrudanga phala beeja (Luffa amara) is taken and mixed with 2 Prastha (1536g) of Nagavalli swarasa (betel juice). This mixture is suspended in a cloth and the filtrate dripping from the bundle is collected, measured and placed in a shallow wide mouthed bronze vessel. Equal amount of neem oil is added to it. Sudha rasa and finely powdered gandhaka each is taken in a proportion of 1/5th of the mixture and thoroughly triturated by hand to remove all watery part from it. The resultant lehya is of very thick colloid consistency. As soon as the dashta comes, 1 Panathookkam (2.5g) of this lehya is smeared on a betel leaf and administered to him.

CONCLUSION

Visha vaidhya Sara Samuchchaya is one of the popular and widely practiced books in Malayalam *Visha chikitsa*. It contains many simple and practically feasible formulations which can be easily prepared and used for visha conditions. There are many traditional *vaidyas* who are successfully treating snake bite cases using these medicines and practices. Treatment like oothu chitisa which is commonly practiced in Kerala for unconscious patients due to venomous bites is explained in this book. The author has even mentioned the treatment of allergic effects caused due to chewing betel leaves with lime and arecanut, which is a very common practice in Kerala.

Even today many traditional Vaidyas follow this book in their Ayurvedic practice. This book is a valuable reference for academicians and practitioners. Emergency management of poisoning is also explained in this text book. There is a need of further research on the formulations given in the text in both literature and clinical levels.

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