**BALATANTRAM - A BOOK REVIEW**

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**ABSTRACT**

Ayurveda the ancient Indian bioscience depicts all the aspects of healthy living. *Kaumarabhritya* is a very important branch among the *Ashtangas* of Ayurveda. *Balatantram* is a valuable book in *Balachikitsa* written by Kalyana Vaidya in 16th Century. The work has 14 chapters, signified as *Patala* and has approximately 831 verses. Narration of *Balatantram* contains the principles and practices regarding the various aspects of diseases of children along with infertility related to males and females and *Vajikarana upayas*. This book is already published yet not very popular. This review would help the scientific community to understand this book in concise manner.

**INTRODUCTION**

Ayurveda the ancient Indian bioscience depicts all the aspects of healthy living. The entire concept of Ayurveda was branched into eight as, *Kaya Chikitsa*, *Salakya Tantra*, *Salya Tantra*, *Visha Chikitsa*, *Bhutavidya*, *Koumarabhritya*, *Rosayana* and *Vajikarana*. *Kaumarabhritya* is a very important branch among these *Ashtangas* of Ayurveda.

*Balatantram* is a valuable literary resource dealing with the pediatric care. Sri Kalyana vaidya is considered as the author of *Balatantram*. Narration of *Balatantram* comprises the principles and practices regarding the various aspects of diseases of children along with diseases related to male and female and *Vajikarana upayas*. A vast description regarding the various diseases and its treatments are described in detail. Kalyana Vaidya’s work shows a great deal of Tantric influence in its descriptions of rituals and in the use of mantras.

The text is written in Sanskrit language in the form of *Slokas*. The work has 14 chapters, signified as *Patala* and has approximately 831 verses. The text begins with a *Ganesasthuthi* denoting the age old Hindu tradition of *Mangalacharana*.

Formulations mentioned in the text are usually relatively simple and easy to prepare. Sources mentioned by Kalyana are the *Prayogasara* and *Susruta Samhita*. Commentator Dipachandra mentions the following authors and works as source of *Balatantram - Atreya*, *Bhavaprakasa*, *Bhela*, *Caraka*, *Harita*, *Sannipatakaliaka*, *Susruta*, *Todarananda*, *Vagbhata*, *Vaidyakasaroddhara*, *Vaidyavinoda*, *Vangasena*, *Yogachintamani*, *Yogaratnavali* and *Yogasatha*.

**About the Author**

Kalyana Vaidya was the son of Mahidara, a devotee of Lakshminarasisinha and the grandson of Ramadasa. He was a pandita of Ahichattara lineage and a devotee of Ramachandra. The author discloses his lineage at the end of 14th chapter. Kalyana Vaidya mentions that he completed his treatise in a Siva temple in the year 1587-1588.

**Commentaries**

A commentary in Hindi (mixed with Rajasthani) on *Balatantram* was written by Vacaka Dipachandra, author of *Langhanapathyanirnaya* (eighteenth Century), its title is *Balatantrambhasavachanika* or *Balatantram granthavach anikabandha*.1

**Analysis of Chapters**

There are 14 chapters in *Balatantram*. The contents of each chapter are analyzed as follows.

**Chapter 1 - Sodasa vandhya Prathikara**

This chapter mentioned that there are nine causes for *Vandhya*, in which eight causes are explained for *Nari* and one *Dosha* is mentioned for *Purusha*. Infertility in women is described as two series with its treatment. The first series consists of four types of infertility caused by *Dosha* (Pitta, Vata, Kapha, *...*
Sannipata), two by Grahas, one type by Abhisapa and one by Abhicharanyakriya. Author mentioned symptoms and treatment of Dushtaratha. Ajaksheeram is advised as the important Anupana in all types of Arthavadushti. Vandhyathya due to Grahabaddha exhibits pain in 8th-14th day of menstruation. Treatment modality advised here is Pooja for Gotradevi, Durgadevi or Gananada. To get relief from the symptoms caused by wrath of gods, she should pray to Gotradevi or Durgadevi and she should be respectful for guru and she should give offerings like Dhana, Vastra etc. The second series describes eight types of infertile women called Tripaks, Subrati, Sabda, Trimikhi, Vyaghriti, Vakri, Kamalini and Vyaktini.

Chapter 2 - Sadharana Vandhyoushadha Kadhana

This chapter is about the treatment of various unspecified types of infertility. Acharya also describe Yonisodhana prayoga, Pushpasanjanaya prayoga, Garbhakara prayoga and contraceptive measures to prevent Garbha. Grithas like Aswaganda gritha and Sidha Kalyanaka gritha are mentioned for getting good progeny. Acharya is advised intake of Sundi mixed with Gugda for 7 days, as Garbkaraprayaga. Contraceptive measures like Gudaavaleham i.e., Avalaha made with 1 Pala guda is mixed with Thandalavari and intake of Vanipuspm mixed with Aranala for 7 days.

Chapter 3 - Pusravavirvidhi Kadhana

This chapter contains recipes for Sukravridhi like Laghusalalmalmoola and Thalamooli choornam mixed with Payas or Gritha, Choornam of Kokilaksha beejam, Nisa, Amalaki and Satavari. Musalkanda choornam mixed with Guduchisatwam is advised for increasing male potency. Satavartailam is an important Taila yoga indicated for promoting male potency. Veerya sthambhana chikitsa like intake of Dughdasudha, Ahiphena with 3 Rattipramana sitha is mentioned.

Yonidravana is also attained by using drugs like Kaseesam, Spathika, Majuphala and Kshoudra. Bhagashankochana attained if Nari is used Varti made up of Mocharas, Amalaki, and Kakamachi in Yoni, Amalaka kashayam with Takram is used for Bhagakshalanam. This Bhagakshalanam yoga is used for getting sexual pleasure during coitus.

Chapter 4 - Garbhadhanakale Rudrasnana Kadhana

This chapter describes rituals, including mantras, for getting healthy offspring of the desired sex, a ritual to be performed while digging up the Lakshmana plant and if it put in the right nostril of a woman, guarantees her giving birth to a son and elaborate rules for Rudraasana i.e., tantric ritual which ensures progeny for a childless couple. Acharya explains about Grahanaakala of Oushada and Mantra used to recite during Oushadha grahanakala. Acharya describes Rudrasnana’ for getting good progeny for a Rajaswala stree.

Chapter 5 - Garbhini Garbharaksha Kadhana

This chapter deals with various methods used in antenatal care. In this chapter Acharya describes Garbha raksha vidhi starting from 1st month ending with 12th lunar month of pregnancy. This chapter is concerned with Mantra and offerings to twelve gods and group of deities protecting the expectant mother and the child in the womb up to the twelve month of pregnancy. Mantra should chant for 21 times and one should take bath after returning from the ritual. Acharya is mentioned some special Dravyas to be offered as Balikrma to please the deity by which protection of child and mother is assured.

Chapter 6 - Sukhaprasavapaya Kadhana

This chapter is devoted to procedures, which is beneficial for an easy delivery. It mainly deals with perinatal care and management. Both Adravyabhoota and Dravyabhoota treatment is described here. Balatalia is advised for Abhyanga in perinatal period. General guidelines have been given for Sutikagraha and author mentions about the appointment of ladies who are efficient in taking care of Prasoota. Description of proper mantra should be chanted all time for the welfare of the newborn and the mother can be seen in this chapter. Red thread with 7 knots should be tied at the door of Sutika griha. For easy delivery Acharya is explained medicines to be taken orally, i.e., Mathulanga choorna prayoga and Aswathamoola prayoga. The root of Aswatha grown towards north should be taken orally along with rice water. This even helps to expel out Mrithagarbha. Indravaruny prayoga, Kaliharmooli prayoga and Sinduvara prayoga are mentioned for Yonilepana for easy delivery. Langalikamachi prayoga, Saliparnimoolo prayoga and Roobukadi prayoga are used for Nabhepana for the purpose of easy delivery.

Chapter 7-Dinograhita Balagrahahara Kadhana

This chapter mentions about early neonatal care of child. It describes ten Grahas like Nandhini, Sunandh, Khatali, Katakoli, Ahamkari devi, Khatavangi, Hinsika, Bhishami, Mesha and Rodhena who may assault a child during the first ten days of its life. Acharya also describes mantra to be chanted during the time of Grahadhadha. Kwatham of Apamarga, Vacha, Chandana should be used for Snanam with chanting of Mantra.

Chapter 8 - Masagrahita Balagrahahara Kadhana

In this chapter Acharya has described the management of Balagragha affecting the child during the first year of his life. At the end of the chapter Acharya mentions one Sloka for reciting all twelve Grasha in month wise.

Chapter 9 - Varsha Grahita Balaraksha Kadhana

This chapter mentions about sixteen Grahas who prey upon a child during the first six years of life. Panchagavya is used for Snanam in all the 16 types of Grahadosha.

Chapter 10-Dinamasavarsha Balagraghopaya Kadhana

This chapter gives the names of sixteen more Grahas whose attack can be expected during the first day, month, or year, second day, month or year etc. Dhoopana of tail of cat, Nrikesa, ghee, Nimapatra etc. is mentioned in first month. Dhoopana with Kushta, Guggulu, Gajasidhanta, Sidharthakam and Gogritham is also mentioned for the treatment of Grahadhadha.
Chapter 11- Sadharana Balaraksha Kadhana

This chapter mentions about common measures against all types of Grahas, besides adding nine names of Grahas whose attacks are seen as a punishment for offences committed during previous life. The measures described in order to ward off attacks by Grahas usually consist of offerings (Bali) of a specified number of various objects to be deposited in a particular quarter of the sky accompanied by utter of Mantras.

Chapter 12 - Jvararahanopaya Kadhana

First section of this chapter mentions about the wet nurse, recipes which promote lactation in nursing mothers and measures which purify the milk. Second section deals with the treatment of some disorders especially occurring in infants (inflammation of navel, anal region, mouth, and therapy for fever in children).

Chapter 13 - Seetadal Chikitsa Kadhana

This chapter deals with treatment of children’s diseases that affecting digestive system like Athisara, Arsas, Grahani and Chardi, diseases that are affecting nervous system like Vatavyadi, Unmada and Apasmara. Acharya describes Seethala Chikitsa (Masuri chikitsa) in detail in this chapter and mentions treatment for various stages in Masuri. For example, to cure Krimi in Seethalavrana, Acharya advised Gomaya choornam or Suras a choornam. Pain and burning sensation is cured by the use of Muktha, Praval and Kachapprishta theyam.

Chapter 14 - Nanapravya Kadhana

First part of this chapter deals with diseases of Netra, Nasa, Karna, Sira and Mukha. Second part deals with Visha hikitsa of Swavisha and vrishchikavisha. Kalyana vaidhya describes various Rasayana prayaga like daily usage of Asithatila and Bringarajaptram for rejuvenation. Administration of Gudoochiphala choorna and Aswagandha are also mentioned for Rasayana therapy.

Before ending the description of Balatantram, Acharya tries to keep in mind the importance of ascertaining Desa, Kala etc. before doing treatment in Bala.

Special features

Kalyana Vaidya’s work shows a great deal of Tantric influence in its descriptions of rituals and in the use of mantras. Magical abound in therapies with frequent use of substances like excrements, hairs, nails, horns etc. of various animals are described. Kalyana’s materia medica consists for a very large part of medicinal plants and some mineral known from classical Ayurvedic texts. Even though the drugs and formulations mentioned in this book are very simple, some of the drugs like Sarpakanchucha, Gokhuraka etc mentioned for Dhoopaprayaga are difficult to get now a days. Usage of metals and minerals like Silajatu, Paradha, Gandhaka, Sphatika etc are mentioned in treatment of different diseases.

This book gives equal importance to Yuktiyaprasya chikitsa and Daivavypasraya chikitsa. The order of disease mentioned in chapters thirteen and fourteen partially agrees with the Madhava Nidana but makes a rather chaotic impression.

CONCLUSION

Among Ashtangas of Ayurveda Bala Chikitsa need special attention as it is relatively a challenge for the paediatrician to diagnose the diseases of a child. Balatantram is a valuable book in Balachikitsa written by Kalyana Vaidya in 16th Century.

First two Patalas dealt with different types of infertility and treatment for that. Third and fourth chapter mainly mention about recipes which promote male potency and rituals, mantras etc to be performed to get good progeny. Fifth and sixth chapter deals with Garbharakshavidhi upto 12th month and procedures used for easy delivery. Seventh to eleventh chapter deal with Grahas which attack the child during 1st day-16th day, 1st month-16th month, 1st year - 16th year and 1st day, 1st month, 1st year- 16th day, 16th month and 16th year. Acharya emphasize the importance of offerings to please these Graha in all these chapters and mentions about Dhoopanadi prayaga as treatment modality. Twelveth chapter describes about Datrilakshana and Shathyasudhi upayas. Thirteenth and fourteenth chapter narrate treatment for various diseases like Chardi, Athisara, Seethala, Ungwajathrugata rogas, Vridhi etc and Rasayana prayag as rejuvenating body.

On concluding, Balatantram is an important book to read by all Ayurvedic scholars and need to be given wide publicity.

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