

BOOK REVIEW

Keraliya Cikitsa Paddhati - A Complete Guide to Specialized Keralan Ayurveda Treatment Procedures Based on Dharakalpah-A Book Review

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ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received on: 08-11-2023

Accepted on: 12-12-2023

Published on: 31-12-2023

Key words:

Cikitsa,
Knowledge,
Keraliya Ayurveda,
Traditional

ABSTRACT

Background: Various Socio-political and geographical reasons helped Kerala to provide a favorable atmosphere to flourish Ayurveda in this land. Inestimable contributions made by Ayurvedic practitioners in Kerala led to developments in terms of procedures as well as medicine. Knowledge about the subtler nuances of performing various therapeutic procedures, along with their clinical implications was recorded by eminent practitioners in Kerala. However, it was dispersed amongst various regional texts, and it needed to be lined under one heading. Authors Pavana Jayaram and Manoj Sankaranarayana managed to gather all these pieces of information together and presented them in the form of this book named - Keraliya Cikitsa Paddhati.

Methodology: The presented book was studied, analyzed, and compared with other contemporary works on a similar subject.

Body and Analysis: The present book is written in Sanskrit and English. It contains 304 pages, and its price is 500 INR. This book was published by Sarada Mahadeva Iyer, Ayurvedic Educational and Charitable Trust, Tamil Nadu. The book was published in 2010. It comprises three sections. The first section encompasses the Sanskrit text Dharakalpa which sheds light on the Procedure named Dhara – one of the specialized Keraliya treatment modalities. Following it, the book presents the first and only english commentary on Dharakalpa written by the authors – Pavana and Manoj. The second section of the book comprises an extensive review of the available literature about external treatment modalities (Bahih-parimarjana cikitsa). The third section of the book encompasses various necessary preparations required before commencing the procedure. It caters both, epistemological knowledge and pragmatic usage of external treatment modalities for the Ayurvedic fraternity. 'Keraliya Cikitsa Paddhati' is the first and only attempt made in such a direction where the traditional knowledge is not merely translated but very well explored through available literature.

1. INTRODUCTION

Kerala is a land blessed with biodiversity and well protected by its natural boundaries. As a result, it was less affected by perpetual strife for power compared to the mainland. This unique situation provided a favorable atmosphere for various indigenous streams of knowledge especially *Ayurveda* to flourish in this land. Inestimable contributions

made by *Ayurvedic* practitioners in Kerala led to developments in terms of procedures as well as medicine. Knowledge about the subtler nuances of performing various therapeutic procedures, along with their clinical implications was recorded by eminent practitioners in Kerala. However, it was dispersed amongst various regional texts, and it needed to be lined under one heading. Authors Pavana Jayaram and Manoj Sankaranarayana managed to gather all these pieces of information together and presented them in the form of this book for the first time in this era. They are post-graduates in *Ayurveda* and have been trained under renowned practitioners of *Ayurveda*. They have also co-authored another book named "*Rogavijnana and Vikritivijnana*."

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This work is presented in three parts; the first part contains *Dharakalpa*, a Sanskrit text with the first ever English commentary on *Dharakalpa* written by the authors. The second part is a comprehensive analysis of special *Keraliya Ayurveda* treatment procedures. An interesting addition of the third part – the appendix, makes it a complete guide for *Keraliya* treatment modalities.

The present book is written in *Sanskrit* and English. It contains 304 pages, and its price is 500 INR. This book was published by Sarada Mahadeva Iyer, Ayurvedic Educational and Charitable Trust, Tamil Nadu. The book was published in 2010. The book is edited by Dr. Usha Rani Sanka and Dr. Marcis Gasuns. It is forwarded by P. R. Krishna Kumar, Dr. M. R. Vasudevan Namboodiri, Dr. Anitha Jacob, and P.T.N. Vasudevan Mooss. Acknowledgment by these eminent personalities in *Ayurveda* highlights this book's significance in the current era.

2. BODY

“*Keraliya Cikitsa Paddhati*” broadly comprises three sections [Table 1]. The first section encompasses the Sanskrit text *Dharakalpa* which sheds light on the Procedure named *Dhara* – one of the specialized *Keraliya* treatment modalities. Following it, the book presents the first and only English commentary on *Dharakalpa* written by the authors – Pavana and Manoj. The second section of the book comprises an extensive review of the available literature about external treatment modalities (*Bahih-parimarjana cikitsa*). *Murdha-seka*, *Kaya-seka*, *Pinda sweda*, *Anna-lepana*, and *Shiro-lepana* are *Pancha-kriya* (five procedures) that are developed and profoundly practiced in the traditions of Kerala.^[1] It aims to bring authenticity and operative uniformity to perform later-developed external treatment modalities. In this section, authors have discussed the evolutionary progress in the procedures, and operative guidelines as well as their indications mentioned in various regional texts and *Samhita* in the later era of *Ayurveda*.

The third section of the book encompasses various necessary preparations required before commencing the procedure. It includes comprehensive knowledge of *Shashtika* and preparations such as *Gandharvastadi kashayam*, *Panchagandha choornam*, and *Snana kashaya*, which are commonly used during all the above-mentioned procedures.

In a nutshell, this single book provides the evolutionary background, procedural update, and clinical applications of specialized *Keraliya Ayurveda* treatment procedures. This is the first and only attempt made in such a direction where the traditional knowledge is not merely translated but very well explored through available literature.

3. ANALYSIS

“*Keraliya Cikitsa Paddhati*” is a book of reflection on traditional *Ayurvedic* treatment procedures that evolved and developed in Kerala. It serves the novel purpose of opening the door of knowledge about *Keraliya* procedures to the external world.

The preface of the book defines the intention and approach of the writers. It critically analyses the progression of *Ayurveda* through various socio-political backgrounds. It showcases how the practices of *Shodhana cikitsa* took a back seat due to a lack of scholarly physicians and *Shamana* procedures took over. The state achieved the balance of usage of external modalities along with internally used herbo-mineral

drugs for the purpose of *Shamana*. This book intends to enquire about the theoretical basis on which specialized treatment procedures are preserved in Kerala. The book is also inspired by inquisitiveness that raged from the usage of the misnomer *Keraliya pancha-karma* which is commonly been used without any textual reference from any regional text.

In the first part of the book, the authors have attempted to weave knowledge about the treatment modality *Dhara* by keeping the textbook *Dharakalpa* in the center. *Dhara*: the flow of a liquid stream; and *Kalpa*: *Shastram* or science about the procedural aspect. As the name suggests, it is a comprehensive work on the procedure of *Dhara* and the analogous treatment procedure. The authors invariably direct the fact of greater clinical significance to the procedure of *Dhara* amongst all other procedures. In the modern period, *Acharya Yadavaji Trikramaji* first published this basic text along with *Vaidyamanorama* under his *Ayurveda granthamala* (Vol. 9) in the year 1913. As the book-*Dharakalpa* was essential in understanding the procedure of *Dhara*, Some *Hindi* and *Kannada* translations were published. However, the inclusion of the English commentary makes this book unique as it provides thorough information about the procedure of *Dhara* from all the contemporary *Samhita* and regional texts. This commentary makes this book stand out among all the contemporary books on *Dhara*, as it provides a systematic review of available literature along with some secluded manuscripts in *Sanskrit* and *Malayalam* and focuses on the precise interpretation of it. The *Sanskrit* text of *Aryavaidyan S. Raghunatha sarma* explaining various approaches of specialized treatment procedures that are prevalent in Kerala is been revived through this commentary. The list of accessory material (*Anyopakaranani*) necessary for *Murdha-seka* is yet another remarkable contribution by the commentator to the text.

In the second section of the book, the authors attempt to collect the available literature and current practices about these external treatment modalities. It analyses these procedures for their clinical significance, which is rooted in the fundamental tenets of *Ayurveda*. Even though the traces of references about the indications of these procedures are found in the *Samhita*, their procedural details and clinical utility have been further explored by various scholars from Kerala. This book attempts to connect the links between all the references found in the various *Samhita* to provide elaborate and standard operative procedures. Some of the indications of procedures open up a novel arena about their systemic effectiveness. For example, *Sirodhara* with *Swarasa of Bhringaraja* is recommended in *Kamala*. The extensive review of *Siro-abhyanga* revealed its usefulness not only in *Shiro-roga* but also in systemic disorders such as *Vishama Jwara*, *Asrgadhara*, and *Svasa*.

Indications like *Dhara* with tender coconut water and milk in *Kamala* associated with *Bhrama* (dizziness), highlight the effectiveness of procedural interventions in emergency conditions too. The book includes various procedural adaptations by other authors too. For example, *Dhara* with the aqueous medium is to be performed after covering the body part with plantain leaf to reduce *Kapha Prakopa*, as quoted by *Nischalakara*, which is been mentioned in the book while discussing the process of *Dhara*. The inclusion of a chapter to discuss the differences in the *Rutu-kala* according to geographical position showcases the awareness of the authors about the consideration of *Kala* before commencing any procedure.

Newer findings regarding the use of specialized procedures reflect the outcome of constant contemplation on clinical pragmatism oriented around fundamental principles. Various researchers have disclosed the multi-faceted systemic effects of tropical applications. External applications

of unctuous substances in the form of *Abhyanga* and *Seka* have shown positive effects on growth factors, altered states of consciousness stages, noci receptors, the parasympathetic nervous system, and neurotransmitters. *Siro-Dhara* is also been studied for its effect on physiological (tidal volume, CO₂ excretion, and ECG) and psycho-somatic (EEG, the profile of mood states, POMS) strata of the body.^[2]

In the last part of the book, the authors provide some adjuvant medicinal preparations required for the successful commencement of the procedure. It sensitizes the readers with comprehensive knowledge about *Shashtika*-the integral part of *Njavara kizhi* and *Anna-Lepana*, different varieties of *Shashtika*, and their properties. It provides preparation of *Gandharvahastadi kashayam*, which is also known as *Pathi kashayam* (as it is administered immediately after therapeutic procedures in *Droni* itself). It can be well explained by the *Agni-varadhana*, *kleda-hara*, and *Vatanulomana* properties of this *Kashaya* required to pacify the *Abhishaynda* brought by the sudation. Preparation of all these formulations needs a precise understanding of the metric system. This book provides detailed conversions of measurements mentioned in *Samhita* into the current metric system. The position of the patient while performing the procedure is important so as to cover the entire body, so this book elucidates seven positions in which the *Kaya-seka* is performed in Kerala.

Authors have not only thoroughly reviewed and complied but also have restructured all the available literature around Specialized Keraliya ayurveda treatment procedures in the simplest yet elaborative manner. This book empowers both the theoretical and procedural aspects of external treatment modalities which is lacking in books of recent times. This book is one of the first books written about *Keraliya Cikitsa* in the English language. As a result, it is able to serve the purpose to even larger community. And hence, "*Keraliya Cikitsa Paddhati*" strikes the perfect balance in catering to both, epistemological knowledge and pragmatic usage of external treatment modalities for the Ayurvedic fraternity across the world.

4. CONCLUSION

Kerala, the state evolved a well-balanced system of *Ayurveda* by giving equal importance to its philosophy and therapeutic procedures. The book reflects the same and sensitizes the readers about both. The extent of use of "*Keraliya Pancha kriya*" across the centuries proves their significance in the management of various disease conditions. This book is the first-ever attempt to serve the pearls of knowledge in traditional *Kerala* textbooks to the larger community of *Ayurveda*. It surely is the must-have book in every *Ayurvedic* physician's collection.

6. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Nil.

7. AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

All authors give equal contribution while preparing this book review.

8. FUNDING

Nil.

9. ETHICAL APPROVALS

This study is not required ethical clearance as it is Book review.

10. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Nil.

11. DATA AVAILABILITY

This is an original manuscript and all data are available for only review purposes from principal investigators.

12. PUBLISHERS NOTE

This journal remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published institutional affiliation.

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How to cite this article:

Lunavat RB, Binitha A, Jigeesh PP. Keraliya Cikitsa Paddhati - A Complete Guide to Specialized Keralan Ayurveda Treatment Procedures Based on Dharakalpah-A Book Review. IRJAY. [online] 2023;6(12):69-73.

Available from: <https://irjay.com>

DOI link- <https://doi.org/10.47223/IRJAY.2023.61212>.

Table 1: Contents of the book

<p><i>Dharakalpa</i> and its commentary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Dharakalpa</i> – original text • English commentary By Pavana Jayaram and Manoj Sankarnarayana 	<p>A comprehensive analysis of the <i>Keraliya Ayurveda</i> treatment procedure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Murdhini taila</i> • <i>Bahya- parimarjana</i> • <i>Abhyanga</i> • <i>Seka</i> • <i>Ekanga sekam</i> • <i>Avagaha</i> • <i>Pichu</i> • <i>Sirovasti</i> • Modern purview of <i>Murdhini taila</i> • <i>Pinda sveda</i> • <i>Sastika pinda sveda</i> • <i>Annalepa vidhi</i> • <i>Sirolepa</i> • <i>Talam</i> • <i>Urovasti</i> • <i>Kshira-dhuma</i> • <i>Dhanyamla dhara</i> • <i>Usmasveda</i> • <i>Patrapottala sveda</i> • <i>Curna pinda sveda</i> • <i>Dhanya pottala sveda</i> • <i>Jambira pinda sveda</i> • <i>Kalavidhi</i> 	<p>Appendix</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Sastika Sali</i> • <i>Gandharvahastadi kasaya</i> • <i>Panca gandha curna</i> • <i>Snana kashaya</i> • Measurement
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