

BOOK REVIEW

Book Review on Ayurvedic Treatments of Kerala

V. J. Aswathy¹, V. R. Subin², P. P. Jigeesh³

¹MD Scholar, Department of Panchakarma, Vaidyaratnam P S Varier Ayurveda College, Kottakkal, Kerala, India.

²Professor, Department of Panchakarma, Vaidyaratnam P S Varier Ayurveda College, Kottakkal, Kerala, India.

³Professor and Head, Department of Panchakarma, Vaidyaratnam P S Varier Ayurveda College, Kottakkal, Kerala, India.

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received on: 12-03-2024

Accepted on: 19-04-2024

Published on: 30-04-2024

Key words:

Keraleeya kriya kramas,
Sirovasti,
Siraseka,
droni dhara patram

ABSTRACT

The book “Ayurvedic Treatments of Kerala” is by Vayaskara N.S. Mooss who belongs to the lineage of Ayurvedic doctors known as Ashtavaidya. Despite hailing from a noble orthodox Brahmin family, he was open and receptive to English education. His aptitude for botany and English is evident in various works, including Ayurvedic flora medica and single-drug treatments.

1. INTRODUCTION

Kerala physicians have documented their clinical experiences and contributed significantly to Ayurvedic literature. Many of these texts focus on Panchakarma and its preparatory stages, which are crucial aspects of Ayurvedic treatment. This particular publication aimed to promote the practice of Panchakarma treatment in Kerala and provide detailed explanations of unique Kerala practices such as *Pizhichil*, *Navara Kizhi*, *Sirovasti*, *Siraseka*, and dietary/regimen recommendations, along with the challenges encountered during Keraleeya kriya kramas.

The author of the book “Ayurvedic Treatments of Kerala” is by Vayaskara N.S. Mooss who belongs to the lineage of Ayurvedic doctors known as Ashtavaidya. Despite hailing from a noble orthodox Brahmin family, he was open and receptive to English education. His aptitude for botany and English is evident in various works, including Ayurvedic flora medica and single-drug treatments. He served as the editor and publisher of the Vaidya Sarathy periodical and gained renown for his expertise in identifying medicinal plants. N.S. Mooss is particularly recognized for publishing the critical edition of Indu's Sasilekha commentary on Vagbhata's Ashtangahridaya.

The initial edition of “Ayurvedic Treatments of Kerala” was released in 1944, followed by a second edition in 1946, both printed and released

Corresponding Author:

V. J. Aswathy, MD Scholar, Department of Panchakarma, Vaidyaratnam P S Varier Ayurveda College, Kottakkal, Kerala, India.

E-mail: aswathyvj612@gmail.com

by Vaidya Sarathy Press Kottayam, owned by N.S. Mooss himself. The second edition was priced at Rs. 3 and consisted of 90 pages, making it the fourth book in the Vaidya Sarathy series. This review is based on the second edition. The Famous works of Vayaskara N.S Mooss is shown in Table 1.

The book begins with a detailed explanation of Pinda Sweda and then proceeds to delve into six major treatments prevalent at the time, with thorough explanations provided for each. The author's meticulous detailing of each procedure, accompanied by Sanskrit quotations, enhances the reader's understanding. In addition, the inclusion of picture depictions for each procedure adds to the esthetic appeal of the work. The author goes a step further by providing English meanings in brackets for better comprehension. In the final four chapters, the author dedicates significant attention to the importance of diet and regimen, outlining food patterns to be followed and addressing any minor issues that may arise during treatment. This attention to detail is a notable feature of the book. Furthermore, the author shares mishaps encountered during their practice, highlighting real-world challenges. The last chapter is exclusively dedicated to the apparatus used in procedures at that time, providing comprehensive insights into the tools employed in Ayurvedic treatments.

Book Name: Ayurvedic Treatments of Kerala

Author: Vayaskara N S Mooss

Editor: Vayaskara N S Mooss

Publication: Vaidya Sarathy

Place of publication: Kottayam Edition: Second Edition 1946.

2. BODY

The textbook extensively highlights the Kerala tradition of medicine across its 10 chapters. It commences with an introduction by Dr. L.A Ravi Varma who elucidates the primary objective of the method, emphasizing detoxification through warmth and diaphoresis, which also provides a soothing effect, thereby enabling the procedures to function as a form of rejuvenation.

The text offers a comprehensive description of *Navara Kizhi's* practical implementation, wherein therapeutic procedures induce perspiration throughout the entire body or a specific region. Another therapy, *Anna Lepana*, a kind of *Pinda Sweda*, is discussed, as particularly effective in instances of *vata adika vata rakta*, where *anna lepana* with *godhuma choorna* and milk proves highly effective.^[1]

Kaya Seka/Pizhichil involves pouring oil until perspiration occurs over the chest, armpits, and forehead, recommended as the most effective treatment among *Bahya Sneha Chikitsa*. *Sirovasti*, highly effective in treating illnesses of the eye, ear, and head, is detailed, along with *Siraseka/Dhara*, employing a dhara vessel with a capacity of three *prastha*, with specific recommendations for its application period.

Special emphasis is placed on *Takra Dhara* within the discussion of *Dhara*, suggesting medicated ghee consumption after the course. Specific *Dhara* indications for severe cases of typhoid fever, along with *Ksheera Dhara and Taila Dhara*, are also mentioned. *Siro Lepana*,^[2] known to improve vision and effective for insomnia treatment, allows the patient to bathe shortly after the procedure.

The final chapters delve into diet and regimens, detailing appropriate food types, water consumption, clothing choices, sleep patterns, exercise routines, and other incidents that occurred during treatments. The book concludes with a comprehensive explanation of equipment, accessories, and medications all chapters are mentioned in Table 2.

3. ANALYSIS

While there are numerous Ayurvedic standard references available on Kerala therapies, practical details and explanatory references are limited. The primary goal of this book is to provide a detailed discussion of various Keraleeya kriya kramas. The author attempted to collect practical details of procedures and present them in a scientific and rationalistic manner, aiding in the understanding of traditional Ayurveda treatments and applications prevalent at the time. Although procedures have evolved from traditional practices, Vayaskara N.S Mooss work in bridging traditional relevance with the scientific community is remarkable. The author chose to write the book in English to enhance its accessibility and organization. The book specifically focuses on six common techniques in Kerala, namely, *Navara Kizhi*, *Anna lepana*, *Kaya seka*, *Sirovasti*, *Siro dhara*, and *Siro lepana*.

In the case of *Sirovasti*, the technique can produce notably better results with preparatory purification. For *Siraseka*, the author describes a special *dhara dravya* using *ksheera* diluted with fresh, tender coconut water. In severe cases of typhoid fever, breast milk *dhara* is recommended for potentially better practical results. Regarding *taila dhara*, a special method of preparing *taila* is explained, with *tila taila* being substituted with cow's ghee. Patients undergoing *Siro lepana* are allowed to bathe shortly after treatment, using warm water for their body and cool water for their head. The author stresses the importance of diet and routines in

the final section, offering clear guidance on vegetable, cereal, and other food consumption, as well as what foods to avoid. Every component that might affect the treatment course is addressed, including hydration, constipation prevention, appropriate dressing, reading, and sleep.

The book also provides insights into the herbs used in bathing water and emphasizes the importance of patients being bathed by attendants. Mishaps, tools, and accessories such as *dhara patram* (vessel), *droni*, and *galanti* are described in the last chapters, complete with explanations and illustrations. Thus, the author underscores to the younger generation the value of Keraleeya kriya krama and the practices that were prevalent at that time, which have since become obsolete due to modernization.

4. CONCLUSION

The book strives to highlight the significance of Ayurveda Kerala Chikitsa. While it focuses only primarily on six procedures that were prevalent at the time, it also hunts through various aspects such as diet plans, sleep schedules, and meals that are essential to track during treatment. Despite the limited scope, the author's creative insights are presented in a reliable and scientifically sound manner, particularly evident in the detailed descriptions of the techniques.

5. ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Nil.

6. AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

All the authors contributed equally to the design and execution of the article.

7. FUNDING

Central Council for Research in Ayurvedic Sciences.

8. ETHICAL APPROVALS

This study does not require ethical clearance as it is a book review.

9. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Nil.

10. DATA AVAILABILITY

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

11. PUBLISHERS NOTE

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

REFERENCES

1. Mooss VN. Ayurvedic Treatments of Kerala. 2nd ed. Kottayam: Vaidya Sarathy Press; 1946.
2. Mooss VN. Zimmerman Francis obituary newsletter. IASTAM 1986;5:6.

How to cite this article:

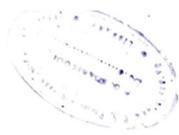
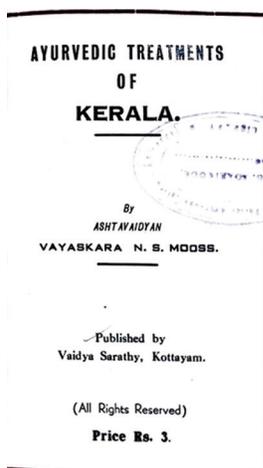
Aswathy VJ, Subin VR, Jigeesh PP. Book Review on Ayurvedic Treatments of Kerala. IRJAY. [online] 2024;7(4):74-76.

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

DOI link- <https://doi.org/10.48165/IRJAY.2024.70414>



N. S. Mooss, Vayaskara.



Printed and Published by the
Proprietor, Vaidyasarathy
Press, Kottayam, South
India, on the Sixteenth
day of December
in the year nine-
teen hundred
and forty
Six.



Table 1 : Famous works of Vayaskara N.S Mooss

S. No	Book	Timeline of publication
1.	Single drug remedies	1976
2.	Ayurvedic flora medica	1977
3.	Indu's paribhasa or discourse on pharmaceutics	1979
4.	Ganas of vagbhata	1980
5.	Ayurvedic treatment of Kerala	1983
6.	Vagbhata's ashtanga hridaya samhita kalpa sthana	1984
7.	Madanadi nighantu	1985
		Commentary
8.	Ashtanga hridaya utara sthana	Kairali
9.	Vagbhata's ashtanga hridayasamhita	Sasilekha

Table 2: Chapters of book

S. No	Chapters
1.	Pinda sweda or Navara kizhi
2.	Anna lepana
3.	Kaya seka/pizhichil
4.	Sirovasthi
5.	Siraseka/dhara
6.	Sirolepana
7.	Diet and regimen
8.	Mishaps
9.	Apparatus and accessories
10.	Medicaments