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A Book Review on *Vastipradeepam*

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INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda was side lined in the beginning of twentieth century due to the popularity and easy access to modern healthcare facilities as well as lack of enough promptness to popularize traditional health care systems. Sri C.Krishnan Vaidyan Panavally tried to make *Ayurveda* more popular and practical based on the principles of classical text books, through his clinical practices and books.

One such notable work by the author is *Vastipradeepam*, a practical handbook, written in Malayalam published by C K Raghavan Vaidyan, CKV hospital, Panavally, who is the son of author. First edition of the book was published in 1933 and the second edition was published in the year 1988. This book contains a total of 109 pages and priced at

Rs 100.

AUTHOR'S RECOGNITION

Sri.C Krishnan Vaidyan Panavally was born in 1878 to Sri.Sanku and Smt.Maanikka in Cherthala district. His father was a physician and he too followed his path and completed his *Ayurvedic* education from Haripad Mootha Koyi Thamburan in 1899. Believing that the surgical plans for science should be updated for the development of *Ayurveda*, he also put aside modern knowledge. He proved that the hallmark of a physician is the knowledge and courage to make valuable contributions in the field of *Ayurveda*. At a time when the physicians were reluctant to do *Panchakarma* procedures, he skillfully unveiled the same. He became a renowned practitioner in a short period



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of time and established a school for *Sanskrit* and *Ayurvedic* medicine at Panavally. He was a patriot and took part in *Vaikom satyagraha* movement. He also penned two books *Kanthopadesam* and *Snehapana vidhi*, which were not published yet and he passed away in 1937.

Subject matter of Book at a Glance

“*Vastipradeepam*” as the name indicates is a treatise focused on the procedure *Vasti* but it also elaborately explains the preparative procedures of *Shodhana* viz. *Snehana* and *Svedana*. For reader’s sake the whole content of the book can be divided into 18 chapters where the first two chapters dealt with *Snehapana*, the next five chapters dealt with *Svedana* and the remaining all chapters were about *Vasti*. Procedures which were popularly practiced in Kerala like *Kayaseka*, *Pindasveda*, *Takradhara* and *Dhanyamladhara* were also described along with *Svedana*.
BODY

The book begins with a brief biography of the Author which itself gives an overall picture of him in multiple fields where he was successfully involved. He was also a great teacher and a poet. He was able to make his mark in the fields of research, industry and social service. The content of the book is not divided as chapters, but each topic is described under a heading viz – *Snehapana vidhi*, four types of *sneha*, formulations of *Sadyosneha*, *Snehavyapat*, *Sveda vidhi*, *Pizhichil*, *Kizhi/Pinda sweda*, *Takradhara*, *Dhanyamladhara*, *Vasti vidhi*, *Kashayakalpam*, *Ksheeravasti* and *Vastivyapat*. Under these headings the indications, contra indications, classification, complication and treatment of complications, dosage, dietary and behavioural restrictions are described as in classical literature along with his own views and clinical experiences about each therapy.

Under *Svedavidhi adhyaya*, the *chaturvidha sveda* with indication, contraindication, procedure etc. are described as in classical textbooks. But the Kerala special practices of *Svedakarma* like *Pizhichil*, *Kizhi/Pindasweda*, *Avagaha*, *Dhanyamladhara* are explained in detail which is a major attraction of the book other than *Vasti*. Author also emphasize classification of *sveda* based on *guna* into *Uttama*, *Madhyama* and *Adhama Sveda* which has to be fixed depending upon the disease condition of the patient. *Shashtika pinda sweda* is explained in detail under *Pindasweda* and preparation of *Takradhara* & *Dhanyamla* are also described.

Major portion of the book is set apart for different aspects of *Vasti*. There is a detailed description of measurements

of *Vastinetra* according to age. For *Vasti yantra*, author himself used football bladder of 3rd and 4th number in practice. In second part of *Vasti* chapter, various formulations of *Anuvasana* and *Kashaya Vasti* are mentioned with their Sanskrit quotations from classical text books. The concept of *Ashtadasa ashtadasaka vasti* as 18 *Kashaya Vasti* and 18 *Sneha Vasti* is also mentioned. The author has also quoted certain portions from *Phalamatra Sidhi* chapter of *Charaka samhita* as such to highlight most important *Vastidravya* and to show the importance of *Vasti* among all procedures. This book ends by describing complications of *Vasti* along with its management.

ANALYSIS

In the preface, the detailed biography of the author itself picturize himself as a great physician. He dared to practice *Panchakarma* in an adverse social atmosphere. In this book, author signifies importance of application of *Sneha* or *Snehapana* and *Svedana* before all *Shodhana* procedures. While mentioning about *Snehapana*, he followed classical texts throughout his book like dosage of *snehapana*, indication of *snehapana*, complications of *sneha* etc. by incorporating his practical experiences also. Dosage of *Snehapana* is mentioned in a gradually increasing order. According to him higher dose should not be given more than once but it can be given 2 times when the patient is strong. From his experience the quantity of *sneha* digested in 6 hours is found as 1/1.5/2 ounce, so he advised to start by one of these doses considering the patient. If the patient is *rooksha*, then the dose can be increased till *samyak snigdha* features gets manifested or maximum upto 7 days.

The author always tries to give explanations for each reference quoted from textbooks. The rationale behind drinking hot water just after *Sneha* intake and the probable mode of action of *Sadyosneha* are few examples. According to him the regimen of *Snehapana* should be followed during *jwara* and intake of *rasayana*.

We can see that the author is eloquent about the *pathya* or regimen mentioned in our classics. He highlights that the over stress of unnecessary *pathya* explained by *Ayurveda* physicians to their patients like complete avoidance of *lavana*, *katu*, *amla rasa* etc. while taking medicines was the reason why people go for other systems of medication where less restrictions or no restrictions are followed. He instructs to follow general *pathya* like using of luke warm water for drinking, avoidance of day sleep, holding of natural urges etc. along with *pathya* according to the

disease and *dosha* status of the patient by applying *yukti* of the physician which is relevant in this current era.

Among the *svedana* procedures he seems to be more concerned about *Upanaha sveda* and *Avagaha sveda*. According to him special care should be given while doing *Upanaha* in *Pitta* vitiated conditions. Likewise more care should be taken while doing *Avagaha*, because even slight increase in temperature may lead to complications. Author, from his personal experience, claims that *Dhanyamla dhara* gives better results in stroke patients and it is beneficial in obesity where *sveda* is contra indicated.

Several books on or before that period has influenced the author in his practice. He has followed reference from *Dharakalpa* for explaining the effects of *Takradhara* like it prevents premature graying of hair, reverse the agitation of *doshas*, pacifies headache etc. While mentioning about *Kayaseka*, author has advised to do *Thala* (keeping medicated powders or oil or a combination of these over vertex of head) before *Kayaseka* and the method for tying the knot of cloth piece around forehead is also mentioned. He signifies the importance of *Shamana chikitsa* along with *Shodhana chikitsa*. Administration of *Gandharvahasthadi kashaya* in morning and *kashaya* that pacifies *vata dosha* like *Bhadradarvadi* or *Vidaryadi* in evening during *Kayaseka* is one such example and advised to follow the same regimen in *Snehapana* for equal and half number of days after therapy.

Among *Pinda sweda*, *Shashtika pinda sweda* is given prior importance and preparation of medicine for the same is explained as per the text *Sirassekadi vidhi*. In contrary to the usual 7 positions, author advises to do the procedure in 4 postures namely supine, left lateral, right lateral and in prone position. Here also he reminds us to follow the suitable regimen as he claims that strict regimen should be followed in *Pinda sveda* than in *Pizhichil*.

Author followed *Susruta samhita* for most of the references of *Vasti*. He claims that most of the physicians stay back from practising *Vasti* due to fear of complications. Author tries to boost up reader's confidence by saying that he has done *Vasti* in more than 300 patients, in which retention time did not exceed more than 48 minutes and didn't cause any complications. At the same time he warns that care should be taken and physician himself should do all

necessary steps in this procedure. Author also shared his experience on administration of more than one *Vasti*, because *Kashaya vasti* retains only for 10-15 minutes, which is not enough to remove all vitiated *doshas*. But he makes clear that repeated *Vasti* is not needed for *Brimhana*, *Shamana*, *Vajeekarana* and *Yapana vasti*. Author also tries to give logical explanations in various contexts, for example, if *Vasti* is done after *Nasya*, it can cause *vibhrama* due to dilatation of vessels of head and after *Snehavasti* firm upward massage on legs for 100 *matra* is advised in order to deviate patient's mind and to increase retention time. Different *Vasti* formulations from classical text books are also compiled and classified based on action with method of preparation like *balaguluchyadi kashaya vasti*, *dvadasaprasruta vasti*, *panchatikta vasti*, *madhu tailika vasti* etc.

DRAWBACKS

Eventhough the book is entitled as *Vastipradeepam*, it elaborately explains the preparative procedures of *Shodhana* viz. *Snehana* and *Svedana* but the author has not mentioned about any other procedures like *Vamana* or *Virechana*. Though major part is taken from classical text books, references and citations are not given and as the book is written in Malayalam, it limits its reading to people who knows the language.

CONCLUSION

The book is a must read for *Ayurveda* students and practitioners who are looking out for practical applications of *Panchakarma* procedures. *Vastipradeepam* can be considered as an exclusive book on *Vasti* and it also gives a concise account on *Snehapana*, *Svedana* including certain Kerala speciality procedures along with author's practical experiences. It is very much inspiring and boosting up the confidence in practicing *Panchakarma* in beginners.

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Fig 1 Front and Back Cover Of Book

