Medicine in the *sivatattvaratnakara* of Keladi Basavaraja

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**ABSTRACT**

The *Sivatattvaratnakara*, a Sanskrit work of Basavaraja, the ruler of a small ruling Keladi dynasty. In this work he discussed variety of sciences in which the *Ayurveda* system of medicine is most important one. He deals the subject in the 21st and 22nd parts of the work. It has been a practice in India to trace the origin of arts, sciences etc., to superior gods and it is believed that *Ayurveda* also was created for the welfare of mankind by the Supreme Being Brahman. In this work we find a condensed form of the legend related to the origin of *Ayurveda*. Here Basavaraja gives detail account on the different diseases and healing methods. He was a scholar-king deals with a vast number of subjects in general and particularly all branches of science like *Ayurveda* (medicine), chemistry, toxicology, typology, weapons, metallurgy, horticulture, child care and sacraments, geography, astronomy, cosmography, astrology etc.

The present paper deals with the medicine, which is called as *Ayurveda* from the ancient period.

*Ayurveda* was given a great importance from the ancient times and it is called as secondary *Veda*. The name Dhanvantari is closely associated with *Ayurveda* mentioned in *Visnupurana*. The *Sivatattvaratnakara* deals *Ayurveda* with great importance. He states that a man endowed with a strong physique should enjoy the luxuries in different seasons. Basavaraja explains about the medical science to his son Somasekara. In this work the author gives details on eight branches of *Ayurveda*, called as *Ashtanga*, deals the sciences of medicine. They are *Kayatantra*, a medical treatment for fevers and ailments related to all parts of the body; *Balatantra* is pediatrics or treatment of children’s diseases; *Grahatantra* is a treatment related to psychic diseases; *Urdhvangatantra* (Sailaka) related to the treatment of diseases of the organs; *Salyatantra* is a treatment of extraction of foreign bodies through surgery etc.; *Damshtra* is a treatment of conditions caused by natural and artificial poisons (*toxicology*); *Jaratantra* or *Rasayantra* is an administration of elixirs for the maintenance of youth and prevention of old age and *Vrishathantra* is a use of aphrodisiacs.

The *Sivatattvaratnakara* deals the six places or *Sthanas* of head, chest, two arms, and two legs. All the other organs and limbs of the body are classified in to these six *Sthanas*. Eyes, nose, ears etc., are included in the *Anga* head; heart, stomach etc., in the chest and so on. In this work we can have three principles, which constitute the *Ayurveda* are enumerated by the author and they are (1) *Adana* is etiology includes the immediate and distant causes of disease. 2) *Nidana* is symptomatology includes the entire signs and symptoms of diseases and health,
and 3) Chikitsa is a therapeutics administration of medicines, treatment etc. Basavaraja has thus presented in a nutshell the scope of the science of longevity.7

**Types of Treatment and Qualities of a Physician**

The work also deals with four types of treatment and qualities of a physician. The four types of treatment are Daivam by administering Rasas, Manusham by preparing medicines of herbs, Asuram made by using surgical instruments, burning, etc., and Siddhavaydham consisting of chanting of Mantras etc.7

He gives detail information about qualities of a physician. A patient getting cured of the disease of becoming a victim of it depends on the physician, who undertakes his treatment and administrators of medicines to him. Basavaraja described the qualities of a good physician who should be approached by sick people. He, who has mastered the entire medical science, has been guided by a preceptor, has extensive practical experience, dexterity, purity, is free from desires, sympathetic, courageous, and has a lucky hand, is a good physician.

The work also classified the physicians in to two groups-Amrithahastaka and Daqghahastaka. Amrithahastaka, a physician endowed with the healing touch will have the marks of flag, jar, lotus, fish or bow in his palm and a clear line under his finger endowed with the healing touch will have the marks of flag, jar, and has a lucky hand, is a good physician. Basavaraja, gives detail information on rules on preparation of medicines health, soils, administration of drugs, diets and drinks, food items, milk and milk products. The Sivatattvaratnakara of Keladi Basavaraja is one of the encyclopedic works on medicine of the contemporary period.

**Digestion of Foods**

The Sivatattvaratnakara enumerates the digestive fire in animals. In animals like elephants, horses etc., the digestive fire is of the size of the thumb. In human beings and other smaller animals it is big as the barley grain. In birds like eagles, owls and cranes, the fire causes digestion is atomic. In smaller insects, it is as small as the tip of hair. The work deals with the time for digestion of foods. While taking medicines, man’s eating habits should be regulated and which helps to digestion of foods properly. The author has given the time taken by water, rice, meat etc., to get digested and liquids take 168 minutes (Ghatis). Mixed liquids take 120 minutes, milk in 480 minutes and rice gets digested in 6 hours. He also gives the details of other food items in his work.7

**Pulse Rate Examination**

According to our author, a physician can diagnose diseases by the examination of pulse beats. The vessel (Dhamani) at the base of the thumb gives the evidence of life. This examination is very much helpful to identify normal and abnormal condition of the body. Pulse (Nadi), excreta, urine, tongue, voice, touch, colour and eyes are examined to find out the ailment a patient. The pulse examination is done by placing three fingers on the Nadi. The physician should feel the Nadi at the root of the thumb of the right hand in the males and of the left hand in the females. The first finger detects the movements of Brahmanadi, that Vaya, the middle finger that of Vishnumadi, that of Pitta and the third finger detects the movement of Rudranadi, that of Kapha. The Nadi (pulse), thus helps to detect diseases of a patient.9

The author refers the three types of Nadis and he suggests that a physician not to examine the pulse beats if a person undergone physical exercise, who are hungry, thirsty and who have had intercourse with a woman. He also discusses the places in the body where pulse rate could be felt. Different pulses should be examined to detect various types of ailments like indigestion, breathing problem, fever etc., can be examined by pulse rate.9

Basavaraja describes the varied types of the pulse beats according to the taste of food consumed. Pulse beat is fast if saline things are consumed. When sweet things are taken, the pulse beat is like the gait of swan. If astringent food is taken, the pulse works like the movement of water creatures. If bitter and pungent things are consumed the pulse starts beating like the gait of elephant, camel etc. If a lady young and gentle, her pulse beat resembles the gait of peacock. The pulse beat will resemble the gait of a royal swan if she is a mature. For old woman the pulse beat resemble the gait of buffalo. The Sivatattvaratnakara also deals with the various diseases like fever, blood pressure and causes of aggravation of diseases and etiological factors and he also describes the medicinal treatment for the various diseases. In the beginning, the work deals with the preparation of medicines. He has given the recipes for eight compound preparations prescribed for the treatment of various ailments. Eranda Gana cures diseases caused by Vata and is prepared by mixing substances like Eranda, Amardaru, Goksura, Kairata, Sobanjana, Putika Amrita, Asvagandha etc.10 He enumerates different types of fruits, leaves, flowers, roots, bulbs, seeds and tree extracts, all of which are useful in preparing different medicines. As Charakasamhita mentioned, Basavaraja also followed other texts on medicine in providing the list of fruits and flowers and as a physician must be thorough with the knowledge of various fruits, vegetables etc., having medicinal values.11

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**Conclusion**

The Sivatattvaratnakara of Keladi Basavaraja is one of the encyclopaedic works in the different branches of sciences. It deals the practice of Ayurveda system of medicine, which was quite common in India during the medieval period and it continued to be popular up to the first two decades of the nineteenth century. The art of healing was mostly confined during this period to the Vaidyas of the Ayurvedic School. He
has enumerated and briefly defined the eight specialized branches of Ayurveda. Here he might be referred the Ancient works on medicine. Ancient texts like that of Bhela, Charaka and Sushruta, though aware of the eight parts are not strictly divided according to these eight branches. But Sivatattvaratnakara divided this section in accordance with the Ashthanga, as already pointed out that he has selected four branches for discussion. Thus, it is clear that Basavaraja followed the later authors like Vagbhata in dealing with Ayurveda in this order. He included three branches of Kayatantra, Damshtra and Rasayana. Therefore the work is considered as the masterpiece of the great importance on medicine. Even in the present day, we can have adopted this type of medicine and treatment to our diseases and Ayurveda doesn’t have any side effect. So, we can avoid the costly and affective modern medicine.

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