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# 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 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> 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 Basavaraj 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.

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## Introduction

*Ayurveda*—life-knowledge is an ancient science of medicine. It is a discipline of the *Upaveda* or auxiliary knowledge and treated as a supplement or appendix of the *Vedas* themselves, usually either the *Rigveda* or the *Atharvaveda*. The oldest known *Ayurvedic* texts are the *Susruta Samhita* and the *Charaka Samhita*. These classical Sanskrit encyclopaedias of medicine are among the foundational and formally compiled works of *Ayurveda*.

The *Samhita* of the *Atharvaveda* itself contains 114 hymns or incantations for the magical cure of diseases. There are various legendary accounts of the origin of *Ayurveda*, e.g. that the science was received by Dhanvantari (Divodasa) from Brahma Tradition also holds that a lost text written by the sage Agnivesh, a student of the sage Bharadwaja, influenced the writings of *Ayurveda*. Then this tradition continued even in our times.

In the 17<sup>th</sup> century A.D. many works were written on different types of medicine. The *Sivatattvaratnakara* is one of them. This is an encyclopaedic work on different sciences. It is a Sanskrit verse written by Keladi Basavaraja, a distinguished scholar-king of Karnataka and who ruled Keladi Kingdom from 1694 AD to 1714. Keladi was a small feudatory kingdom of Vijayanagara empire in the early time and later it grew an independent and important kingdom extended up to Goa in north and Cannanore in the south. The present districts of Hassan and Shimoga were its boundaries in Karnataka. The Keladi Kingdom was ruled by eighteen kings from 1499 AD to 1763 A.D. These rulers continued the tradition of Vijayangara and they themselves were authors of several outstanding works both in Sanskrit and Kannada. Basavappa Nayaka I or Basavaraja was the most distinguished scholar-king among them. Keladi Basavaraja (Basavappa Nayaka I) was an adopted son and successor of the heroic queen Kaladi Channammaji and wife of Somasekhara Nayaka I. After long military activities, Basavaraja spent his time in peace and turned his attention to literary activities. He was a Virasaiva and encouraged other religions also. He had a deep faith on Virasaivism, which proved in the invocatory stanza of *Sivatattvaratnakara*. The work deals

with variety of knowledge on contemporary history, politics, culture, art and architecture, science, technology, medicine etc. It also throws light on the contemporary branches of knowledge.

## A Literary Masterpiece on Medicine

Keladi Basavaraja, a scholar-king deals a vast number of subjects in general and particularly all branches of science like *Ayurveda* (medicine), metallurgy, chemistry, poisons, toxicology, typology, weapons, 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 Somasekhara. 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* (*Salakya*) 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 *Rasayana* is an administration of elixirs for the maintenance of youth and prevention of old age and *Vrishatantra* is a use of aphrodisiacs.<sup>1</sup>

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.<sup>6</sup> 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,

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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.<sup>2</sup>

### 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 *Siddhavaidyam* consisting of chanting of *Mantras* etc.<sup>3</sup>

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- *Amritahastaka* and *Dagdahastaka*. *Amritahastaka*, 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 *Anamika* (ring finger). A physician whose palm is distinctly marked with a dark line, and devoid of sympathy, greedy, not disciplined and who having a killing touch is a bad physician and who should not become to the profession. The author also clarifies that a physician should avoid patients who are his enemies and whose condition is very serious.<sup>4</sup>

The *Sivatattvaratnakara* deals with the three diseases of *Vata* (air or wind), *Pitta* (bile) and *Kapha* (a well) are the pathogenic factors in the body caused on account of their vitiation. A physician must know all the three diseases. The important locations of these diseases are colon, waist, thighs, ears, bones, organ of touch are locations of *Vata*, amongst them colon is the most important one. The places of *Pitta* and navel are blood, *Rasas*, eyes etc; chest, neck, head, joints, intestines, *Rasa*, fat, nose and tongue are the locations of *Kapha* and chest is the most important location amongst them.<sup>4</sup> These diseases can be cured by administering appropriate drugs depending on the physical condition of the patient. A physician must know the qualities and actions of the various drugs. A thorough knowledge of the classification of *Rasas* and disease is important, because a physician well acquainted with them seldom commits blunders in ascertaining etiology, symptomatology and treatment of disease.<sup>5</sup>

The *Kapha*, *Pitta* and *Vayu* respectively produce the types of mucous indigestion of chime (*Amajirna*), acid indigestion (*Vdagdhajirna*), and indigestion due to incarcerated fecal matter (*Vishtabdhajirna*). Certain authorities aver that there is a fourth class of indigestion; known as the indigestion of unassimilated chyle (*Rasa sesha*).<sup>6</sup> In his work, Basavaraja gives remedies for all root diseases.

### 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 (*Ghatas*). 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.<sup>7</sup>

### 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 *Vayu*, the middle finger that of *Vishnunadi*, 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.<sup>8</sup>

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.<sup>9</sup>

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.<sup>10</sup> 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.<sup>11</sup>

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.

### Conclusion

The *Sivatattvaratnakara* of Keladi Basavaraj 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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