



Review Article

BALATANTRAM - A BOOK REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

Ayurveda the ancient Indian bioscience depicts all the aspects of healthy living. *Kaumarabhrithya* is a very important branch among the *Ashtangas* of Ayurveda. *Balatantram* is a valuable book in *Balachikitsa* written by Kalyana Vaidya in 16th Century. The work has 14 chapters, signified as *Patala* and has approximately 831 verses. Narration of *Balatantram* contains the principles and practices regarding the various aspects of diseases of children along with infertility related to males and females and *Vajikarana upayas*. This book is already published yet not very popular. This review would help the scientific community to understand this book in concise manner.

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda, the ancient Indian bioscience depicts all the aspects of healthy living. The entire concept of Ayurveda was branched into eight as, *Kaya Chikitsa*, *Salakya Tantra*, *Salya Tantra*, *Visha Chikitsa*, *Bhutavidya*, *Koumarabhrithya*, *Rasayana* and *Vajikarana*. *Kaumarabhrithya* is a very important branch among these *Ashtangas* of Ayurveda.

Balatantram is a valuable literary resource dealing with the pediatric care. Sri Kalyana vaidya is considered as the author of *Balatantram*. Narration of *Balatantram* comprises the principles and practices regarding the various aspects of diseases of children along with diseases related to male and female and *Vajikarana upayas*. A vast description regarding the various diseases and its treatments are described in detail. Kalyana Vaidya's work shows a great deal of *Tantric* influence in its descriptions of rituals and in the use of mantras.

The text is written in Sanskrit language in the form of *Slokas*. The work has 14 chapters, signified as *Patala* and has approximately 831 verses. The text begins with a *Ganesasthuthi* denoting the age old Hindu tradition of *Mangalacharana*.

Formulations mentioned in the text are usually relatively simple and easy to prepare. Sources mentioned by Kalyana are the *Prayogasara* and *Susruta Samhita*. Commentator Dipachandra mentions the following authors and works as source of *Balatantram*- Atreya, Bhavaprakasa, Bhela, Caraka, Harita, Samnipatakalka, Susruta, Toderananda, Vagbhata, Vaidyasaroddhara, Vaidyavinoda, Vangasena, Yogachintamani, Yogaratnavali and Yogasatha.

About the Author

Kalyana Vaidya was the son of Mahidara, a devotee of Lakshminarasimha and the grandson of Ramadasa. He was a Pandita of Ahichattara lineage and a devotee of Ramachandra. The author discloses his lineage at the end of 14th chapter. Kalyana Vaidya mentions that he completed his treatise in a Siva temple in the year 1587- 1588.

Commentaries

A commentary in Hindi (mixed with Rajasthani) on *Balatantram* was written by Vacaka Dipachandra, author of *Langhanapathyanirnaya* (eighteenth Century), its title is *Balatantrambhasavachanika* or *Balatantram granthavachanikabandha*.^[1]

Analysis of Chapters

There are 14 chapters in *Balatantram*. The contents of each chapter are analyzed as follows.

Chapter 1 - Sodasa vandhya Prathikara

This chapter mentioned that there are nine causes for *Vandhyatha*, in which eight causes are explained for *Nari* and one *Dosha* is mentioned for *Purusha*. Infertility in women is described as two series with its treatment. The first series consists of four types of infertility caused by *Dosha* (*Pitta*, *Vata*, *Kapha*,

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Sannipata), two by *Grahas*, one type by *Abhisapa* and one by *Abhicharakriya*. Author mentioned symptoms and treatment of *Dushtarthava*. *Ajaksheeram* is advised as the important *Anupana* in all types of *Arthavadushti*. *Vandhyatha* due to *Grahabadha* exhibits pain in 8th-14th day of menstruation. Treatment modality advised here is *Pooja* for *Gotradevi*, *Durgadevi* or *Gananada*. To get relief from the symptoms caused by wrath of gods, she should pray to *Gotradevi* or *Durgadevi* and she should be respectful for guru and she should give offerings like *Dhana*, *Vastra* etc. The second series describes eight types of infertile women called *Tripaksi*, *Subrati*, *Sabda*, *Trimukhi*, *Vyaghrini*, *Vakri*, *Kamalini* and *Vyaktini*.

Chapter 2 - *Sadharana Vandhyoushadha Kadhana*

This chapter is about the treatment of various unspecified types of infertility. Acharya also describe *Yonisodhana prayoga*, *Pushpasanjana prayoga*, *Garbhakara prayoga* and contraceptive measures to prevent *Garbha*. *Grithas* like *Aswaganda gritha* and *Sidha Kalyanaka gritha* are mentioned for getting good progeny. Acharya is advised intake of *Sundi* mixed with *Guggha* for 7 days, as *Garbakaraprayoga*. Contraceptive measures like *Gudaavaleham* i.e., *Avaleha* made with 1 *Pala guda* is mixed with *Thandulavari* and intake of *Vanipushpam* mixed with *Aranala* for 7 days.

Chapter 3 - *Puruhsaviryavidhi Kadhana*

This chapter contains recipes for *Sukravridhi* like *Laghusalmalimoola* and *Thalamooli choornam* mixed with *Payas* or *Gritha*, *Chooranam* of *Kokilaksha beejam*, *Nisa*, *Amalaki* and *Satavari*. *Musalikandha choornam* mixed with *Guduchisatwam* is advised for increasing male potency. *Satavaritailam* is an important *Taila yoga* indicated for promoting male potency. *Veerya sthambhana chikitsa* like intake of *Dugdhasudha*, *Ahiphena* with 3 *Rattipramana sitha* is mentioned.

Yonidravana is also attained by using drugs like *Kaseesam*, *Sphatika*, *Majuphalam* mixed with *Kshoudra*. *Bhagasankochana* attained if *Nari* is used *Varti* made up of *Mocharasa*, *Amalaki*, and *Kakamachi* in *Yoni*, *Amalaka kashayam* mixed with *Takram* is used for *Bhagakshalanam*. This *Bhagakshalana yoga* is used for getting sexual pleasure during coitus.

Chapter 4 - *Garbhadhanakale Rudrasnana Kadhana*

This chapter describes rituals, including mantras, for getting healthy offspring of the desired sex, a ritual to be performed while digging up the *Lakshmana* plant and if it put in the right nostril of a woman, guarantees her giving birth to a son and elaborate rules for *Rudrasnana* i.e., tantric ritual which ensures progeny for a childless couple. Acharya explains about *Grahanakala* of *Oushada* and *Mantra* used to recite during *Oushadha grahanakala*. Acharya describes *Rudrasnana'* for getting good progeny for a *Rajaswala stree*

Chapter 5 - *Garbhini Garbharaksha Kadhana*

This chapter deals with various methods used in antenatal care. In this chapter Acharya describes *Garbha raksha vidhi* starting from 1st month ending with 12th lunar month of pregnancy. This chapter is concerned with

Mantra and offerings to twelve gods and group of deities protecting the expectant mother and the child in the womb up to the twelve month of pregnancy. Mantra should be chant for 21 times and one should take bath after returning from the ritual. Acharya is mentioned some special *Dravyas* to be offered as *Balikrma* to please the deity by which protection of child and mother is assured.

Chapter 6 - *Sukhaprasavopaya Kadhana*

This chapter is devoted to procedures, which is beneficial for an easy delivery. It mainly deals with perinatal care and management. Both *Adravyabhoota* and *Dravyabhoota* treatment is described here. *Balataila* is advised for *Abhyanga* in perinatal period. General guidelines have been given for *Sutikagraha* and author mentions about the appointment of ladies who are efficient in taking care of *Prasoota*. Description of proper mantra should be chanted all time for the welfare of the newborn and the mother can be seen in this chapter. Red thread with 7 knots should be tied at the door of *Sutika griha*. For easy delivery Acharya is explained medicines to be taken orally, i.e., *Mathulanga choorna prayoga* and *Aswathamoola prayoga*. The root of *Aswatha* grown towards north should be taken orally along with rice water. This even helps to expel out *Mrithagarbha*. *Indravavaruni prayoga*, *Kaliharimooli prayoga* and *Sinduvara prayoga* are mentioned for *Yonilepana* for easy delivery. *Langalikamachi prayoga*, *Saliparnimoola prayoga* and *Roobukadi prayoga* are used for *Nabhilepana* for the purpose of easy delivery.

Chapter 7 - *Dinagrahita Balagrahahara Kadhana*

This chapter mentions about early neonatal care of child. It describes ten *Grahas* like *Nandhini*, *Sunandha*, *Khatali*, *Katakoli*, *Ahamkari devi*, *Khatavangi*, *Hinsika*, *Bhishani*, *Mesha* and *Rodhana* who may assault a child during the first ten days of its life. Acharya also describes mantra to be chanted during the time of *Grahabadha*. *Kwatham* of *Apamarga*, *Vacha*, *Chandana* should be used for *Snanam* with chanting of *Mantra*.

Chapter 8 - *Masagrahita Balagrahahara Kadhana*

In this chapter Acharya has described the management of *Balagraha* affecting the child during the first year of his life. At the end of the chapter Acharya mentions one *Sloka* for reciting all twelve *Graham* in month wise.

Chapter 9 - *Varsha Grahita Balaraksha Kadhana*

This chapter mentions about sixteen *Grahas* who prey upon a child during the first sixteen years of life. *Panchagavya* is used for *Snanam* in all the 16 types of *Grahadosha*.

Chapter 10 - *Dinamasavarsha Balagrahopaya Kadhana*

This chapter gives the names of sixteen more *Grahas* whose attack can be expected during the first day, month, or year, second day, month or year etc. *Dhoopana* of tail of cat, *Nrikesa*, ghee, *Nimbapatra* etc., is mentioned in first month. *Dhoopana* with *Kushta*, *Guggulu*, *Gajasidhanta*, *Sidharthakam* and *Gogritham* is also mentioned for the treatment of *Grahabadha*.

Chapter 11 - Sadharana Balaraksha Kadhana

This chapter mentions about common measures against all types of *Grahas*, besides adding nine names of *Grahas* whose attacks are seen as a punishment for offences committed during previous life. The measures described in order to ward off attacks by *Grahas* usually consist of offerings (*Bali*) of a specified number of various objects to be deposited in a particular quarter of the sky accompanied by utter of *Mantras*.

Chapter 12 - Jwaraharanopaya Kadhana

First section of this chapter mentions about the wet nurse, recipes which promote lactation in nursing mothers and measures which purify the milk. Second section deals with the treatment of some disorders especially occurring in infants (inflammation of navel, anal region, mouth, and therapy for fever in children).

Chapter 13 - Seetaladi Chikitsa Kadhana

This chapter deals with treatment of children's diseases that affecting digestive system like *Athisara*, *Arsas*, *Grahani* and *Chardi*, diseases that are affecting nervous system like *Vatavyadhi*, *Unmada* and *Apasmara*. Acharya describes *Seethala Chikitsa (Masuri chikitsa)* in detail in this chapter and mentions treatment for various stages in *Masuri*. For example, to cure *Krimi* in *Seethalavrana*, Acharya advised *Gomaya choornam* or *Surasa choornam*. Pain and burning sensation is cured by the use of *Muktha*, *Pravala* and *Kachapaprishta thoyam*.

Chapter 14 - Nanaprayoga Kadhana

First part of this chapter deals with diseases of *Netra*, *Nasa*, *Karna*, *Sira* and *Mukha*.

Second part deals with *Visha hikitsa* of *Swavisha* and *Vrishchikavisha*. *Kalyana vaidhya* describes various *Rasayana prayoga* like daily usage of *Asithatila* and *Bringarajapatram* for rejuvenation. Administration of *Gudoochiphala choorna* and *Aswagandha* are also mentioned for *Rasayana* therapy.

Before ending the description of *Balatantram*, Acharya tries to keep in mind the importance of ascertaining *Desa*, *Kala* etc., before doing treatment in *Bala*.

Special features

Kalyana Vaidya's work shows a great deal of Tantric influence in its descriptions of rituals and in the use of mantras. Magical abound in therapies with frequent use of substances like excrements, hairs, nails,

horns etc., of various animals are described. *Kalyana's* materia medica consists for a very large part of medicinal plants and some mineral known from classical Ayurvedic texts. Even though the drugs and formulations mentioned in this book are very simple, some of the drugs like *Sarpakanchuka*, *Gokhuraka* etc mentioned for *Dhoopa prayoga* are difficult to get now a days. Usage of metals and minerals like *Silajatu*, *Paradha*, *Gandhaka*, *Sphatika* etc are mentioned in treatment of different diseases.

This book gives equal importance to *Yuktivyaprasaya chikitsa* and *Daivavyapasraya chikitsa*. The order of disease mentioned in chapters thirteen and fourteen partially agrees with the *Madhava Nidana* but makes a rather chaotic impression.

CONCLUSION

Among *Ashtangas* of Ayurveda *Bala Chikitsa* need special attention as it is relatively a challenge for the pediatrician to diagnose the diseases of a child. *Balatantram* is a valuable book in *Balachikitsa* written by *Kalyana Vaidya* in 16th Century.

First two *Patalas* dealt with different types of infertility and treatment for that. Third and fourth chapter mainly mention about recipes which promote male potency and rituals, mantras etc to be performed to get good progeny. Fifth and sixth chapter deals with *Garbharakshavidhi* upto 12th month and procedures used for easy delivery. Seventh to eleventh chapter deal with *Grahas* which attack the child during 1st day- 16th day, 1st month- 16th month, 1st year- 16th year and 1st day, 1st month, 1st year- 16th day, 16th month and 16th year. Acharya emphasize the importance of offerings to please these *Graha* in all these chapters and mentions about *Dhoopanadi prayoga* as treatment modality. Twelveth chapter describes about *Datrilakshana* and *Sthanya sudhi upayas*. Thirteenth and fourteenth chapter narrate treatment for various diseases like *Chardi*, *Athisara*, *Seethala*, *Urgwajathrugata rogas*, *Vridhi* etc., and *Rasayana prayogas* for rejuvenating body.

On concluding, *Balatantram* is an important book to read by all Ayurvedic scholars and need to be given wide publicity.

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