



BOOK REVIEW

A Book Review of *Jyotsnika (Visha Vaidya)*

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INTRODUCTION

Bio diversity of Kerala is a blessing from God, as it comprises a wide variety of flora and fauna. For the same reason snake bite, insect bite, wild animal bites etc. were common especially in days of old. Many persons with *Vaidya parambarya* were concentrated in *Visha chikitsa* as the incidence rate was high in those days. There were many eminent *Visha vaidyas* in Kerala who managed snake bite and even bite from rabid dog, which is a most fatal condition. The basis of treatment among *Visha vaidyas* in Kerala were the concepts said in *Visha vaidya grandhas* such as *Vishanarayaneeyam*, *Uddeesa tantra*, *Ulpala tantra*, *Harameghala*, *Lakshanamritam*, *Ashtanga hridaya*, *Kalavanchana* etc. All these books were written in Sanskrit. Later, many *Visha vaidya grandhas* were written in Malayalam based on the above said books. "*Visha vaidya jyotsnika*" is one such book which is based on *Uddeesa tantra*, which is highly concentrated in *Oushadha prayoga* in *Visha chikitsa*. The term "*Jyotsnika*" is derived from the word "*Uddeesa*" which means moon. The author of "*Jyotsnika*" is said to be unknown and from the *Vaidya parambarya adhikara* in the text it is said that "Narayanan" is the author, but his further details remain unspecified. Many opinions such as he is the disciple of "Vasudevan" who might be a member of any of the famous *Visha vaidya* families such as Kokkara, Pambumekkadu or Karattu. Here, in this article a humble attempt is made to bring in notice about the applicable concepts and medicinal compositions said in the edited version of *Jyotsnika* ie *Jyotsnika (visha vaidya)* among the persons with interest in Clinical toxicology.

AUTHORS RECOGNITION

Jyotsnika (Visha vaidya) is the re-publication of the famous *Visha vaidya grandha "Jyotsnika"*, which is published by Sreevanchi Sethulakshmi grandhavali as number 9. This book which is written in Malayalam is edited by K. Mahadeva Sastry, Ag. curator for the publication of oriental manuscripts, and published under the authority of the Government of His Highness The Maharaja of Travancore. The second edition is published in 1940. The general editor of the reprint edition in 2013 is Dr.K.G. Sreelekha and published by oriental research institute and manuscript library, University of Kerala.

SUBJECT MATTER OF BOOK AT A GLANCE

This exquisite *Visha vaidya grandha* consist of twenty one *adhikaras* which describes about snake, scorpion, spider, rat, rabid dog, various insects such as wasp, centipede, leech etc. Their features of envenomation and treatment to be adopted. Besides animal toxins, details about symptoms seen on exposure to plant toxins and their antidotes were also mentioned. Many *Vishahara yogas* such as *Tharuna bhaskara gulika*, *Mrithyujaya gulika*, *Paranthyadi keram* etc were described. *Keraleeya visha vaidyas* used *daiva vyapasraya chikitsa* along with *yukthi vyapasraya chikitsa* and their line of treatment was *dhyanam*, *manthram*, *oushadham* and *prayogam*. Correspondingly the author dedicated two *adhikaras* for *manthra prayogas* (*Satwajaya chikitsa* ie withdrawal of mind from unwholesome objects) along with *dhyanam*. "Garuda panchakshari" and "Neelakantatrayakshari" are best *Mantras* for *visha samana* and this should be chanted with utmost devotion. For those cannot chant *Mantra* with utmost devotion, *Oushadha* can be used and if both medicine and *mantra* are integrated, the result will be fast. Apart from this, *Visha upadravas* (complications arising due to exposure to various toxins), their management, and *Dootha lakshana* which is highly connected with medical astrology also were specified.

CHAPTERS

Adhikaram 1	<i>Visha chikitsaka lakshanam, Chikitsa arha</i> etc.
Adhikaram 2	<i>Doothadi lakshana</i>
Adhikaram 3	<i>Sa visha avisha damsa lakshana</i>
Adhikaram 4	<i>Chikitsa praramba samanya</i>
Adhikaram 5	<i>Darveekara chikitsa</i>
Adhikaram 6	<i>Mandali chikitsa</i>
Adhikaram 7	<i>Rajila chikitsa</i>
Adhikaram 8	<i>Chikitsa kramam samanya</i>
Adhikaram 9	<i>Leha tailadi prayoga</i>
Adhikaram 10	<i>Sudha kaladi niroopanam</i>
Adhikaram 11	<i>Mooshika visha chikitsa</i>
Adhikaram 12	<i>Vrischika visha vijnana pratishedam</i>
Adhikaram 13	<i>Sthavara visha vijnana pratishedam</i>
Adhikaram 14	<i>Pashuchikitsa</i>
Adhikaram 15	<i>Sarva visha pratishedam</i>
Adhikaram 16	<i>Sarva maha visha chikitsa</i>
Adhikaram 17	<i>Nagotpathi kramam</i>
Adhikaram 18	<i>Sarpa lakshana</i>
Adhikaram 19	<i>Mantra swaroopadi krama</i>
Adhikaram 20	<i>Mantra prayogam</i>
Adhikaram 21	<i>Vaidya parambarya</i>

ANALYSIS OF METHODOLOGIES AND TECHNIQUES MENTIONED IN THE BOOK

AMRITHA KALA/SUDHA KALA AND VISHA KALA:

On analyzing this exclusive concept, explained in *adhikara* 10, *Amritha kala* and *visha kala* can be considered as circulating energy which ascends in *sukla paksha* through right side in men and descends through left side in *Krishna paksha*. In women *amritha kala* and *visha kala* ascends through left side and descends through right side. This energy is said to be concentrated in 15 points in our body such as *asangushtam* (bigtoe) (First day of *sukla paksha*), *padham* (foot), *sandhi*(joints), *janu*(knee), *guhya*(anus), *nabhi* (lowerabdomen), *hridayam*(heart), *kucham*(buttocks), *kantam*(neck), *nasika*(nose), *Netra*(eyes), *karna*(ears), *bhrumadhyam*(glabella), *netti*(forehead), *moordha*(bregma) in order. *Visha kala* will always stand in seventh *stana* above *amritha kala*.ie if *amritha kala* is in *angushta*, *visha kala* will be in *hridaya*. If bite is got at the site where *vishakala* stands, immediate death will occur. If bite occurs in site of *amrita kala* even by *ashtanaga* such as *gulikan*, it is said that symptoms of envenomation does not occur. If *visha kala* is situated in *kanta stana*, there is a chance of food poisoning.

VISHA VEGA AND LEENA JEEVAN

The movement of *visha* from one *dhathu* to the adjacent *dhathu* is called *vega* and 7 *vega lakshanas* starting from *charma*(skin) to *sukla*(semen) is mentioned in *adhikara* 3. According to the concept of *leena jeevan* explained in 3rd *adhikara*, even if the victim goes to a stage of unconsciousness immediately after bite and the confirmatory signs of death are absent, there is life inside him. The patient can be survived by emergency procedures.

OOTHU CHIKITSA (Blowing therapy)

This treatment procedure is mentioned in *sarpa samanya chikitsa* and indicated when *visha* is situated in first three *dhatus*. In this procedure three persons are made to blow over two ears and vertex for 150 times after chewing certain drugs such as *viswa*(*Zingiber officinale*), *dusparsa* (*Tragia involucrate*), *maricha*(*Piper nigrum*) and *vishavega* (*Aristolochia indica*) in equal quantities and this helps to regain altered consciousness.

MANDALI VISHA UPADRAVA CHIKITSA

Certain combination medicines are enlisted for various complications arising due to viper envenomation in *adhikara* 6.

Complications	Management
1.Mental derangement	<i>Ramaccham</i> (Chrysopogan zizanoids) and <i>Chandana</i> (Santalum album) internally
2.Yellowish discoloration of urine	Bark of <i>Pongamia pinnata</i> in luke warm water
3.Fever	Root of Tamarind in milk
4.Vomiting	<i>Triphala</i> internally
5.Burning sensation	<i>Sarvanga lepana</i> with <i>Ramaccham</i> (Chrysopogan zizanoids), <i>Iruveli</i> (Coleus zeylanicus) and <i>chandana</i> (Santalum album)
6.Haemetemesis	<i>Nimba patram</i> (Azadirachta indica) in milk
7.Bloody diarrhea	Bark of <i>kadamba</i> (Neolamarckia cadamba) internally
8.Loss of strength of joint	<i>Punarnava</i> (Boerhavia diffusa) in lukewarm water
9.Abdominal distention	<i>Trikatu</i> with <i>saindhavam</i>
10.Thirst	<i>Kadalikanda</i> (Musa paradisiacal) <i>toyam</i> and milk internally
11.Haemoptysis and Epistaxis	<i>Malathipatra</i> (Aganosma heynei) <i>toyam</i> with <i>tailam</i> internally
12.Bleeding from Hair follicle	<i>Sigrumoola</i> (Moringa oleifera) <i>choornam</i> with ghee for scrubbing all over the body
13.Urinary and faecal retention	<i>Pippali</i> (Piper longum) and <i>ela</i> (Elettaria cardamomum) in <i>nalikerodaka</i> (Cocos nucifera) / <i>koshna toyam</i>

DATURA LEPA

This *prayoga* is explained 6th *adhikara*. ie Remove seeds from *Datura metel* fruit and fill it with *saindhava*, then boil in *kanchikam* and made into paste and applied over *vishaja sopha*. This is practically used in other conditions of painful swelling. Practically after filling with *saindhava* it is bound in plantain leaf and boiled in milk.

SIGRU PUNARNAVADI LEPA YOGAM

The yoga consist of *sigru* (Moringa oleifera), *punarnava* (Boerhavia diffusa), *haridra* (Curcuma longa), *vacha* (Acorus calamus), *Chandana* (Santalum album), *pata* (Cyclea peltata), *iswarimooli* (Aristolochia indica), *yashti* (Glycyrrhiza glabra), *sireesha* (Albizia lebeck) and *gokshura* (Tribulus terrestris) said in 6th *adhikara* is indicated for external application in *vishaja sopha*.

THOOKKU DHARA

This is indicated in *vishaja sopha*, explained in 6th *adhikara*. If *nimba patra* is used along with other drugs it is more beneficial.

NELLIKKA THALAM

Goosberry after boiling in milk is applied as *thalam* in *visha* cases. This procedure is explained in *adhikara* 8.

PATHYA APATHYA in visha:

Pathya Apathyas are explained in 8th *adhikara*. *Shashtikam* (Red rice), *Navatandulam* (Oryza sativa used within 2 months), *varak* (Kodo millet), *tina* (millets), *kodravam* (Paspalum strabicultum), *mulanellu* (Bamboo rice) are most suitable for *visha*. Meat of mangoose, peacock, cuckoo meat and small fish (along

with bone) are said to be best according to this book. Fish is *apathya* and causes *sthambhana* and *visha vardhana*, if taken without bone. On discussing this context we can notice, fish along with bone (rich in calcium carbonate) is mentioned as *pathya* where as fish without bone is said to cause a negative impact on *visha*. Role of calcium in various envenomation is already proven in studies. Calcium act as neurotransmitter in case of krait bite as the neurotoxic manifestations are due to pre synaptic inhibition and calcium gluconate is given till the recovery from neuro paralysis in such cases^[1]. Calcium gluconate is administered in order to relieve muscle spasm in cases of toxicity.

BHINNA VISHAM

Bhinna visha is explained in 8th *adhikara*. According to the concepts of this book, we have to do treatment for succeeding *dhatu*, ie if *visha* is present in *mamsa dhathu*, we have to do the treatment for *visha* in *medho dhathu*. If treatment given is having *mandha veerya* or not corresponding to *dhathu*, *visha* is not removed from the body completely. This *Visha* disintegrates and gets accumulated in different joints and manifests symptoms such *sandhi sadam* (Loss of strength of joints), tremor, burning sensation and pain in the body. This concept is called as *bhinna visha* (Fragmented poison). The treatment recommended are internal administration of milk decoction of *Physalis minima* which gives immediate result and *Rasa* (mercury) and *nilanarakam* (*Naregamia alata*) externally all over the body. Anti-inflammatory, analgesic and antipyretic effect of *Physalis minima* is already proven.

JALA DHARA

Jala dhara explained in 8th *adhikara*, is good for *visha samana*, burning sensation, altered consciousness, delirium, lethargy and hot flushes. The procedure should be done in a continuous manner without interrupting *dhara* till the patient shivers. Water mixed with pepper powder is recommended internally in order to avoid giddiness.

TREATMENT OF VARIOUS VISHA

Treatment of various *vishas* such as *Marjara* (cat), *Swana* (dog), *Matsya* (fish), *Kanabha* (Wasp), *Jalooka* (Leech), *Bringa* (Beetle) etc. are explained in 12th *adhikara*. Some among the combinations are widely used in clinical practices such as *Biophytum sensitivum* with butter both externally and internally for wasp sting, *Nisa sariba ghritam* externally and internally for leech bite, *Punnataka* (*Valeriana wallichii*), *Curcuma longa* and *Coscinium fenestratum* for external application for beetle bite, Root of *Brassica nigra* internally, *Dasapushpa* and *Tinospora cordifolia* boiled in milk for external application in fish stung by its whiskers or fins.

ANTIDOTES FOR PLANT TOXIN

Explained in 13th *adhikara*

PASU CHIKITSA

Pasu chikitsa or *mrga ayurveda* is another high light of the book which is said in 14th *adhikara*. Symptoms of cattle's afflicted with poison and its treatment is explained here.

PRACTICAL ASPECT

Yogas such as *Sigrū punarnavadi agada* for *vishaja sophā*, *Neelithulasyadi agada* for spider envenomation, *Durva rasadi keram*, *paranthyadi kerataila*, *Neeli karanjadi kashaya*, *Datura lepa*, *Nisa sariba ghritam* or *kashaya* for *jalooka visha*, *Mukkutti venna prayoga* for wasp sting, etc. are commonly used in the practice of *visha chikitsa* presently. *Agada yogas* are given in the form various *kalpana viseshā's* according to the choice of *vaidya*. Man's relationship with Addictive drugs are increasing now a days and the present book contribute many single drugs for the purpose of de-addiction. Many antidotes are mentioned for drugs of addiction such as lemon for alcohol, Coconut milk for tobacco, *Bimbi* (*Coccinia grandis*) for cannabis, Root of Thorn apple for poppy and even salted mango for the excessive use of curd and the concepts behind this is mind blowing. Researches had proved the hepato protective effects of lemon juice on alcohol induced liver injury in a study conducted in mice through decreasing the levels of AST, ALT, Hepatic TG and lipid peroxidation^[2].

Plant toxin	Antidotes
1. <i>Semecarpus anacardium</i>	Bark of <i>Terminalia Bellirica</i> for external and internal administration. <i>Trivritt</i> (<i>Operculina turpethum</i>) can also be given and if excessive purgation occurs <i>Guda dhara</i> , internal administration and bathing with <i>satavari jala</i> .
2. <i>Nagadanthi</i> (<i>Baliospermum montanum</i>)	Same as above
3. <i>Kannambatti</i>	Bark of <i>Puzhaparuthi</i> (<i>Hibiscus tiliaceus</i>)
4. Alcohol	Lemon
5. <i>Cannabis sativa</i>	<i>Bimbi</i> (<i>Coccinia grandis</i>)
6. <i>Aaveen marunnu</i> (<i>Papaver somniferum</i>)	Root and leaf of <i>Datura</i> (<i>Datura metel</i>)
7. <i>Langali</i> (<i>Gloriosa superba</i>)	Root of <i>Indigofera tinctoria</i>
8. <i>Delphinium denudatum</i>	<i>Piper nigrum</i>
9. <i>Pashana</i> (<i>Arsenic</i>)	Root of <i>indigofera tinctoria</i> and <i>mrnalām</i> (<i>Nelumbo nucifera</i>), <i>sarshapa</i> (<i>Brassica juncea</i>)
10. Mercury	<i>Kushmandam</i> (<i>Benincasa hispida</i>)
11. <i>Chitrakam-plumbago zeylanica</i> and <i>aavil</i> (<i>Holoptelea integrifolia</i>)	<i>Ricinus communis</i> , butter and <i>satavari</i> (<i>Asperagus racemosa</i>)
12. <i>Strichnus nuxvomica</i>	<i>Gunjapallavam</i> (Tender leaves of <i>Abrus precatorius</i>) internal and external administration
13. <i>Vatsanabhi</i> (<i>Aconitum ferox</i>)	<i>Delphinium denudatum</i> , Root of <i>Indigofera tinctoria</i>
14. Curd and butter milk	Unripe salted mango with cotyledon kept for longer period
15. Tobacco	Coconut milk
16. <i>Taila veerya</i>	<i>Lavana toyam</i> (Saline water)
17. Jack fruit	<i>Thelkada</i> (<i>Heliotropium indicum</i>) and <i>Sunti</i> (<i>Zingiber officinale</i>)

DEMERITS OF THE TEXT

Name of the author is not revealed and the period of the book is unknown. The concepts and medicinal combinations mentioned in the book is remarkable for the corresponding period. But in the present era of anti venom and vaccines many techniques remain to be irrelevant and in applicable. So re writing the book with relevant and applicable concepts with exquisite combination medicines in *visha chikitsa* is important.

CONCLUSION

Jyotsnika (visha vaidya) is one of the best book with practical applications which is written in regional language. Single and simple remedies using locally available drugs are said in various context of *visha chikitsa* in this book. Most of the *visha vaidyas* in kerala followed the book "*Jyotsnika*". The applicability of medicines indicated for snake envenomation, in other conditions of neurotoxicity, nephrotoxicity, hepato toxicity, haemotoxicity, cyto toxicity is to be explored more and subjected to research. Single drugs for de addiction is a high light of this book and is of much contem-

porary relevance where the youth are trapped in such addictions presently. *Visha upadrava chikitsa* can be widely applied in our day today clinical practice such as post bite ulcers, recurrent toxic manifestations and many medical conditions with unknown etiology. Many exclusive medicines and procedures which are not mentioned in other classical ayurvedic books for *visha chikitsa* is said in *Jyotsnika (visha vaidya)* and an attempt is made to introduce those concepts into the field of enthusiastic researchers.

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