



BOOK REVIEW

Study of manuscript Govindadasotsavam

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Abstract

Ayurveda the ancient Indian treatment science is codified and transmitted through centuries in the form of written documents called manuscripts. The term manuscript in a broader sense means any document written by hand, such as documents or texts written on materials like palm leaf, birch bark, leather, cloth, paper and inscriptions on rocks, pillars etc. It is worth knowing that Indian medical heritage has one of the largest collections of manuscripts in any civilization in the world. Very few of these texts have been published during the past decades and many of the published works are not available today.

The study of manuscript Govindadasotsavam is an effort to transcribe, critically edit and translate the manuscript Govindadasotsavam. The text is written by the author Mukunda Mishra. The period as given in the manuscript is dated as 1767. The manuscript having similarity in title, author, and contents are considered for critical edition based on availability. Transcription was done initially by identifying the script and by adopting appropriate transcription techniques which was followed by the method of critical edition. In the process of the critical edition, accepted readings from different codices were noted. Maximum number of accepted readings was from Codex A. Further, the manuscript was processed for translation into English language where the subject matter of the manuscript was decoded. Since the period of the manuscript is the 17th century CE the influence from other medieval textbooks is well evident in the manuscript. The unique aspect of the manuscript is that it deals with the subject in a very concise manner picks the best yogas from different classics for the treatment of various diseases and presents yogas simply and briefly.

Introduction

Ayurveda the ancient Indian treatment science is codified and transmitted through centuries in the form of written documents called manuscripts. The term manuscript in a broader sense means any document written by hand, such as documents or texts written on materials like palm leaf, birch bark, leather, cloth, paper and inscriptions on rocks, pillars etc. There are innumerable manuscripts dispersed in several parts of India. Composed in different Indian languages these manuscripts have been preserved for centuries, in different institutions, libraries, temples and several private

collections. The study of manuscript Govindadasotsavam is an effort to transcribe, critically edit and translate the manuscript Govindadasotsavam. Such studies will bring out a detailed understanding of the manuscripts and can give new insights into various domains of Ayurveda.

The text is written by the author Mukunda Mishra. The period as given in the manuscript is dated as 1767¹. The place is given as Shrikhala during the period of Mughal emperor Akbar². The text is found to be a unique textbook written by the author to provide guidelines to the vaidyas for the management of various ailments with simple and efficacious remedies. It mainly deals with kayacikitsa pradhana vyadhis and their management. It also includes the topics from shalakyā, shalyā, striroga, vajikarana. Rasashastra topics are also dealt with where sodhana and marana of parada and loha are mentioned.

Aim and Objective

To study the manuscript 'Govindadasotsavam

Explore, analyze and interpret the subject matter present in it and thereby review the contributions of the manuscript Govindadasotsavam in the field of Ayurveda.

Materials and methods

The digital copy of the source manuscript obtained from Lalchand Research Library, sector 10, DAV College, Chandigarh, Punjab, MS NO 2241 is considered as Codex A which is completely available and legible³.

- Manuscript type: Paper manuscript
- Language: Sanskrit with Devanagari script
- No. of folios: 26, with 9 lines per folio in (codex A)
- Style of writing: The text is written on paper probably with black ink in a horizontal manner. Proper margins are maintained on both the right and left sides. Writing is full from top to bottom leaving some blank space at top and bottom, following the rule of 9 lines/ folio. Handwriting of the text is maintained all through. The text starts with salutations to Lord Ganapati and is written in red ink.
- Punctuation: Dirghadanda, a red-coloured double line has been used to indicate the end of a stanza.
- Marginalia: Folio no. is mentioned in the left side top portion of each folio
- Year: 1767
- Author: Mukunda Mishra

The 2nd copy is obtained from the same library (Lalchand Research Library, sector 10, DAV College, Chandigarh, Punjab) with MS NO 4045 and taken as codex B which has 11 folios, with 15 lines per folio⁴.

Observations

Govindadasotsavam authored by Mukunda Mishra is a paper manuscript in Sanskrit language, documented in Devanagari script. The manuscript appears to deal with many of the important aspects of various diseases and their treatment along with pathyapathya. A total of 58 chapters are found in the manuscript. Instead of details regarding the diseases the manuscript mainly focuses on formulations given for various diseases. While critical edition it is traced that the formulations mentioned in the manuscript have minimal drugs and are easy in preparation.

Salient features of the manuscript:

The manuscript initially begins with the author Mukunda Mishra revealing that he is going to edit the textbook named Govindadasotsavam written by Govindadasa, the great physician⁵. The author begins the manuscript by praising Lord Gaṇeśha and Lord Kṛiṣṇha, thereafter the details of Govindadasa are given throughout the first leaf⁶. The following author details contents of the manuscript are dealt⁷. All chapters of the manuscript begin with 'atha' and end with "iti". By including rasoushadhis in almost every yoga the author shows his affinity towards rasashastra. There is separate section for shodhana and marana of parada and loha. Diseases like snayuka, sphota and carana roga are found in this manuscript. Most of the formulations are simple and contain fewer drugs. Nearly 3/4th of the manuscript deals with kayacikitsa pradhana vyadhis. Kilasakuṭharavara and Jwaragajankusa rasa are the yogas mentioned with naming. Most of the sutra of the text comes under an eight-syllable chandas (meter) called anusṭup also known as shloka chandas. The manuscript begins with shalakyā rogas and their management. A separate and unique chapter called mohanam is mentioned. Codex A ends with vashikaraṇa prakaraṇa whereas Codex B ends with an appendix having the details of authors, period etc.

Vrittis used in Govindadasotsavam:

Govindadasotsavam is a text which follows both padya (poetry) and gadya (prose) forms in composition. In the present study, 174 verses were identified. A total of 44 varieties of chandas were identified in the whole text. Most of the sutra of the text comes under an eight-syllable chandas (metre) called anusṭup also known as shloka chandas. The chandas other than anusṭup include are shardoolavikriditam, arya, totakam etc.

Critical apparatus:

In manuscriptology following the collection of the manuscript, the secondary steps like transcription, translation and critical edition are done in the respective order. While constituting a text, only one reading is accepted while others are rejected. Those that are rejected

form the critical apparatus. The variant readings were evaluated and accepted based on the contextual meaning. Based on critical edition, omission, addition, conjectural emendation, and repetitions are noted. Accepted readings from both codices were noted and a maximum of 216 readings were accepted from codex A and 89 accepted readings from codex B.

Subject matter dealt in Govindadasotsavam:

A total of 58 chapters are found in the manuscript. The author starts the text by describing shalaky rogas initially starting with chapter one - Siro roga chikitsa and ending with chapter seven - Gala roga chikitsa. Thereafter the diseases in kayachikitsa are dealt with starting from chapter eight -jwara and ending with chapter forty-nine - charaṇa roga chikitsa. After dealing with diseases, in chapter fifty the yogas for virechana have been described and thereafter vandhya, sukhaprasava, yonigaḍhikaraṇam, lomashatana and stambhana described respectively. Chapter fifty-six deals with parada sodhana and maraṇa and fifty-seven deals with loha maraṇa. Mohanam the fifty-eighth chapter deals with vashikaraṇa prakaraṇa and codex A ends here. In Codex B there is an appendix that mentions the details regarding the author Mukunda Mishra, the time and place in which the manuscript was written, details regarding the scribe etc⁸.

Style of presentation:

Available first literatures written on Ayurveda are Caraka samhita and Susruta samhita which are well documented and systematized. Though Caraka samhita and Susruta samhita represent two different schools of specialization, that is the medical and surgical systems respectively, the ashtangas of Ayurveda are dealt with in these treatises. In the chronology of Ayurvedic literature, Madhavakara was the first author to deviate from this way, limiting the literature to the diagnosis part and treatment part dealt in two separate treatises. However, later authors Vrinda Madhava (11 AD), cakradatta (12 AD) etc. followed the pattern of the second book and wrote treatises only on treatment. The later period of Ayurvedic literature is mainly characterized by compilations. Govindadasotsavam is one such compilation. The author has written the book by compiling information from various treatises that existed before it. The order of the chapters is similar to the other medieval works like Chakradatta, Bhaishajya Ratnavali, Yogaratnakara and madhava nidana. Nearly thirty three yogas in the treatment section are found to be similar to bhaishajya ratnavali and the author has picked the best from various sources. The author has mostly concentrated on formulations with a limited number of ingredients and said that the formulations in this manuscript are unique and simple.

Discussion

The study of the manuscript Govindadasotsavam is a simple step to bring forward and explore the contents of the manuscript Govindadasotsavam to Ayurveda fraternity. The literary aspects of Govindadasotsavam enfold its historical background, date, authorship and the availability of the manuscript with a similar title and author. The author of Govindadasotsavam is Mukunda Mishra, observed from the manuscript at the beginning and the end of the work. The author himself says that he is going to edit the work written by the great physician Govindadasa. The colophon of Codex A gives clues about the author or scribe's identity as there is a mention of offerings to god before starting of the subject. The author starts by praising lord Ganesha and Krishna and thereby we can conclude the religion of the author is Hindu. In Codex B since the initial leaves were missing, it was not able to find the mangala shloka which would be usually written in the starting by praising the lord. Codex B starts with the 27th shloka and a sixth leaf of Codex A.

Critical apparatus:

Regarding accepted reading, the maximum of the accepted reading was from Codex A which is assumed to be closer to the author's Ur (original) text. Nearly 216 accepted readings were found in Codex A and there were 9 accepted readings in Codex B. It is because Codex A had a lesser number of omissions, deletions, repetitions, additions, transpositions and conjectural emendations.

Author

Govindadasa: The original author of Govindadasotsavam. In the first and last leaf, the author Mukunda Mishra gives details about the author Govindadasa. Pitha is mentioned as the father of Govindadasa and Shivaraja is the grandfather. He belongs to the Nidrayogakhya dynasty, was a Kshatriya and a great physician. To show the greatness of the author Govindadasa he has been compared with many great epic characters like Yudhishtira, karna, kamadeva etc. The period or date on the authorship of Govindadasa is not mentioned in the manuscript or is not traceable.

Mukunda Mishra: He edited the work of the great physician Govindadasa. Mukunda Mishra was the court poet and also the helper of various physicians who belonged to the city named Srikhala in the country of the Mughal emperor Akbar. Details regarding the family history of Mukunda Mishra are not mentioned in the manuscript. As the manuscript begins by praising lord Ganesha and Krishna it can be assumed that he belongs to the Hindu religion and Vaishnava Sampradaya. Mukunda Mishra has quoted in various places regarding the edition of the manuscript and his intention might be to edit the text to make it better and to reproduce a copy to preserve the contents of the same.

Period

The book was edited by Mukunda Mishra in 1767, on a fine Thursday, on the 5th day of the half month, on a full moon day. This information is available in the last leaf of Codex B.

Scribe

Information regarding the scribe is available in the last leaf of Codex B. The text is written by the disciple of the great old sage (Vridharshi), who was a good physician and this treatise is written for learning of the sages belonging to the harivamsa category (family of lord Krishna). This is regarding the scribe in Codex B. The Codex A ends with the contents itself. No information is available regarding the scribe. The scribe of Codex A might be different because of the peculiarities in the script of both manuscripts. The style, orthographic peculiarities, and language that the scribe used in both codices suggest that the scribe was related to Ayurveda and also both the manuscripts have been copied from a common ancestral copy.

Subject matter

After dealing with the details of the author Govindadasa the contents of the chapter have been explained starting from shiroroga. Diseases are explained along with their indication, contraindication, dietary regimen, that are incurable along with unique and secret formulations. The text Govindadasotsavam has subjects dealing with various branches of Ayurveda like kayacikitsa, shalya, urdhwanga, vajikarana, striroga etc but mostly deals with kayacikitsa implies that the treatise is a kayacikitsa pradhana grantha.

The treatment of jwara initially begins with the pathyapathya whereas in other chapters pathyapathya and sadhyasadyata are dealt with towards the end of the chapter. In jwara, a unique preparation called jwaragajankusha rasa is mentioned but the ingredients or preparation of this is not mentioned here. Kashaya made of amruta, arunacandana, dhanya, nimba and padma is said to cure all types of fever is said to be a simple and unique yoga. Preparations are mentioned to cure jwara associated with vibandha, daha, agnimandya etc. Valuka yantra or ardhanadishwara yantra is mentioned in the context of jwara cikitsa. The application of ghee in the form of collyrium is mentioned which appears to be unique. Yoga with haratala and tambula is mentioned in the management of shitajwara.

The chapter atisara begins by explaining the importance of langhana in atisara. Nabhilepa is mentioned in atisara using amalaki and ardraka swarasa which can be easily utilized. A similar reference is also found in textbooks like cakradatta and bhaishajyaratnavali. Lohakitta and the process of nirvana (quenching used for sodhana of mineral drugs) are mentioned in the treatment of panduroga. In raktapitta cikitsa vasa swarasa with madhu is said to cure all types of raktapitta.

Rajyakshma is mentioned in the name of rogaraja through out the manuscript. A simile is explained in the context of rogaraja cikitsa and the treatment of kasa is mentioned under rogaraja cikitsa. Kilasakuṭharavara is mentioned under hikka cikitsa, shwasa, swarabheda cikitsa which is similar to swasakuṭhara rasa mentioned in rasendra sara samgraha and bhaishajya ratnavali. In the context of chardi cikitsa it is mentioned that ashwatha bark should be burnt and dipped in water and if taken internally will cure vomiting. In apasmara chikitsa, a different kind of yoga is mentioned by using nasya with the powder of human hair and maricha to regain consciousness in epilepsy. Lehya preparations are not commonly mentioned in the manuscript like kashaya and choorna. Contrary to that a lehya preparation is mentioned in the context of urustambha cikitsa. Khapachi yantra and handika is mentioned in the context of switra cikitsa. Unique and simple preparation made out of jaggery and yavani will cure kilasa, kushta and udarda immediately. After describing diseases, the chapter on virechana is mentioned along with a yoga used for virechana which includes rasoushadhis. Parada, gandhaka, vishwa, tankana and jayapala are mentioned in preparation of virechana yoga which will cause purgation if given with cold water and constipative when taken with hot water.

From the rasashastra point of view, a separate chapter on sodhana and maraṇa of parada and loha is mentioned. Khalwayantra and kacakupi are mentioned in this context. The preparation of rasasindura is mentioned in the chapter on parada.

In the chapter on shiroroga, shirashula has been dealt with initially followed by kesharanjana. While mentioning the preparation of kajjali the test of kajjali is mentioned. It is given that, triphalachurna if taken with honey and ghee at night will cure all diseases related to the eye. Animal products like the shedded skin of a snake, bone taken from the neck of a peacock etc. are mentioned in the management of vrana. In the context of bhagna cikitsa, it is mentioned that bhagna diagnosed should be covered with wet cloth primarily and then application of mud and paste of amalaki is mentioned. Vandhya, sukhaprasava and yonigadhikaranam have been mentioned in the context of striroga. In the chapter on vandhya, yoga is mentioned which should be prepared using tanduliyaka mixed with rice water is indicated as a contraceptive and appears to be unique. Wick prepared out of swetarka on pushyanakshatra, if burnt and kept in the house will prevent viryachyuti, so the person can have sexual intercourse for a prolonged time and will not cause premature ejaculation. The stambhana yogas and vashikarana prakarana mentioned in the manuscript show the influence of tantra prevalent in that era.

Nearly one hundred sixty plant drugs are identified in the manuscript where some drugs like haritaki, aamalaki,

ardraka, musta etc. are found to be used with their synonyms along with the original name. Drugs most commonly used include Amalaki used for nineteen times. In the group of mineral drugs gandhaka and parada have been mentioned. The teeth of a bull, the skin of a serpent, the teeth of an elephant, the horn of a cow, the feathers of a peacock, the waste of a peacock, bone from the neck of a peacock, cow's urine, cow's ghee, human hair procured after shaving head have been used as animal drugs in various contexts.

While going through the subject matter dealt with in Govindadasotsavam, undoubtedly it can be stated that the author had his views regarding the subject. Instead of following a single text, the author has analyzed various samhitas and nighantus to mould an opinion. Therefore the book shows similarities and at the same time, some differences with popular Ayurvedic classics.

The manuscript has been compared with medieval Ayurvedic literature like Cakradatta of Cakrapanidatta written in the 11th century, Bhaishajyaratnavali of Kavi Raj Govinda Das Sen written in the 18th century and Yogaratnakara of 17th century.

Nearly thirty-three yogas in the treatment section are found to be similar to bhaishajyaratnavali and the author has picked the best from various sources. The author had mostly concentrated on formulations with a limited number of ingredients and he has said that the formulations in this manuscript are unique and simple.

Conclusion

The work Govindadasotsavam written by the author Mukunda Mishra is not a mere compilation work. The author has referred to many classics and picked the best varieties of yogas to mould a text like this. The author has quoted in the

beginning and in between while describing the diseases regarding the uniqueness of the yogas described in the manuscript. Most of the yogas mentioned in the manuscript contain a combination of herbal and mineral drugs and many yogas contain Triphala as a main ingredient. The most frequently used type of preparation is churna kalpana. Other preparations include taila, vati, kasaya, kalka, varti etc. Among shodhana and shaman yogas for the management of diseases. There is a separate chapter named Virecana where shodhana yogas are mentioned in general. Panchakarma is explained in the chapter of kushta cikitsa. Though the content of the text is similar to the subject matter found in many other textbooks of Ayurveda like cakradatta, bhaishajyaratnavali, yogaratnakara etc., the unique aspect of the text is that it deals with the subject in a very concise manner and picked the best yogas from different classics for the treatment of various diseases and simply presented the yogas.

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2. MS Govindadasotsavam, M-4045, page 13, verse 161
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4. Lalchand Research Library, sector 10, DAV College, Chandigarh, Punjab) with MS NO 4045
5. MS Govindadasotsavam, M-2241, page 2, sutra 4
6. MS Govindadasotsavam, M-2241, page 2, sutra 1
7. MS Govindadasotsavam, M-2241, page 3, sutra 6

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