AYURVEDIC HERITAGE OF J & K
A REVIEW OF SRI RANBIRA CIKITSA SUDHA SĀRA

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ABSTRACT

This work reviews the contents of an Ayurvedic treatise “Sri Ranbira Cikitsa Sudha Sāra” authored by Kaviraj Neel Kanth in the year 1931 of Vikram, in ‘Takari’ script, the official script during the reign of His Highness Maharaja Ranbir Singh of Jammu and Kashmir. A copy of the book is presently available with Raghunath Sanskrit Library, Jammu in torn condition. This is a humble effort by the authors for the exploration of hidden and old Ayurvedic literature of Jammu and Kashmir.

No science can stand the test of time and prove its validity in practice without having concrete footing in the culture and civilization. During the centuries of foreign rule in India, Ayurvedic institutions declined or were suppressed and much of the Ayurvedic knowledge was fragmented, misunderstood and not used in its totality. But the individual consciousness of a sufficient number of members of Indian society who were coherent, harmonious and life supporting in real sense, kept this life science into existence by their untiring efforts. Maharājā Ranbir Singh, the ruler of Jammu and Kashmir was such a personality who had a great respect and regard for the cultural heritage of this land. He did a lot for progress and propagation of Indian heritage especially of Sanskrit and Vedic literature. He always encouraged scholarly people to come forward and work for the preservation of rich ancient heritage. Six years after the publication of Ranbira Prakāśa, a treatise on Ayurvedic literature which is a compendium of various Ayurvedic texts by Pt. Jagadhar in the year 1931 of Vikram, Maharājā Ranbir Singh got published another Ayurvedic treatise, ‘Sri Ranbira Cikitsa Sudha Sāra’ authored by Kaviraj Neel Kanth, an Ayurvedic scholar of that time who belonged to Purmandal, a place situated in the south-east part of Jammu. Vidhyavilasa Mudranālaya published this treatise under the supervision

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of Pandit Sankar Nath. A torn copy of this work is presently available with Raghunāth Sanskrit Library, Jammu bearing Acc.No.842.

This work has been written in “Takari” script, which was the official script during the reign of His Highness Maharāja Ranbir Singh. A lot of improvements were made in this script during the period of Maharāja. As the original texts of Āyurveda are written in Sanskrit, it was not possible for a common man to understand the exact essence of the texts. In order to make this system of medicine popular, the treasure contained in these masterly works needed to be made available for its easy and practical applicability for the common populace. Maharāja Ranbir Singh realized this fact and persuaded the scholars of that time to bring forth this knowledge in the form of published material in the language of the masses. Contrast from the Ranbira Prakāśa, which is a detailed work on Āyurveda in two large volumes in Hindi language, Sri Runbira Cikitsa Sudha Sāra is a handy work consisting of only 78 pages. Moreover, it is composed in the prose form whereas, Ranbira Prakāśa is composed in meters on the tune of the great epic Rāmāyaṇa.

The work starts with the traditional Mangalacarana, which states that the Jammu (J&K) forms a part of Bhārat (India) and Maharāja Ranbir Singh who belongs to the family tree of great Maharāja Gulab Singh was governing the region at that time. The author writes in praise of Maharāja Ranbir Singh about his bravery, statesmanship, genius and care for his people.

The book starts with a salutation to Lord Rāma and prayer to Lambodara (Lord Ganeśa). Then comes the actual text. The methodology for the different pharmaceutical preparations like Kwātha (decoction), Avaleha (confection), Vāṭi (tablet), Curṇa (powder) and Hima (cold infusion) has been described. The remaining work is divided into seven Sutarangas (sections).

The first section deals with the etio-pathogenesis of Jwara (fever), its different types, specific remedies and dietary management. In the second section diseases like Atisāra (diarrhoea), Sangrahani (mal-absorption syndrome) and Arṣa (hemorrhoids) are discussed in detail along with their treatment and dietetics. Third section deals with
Kāsa (bronchitis), Śvāsa (asthma), Śula (abdominal colic), Āmavāta (rheumatoid arthritis) and Netra roga (ophthalmic disorders). The fourth section deals with Pāndu (anemia), Kāmala (hepatitis), Stree roga (gynaecological disorders) and Bāla roga (paediatric diseases). Similarly, the fifth section deals with Rājayakṣma (consumption), Medovṛddhi (obesity), Kṛmi roga (helmenthiasis), Mukha roga (diseases of the oral cavity), Āmlapitta (hyperacidity), Prameha (urinary anomalies), Vātarakta (gouty arthritis), Višuci (acute enteritis), Tṛṣṇa (acute thirst), Vamanā (vomiting), Kandu (pruritis), Gandamāla (cervical lymphadenitis), Kanṭha roga (diseases of throat), Mandaṅgni (decreased digestion), Vidradhi (abscess), Hṛda roga (cardiac diseases), Danta roga (dental disorders), Raktapitta (haemothermia), Hikka (hiccough) and Murca (syncope).

The sixth section details the diseases like Urustambha (spastic paraplegia), Aśmari (urolithiasis), Mutraṅccra (dysurea), Sukha roga (STD), Kapāla roga (diseases of skull), Śopha (oedema), Kapra roga (diseases of ear), Vāta, Pitta and Kapha roga (humoral disorders). In this section certain specific therapeutic recipes have also been mentioned most of which are Rasa preparations. Vehicles for the different drugs have also been indicated. In the seventh section, author has concludes the work.

In the end of the book, a list of 242 drugs comprising of herbal, mineral and animal origin has been appended along with their Sanskrit and Persian synonyms.

It is remarkable here to notify that the most talked about diseases of the present day affluent society which are taking a heavy toll of the society i.e. obesity, ischeimial heart diseases, consumption (immunodeficiency) etc., have been given due consideration in this work. Otherwise also while detailing the different diseases, all the aspects of the disease right from the aetio-pathogenesis, types and therapeutic approach have been given. Although, the work is in unison with the basic principles of Āyurveda, yet the worthy scholar has not given any reference in the work. The recipes mentioned in the book especially the last seven in section sixth indicate the inclination of the physician scholar Kaviraj Neel Kanth towards the Rasa therapy and it appears as if these recipes were well tried by the author. But in order to prove their worthiness, these formulations need to be evaluated on modern scientific parameters.
Maharaja Ranbir Singh
“Tākari” script of the book
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सारांश

जम्मू और कश्मीर की आयुर्वेदिय विरासत -
श्री रणबीर चिकित्सा मुद्दासार पर एक समालोचन
- अनिल कुमार, गेबिन सिंह एवं नरेश कुमार

प्रस्तुत अध्ययन, कविराज नीलकण्ठ द्वारा रचित आयुर्वेद ग्रन्थ श्री रणबीर चिकित्सा मुद्दासार का पुनरावलोकन है। इस ग्रन्थ की रचना जम्मू-कश्मीर राज्य के महाराजा रणबीर सिंह के शासनकाल में विक्रमी संवत १९३१ में उस समय की राज लिपी ‘टाकरी’ में की गई थी। वर्तमान में, इस ग्रन्थ की एक प्रति जोकि जीर्ण-शीर्ण अवस्था में जम्मू के रघुनाथ पुस्तकालय में उपलब्ध है। प्रस्तुत अध्ययन, जम्मू-कश्मीर राज्य में अदृश्य पुरातन आयुर्वेद साहित्य के अन्वेषण हेतु लेखकों का एक प्रयास मात्र है।