Project Report

English Translation with critical notes and indexing of 
Pathyāpathyaviniścaya — A 16th century text on 
Ayurvedic Dietetics*

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Abstract

The Pathyāpathyaviniścaya of Vishwanatha Sen of the 16th Century AD was acclaimed all over the country as an authentic work on therapeutic dietetics. It was translated subsequently into Telugu, Bengali, Gujarati and Hindi but at present, the book is out of print not accessed by the Ayurvedic community. This report discusses the results of the attempt to translate this text book into English with critical notes and indexes, which will enable wider access and use amongst the professionals of Ayurveda and the larger global community that looks towards traditional systems of health for ideas on nurturing healthy diet and lifestyle. The book is divided into five sections covering 75 chapters listing with dos and don’ts for specific diseases with respect to diet, lifestyle and medicine. Each verse is given in the devanagari script with transliteration in the roman script along with prose order. Word by word meaning is also given with translation and critical notes. The entire information from the book has also been converted into a database to develop a software that will enable easy retrieval and sorting of the data.

INTRODUCTION

The Pathyāpathyaviniścaya of Vishwanatha Sen is an important work on Ayurvedic Dietetics that was composed in the 16th Century AD. This work was acclaimed all over the country as an authentic work on therapeutic dietetics. It was translated to Telugu, Bengali and Gujarati in early 20th Century and in 1999 into Hindi by Central Council for Research in Ayurvedic Sciences (CCRAS). Presently, the book is out of print and remains neglected by the academic community of Ayurveda.

Following to a great extent, the nosological arrangements of diseases by Mādhava, the Ayurvedic expert in diagnostics, Vishwanatha Sen has summarised the dos and don’ts for about 75 disease categories; covering almost all the diseases well known to Ayurveda in his times. P V Sharma has also noted the similarity of the sequence of diseases with the text Cakradatta. He has also listed the indications and contra indications of diet, regimen and therapy with respect to the three doṣas as well as the six seasons. This makes the Pathyāpathyaviniścaya work one of the most comprehensive and exclusive treatises on therapeutic dietetics in the history of Ayurveda. Pathyāpathya, which includes therapeutic dietetics, behaviour, regimens and adjuvant therapies, began to emerge as an independent discipline only after the 15th Century AD according to Professor P V Sharma. Sivadasa Sena of the 15th Century AD makes mention of such a treatise. The Yogaratnākara composed in the 17th Century AD has borrowed many verses from the Pathyāpathyaviniścaya. Thus, this treatise is a landmark in the development of therapeutic dietetics and regimen as an independent discipline.

* Accomplished under the sponsorship of Indian National Commission for History of Science between the period July 2012 and June 2013 with additional period of three months between May 2014 and August 2014.

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in the evolutionary history of Ayurveda. As the title implies, this book deals with indications and contra indications to be followed when treating diseases. Although the emphasis is on diet, the text also mentions behaviour, important medicines and therapies that are indicated and contra indicated in specific diseases. Thus, the book goes beyond the scope of dietetics and can be characterized as a handbook of supportive therapeutic regimen. Apart from covering about 75 major diseases, the book also devotes a section on supportive regimens to be followed in diseases with co-morbidities i.e. when a patient is suffering from more than one disease. Supportive regimen is also given for the three doṣas and according to the seasons. An old copy of the Hindi translation that was published by CCRAS (presently out of print) is available. This publication was based on four versions of the Pathyāpathyaviniścaya – three of which are manuscripts and one a printed edition no longer available. Two of the four manuscripts were obtained from the Orissa State Museum. The third manuscript was available with CCRAS. The fourth was an out of print publication in Devanagari script dated 1951. Previous translations into other Indian languages are not available in print now. The Hindi translation published by CCRAS having grammatical mistakes is out of print. Further the indexes and scientific names of plant, animal and mineral sources have not been included in this edition. The Pathyāpathyaviniścaya in English translation with critical notes and indexing will therefore bring to light important developments in the historical evolution of the branch of dietetics as an independent discipline in the tradition of Ayurveda. An English translation will also open the subject to a wider global readership.

2. Chapters of Pathyāpathyaviniścaya

The book has basically five sections. The first section deals with the introductory verses. The second section has 63 chapters, each one dealing with a particular disease or disease group as the case may be and the indications and contra indications with regard to diet, behaviour, drugs and regimen. The third section deals with indications and contra indications with respect to the doṣas. The fourth section deals with indications and contra indications with respect to the seasons. The fifth section deals with the concluding verses of the treatise. The subject matter of the book is listed below indicating the number of verses in each chapter.


One of the major contributions of the translation work is the creation of exhaustive indexes. The indexes covers Sanskrit names of dietary articles, plants, animals, animal products, minerals, behaviour, regimens, drugs, therapies, materials and places. Indexes would also be built for scientific nomenclature used in the translations.

3. DETAILED DISCUSSION

The work on translation of Pathyāpathyaviniścaya was carried out as follows.

a. Re-examination of manuscript – The manuscript was corrected for obvious typographical and grammatical errors to a certain extent. However, a critical edition of the text should be done in the future by examining all available manuscripts. It was beyond the scope of this project with a duration of 15 months to attempt a critical analysis of the text. In some places, difficulties with words have been pointed out and discussed without making corrections. There are two readings śreyasaḥ kriyā and rasakriyā. The former means the actions that leads to good outcomes. The latter means a type of medicine that is to be poured into the eyes. It is difficult to decide which is the more appropriate in this context. In another context, the word kanā may mean particles or powder of horse gram or Piper longum. It is left to the discretion of the reader to decide which version to accept.

b. Historical positioning of the text – The Pathyāpathyaviniścaya has been historically positioned from the perspective of the evolution of the Ayurvedic tradition by examining important classical works on Ayurveda and the independent works on therapeutic dietetics. For example, there are earlier works on dietary articles, cooking procedures, but the emergence of texts dealing with disease based descriptions of diet and regimen is a later development which are typical of the.

c. Linguistic and grammatical analysis of the verses – The verses have been translated in a systematic manner. The verses have been reconstructed into prose and meaning derived word by word. An example is given below

Verse 3 in Sanskrit

भिषक कर्तवेः रोगेरुः निरिष्तानिः यथायथायमः
निदानपथधायणिः त्रिः यत्नादविचिन्तयेत् ||3||

Transliteration of Verse

bhīṣak sarveṣu rogeṣu nirdiṣṭānī yathāyathām
idānapathyāpathyāni trīṇī yatnādvicintayer ||3||

Prose Order in Sanskrit

सर्वेः रोगेरुः यथायथाय निरिष्टानिः त्रिः
निदानपथधायणिः यत्नात् भिषकः विचिन्तयेत् ||

Transliteration of Prose Order

sarveṣu rogeṣu yathāyathām nirdiṣṭānī trīṇī
idānapathyāpathyāni yatnāḥ bhīṣak vicintayet ||

Word by word meaning

सर्वेः —sarveṣu—in all, रोगेरुः —rogeṣu—diseases, यथायथाय —yathāyathām—as has been, निरिष्टानिः
—nirdiśāni—instructed, त्रिनि—the three, निदानपथवाय-पत्हायानि—etiological, wholesome and unwholesome factors, यतना—with great effort, भिषकः—the physician, विचिन्तयेत—should think about.

**Translation**

The physician should with great effort think about the three factors concerning etiology, wholesomeness and unwholesomeness with respect to all the diseases.

**Critical Notes**

This verse points out the three factors that are crucial in management of disease. These are the etiological factors, the wholesome and unwholesome factors. In classical texts like Caraka Saṁhitā we encounter a different set of three factors that are cardinal in the management of diseases - ṇidāna, Dośa and Dūṣyā. The treatment has to be opposite in nature to the etiology, the vitiated Dośa and the Dhūt or tissue. “nidānadoṣaduceybhyo viparītaḥ hitam dhruvam, uktanuktān gadān sarvān samagyauktāni niyacchati” (CS, Ci. Sth. 30. 292)

**Verse 5 in Sanskrit**

रक्षु सर्वास्यवायानि यथास्वामच विवर्जयेवः
ताह त्रहपथ्यवायवत्ते दहदायेव त्रीश्चः! ||5||

**Transliteration of Verse**

rukṣu sarvāśvapathāni yathāsvam ca vivarjayet
tā hyapathyāvī virardhante dohadairiva virudhaḥ ||5||

**Prose Order in Sanskrit**

सर्वास् रक्षु यथास्वच्छ अपथायनी विवर्जेत। ताह: हि
दोहदे: त्रीश्च दह: अपथ्य: दिक्तते। ||

**Transliteration of Prose Order**

sarvāśu rkuca yathāsvam ca apathyāni vivarjayet. tāḥ
dohadaiḥ virudhaḥ iva apathyaiḥ vivardhante ||

**Word by word meaning**

सर्वास् - sarvāśu - in all, रक्षु - rukṣu - diseases, यथास्वच्छ - yathāsvam - as appropriate, अपथायनी - apathyāni - unwholesome factors, विवर्जेत - vivarjayet - should be avoided, ताह: - tāḥ - these (diseases), हि - hi - surely, दोहदे: - dohadaiḥ - by the wish to be fondled by lovely women, त्रीश्च - virudhaḥ - climbing shrubs, इव - iva - like, अपथ्यः: - apathyaiḥ - by unwholesome factors, दिक्तते - vivardhante - increase.

**Translation**

Unwholesome factors should be avoided in all diseases as appropriate. Diseases flourish under the influence of unwholesome factors just as climbing shrubs at the time of budding respond to the sensuous touch of lovely women.

**Critical Notes**

The CCRAS edition reads the word rukṣu as rūkṣa. This is most likely a typographical error, but nevertheless misleading. Rukṣu means ‘in diseases’, whereas rūkṣa means ‘dry’. The word dohada has been translated as channels that carry water to the plants in the CCRAS edition. Though this translation makes sense in the context, Sanskrit dictionaries give a different meaning for dohada. According to Monier Williams dohada is the Prākrit version of the Sanskrit daurheda which literally means one who has two hearts. This refers to pregnant ladies and their strange desires during pregnancy. Figuratively, it also refers to plants that at the time of budding long to be touched by the foot or by mouth of a lovely woman. The word is used in this sense by Kālidāsa in his Rāghuvamśa 19th Canto, 12th Verse.

Based on the linguistic and grammatical analysis, an interpretative translation in English has been provided. Critical notes are also provided pointing out convergences and divergences with other important texts. New contributions of the author is highlighted through the critical notes. An example is given below.
d. Scientific nomenclature equivalents for plants, animal products, food items, and therapeutic interventions – Wherever it is relevant and valid, scientific nomenclature has been provided especially for medicinal plants, animal products and therapeutic interventions mentioned in the text. If a term is well known, the popular name is mentioned. For example, āmalakī is translated as Gooseberry instead of Emblica officinalis. If a term is not well known, then the scientific nomenclature is mentioned. For example, Bhavya is translated as Dillenia indica. If a Sanskrit word is not identified, this is mentioned in the translation. Technical terms have been tagged and classified into many categories for indexing. For example, Plants, Birds, Animals, Animal Products, Plant Products, Food preparations, Oils, Spices and Condiments, Behaviour, Treatments, Surgical procedures and so on. The technical terms were captured in a database and a software developed for structured data retrieval. For example, Madhurālikā is an unidentified fish. An extract from the index of English equivalents is given below.

Item, Śloka
Abstaining from food, 224
Abstaining from speech, 422
Acacia catechu, 82, 301, 380, 400, 417
Achyranthes aspera, 109
Acorus calamus, 192, 205, 211, 446
Adathoda vasica, 118, 152, 480, 514, 517
Administration of poison with food, 38, 60, 112, 314
Aegle marmelos tender fruit, 47
After drink, 129, 142, 499
Aggravating kapha, 129, 174, 321, 328, 423
Aggressive purificatory treatment, 366
Aggressive purificatory treatment in the beginning, 508

Ailanthus excelsa, 39, 48
Albizia lebbeck, 42, 105, 146, 400, 474
Alcohol, 43, 82, 104, 114, 176, 201, 207, 237, 254, 264, 289, 290, 294, 312, 327, 357, 386, 397, 403, 450, 455, 502, 514, 517

At the outset, the “Pathyāpathya-viniścaya” was understood as a textbook of dietetics dealing with what type of food is indicated or contraindicated in specific diseases. After a close study of the text in the course of the preliminary translation, it is now evident that the text does not deal with only dietetics or food articles. Much of the indications and contraindications deal with lifestyle modifications. This is in tune with the definition of the word “pathya” which is generally used to indicate both diet and lifestyle. However, it is interesting to note that the author does not restrict himself to discussing about diet and lifestyle and also ventures to medicines and therapies that are indicated or contraindicated in specific diseases. Far from being a book on dietetics, the Pathyāpathya-viniścaya is an Advisory to Physicians on Indications and Contraindications of Diet, Lifestyle and Medications in specific diseases. The author seems to use the word “pathya” in the sense of wholesome and “apathya” in the sense of unwholesome and therefore has no hesitation in also including medications in his work. But it is important to note that medical authors have used the term “pathya” to denote diet and lifestyle, which excludes medications. The famous verse “pathye sati gadaśatasya kimaushadhanishevanaih” clearly conveys the idea that pathya does not denote medicine. The meaning of the verse is “When the patient follows pathya, what is the use of medicine” Thus Visvanatha Sena does not use the word pathya in a restricted sense. In Vāgbhata’s Aṣṭāṅga Hydya Samhitā, the word pathya is used as a synonym for treatment. According to Caraka, pathya is that which is wholesome for the channels in the body.
Anything that does not cause blockage of channels and does not interfere with the flow of substances in the body is pathya or wholesome. Thus it appears that the title of the text may be appropriately modified as “Advisory on Indications and Contraindications of Diet, Lifestyle and Medications in Specific Diseases”

e. Development of a Software: A software has been developed using the contents of the translation considering the nature of the subject matter, which is not descriptive but instructive. The software allows to search items by category and lists indications and contraindications for specific diseases.
The software also allows to list indications and contra indications of lifestyle, diet and medicine for specific diseases in a structured manner.

4. Conclusion

The major findings from the critical study of the text Pathyāpathyaviniścaya has been that pathya does not mean only diet. It means what is wholesome for a disease and includes Lifestyle, Food and Medicine. The book gives a list of Lifestyle, Food and Medicine indicated and contraindicated in specific diseases, including religious rituals. It does not recommend vegetarian diet as superior in management of diseases, but rather advocates a mixture of vegetarian and non-vegetarian diet according to the nature of the disease. Some of the other texts composed around this period like the Kalyanakaraka emphasises on vegetarian diet. The book gives interesting information on the animals, birds and plants that were commonly used in India for the purpose of food and medicine. Few of the verses are borrowed from classical texts like the Aṣṭāṅgaḥṛdaya, but the listing of items indicated and contraindicated in specific diseases is not seen in other works. Though the book deals with Lifestyle, Diet and Medicine together, there is a greater emphasis on Diet as the more important component in the trinity compared to the earlier texts.

The final outcomes of this project are as follows. 1. Structured translation with relevant critical notes. 2. Comprehensive classified indexes. 3. Software tool for advanced data analysis and structured data mining 4. Research papers based on analysis of data (Two papers are under preparation and will be submitted for publication shortly)

Bibliography


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