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Review Article

KASYAPA SAMHITA: ONLY REVERED TEXT ON KAUMARBHRITYA

Singhal Harish Kumar¹, Kataria Amit², Verma Jitesh³, Neetu⁴¹Assistant Professor, Department of Kaumarbhritya, University College of Ayurveda, Dr. S.R. Rajasthan Ayurved University, Jodhpur, Rajasthan, India²Associate Professor, Department of Kaumarbhritya, Sh. Krishna Government Ayurvedic College and Hospital, Kurukshetra, Haryana, India³Assistant Professor, Department of Kaumarbhritya (Ayurvedic pediatrics), Ch. Brahm Prakash Ayurveda Charak Sansthan, Khera Dabar, New Delhi, India⁴Lecturer, Department of Rasa Shastra, Punjab Ayurvedic College, More Zenda, Sriganganagar (Rajasthan), India

*Correspondence

Singhal Harish Kumar
Assistant Professor, Department of
Kaumarbhritya, University College of Ayurveda,
Dr. S.R. Rajasthan Ayurved University, Jodhpur,
Rajasthan, India

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Abstract

Literature is both the foundation of human knowledge and the record of human experience. Every field of study produces its own literature that serves as the foundation for future learning. Ayurveda the Indian traditional system of medicine have huge amount of literature but some important texts are either missing or incompletely available. The partially available ancient Ayurvedic texts are on the verge of extinction due to lack of protection or maintenance or improper interpretations and uses. Kashyapa samhita is one of these partially or incompletely available texts. This text is mainly devoted to the Kaumarbhritya branch of Ashtanga Ayurveda and is only available detailed and revered text for this very specialty. Its incline towards Kaumarbhritya, contributions and significance is discussed in detail with scientific perspective.

Keywords: Ayurveda, Kashyapa Samhita, Kaumarbhritya, Astanga

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda is not only the medical science but it is complete science of life including aspect of health; hence many of its aspects are widely seen even in non-medical religious texts of Hindu philosophy and culture. It is an essence which emerged out with God Dhanwantri after churning of sea by Devatas and daityas. Whole ayurveda is divided into eight branches named as Kayachikitsa, Kaumarbhritya, Shalya tantra, Shalakya tantra, Bhuta vidya, Agad tantra, Rasayana Tantra and Vajikarna Tantra. It was the ancient classification and the then scholars maintained their own order of description giving due priority to their respective specializations. But now-a-days the orientation of such classification is alarmingly changing. Yet, in all of them the branch Kaumarbhritya has taken its own seat. In Rigveda and Atharvaveda several references pertaining to the branch of Kaumarbhritya are met with viz. nourishment of fertilized zygote¹, tonic measures of the weak^{2,3}, intestinal worm infestations of the children⁴, Rakshoghna drugs (aseptic and antiseptics) and medhajanaka drugs⁵ (brain tonics) etc. Even in Purana grantha like Garudapurana, Skandapurana, Valmiki-Ramayana, Kumarasambhava, Manusmriti, Dharmasindhusara and Kautilya's Arthashastra etc. some

material pertaining to Kaumarbhritya is available. In Ayurveda, Kashyapa samhita highlights the depth and specialty of the Kaumarbhritya. Some books of ancient era have been mentioned as the special classics of Kaumarbhritya where in most are not available at all while few available texts have incomplete subject material, these are - Vriddha Kashyapa Samhita, Kashyapa Samhita (Vriddha Jivakiya tantra), Parvataka tantra, Bandhakatantra, Hiranyaksa tantra and Kumaratantra.

Kashyapa Samhita

The presently available Kashyapa Samhita is a text on the name of Vriddha Jivakiya Tantra, Vidyotini, a Hindi commentary on Kashyapa Samhita by Sri Satyapal Bhishgacharya published in 1953 by Chaukhamba Sanskrit Series, Varanasi, India. The period of the Samhita is stated to be around 6th century B.C. This was preached by Kashyapa (Marichi) and his disciple Vriddha Jivaka (son of Richika) wrote the same. Its redactor was Acharya Vatsya (said to belong to 7th century AD) who received the text from a Yaksha named Anayasa. The Samhita is said to have contained eight (8) sthana and one hundred and twenty (120) chapters as follows:⁶

1. Sutra sthana (30 chapters)
2. Nidana sthana (8 chapters)
3. Vimana sthana (8 chapters)
4. Sharira sthana (8 chapters)
5. Indriya sthana (12 chapters)
6. Chikitsa sthana (30 chapters)
7. Siddhi sthana (12 chapters)
8. Kalpa sthana (12 chapters) and
Khila sthana (80 chapters)

In addition to eight sthana one supplementary part named Khila sthana having 80 chapters is also an essential part of Kashyapa Samhita. Available Kashyapa Samhita is incomplete, as out of total 200 chapters only 78 are presently available; these too are incomplete either in the beginning, end or in between.

Contribution of Kashyapa Samhita

Kashyapa Samhita is basically the book of pediatric specialty, naturally every topic touched has its leaning towards it. The childhood is divided into three stages i.e. garbha (intra-uterine life), bala (childhood) and kumara (adolescence)⁷; which is accepted even today. In present scenario the neonatologist advise the diet, daily routine etc. to the mother for proper growth and development of fetus and also for the well-being of the future child. Kashyapa has mentioned about showing the rising sun and moon during first month⁸, & also given elaborate description of sudation including sudation with warmed-up palm^{9,10} and emesis¹¹ to the children. A detailed discussion is given about basti (enema) which is considered as nectar and used for producing brimhana (anabolic) effect in children along with specific oleaginous substance named shaishuka snehana to be used in enema.¹² A detailed and incisive description of nasya (sternutatory drugs) for the children is discussed. The diseases like Phakka, Visarpa of children along with story about its development and Charmadala have not been described by any other author though fumigations are described by other authors also, but the long list of fumigations of Dhupakalpadhyaya for various purposes other than those mentioned by other authors and also classification as Pratidhupa, Anudhupa etc. are also contributions of Kashyapa Samhita. Ashtapidika (eight furunculosis), Arakilika, ulcers of the over-active crawling child, Dadru (ring worm) along with blisters developing due to infliction by duhsaha and other skin disorders specific in the children are mentioned. Detail story about duhsaha, reasons of abduction by it and its worship on Panchami is described.¹³ Just passing reference about dosages schedule for children is available in Sushruta Samhita; however, in Kashyapa Samhita it is dealt in details.^{14,15} Similarly, features indicative of longevity of new born are given in other classics, but this classic has described features denoting even future physical and psychological built-up.¹⁶ Vagbhatta have advised that the child should be made to sit in fifth month after proper ceremony, while this very ceremony with elaborate arrangement including assessment of psychological status of the child and complications of prolonged sitting etc are given.¹⁷ Kashyapa Samhita prescribes feeding of fruit juice in sixth month and cereals after eruption of teeth or in tenth month, whereas Annaprashana (feeding of cereals) is prescribed in sixth month by other authors.¹⁸⁻²¹ Although the requirements of child are fully met with mother's milk or milk of cow, which if continued without supplementation of cereals for one year or more can provide optimum and best growth and development to the child, however, it is deficient in vitamin C which is supplied by fruits, thus, the description of Kashyapa is more scientific. Though the dentition is described by Vagbhatta, however, details about period of eruption, auspicious or inauspicious eruption and cause of easy eruption in girls and with difficulty in boys etc, details are given only in Kashyapa Samhita.²² Certain drugs /

recipes, specially gold or medicated ghrita to be given to the children for increasing longevity, intellect as-well-as for protection against grahas, are prescribed by Sushruta and Vagbhatta, however, in Kashyapa Samhita certain lehas are prescribed mainly as a substitute or supplementary feed (these also provide above benefits) with detailed indications and contraindications.²³ Sushruta and Vagbhatta have mentioned specific symptoms / signs of very few diseases which help in the diagnosis as the children can not narrate, whereas, one complete chapter is devoted in Kashyapa Samhita for this subject which includes the features / behaviour of wet-nurse and child abducted by grahas also.²⁴ Though, Vagbhatta have advised special sacrifices and protection etc. on sixth day after birth, but have not named it as Shashthi graha, this Shashthi, the sister of Skanda and being sixth in order and having six faces, is said as Shashthi, thus, its worship on every sixth day (Shashthi) of a fortnight and sixth day after delivery is advised; the Shashthi, attacking the child due to improper diet by wet-nurse, is said to be chronic and incurable^{25,26} Sushruta has described nine bala grahas namely Skanda, Skandapasmara or Shakha or Vishaka, Naigamesa or Pitrigraha, Shakuni, Revati, Putana, Andhaputana, Shitaputana and Mukhamandika in Uttara Tantra, while Vagbhatta have given twelve considering Naigamesa and Pitrigraha separately and adding Savagraha and shushkarevati in the list, Sushruta has included Shushka (shushkarevati) as a synonym of Revati. In Kashyapa Samhita, description of grahas attacking the children is a bit different. The number is given as ten²⁷ without naming these; features, denoting like hood Naigamesa, Revati, Shushka Revati, Shakuni, Mukhamandika and Putana²⁸, indicate that probably these very ten grahas are referred in description of number; however, treatment for Andhaputana, Sitaputana and Kataputana is also prescribed²⁹ thus, total number becomes thirteen. Out of these, Pundarika and Kataputana are not described by any other author, while Savagraha given by Vagbhatta is not described here. In the chapter on treatment of Balagraha, it is said that Revati is the only graha having twenty names including Shushka, Shashthi, Putana, Mukhamandika etc. but then story about birth of Putana and Mukhamandika or Mukharchika, their clinical features and treatment of Andhaputana, Shitaputana and Kataputana is mentioned. Features of seizure by Revati and its treatment are also described. In Ravana krita Kaumaratantra, twelve grahas having only feminine names and attacking the child from 1st to 12th day, month or year, with tantrika treatment are given; fever is common symptom of all these, which is a synonym of Revati of Kashyapa also; amongst these, Putana, Mukhamandika, Kataputana, Shakuni or Shakunika and Shushka Revati are common in both the texts.³⁰ General clinical features of seizure by bala grahas caused by misdeeds of dhatri,³¹ and the features of milk vitiated by Shakuni, Skanda, Shashthi and Putana are mentioned.³² Skanda, Skandapasmara, Naigamesa and Skandapita are curable by emesis, while emesis is contraindicated in Revati, Pundarika, Shakuni, Putana and Mukhamandika.³³ Vitiation of milk by grahas and cleansing measures for these are not described by any other author. Revati named as Jataharinis classified into thirty one names, produces menstrual disorders, abortions, still-births, neonatal deaths or death of children at later age; in this list of thirty one Shushka Revati, characterized with emaciation associated with delayed menarche and sixteen

Jataharinis killing the children from birth to fifteenth days, are described³⁴; however, Jataharinis also attacks children, as the features of child seized with this are described. Though both Revati i.e. described under Balagraha and as Jataharini influence children (fetus, neonate or child), however, there is basic difference in both these, as the former directly attacks the child, while the latter seizes the pregnant woman and only through her, the child is influenced. It seems that the author of Kashyapa Samhita has incorporated both the hypothesis prevailing at that time i.e. only female grahas as-well-as male and female both. Description of nourishment of fetus from maternal diet is almost like Charak Samhita that the rasa derived from the pregnant woman's diet serves three purposes i.e. nourishment of own body, nutrition to the fetus and formation of breast-milk, however, at one place in Kashyapa Samhita nutrition to the breasts instead of formation of breast-milk is mentioned.^{35,36} Though, dhatri is described in every classic, however, one full chapter (dhatri chikitsadhyaya) is devoted for her treatment in this book, wherein, it is mentioned that due to improper use of diet by wet-nurse the Shashthi attacks the child. A very weird hypothesis that the dhatri, being cared at some one else's place does not suffer from stanayavajra (breast abscess) is given.³⁷ Breast-milk is said to be vitiated even by Shakuni, Skanda, Putana and Shashthi grahas. The colour of breast-milk is said to influence the future health of the child.³⁸ The available contents of the samhita reveal that the text is more concerned with Kaumarbhritya as for the earlier descriptions; hence it is popular as the text of paediatrics.

Significance of Kashyapa Samhita

- In Dhatri chikitsa Adhyaya, Kashyapa has stated that Pediatrician should be more proficient in pathologies and there observations to initiate treatment as the nature and dosage of medicine depend upon the gravity and severity of the disease. He cannot afford to commit mistakes as the child is very delicate. Kashyapa has further narrated that the role of pediatrician is always critical as he has to look after the state of pregnancy and dhatri's health too for the welfare of the child. Further sage again highlighted significance of Kaumarbhritya saying that in the medical field, 'pediatrician, dhatri and child' always have to face critical situations in view of children's delicacy and risk prone conditions.
- Charaka has explained that Dosha, dushya and mala remain in low potency in children.³⁹ The diseases of adults also affect children but in less potentiated state; hence the dosage of medicine should also be low (this aspect holds well both in health and diseased state and as such indicates the responsibility of pediatrician).
- The practice of fumigation (dhupana karma) is mainly seen in Kaumarbhritya more so in graha chikitsa and sterilization of sutikagara (labour room).
- Several events of psychology and psychiatry are widely referred in paediatrics e.g. the toys to be placed in kumaragara (nursery) should be beautiful but not fearful. The environment should be pleasant and a child should never be frightened.
- Ayu pariksha in children was described at depth in order to assess not only the longevity but also the luck of future life that encroaches the field of the science of 'forecasting'. This examination is also helpful to find out the congenital anomalies of the child.
- Several measures were widely described for the purpose of conception in women and also the desired sex of the baby and specifically son too. This is named as Pumsavan. It may be a controversial topic in the outlook of modern medicine but definitely holds interest for research.
- In children, signs are more significant than symptoms for diagnosis. This is why Kashyapa has specially mentioned vedanadhyaya wherein 32 disorders are described. This further endorses the sharp knowledge of the ancient pediatrician.

DISCUSSION

Kashyapa Samhita is said to be the book of Kaumarbhritya on the basis of following facts:

- 1) On the basis of subject described in entire book, where-in out of available total seventy eight chapters, 28 (36.36 %) are devoted exclusively to various aspects of Kaumarbhritya of which seventeen chapters i.e. six chapters (18th, 20th, 21st, 23rd, 25th and 28th) of Sutra sthana; five chapters (jwara, balagraha, shotha, krimi and phakka-chikitsa) of chikitsa sthana, two chapters (dhupakalpa and satikalpa) chapters of Kalpa sthana and four chapters (twelfth to fourteenth) of Khila sthana are totally devoted to various aspects of pediatrics; besides these other nine chapters i.e. three chapters (asamana gotriya, garbhawakranti and jatisutriya) of Sharira sthana, two chapters (garbhini chikitsa and dusiprajata chikitsa) of Chikitsa sthana; Revati Kalpa of Kalpa sthana and three chapters (ninth to eleventh) of Khila sthana are devoted to obstetrics and gynecology and another two i.e. ninetieth chapter of sutra sthana and dhatri chikitsa of chikitsa sthana are related to breast milk and wet nurse. In remaining forty-nine chapters also maximum emphasis is on promotive, preventive, curative and rehabilitative care of children; described etiology of various diseases also has tilt towards etiology related to breast milk or children, the best examples for which are aushadhabheshajendriya chapter of Indriya sthana having 10.5 out of thirty six verses related to pediatrics, as-well-as last verse indicating relation of entire chapter with pediatrics, and dwivraniya chikitsadhyaya of chikitsa sthana, where-in out of fifty six verses, thirty three are exclusively related to pediatric problems, another two (verses 38, 39) though incomplete, also appear to be related to this very specialty. For the treatment of Gulma due to vata, which can develop at any age, one recipe named 'shaishuka ghrita'⁴⁰ is prescribed, which shows that probably in the classic the diseases developing mainly in children are described. While describing cleansing measures specially enemas and emesis with purgation in Siddhi sthana chapters one and three respectively, greater emphasis is laid upon method / drugs / necessity / benefits for children or wet nurse.
- 2) Amongst the qualities of patient, obedience to the wet nurse is also included,⁴¹ this shows that the causes to be dealt are mainly children.
- 3) As childhood is the age having maximum growth and development, that-is-why the aim of bhesaja (treatment) is said to be un-interrupted growth of body along with pacification of diseases.⁴²

- 4) Kaumarbhritya is described as first branch and is said to be top-most in the same way as god Agni is amongst all the sages; it is the grown-up child who provides opportunity to other specialist for treatment.⁴³
- 5) The treatment of wounds is said to belong to the domain of other specialists,⁴⁴ in other words this book is not of surgery.
- 6) Available summing-up verse of three sections i.e. Indriya, Chikitsa and Kalpa Sthana state the subject of the book as Kaumarbhritya, such as:
 - a) Thus ends the chapter named aushadhabheshajiya Indriya in Indriya sthana in Kaumarbhritya of Vriddha Jivaka redacted by Vatsya show ends the section of signs of life and death.
 - b) Thus an end the chapter on treatment of wet nurse in the section on treatment of Kaumarbhritya of Vriddha Jivaka shows ends the section on treatment.
 - c) Thus ends twelfth chapter named Samhitakalpa of Kalpa sthana in Kaumarbhritya of Vriddha Jivakiya tantra redacted by Vatsya show ends the section on pharmaceutical preparations / sacred precepts.
- 7) At a good number of places the treatment is said to be described for the benefit of children, which shows the emphasis laid for the specialty in the book such as:
 - a) The disciple asked the treatment of both types of wounds for the welfare of children; and Kashyapa described the drugs of various diseases for the benefits of children; which is advised to be retained by wise physicians for the benefits of children.⁴⁵
 - b) The physician treating children are said to be always under stress and strain as they are to perform most difficult tasks.⁴⁶
 - c) The treatment of various disorders of eyes is described for the benefit of children.⁴⁷
 - d) Great sage told entire treatment of children to King Vayorvida.⁴⁸
 - e) Great sage Kashyapa described erysipelas for the benefit of children.⁴⁹
- 8) Based on the opinion of Kashyapa the erudite of Kaumarbhritya divide the fumigations under two⁵⁰ or Kashyapa the preacher is an authority of Kaumarbhritya.
- 9) Puerperal disorders are advised to be treated by specialist of that subject, not by ignorant educated in other disciplines.⁵¹ As obstetrics is also included in Kaumarbhritya, hence, this reference also can be considered here to point out the book is mainly of Kaumarbhritya.

CONCLUSION

On the basis of above study it is concluded that Kasyapa samhita is the only revered text of Kaumarbhritya which illustrated child's nutrition, growth and development, various ceremonies, lehana, dhupana, jataharinis, disorder related to vitiated breast milk and other pediatric disorders with their management. But as the major part of the text is extinct other important pediatric disorders, congenital anomalies, developmental disabilities etc are missing. Therefore, an effort should be done in future to complete the extinct part so that we enrich our knowledge in the field of Kaumarbhritya.

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