

## INTRODUCTION TO PUSHPA AYURVEDA

K.P. VARADHAN

*Sri Rama Krishna Ayurvedashram, Gadwal 509 125, India.*

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**ABSTRACT:** *In this paper the author describes the origin and development of pushpa Ayurveda or floral therapy, a special branch of Ayurveda. The strict adherence of nonviolent principles necessitated the Jain Medical Pundits to develop this branch and put it on a proper pedestal.*

### Introduction:

Vedas are considered to be the source books of all the Indian Arts and sciences. Ayurveda, being Upaveda to Atharvana Veda is divided into eight parts and they are known as Astangas, Kaya, Bala, Graha, Salya, Salakya, Agada, Rasayana and Vajikarana Tantras. The ancient physicians of Ayurveda like caraka Susruta, Vagbhata, Bhela and Haritaka by dint of their continuous observation and experimentation evolved their own system or method of treatment. They composed treatises which are known after their names. As far back as 2000 B.C when Sahadeva, Salihotra and palakapya were prominent physicians we come across in 'Pasu Vaidyam' treatments given to plants, animals and birds. Ahimsa or non-violence being cardinal creed of Buddhism, we find several hospitals opened by King Asoka, where not only human beings but animals and birds received treatment.

### Discovery of Pushpa Ayurveda

Mahavira was the contemporary of Buddha. He was also a staunch follower of Ahimsa. The jains were strict adherents of non-violence. They differed from the traditional line of treatment established by caraka, susruta and others who included the blood and flesh of animals and birds in the preparation of medicines. They thought more of a pious and gently method of treatment which does not involve killing of any living being. Hence they selected flowers to be a fitting media for curing various ailments. The main virtue Bhutadaya Pascattapa or sympathy towards living beings gave inspiration to discover treatment through flowers. In the context a peep into the forward given by the publishers to 'Kalyana Karaka', an Ayurvedic Treatise written by Ugraditya Acarya, a Jain Physician of 9<sup>th</sup> Century is relevant. An extract of which is given below:

“ The authors of Ayurvedic texts have given first place to the herbal medicines. Some of the authors like caraka have propogated the use of prohibited articles like 'meat' in the

name of medicine. But the Jain Physicians launched on an ideal line of treatment which does not harm any living being. This is the reason why the author in Puspa Ayurveda has written the preparation of Rasayana medicines with 18000 kinds of flowers. After a keen observation in this treatise of Puspa Ayurveda we find the book written in old karnatak script belonging to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Century B.C. It is a rare and useful opportunity for the research scholars of history. The readers may well imagine the worth of such a book in which only the uses of 18000 kinds of flowers are mentioned. Thus we can proudly say that but for the Jain acaryas none has written on Puspa Ayurveda". In view of the above it is evident that Jain Munis stand in the forefront as the pioneers of Puspa Ayurveda or Floral therapy.

In ancient India growing of trees and gardening was considered to be one of the seven virtues or Sapta Santanam. The kings and the rich philanthropists took interest in growing shady trees, and flower parks. We find many beautiful description of such gardens in the writings of foreign pilgrims who visited our country from time to time. Some of them were so vastly spread as to occupy hundreds of miles like Lumbini Vanam, and Gardens of Pataliputra. Among them though mostly ruined, a few still remain as relics. They are Shalimar gardens in Kashmir, Moghal gardens in Delhi, Lalbagh in Bangalore etc.

The collection of flowers and weaving of garlands was considered to be a fine art. It was entrusted to certain class of people who made it a profession. They supplied flowers

and garlands both to the public and the state. We come across puspa Lavikas in our ancient works of poetry like Meghasandesa and Gadha Saptasati etc.

Flowers are matchless ornaments to the Nature Queen. They are not only a source of beauty and delicacy but also Fountain heads of health and joy. From time immemorial man has been a worshipper of Nature-greatly charmed and inspired to look at the floral beauties at dawn and dusk. The historicity of flower goes beyond human conception, because the creator of the Universe-Brahma (Puspa Sambhava) has come out from the womb of flower. Rgveda is considered to be the oldest scripture of the world. In the famous hymn of Mantrapuspa (I) we find the secret of creation revealed by Vedic seers. The symbolic representation is mystical. It is hinted that the knower of the flower abounds with prosperity and fortune. Glancing through the world literature – treatises of prose and poetry, we find the blossoming beauties produced by the master artists in the tapestry of cerebral gardens. And these have served as perennial source of nectar to the degenerating humanity.

One more instance on 'Puspa Ayurveda' comes to light from the historical 'Paintings' based on the facts pertaining to medicinal advancement in the Buddhist period. In the course of his intense travels the Buddha suffered from constipation. King Ajatasatr was very much upset by this incident. He did not like general physicians to give any oral drug because he thought it would leave adverse effect on the delicate constitution of the royal monk. Hence he summoned for

Jeevaka the renowned Ayurvedic professor in Takshasila University.

The Physician put a drop of medicine on a lotus flower and made the sage to smell. He was relieved of the trouble.

Such recipes are found in our medical treatises.

The Kingdom of flowers is very vast. In general, we can categorise them in four main classes depending on the nature of the purpose for which they are grown.

1. Ornamental flowers.
2. Commercial flowers.
3. Medicinal flowers.
4. Kitchen or Vegetable flowers.

### **1. Ornamental flowers:**

These flowers are grown in the gardens, along the road side borders, or in front of houses to enhance beauty and show e.g. Deva Kancan (Bauhinia Acuminta), Palasa (Bastard teak), Aragwadha (Purging cassia) Bougainvillea, Punnaga (Alexandria Laurel), Arjuna (Terminalia Glabra), Rakta Kara Veera (Oleander red), Devaganneru (Pegoda Tree).

### **2. Commercial flowers:**

These flowers are used to prepare scents or oils. Some of them are useful to extract alkaloids for preparation of medicines. They have good market value and are a source to earn foreign currency. E.g. Rose, Sunflower, Vinca rosea, Kasa (a kind of grass) flowers.

### **3. Medicinal flowers:**

These flowers have more of medicinal properties and are useful in treating different kinds of diseases. Flowers are directly eaten as petals or made into juice, decoction, tincture or mixing them with some other ingredients and then administered. The main purpose of the present article is to acquaint our learned readers with the various processing methods through which the flowers can be employed in floral therapy. The following are some of the main methods adopted by the floral physician in this treatment.

### **1. Darsanam:**

The patient is advised to concentrate his mind gazing at a given dazzling flower. The chromotherapy comes in picture in this treatment. The laws of colour treatment are applied. Raktamandara (Hibiscus Rosa sinensis). These flowers full of red colour are used for the cure of Vataroga joint pains orange Colour. Aragwada, (cassia fistula) Rose are useful in constipation. Yellow coloured marigold and anthemis Nobilis are useful for pitta jwaras i.e. Fevers born from biliousness and blue coloured Visnukrana (Evolvulus alsinoides) for general fevers.

### **2. Sparsha Vidhanam:**

The patient is advised to wear garments made of flowers, put on cap, bracelets, necklace etc, made of flowers or lie down on a bed made of flowers. (Puspa Sayya).

### 3. Alepana Vidhanam

In this method flowers singly or mixed with some other medicated drugs are grinded into pulp and pointed throughout the body or to the particular affected part of the patient.

### 4. Aghrana Vidhanam or Nasya Vidhanam (Smelling process Or Nosal Dropping)

Gandha or odour is the important element in flower. It may be a pleasant small or a foul one. This Gandha is divided into three classes in respect of their concentration. 1. Mild (Manda) ii. Medium (Madhya) iii. Super (Tivra) iv. Nirgandha Odourless.

The subtle particles of the flower borne by the waves of the wind touch the mucus membrane or nodul in the nasal cavity. The sensory nerves carry it to the brain. This stimulates every cell of the body. The effect of this stimulation depends upon the potency of the scent of the particular flower. This stimulation is further divided into three kinds in respect of the nature of their action.

#### i. Satvik ii. Rajasik iii. Tamasik

For example white lilly, lotus, Jasmine give mild satvik soothing effect to the gentlemen. Rakta Karavira (Red oleander) Ketaki (pandanus odoratissimus etc.) having too Rajasic molecules of smell, enter the brain cells and disturb the mind. Similarly Dhatura (Thorn-apple)

flower containing toxins of Tamasic nature induces sleep or creates nausea.

### 5. Asvadana Vidhanam

#### CONSUMING FLOWERS BY EATING OR DRINKING IN THE FOLLOWING FORMS

1. PUSPA RASA: Fresh extract taken out by crushing the flowers.
2. PUSPA HIMA: Flower essence taken out after soaking in water for 12 hours.
3. PUSPA KVATHA: Decoction of fresh or dried flowers.
4. PUSPA ARKA: Distilled extract of flowers.
5. PUSPA SURA: Tincture of flowers.
6. PUSPA ASAVA: Fermented flower extracts.
7. PUSPA AVALEHYA: Confection of flowers.
8. PUSPA GUTI: Pills made of flowers.
9. PUSPA KALKA : Grinded pulp of dried flowers
10. PUSPA CURNA: Powder made of dried flowers.
11. PUSPA TAILA: Oil prepared with the flowers.
12. PUSPA GHRTA: Ghee (Purified butter) boiled with the flowers.

#### Seasonal Relevance Of Flowers

In Charucharya, a treatise of XIth Century written by Bhoja on health, a chapter is allotted for flowers. He makes mention of

several kinds of flowers to be used during different seasons throughout the year. He also categorises them to suit the taste of different people from various walks of life for example Patalipuspa (Bignomia Stereo shermum) cleanses the impurities of water and mind. It cures thirst and burning sensation. It brings prosperity and fortune. It eradicates bilious tendency, gives pleasant smell and colour and is always highly liked and adored by intelligentia. He prescribes specified flowers for each class of men and women. He is conscious of blossoming and florescence period of different plants. Jatika puspa (Jasminum Grandiflorum) should be worn for a single muhurtam (an hour of forty eight minutes) whereas Nepali flower (Double jasmine) for eight Muhurtas. Utpala flower (Water lilly for three night and Ketaki Pushpa pondinus (Odoratissimus) for five nights.

Bhoja in his health manual has also dealt with the therapeutic uses of different flowers. I shall try to quote one or two of the lot.

Ketaki Puspa (Pandinus Odoratissimus) subdues Vata increases Slesma and Usna. It gives pleasure to women and aggravates sex urge(3). He has narrated the medicinal properties of a number of flowers commonly found in the parks and gardens during different seasons in the year. One more example of jasmine I shall give here. Jasmine has the property of giving heat to the body. It eradicates slesma (Phlegm) endows good vision and whim. It kills lice in hair and is a flower for constant use(4).

CARAKACARYA, the greatest physician has employed flowers of ATARUSA

(Adhatoda Vasika) and Palasa (Butea Frondosa) to be taken with ghee and honey.

Susruta, greatest surgeon of ancient India directs to prepare Asava or Lehya with the flowers of Prenkhana, Jasmine, Ponna, Nagakesara Dhataki Puspa and flowers of silk cotton along with certain herbs in the treatment of pramehas i.e., urinary diseases.

Vagbhata in Astanga Hrdaya Tantra advises to use the Madiphala Kesari (Pollens) in the treatment of dyspepsia and fever.

In some other context in Atisara Roga Chikitsa he recommends Vasti Karma with the fresh juice of silk cotton flower.

The author of Kshema Kutuhalam gives prescription of floral treatment in accordance with the aggravation of doshas. Jasmine subdues three of the doshas i.e., Vata Pitta Sleshma and Mahadaha (deadly inflammation) Rose having a pleasant smell checks Vata and pitta doshas. Blue coloured lotus subsides, pitta dosha relaxes tension and is beneficial to eye sight. Ketaki (Pandinus Odoratissimus) removes Kapha Vata as it possesses cleansing property of Usna Veerya.

In this way a panel of flowers prescribe for various ailments from different sources can be quoted, but I wish to reserve it for future article to be dealt with separately. However I shall try to conclude this article with the words of Bhoja. He extols the benefits of Floro therapy in the following lines.

“Flowers along with perfumed articles like musk and sandal should always be worn. This removes the foul smell of hair and perspiration of body born due to

tiresomeness and exertion. It improves eyesight; subdues burning sensation. It increases sex vigour; endows happiness prosperity and fame. Flowers enchant the minds of women folk”.

KESAKLESA SAMUDBHUTA SWEDA  
DURGANDHA NASANAM  
CHAKSUSYM TAPA SAMANAM  
SOUMANASYA DHARANAT  
CHAKSUSYM RATI VARDHANAM  
SUKHAKARAM SAMPAD  
YASOVARDHANAM PUSPANAMATI  
DHRANANNIGADITAM KANTA  
MANORANJANAM KESANAM  
SECANAM KURYAT  
KASTURIMANULEPAYET  
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