

Jaina Epigraphical Allusions : Ancient Indian Surgery as Reflected in Jain Epigraphy



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Abstract

The earliest source of our knowledge of Indian philosophy and medicines are the four vedas i.e. - Rigveda, Yajurveda, Samveda and Atharva veda, sacred books of knowledge which belong to the period of 1500 – 800 B.C. Ayurveda is considered to be the V veda.

The archaeological references pertaining to the history of medicines in ancient India can be divided into inscription and monuments. Few inscriptions reveal authentic information and are also valuable sources for reconstructing the history of medicines. All medical inscriptions are mainly on Ayurveda alone.

Buddhist Maths and Vihars & Jain and Bastis paid greater attention by providing shelters, free feeding poor's and needy people and by distribution of medicines to the sick of the surrounding areas, special features of the Jain treatment was complete prohibition of use of any animal sacrifices, tissues of animal products in the cure of diseases. Scholars like Pujyapada (6–7 A.D.). Wrote several treatises on medicines, Ugradityacharya favoured Animsa (Non-violence) in the treatment of diseases, they even prohibited animals substance like honey and Jaggary. Application of surgery for curing diseases is prescribed by susruta. In the medieval times surgeon named as Aggralavya who flourished under the patronage of Chalukya king Jayasimha-II. Stone Pillar in the Nalgonda District in Andhra Pradesh is written in Telugu, Kannada script which gave evidence of grant of lands and villages for the maintenance of Jain basadis.

Lastly saidapur inscription gave proof of greatness of Jain scholars (Medicines), this shows that the practice of surgery was in high position and they preached non-violence besides it they practiced and encouraged surgery.

Keywords: Ethical, Spiritual, Dharma, Artha, Kama, Moksha, Shariraka, Manasika, Ayur Veda, Scard books, Mythology, Methodical, Therapeutic, Rasa Shastra, Pharmacopoeis, Allopathy, Homoeopathy, Susruta Samhita, Vasisesika Sutra, Atomic theory, Paramanu, Inoculaton, Vata, Pitta, Kapha, Dhatus, Malas, Manas, Inscriptions, Monuments, Authentic, Dangha, Bastis, Tissues, Monasteries, Susruta, Anatomy, Saidapur, Bhuvanagiri Taluk, Lunar eclipse, Basadis, Decipherable, Sastra-sastra, Trantras, Umatantra, Sangrahaparcicheda.

Introduction

Man has eternally endeavoured to keep himself free from three types of miseries, namely physical mental and spiritual. Therefore the history of medicine is as old as the history of mankind; medicine arose out of the primal sympathy of man to give succor and relief to those in sorrow, need and sickness. The impotance of medicine for human health is also stressed even by ancient medical scholars, which can be gleaned from some of the Jaina epigraphs.

Charaka tells us

"Dharmartha kama Mokshanam Arogyammulam Uttamam"

Which means health is the chief basis for the development of the ethical, economical, artistic and spiritual sides of man. The wealth of a country depends not merely on its natural resources but also on the vitality of its people. If the people are sluggish, backward and inefficient, they will not be able to develop the resources of the country. In spite of rich resources people will remain poor. According to Indian tradition, the four primary objectives of human life are "Dharma" (to perform religious rites), "Artha" (to acquire wealth), "Kama" (to satisfy the worldly desires) and "Moksha" (to attain Salvation)

Good health is considered to be the "Sine qua non" for the achievement of all these four fold objectives. The man has therefore, eternally endeavoured to keep himself and free from miseries. These miseries are of the following types:

Adhyatmika Dukha

Miseries arise out of factors, which operate from within the living organism. This is again of two types classified as Shariraka (Somatic) and Manasika (Psychic).

Adhibautika Dukha

Miseries caused by factors which operate on the living organism from outside.

Adhidaivika Dukha

Miseries effected by providential causes or acts of the gods, that is factors which are beyond human control.

The term Ayur Veda indicates the science of life. Ayush means life and Veda means to know or attain or knowledge, it means the science of life. Charaka has defined Ayurveda as the "Science through the help of which one can obtain knowledge about the useful and harmful types of life (hita and ahita ayus), happy and miserable types of life, the span of life as well as very nature of life."

In modern medicine more attention is paid to correct the afflicted part of the body. But in Ayurveda while treating a disease, the individual as a whole is taken into consideration. Not only the condition of the body, but also the mind and soul are taken into account while treating the patient.

The earliest sources of our knowledge of Indian philosophy and medicine are the four Vedas viz., Rig, Yajur, Sama and Atharvana Vedas; the sacred books of knowledge belong to the period of 1500-800 B.C. According to mythology, Ayurveda was first perceived by Brahma, and He taught to Daksha Prajapati, who taught it to the Asvini Kumaras and they taught it to Indra. Indra taught internal medicine to Bharadwaja and Surgey to Lord Dhanwantari. According to Brahma Vaivarta Purana, Ayurveda is considered to be fifth Veda, and is one of the great developments in the Vedic period by centuries of slow and cautious evolution.

Ayurveda in the post-Vedic period occupied an honoured position as a rational assemblage of methodical and systematic-Herbal therapeutic practice. During early medieval period the Rasa shastra (Iatro-chemistry) came into existence. Mercury and many other metals and minerals were incorporated into the Pharmacopoeis of Ayurveda. During medieval period, India was exposed to frequent foreign invasions and internal frictions and many original Ayurveda works, among others were destroyed. People were engaged in fighting for the security of the country. The progress of Indian medical science was arrested and British rulers introduced Allopathy and Homoeopathy systems of medicine to serve royal families and their employees. Progress of Ayurveda was completely at a stand still and people attracted to western culture/medicine. So British government patronized the Allopathy as Royal medicine and slowly Ayurveda was thrown away to alternate system of medicine. In the name of civilization and modernization, the people treating by the traditional practice were branded as superstitious

and dogmatic. But many things which were treated as myth have now become facts of science E.G. :

1. The circulation of blood described in Susruta Samhita (before 700 B.C.) was a myth till Harvey.
2. The secretion of gastric juice and its role in the process of digestion as described in Charaka (before 300 B.C.) was myth till Pavlov.
3. Sushruta & Kanada, ancient Indian scientists (about 600 B.C.) propounded the Vasisesika sutra (peculiarity -Aphorismas). The essence of these sutras are the Atomic theory of matter. In fact, they gave the name Paramanu (Atom) to an indivisible external and in destructible entity of matter.
4. The traditional practice of inoculation against Small Pox (Masusika) was a myth till Edward Jenner.

History of medicine gained its importance and became a separate discipline in the Medical education many decades ago in Europe, America and England. A number of physicians, surgeons, medical teachers and general practitioners made intensive study on medical history. In India scholars of medical science showed less interest in the history of medicine during pre-independence period. Much research was conducted on this subject only after independence.

1. Doshas (Trifold constitutions of body) :
 - a. Vata - Activities of nervous system,
 - b. Pitta - Digestion, assimilation, tissue building and metabolism,
 - c. Kapha - Skeletal and Anabolic systems
2. Agni (gastric fire - Digestion and Metabolism)
3. Dhatus (Basic tissues of the body, i.e., plasma, blood, muscle, adipose, bone marrow and reproductive elements)
4. Malas (Waste material i.e., faeces, sweat urine)
5. Atma (Soul of heart)
6. Manas (Mind)
7. Indriyas (Sensory and motor organs)

Anatomically and Physiologically if a person is in the state of perfect or equilibrium state, he is called a healthy or immuned person.

Epigraphical Allusions

The Archaeological references pertaining to the history of medicine in ancient India can be divided into two categories i.e., Inscriptions and Monuments.

There are very few inscriptions to be found which would shed light on the history of medicine during this period. They reveal authentic information and are also valuable sources for reconstructing the history of medicine. They also tell us about the patronage of medicine by the rulers, about the conditions of the hospitals during the ancient period and also the nature of medical help that was accessible to people at large. One may find inscriptions, which yields authentic information on the physicians and their service to the cause of medical science.

The available inscriptions need to be studied carefully and should be correlated with the literary sources available in order to reconstruct the history of medicine. It is also to be noted that all the medical inscriptions are mainly on Ayurveda alone, there are no such inscriptions which reveal information about other systems of medicine prevailed in India.

Buddhist establishments and Viharas gave great attention to diet and nursing the sick among the Sangha, as instructed by Buddha, they avoided Surgical interference and employed a restricted number of drugs. The Jaina tradition and Maths or Bastis arranged for shelter, clothing and free feeding of the poor and distribution of medicines to the sick of the surrounding area. One of the special features of the jaina treatment was the complete prohibition of use of any animal sacrifices, tissues of animal products in the cure of diseases. Like the monasteries of medieval Europe, the jaina institutions encouraged scholars to study medical science along with other science and the heads of institutions like Pujiyapada of 6th-7th Century A.D. wrote treatises on medicine as manuals for use in the practice of Jaina physicians. Pujiyapada's work 'Kalyanakaraka' was later enlarged by Ugradityacharya in 9th century A.D. under the patronage of Rashtrakuta ruler Amoghavarsha. The very little work for the promotion of the good of the people indicates the noble aim and high purpose of medicine in that age. As a scholar of Jaina faith, he mainly endeavoured for the upheaval of the jaina principle, i.e., Ahimsa (non-violence). Ancient medical scientists like Charaka and Sushruta recommended animal substances, in the treatment of the certain diseases. But Ugradityacharya condemned the use of animal substances, as they were to be derived after killing the animals, as part of Jaina principle. He refuted the usage of such substances to avoid the cruelty towards the other creatures. He did not accept even the use of honey and prescribed jaggery as substitute while administering the medicine to the patient. The Jaina scholars condemned the killing of animals but they encouraged and practiced surgery.

Saidapur (Jaina) Inscription Alludes Surgery

Application of surgery for curing diseases in the system of Ayurveda is said to have been well prescribed by Susruta. But in course of time, this aspect of cure seems to have been practically given up by the practitioners of Ayurveda for want of sufficient knowledge in anatomy or owing to their aversion to handle the delicate internal organs of the human body. Somehow, these valuable theories of that great scientist are not explored to the maximum utility and much less further researches are made on these lines are undeniable facts. Yet practice of surgery by select Vaidyas in the medieval period is evidenced by the subjoined inscription, which alludes to the greatness of a surgeon named Aggalayya who flourished under the patronage of the Chalukya king Jayasimha II (A.D. 1015-1042).

This record in Telugu-Kannada script is incised on three sides of a stone pillar set up in the village named Saidapur in the Bhuvanagiri Taluk in Nalgonda District of Andhra Pradesh. The portion on the first two sides is in Kannada language while on the third side in Sanskrit. It records the grant of village Muppanapalli, included in the Aleru subdivision of the Kollipaka-7000 province by the Gavunda or village headman for the maintenance of two Jaina basadis, built by certain Aggalayya who bears the titles Vaidyaratnakara, Pranacarya and Naravaidya. The gift was made on the occasion of the lunar eclipse which occurred on the Purnima (full moon day) of Bhadrpada month in the year Bhava corresponding

to Saka 956. This date corresponds to 4th June, 1034 A.D., the week day being Thursday when the king was camping at Pottalakere, the morden Patancheru, situated about 20 miles to the north of Hyderabad. Kollipaka is the present Kolanupaka near Aleru on the Secunderabad- Kazipet section of the Southe Central Railway. During the period of the western Chalukya of Kalyana, Kolipaka was a province of 7000 revenue units. The two Jain basadis which were attached to two jaina temples one at Muccanapalli village and the second at Ikkuriki village, were constructed by Naravaidya Aggakayya. The first basadi was attached to Buddhasena Jinalaya whereas the other to Vaidyaratnakara Jinalaya named after the title of Aggalayya. The second part of the inscription contains the particulars of the gift of lands and income thereon.

The third part contains a brief description of the Ayurveda physician Aggalayya in few Sanskrit verses. Some portions of the inscriptions are not easily decipherable owing to the rough surface of the stone and a few mistake committed by the scribe. However, the following gist can be made out.

"Aggalayya was in his religious persuasion. He was always helpful to the good people; his activities were always intended for the healthy being of the people, for the welfare of friends, for the satisfaction of the gurus (teachers), for the teachings of the Jaina and for clearing of the doubts of the physicians in their medical pursuits. He was verily the god Brahma himself. Among the scholars of Ayurveda and the ingenious scholars in the Sastras that flourished in the court of Jagadekamalla (alias Jayasimha) this Vaidyaratmakara was proficient in the science of sastra-sastra i.e., surgery. And he excelled all other either by sastra or sastra. It further states, when you come to know, that any treatment by surgery was made anywhere and when life was rescued anywhere, then you have to know that it was the good action of Naravaidya Aggalayya and king Jagadekamalla. Even when a disease was found incurable by other physicians in its prakarsa (serious stage) and in its upakrama (treatment) they say in all quarters (regions) that Aggalayya was most efficient in curing that disease".

It again describes that "Aggalayya was proficient in the famous tantras known as Umatantra and Sangrahapariccheda which deal with sastra-sastra, the science of surgery".

Conclusions

The Saidapur inscription shows the greatness of Jaina scholar, Aggalayya, the surgeon who flourished under the patronage of the Chalukya king Jayasimha II (A.D. 1015-1045). This inscription is having immense value to the history of medicine. It shows that the practice of surgery was in its high position and the jains, who preached non-violence, practiced and encouraged the surgery.

Text of the Inscription on the third side of the pillar :

1. O Ni (rdda) haya satam hitaya vidusam (rogabhibhu)
2. Tatmana marogyaya nram sukhaya suhrdam tu
3. Styai gurunam sada raksayai jinasanasasya bhisa
4. Jam sastrakriya samsayady-ucchedaya ca pa
5. Dmabhussa (sa) hajah Srivaidyaratnakarah O

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6. Ayurvedavidam sada patudhiyam ye sastra
7. Karmmakrame praudha (h) Sri Jagadekamalla
8. Nrpatar = yye sastraparangaatas=tesam
9. Samsadi sastrasastrakusalah Sri
10. Vaidyaratnakarah jeta
11. Va (...la) raggala (lo) bu-
12. Dhanidhissastrena sastrena va O
13. Yadyatra sastradisum karmma
14. Karoti kokah tvam. tu pravesti naravai-
15. Dyakam Aggalaryyam divram (tivram) tathapadi
16. Dathapi sukham vidhatum simhasya tasya ca
17. Tatha mahi (ma) ganasya O asakyavyadhe (ra)
18. Pi parair= bhisagbhir=vyadhipra (karse) tadu-
19. Pakrame ca tamaggalayam punaru (ha)
20. Daksam niruha (daksam) kathayanti diksu (")
21. Uma (tantra) madyam (....) sangrahaparccheda
22. Kriyakausaloddamaprathitasastrasastra
23. Visayapraga (nya) marurjijitapra (dam)
24. (Karmmiga) Calcavarti Jayasingam....

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