

A REVIEW ON SUTRASTHANA OF VAGBHATA'S SAMHITA IS BEST AMONG AYURVEDIC CLASSICS (Sutrasthane tu Vagbhate)

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Abstract

Vagbhata's Samhita has earned its right place among the great treatises of Ayurveda because covers the whole eight branches of Ayurveda, topics are chronological arranged, precepts and practices of medical sciences are narrated clearly. Greater portion of the texts are devoted to the Kaya Chikitsa (general medicine) and only brief reference to Shalya (surgery). Vagbhata's Samhita are not only a compiled text book but are ideal ancient treatise based on eternal fundamentals and the basic principles. Important precepts and practices of Ayurveda are explained in brief and codified form in Sutrasthanas of Vagbhata's Samhita.

Keywords: Vagbhata's Samhita; Sutrasthana; Shalya-tantra; Shalakyatantra.

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INTRODUCTION

Sutrasthana, the first section of Vagbhata's Samhita contains fourty chapters in Astanga Samgraha and thirty chapters in Astanga Hridaya. Derivation of 'Sutrasthana' stated in Sushruta Samhita is as Soocanat means indicating briefly the ideas, Sutranat means arranging the topics in respective order and Savanatarhasantatah means originating the flow of ideas.^[1] Just like a thread, which keeps all the pearls together in necklace the specialty about Sutrasthan of Vagbhata's Samhita is that, it comprises all the meaning of Tantra in concise manner.

Important precepts and practices of Ayurveda are explained in brief and codified form in Sutrasthan in Charak Samhita, Susruta Samhita and Vagbhata's Samhita. This section depicts basic and fundamental principles regarding preventive and curative diet articles, food habits, and cause of disease and methods of treatment. Sutrasthana of Vagbhata's Samhita peculiar from Sutrasthana of other Samhita as it has covered all the chief fundamental principles of Ayurveda and the subject matter is arranged in very systematic way.

Fundamental principles of Shalya-tantra (surgery) and Shalakyatantra (ENT) are also described in brief in this section. Sutrasthana of Vagbhata's Samhita has laid equal emphasis on Fundamental Principles of Ayurvedic treatment related to preventive medicine as well as curative medicine and is a full of secret measures containing all the chief doctrines in brief and codified form. The object of Ayurveda is maintenance of health in healthy persons as well as the treatment of diseased persons, which is based upon the proper knowledge of preventive principles as well as basic fundamental principles of treatment of diseases both are clearly narrated in Sutrasthana of Vagbhata's Samhita.

Introduction of Fundamental Principles of Ayurveda described in the Vagbhata's Sutrasthan

First chapter of Sutrasthan of Vagbhata's Samhita deals with almost all fundamental principles of Ayurveda such as three doshas, kind of digestive activity, kind of alimentary tract, body constitution, properties of three doshas, basic tissue, wastes, six tastes, kind of substance, potency, end product of digestion, qualities and properties of substance, cause of disease and health, examination of patients, kind of habitat, kind of time, kind of therapies and four limb of treatment in brief are explained in the entire sutrasthana.^{[2][3]}

Fundamental Principles of hygiene and preventive medicine described in the Vagbhata's Sutrasthan

From third to eighth chapters, subject matter of discussion is swasthvritta, this section is devoted to measures for keeping the body resistant to disease. Details regarding hygiene and preventive medicine are described in chapter Dincharya,^{[4][5]} Ritucharya,^{[6][7]} prevention of disease, knowledge of liquid food materials, nature of food, protection of food and proper quantity of food intake. It is great contribution of Vagbhata's Samhita to Ayurveda and towards the rules of health and some ethical conduct. According to Vagbhata's Samhita healthy person should awake or get up from bed in the Brahmamuhorta (early in the morning) to safe guard his life. After getting one should satisfy the natural urges (defecation, urination) and clean tongue and teeth properly cleaned. Importance of Physical activity or exercise, Udvartana (massaging the body with soft fragrant powders), bath and good conduct is described in detail in Vagbhata's Samhita.

For the maintenance of health, it is necessary that a perfect equilibrium is established with regard to the various forces acting and counteracting on the body. It is not possible to

have the knowledge of suitable diet and regimen for different seasons without having the knowledge of seasons themselves. The governing factors of the body called Doshas are greatly influenced by these seasonal changes, they produce the particular Dasha-related diseases in the particular season. To avoid them one should adopt Ritucharya and seasonal purificatory measures like emesis, purgation, enema etc.

When one season meets the next, the last seven days of the previous and the first seven days of the next constitute the seasonal interlude (ritusandhi). During this period, the lifestyle of the previous season should be gradually abandoned and the lifestyle of the next is correspondingly adopted. Abrupt abandonment of the old lifestyle and adoption of the new would lead to disorders of failed adaptation. Ritusandhi is special contribution of Vagbhata's Samhita described in Ritucharya chapter.^{[8][9]}

Fundamental Principles of dietetics and therapeutics described in the Vagbhata's Sutrasthan

A living body is composed of the five fundamental elements (Mahabhutas). Food is also composed of the same elements. The basic reason for taking food is to augment and replenish the five fundamental elements in the body. Hence proper diet in sickness or health is an integral part of medical treatment; food may also be the cause of ill-health, due to its impaired qualities. Improper quantity, unsuitability to specific conditions of the body, incompatibility with other foods taken at the same time and defective cooking are cause of ill health. Seasonal factors should also be taken into consideration in the proper selection of food. Chapter knowledge of liquid materials, nature of food materials protection of food and proper quantity of food described in the Vagbhata's Samhita provide detail knowledge about above problems.

Knowledge of therapeutics which includes wholesome diet and drug is one among three principles as a means of wellbeing par excellence to healthy and diseased. Chapter knowledge of liquid materials, nature of food materials, protection of food and proper quantity of food described in the Vagbhata's Samhita provide detail knowledge about wholesome diet. Chapter sodhanadigana sangrah, dravyadivijnaniya, Rasabhediya are described in detail the Sutrasthan of Vagbhata's Samhita.

Fundamental Principles of Tri-doshas described in the Vagbhata's Sutrasthan

Ayurvedic system of medicine in all its aspects is largely dependent upon an understanding of the significance and nature of three humours - Vata, pitta and kapha, which is supposed to activate and govern the entire biological process from conception to death. Sutrasthan Vagbhata's Samhita contains three chapters, knowledge of doshas; classification of doshas and treatment of doshas, which cover all fundamental principles of doshas such as characteristics of three doshas, concept of doshas and pathology, diagnosis of deranged doshas, and treatment of three doshas.^{[10][11]}

Fundamental Principles of treatment described in the Vagbhata's Sutrasthan

All Fundamental principles of Ayurvedic treatment is described in the Sutrasthan of the Vagbhata's Samhita. Theory of Samanya (generic concomitance) and Vishesha (the variant factor) is the most important fundamental principle of treatment. This is described just after description of dosha-dhatu and malas, in the Vagbhata's Samhita because whatever responsible for increase of dosha-dhatu-malais known as Samanya (generic concomitance) and causing decrease is known as Vishesha the variant factor) in the absence of inhibiting factors.

Rasa (taste), Gunas(properties), Virya,(potency), Vipaka (taste of food after digestion), and Prabhava (specific action), are the important fundamental principles of Ayurveda, and are parameters to ascertain the actions of the drugs and diets. These are briefly mentioned in the first chapter of Vagbhata's Samhita and are described in detail in Dravyadivijaniya (knowledge of substance) and Rasabhedhiya (classification of taste) chapter of Sutrasthana of Vagbhata's Samhita.

According to Vagbhata's Samhita therapy in brief is of two kinds- Sodhana (purificatory or radical treatment) and Samana (palliative). Sodhana (purificatory) means radical purification that eliminates excess doshas from the body and consists of the five purification practices of Panchakarma therapy; Vamana (Emesis), Virecana (Purgation) Niruhabasti (Non-lubricant enema) Nasya and Raktamoksana (Bloodletting).

Concept of Panchakarma was postulated by ancient seers and sages through their keen observation of the nature. Among classical compendium of Ayurveda kalpa and siddhi sthana of Caraka Samhita and Chikitsa sthana of Sushruta Samhita is devoted for Sodhana therapy but apart from kalpa – siddhi sthana, process of Sodhana therapy with purvakarma (oleation and sudation therapy) is described in detail in the Sutrasthana of Vagbhata's Samhita. Chapter Snehavidhi, Svedavidhi, Vamanavirecana vidhi, Bastividhi, Nasyavidhi and Siravedhavidhi in the Sutrasthana of Vagbhata's Samhita are devoted to various procedure of panckarma therapy.^{[12][13]}

Samana (palliative treatment) therapy does not eliminate doshas, nor aggravate the unbalanced ones but pacifies the aggravated doshas and consist of the seven methods such as Pachana (Ingestion of digestive drugs), Dipana (Ingestion of drugs which enhance hunger), Ksut-nigraha (Fasting) Trisna - nigraha (Abstaining from fluids), Vyayama

(Physical exercise) Atapa-Sevana (Exposure to sun), Maruta-Sevana (Exposure to wind). Chapter Dosopakarmaniya (treatment of doshas) and Dividhaupakarmaniya (two kinds of treatment) in the Sutrasthana of Vagbhata's Samhita are mainly devoted to Samana (palliative) therapy). All measures and methods of treatment are incorporated in two Upakramas (Dvidha-upakramas) namely Santarparna and Apatarparna in Dividhaupakarmaniya (two kinds of treatment) chapter in the Sutrasthana of Vagbhata's Samhita.^{[14][15]}

According asarya and Asarayibhava mentioned in sutrasthan of Vagbhata's Samhita; Vata resides in the asthi (bones), Pitta resides in the in the sveda and rakta, Kapha resides in the remaining dhatu and malas thus the disease arising from increase and decrease of the asarya (residence/container) and Asarayi (resident/content) should be treated quickly by adopting Apatarpaana and Santarpaana methods respectively.

Nasya karma is a specific treatment methodology of Ayurveda mainly indicated for treatment of disease of the parts above the shoulders. Nasyakarma is a therapeutic measure in which the medicated drugs or fats (oils, ghee etc.) processed with drugs is administered through nasal route to eliminate or extinguish the vitiated doshas situated in head and its constituent parts. Nose is the door for the head and the medicine through this spreads and cures the disease situated in head and its constituent parts. Nasyavidhi chapter in the Surasthana of Vagbhata's Samhita is devoted to the, therapeutic properties and utility of nasal therapy.^{[16][17]}

Dhomanpana is a special therapy to treat kaphaja disorders and it is also Pascatt-karma to Nasya and Gandusa, to scrap the dosha which is stacked to the srotas. It is very quick and effective treatment for kaphaja disorders. The daily inhalation of medicated smoke is

effective in not only relieving kapha and Vata induced diseases above the shoulders but also preventing them. Chapter Dhomapanavidhi in the Sutrasthana of Vagbhata's Samhita is devoted to the procedure, of inhalation of medicated smokes. Chapter Gandusavidhi (mouth gargles) in the Sutrasthana of Vagbhata's Samhita described some important prophylactic measures, therapeutic properties and utility of mouth gargles for insuring oral hygiene.

In Sutrasthana of Vagbhata's Samhita various therapeutic procedures are explained which are said to improve or enhance the visual power as well as improve the health of the eye. Tarparna, Putapaka, Ascyotana, Anjana etc. are main therapeutic procedures which improve the health of the eye and treat the eye diseases. Various procedures used for the treatment of eye disorders is described in the chapters. Aschyotanaanjana vidhi, Tarpanaputpaka vidhi (satiating the eye and other therapies).

Fundamental Principles of Shalyatantra (surgery) described in the Vagbhata's Sutrasthan

In comparison to Sutrasthana of Charak Samhita, Sutrasthana of Vagbhata's Samhita has added principles of Shalya-tantra (surgery). Knowledge of Yantra and Shastra is very important for siravedha (venesection), shalyaharan (removal of foreign bodies), surgical operation ksharaagnikarma (alkaline and thermal cautery). Chapter Yantravidhi (use of blunt instruments) Shastravidhi (use of sharp instruments) siravedha (venesection) shalyaharanavidhi (removal of foreign bodies), Shastrakarmavidhi (surgical operation) ksharagnikarma (alkaline and thermal cautery) are devoted to fundamental principles of shalya tantra.^{[18][19]}

Jalaukavidhi (use of leeches) is claimed to be the supreme therapy because of its safety and high efficacy in the disorders involving the

vitiation of blood. It is safely indicated even for the king, rich, old, fearful, weak, women and the people of tender nature. Jalaukavidhi (use of leeches) is described in the Sutrasthana of Vagbhata's Samhita.

CONCLUSION

Sutrasthana is considered as heart in all Ayurvedic classics because this section is synopsis of entire Samhita. To understand any part of the text proper learning of Sutrasthan is needed. Sutrasthana of Vagbhata's Samhita is best among Ayurvedic classics because this section deals with basic fundamental principles of Ayurveda, fundamental principles of Ayurveda related to preventive medicine as well as curative medicine, fundamental principles of dietetics, fundamental principles of therapeutics, fundamental principles of tridoshas, fundamental principles of treatment, eternal medicine and fundamental principles of Shalya and Shalakya tantra. Two objects of Ayurveda are maintenance of health in healthy persons as well as the treatment of diseased persons. For the fulfillment of above objective proper knowledge of preventive and promotive principles as well as basic fundamental principles of treatment is necessary. Sutrasthana of Vagbhata's Samhita fulfills entire objective and is best among Ayurvedic classics.

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