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ASHTANG HRUDAYA SUTRA STHAN: A CRITICAL REVIEW

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ABSTRACT:

Ashtang Hridaya is the cream of vast ocean like literature of Ayurved .¹ Ashtang Hridaya is one of the most elaborated & most often studied treatise on Indian medicine after Charak & Susrut Samhita the most authoritative. Ashtang Hridaya is strictly rational treatise & deal with exclusively with the principles & practices of Medicine. The purpose of this classic appears to be bring together the relevant medical knowledge contained in Charak & Susrut Samhita. It is perfect example of 8 branches of Ayurved authoritative printed back on ancient medicine. With its beauty & brevity of poetical composition, sequential arrangement of topics, clear description of precepts & practices of medical science & many other merits, it has earned its rightful place as among the Brahatrayi. ² Ashtang Hridaya is compilation of all the samhitas available anciently like charak, sushrut etc moreover every topic is explained adequately neither briefly nor too short to understand³.

KEYWORDS:

Ashtang Hridaya , Ayurved, Charak Samhita, Susrut Samhita, Sutasthana.

INTRODUCTION

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INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda is not merely the system of medicine but the science of life with its approach towards the Purusha & good health of society also. The ancient Acharays, seers of truth, discovered truth by means of religious practices & disciplines They practiced intense meditation & had everything 'divine &

pure' in their lives. The ocean of knowledge they left behind in the form of word for us, which we called as *veda*, is fruit of this discipline. *Ayurveda* which has emerged from these *vedas*, is fine blend of science, religion, philosophy & spiritually as well.

As earlier told ocean of knowledge they left, *Samhitas* are the part & parcel of that. *Brahatrayi* & *Laghutrayi* are the major *Ayurvedic* classics which are available to gain *Ayurved* knowledge. *Ashtang Hrudaya* is treatise of which major portion of text being devoted to *kayachikitsa* (Medicine). At beginning of the treatise, in each chapter of every section *Vagbhat* stated that he is going to describe only such information as has been revealed by great sages like *Atreya*.⁴ Collecting only cream of knowledge from numerous text (written by sages) scattered in country this text *Ashtang Hrudaya* has been prepared which is neither too brief nor to elaborate.⁵

STRUCTURE & CONTENT OF ASHTANG HRUDAYA

Ashtang Hridaya consists of six *Sthana* (section). Each *Sthana* contain varying numbers of chapters. The total chapters of this *Samhita* are with 7448 Sholaks (Verse).⁶ This *Samhita* is written in poetry manner. *Ashtang Hridaya* has the signal honour of having highest number of commentary than any other than

Ayurved Samhita. There are 34 commentaries are known, among these some are either lost, available partly or remaining in manuscripts form in the liabries of India & other countries. Only six are available in print in which one is complete and others are partly available. The only commentary available print is *Sarvangasunder* by *Arundatta*. Another one which is written by *Hemadri* is known as *Ayurveda Rasayana* but is in incomplete form. Many translations of *Ashtang Hrudaya* were published in almost all of the Indian languages, an English translation is also appears authored by *Dr.K.R.Srikanthmurthy* and *Dr.Balusu Sitaram*.

The six *sthana* (sections) are as follows

- A) *Sutrasthana* (30chapter),
- B) *Shareer sthana* (06chapter)
- c) *Nidana sthana* (16chapter)
- D) *Chikitsa sthana* (22chapter)
- E) *Kalpasiddhi sthana* (06chapters)
- F) *Uttaratantra* (40 chapters).

Sutrasthana:

Sutrasthana comprises of 30 chapters with 1598 verses. Out of all treatises ancient times, *Vagbhat's* *Sutrasthana* is considered to be one of the

best *Sutrasthana*.⁷ *Sutrasthana* itself specifies its meaning collection of words with wider meaning with short words without any harm to the subject. Most of important subject (literature) is described in the form of *Sutra* in the *Sutrasthana*. First chapter is deals with history of *Ayurved*, basic principles of *Ayurved* & health. Next few chapters are concerned with dietary ethics & preventive measures. It includes *Dincharya* (daily regimen), *Rutucharya* (seasonal regimen) & source of food, prevention of food contamination & limits of food intake. All the principles of health are described to achieve the first objective of *Ayurveda* i.e maintain & promote positive health of healthy individuals.⁸ Qualities of urine of different animals are not described extensively. Qualities of honey are included under the *Ekshuvarga* (Cane juice). Chapter ninth & tenth concerned with principles of pharmacology. For the first time in *Brahatrasyi* definition of *Vipaka* is described elegantly. *Valipanchmula* & *Kantakamula* are not contributed in *Ashtangh Hridaya* which is speciality of *Ashtangh*

Sangraha. Chapter eleventh to fourteenth is described in context to body humours (*Vata*, *Pitta*, *Kapha*). It explains the normal function, cause of vitiation & treatment of *Dosha*. Description of inter mutual relationship between *Dosha* & *Dhatu* is speciality of *Ashtangh Hridaya*. Vaghbhat is first author who named five types of *Kapha Dosha* along with how *Pachaka Pitta* plays its role is clarified. *Panchakarma* related descriptions are found in next six chapters. These all six are particularly concerned with *Panchakarma*. Four types of *Sweda* & seven types of *Sadya Snehan* are described for the first time. Various treatment therapies are elaborately described for different disease according to their site. *Dhuampanvidhi*(medicated smoke), *kaval* & *Gandusha*(gargling liquids) are the example of treatment therapy. The diseases which required surgery are described along with instrument used for it are stated at the last of *Sutrasthana*. Along with all the Surgical instruments in *Yantra Shatsras* chapters ‘*Shalyanirdhatini Nadi* & *Ashmariharan Yantra* are specified.

DISCUSSION

Unlike *Ashtang Sangraha* this treatise is entirely versified, the verse often reminding strongly of the verse portion of *Ashtang Sangraha*. The *Ashtang Sangraha*

was prepared from eight fold medical lore, as ambrosia was obtained from churning the great ocean. Then in order to help the student incapable of great effort, this

treatise was separately prepared on the basis of that elaborate work. The work probably crystallized for the first time the concept of three *Dosha* in Indian medicine, although the thought structure is as old as *Rigveda* both *Charak* & *Susrut Samhita* formulate elaborate theories pertaining to it. This treatise gives, at very commencement a clear & simple

framework for the *Dosha* concept as involved in disease & medicine. The relationship between six *rasa* (taste) & *Dosha* in treatment also mentioned. Although a Buddhist in general outlook, *Vagbhata* freely recommends meat as an article of food & extols the merits of alcoholic liquors. This treatise is devoid of references to opium, pulse examination.

CONCLUSION

Ashtang Hridaya explains that this work is called the “*Hridayam* (Heart)” in the sense of essence or core of all *Ayurvedic* lore. It has largest number of Commentaries as compare to early *Ayurvedic* treatise. This work is compilation of information, explanation & prescription to be found in *Charak* & *Susrut Samhita*. There is little that can be

described as original. But the value of the work is undoubtedly great, for it has neatly collected the essential details from two great classics of *Ayurveda*, which are to an extent rambling & discursive. Finally it is concluded that *Ashtang Hridaya* is merely an abridgement of *Ashtang Sangraha*.

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