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CONTRIBUTION OF ANCIENT AYURVEDA TEXTS IN *AGANDA TANTRA*:

A REVIEW

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Abstract

Agada tantra is branch of Ayurveda toxicology under the heading of *Ashtang* Ayurveda which encompasses science of poisons. The *Agada tantra* or ancient toxicology mainly founded by *Kashyapa* who was the great saint of ancient time. The disciple of *Kashyapa* was treated as royal *Vaidyas* since they used to saves life of royal family members from the poisonous conditions. The traditional practice of toxicology is done by *Vishavaidyas* who were considered experts in toxicology. This branch deals with types of toxic substances, their effects on body and management of poisoning conditions. Ayurveda advocated uses of many antidotes against the symptoms of poisoning resulting from the insects, snakes, spiders and rodents bites, etc. The information about poisons and their management carried forward from the ancient time and knowledge has been updated time by time. Considering this fact present article put an emphasis on contribution of ancient ayurveda texts towards the evolution of *Aganda tantra*. This article summarized key points of Ayurveda *Samhitas* W.S.R. to *Aganda tantra*.

Key-Words: *Ayurveda, Agada tantra, Samhitas, Toxicology*

Introduction

Aganda Tantra is stream of Ayurveda which explained *Visha chikitsa* and deals with management of poisoning conditions. This branch described effects of several types of poisons originating from birds, animals, insects, plants and synthetic chemical, etc. This branch also mentioned clinical perspective of water and environmental pollution [1-3]. *Agada tantra* described different types of poisons as depicted in **Figure 1**.

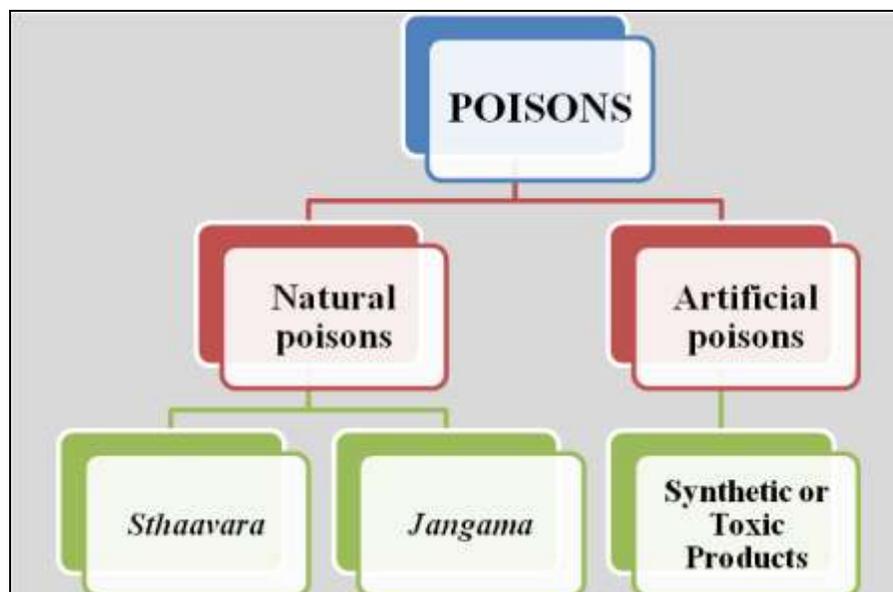


Figure 1: Different types of poisons

The Ayurveda *Samhitas* also described various aspects related to the toxicology branch. Ayurveda texts encompasses details about the qualities of poisons, their biological effects and treatment of poisons including properties of antidote and various therapeutic measures to combat against chronic poisoning symptoms.

Ayurveda also mentioned poisoning of incompatible *Ahara* and its treatment. The right and wrong food, physical appearance, likes and dislikes related to the *Ahara* are given in detail in third chapter of *Ashtaanga Hridaya*. The accumulation of morbid *Doshas* and *Mala* acts as toxins and *Ama* itself produces noxious effects thus Ayurveda elaborated clinical view related to the external toxins as well as internal elements that can act as toxins in some specific circumstances. Ayurveda texts also encompass term *Gara* for specific poison which occurs due to the mere combination of non-poisonous substances [3-5].

The *Vedic* system possesses some information related to the poison and their treatment and spiritual therapy was recommended strongly at that time to fight against poison. *Samhita* came in practice in later stage and elaborated description of different aspects of Ayurveda toxicology with the development of other branches of Ayurveda.

The ancient text mainly categorizes *Samhita* into two types; *Brihatrayee* and *Laghutrayee*. The broad and wide informative texts such as; *Charak Samhita*, *Sushrut Samhita* and *Ashtang Hridaya* comes under the heading of *Bruhatrayee* while *Madhav Nidana*, *Sharangdhar Samhita* and *Bhavprakash* comes under the heading of *Laghutrayee*. The *Brihatrayee* as well as *Laghutrayee* both contains details about the toxins and their management.

The *Charak*, *Sushrut* and *Ashtang Hridaya* described key aspects of *Visha-UpaVisha* in separate manner as well as part of rationale therapy. The *Laghutrayee* like *Sharangdhar Samhita* also presented description of *Agadtantra* as Ayurveda toxicology in scattered manner. These all Ayurveda texts mentioned various information related to the poisons including definition and classification of *Visha*, *Shodhana of Visha*, *Upvisha*, effects of *Visha*, formulations of *Visha-UpaVisha* and treatment of poisoning, etc [5-7].

➤ ***Kashyap***

Agada tantra anciently originated from the school of toxicology founded by *Kashyapa*, The knowledge about poisons and their management circulated by *Kashyapa* followed by his disciples to serve the humanity. The *Vishavaidyas* originated from school of *Kashyapa* scattered all around and saved many lives. The *Vishavaidyas* also used to administer poison to their kings enemies in ancient time. The different families of *Vishavaidyas* specialists in toxicology served in war also to save lives from the bite of poisonous animals in forest area especially.

Kashyapa Samhita contains information regarding several *Agadas* such as; *Dashanga agada* and *Narkesadi dhoopana*, etc. The uses of these *Agadas* were also mentioned in conditions of *Jangama visha*. However *Kasyapa samhita* does not contain any chapter that directly deals with *Jangama visha*.

➤ **Charak Samhita**

Acharya Charaka has given prime importance to *Visha* and disease originated from *Visha*. In this regards *Acharya Charaka* included one separate chapter for describing symptoms and treatment of conditions arises due to the *Visha* (23rd chapter of *Chikitsa sthan*). *Acharya Charaka* has described *Utpatti, Vega, Guna* and *Lakshana* of *Visha* along with its treatment options. *Charak Samhita* contains classification; symptoms and treatment of various types of *Keeta visha*. *Charaka Samhita* also encompasses details about *Dooshivisha* that it vitiates *Rakta dhatu* and may produces skin manifestations like *Arunshika* and *Kitibha*, etc. *Acharya Charaka* has mentioned the treatment of *Dushivisha* present in *Rakta* with the help of *Raktamokshana*. The *Raktamokshana* was mentioned for treating *Dushivisha* as given in *Brihatrayee grantha*.

Acharya Charak in *Vimana Sthan* chapter three described role of *Vayu, Desha, Kala* and *Jala* in *Janpadodhvansa Rogas*, here some references mentioned that can be correlated to the environmental poisons as per the modern science. *Charaka* explained effects of *Vikrutvayu* and *Vishdushit vayu*. *Charaka* described role of *Panchkarma* therapy in the management of environmental poisons. *Vamana, Virechana, Niruha* and *Anuvasanam*, etc. were mentioned as treatment options against poisons.

Acharya Charak described *Rasayan* therapy for reducing effect of chronic or delayed poison. He also mentioned some fuming process to detoxify environments and environmental poisons (*Chikitsa sthan* 23rd chapter).

Charak Samhita described anti-toxic effects of herbs against the environmental poisons. Yellow Mustard, *Chandana, Kusthha*, flower of *Shirisha, Usheer, Tejpatra, Guggula, Bhallatak* and white *Aparajita*, etc. were mentioned as fuming agent that helps to detoxify toxins.

➤ **Susruta Samhita**

Susruta Samhita also described many important information related to the *Visha* and their therapeutic management. *Acharya Susruta* incorporated one section of eight chapters for toxicology branch as '*Kalpa Sthana*'. The description of *Keeta visha* was

mentioned in eight chapter of *Kalpa Sthana* including classification, symptoms and treatment of *Keeta visha*.

Acharya Sushruta has mentioned *Swedana Karma* followed by *Vaman & Virechana Karma* in the management of *Dushivisha* as first line of treatment, however here consideration of *Dosha* predominance also suggested before initiating *Visha-Chikitsa*. Furthermore use of *Agadapaan* (anti-toxic drug) like *Dushivishari Agada* was advised along with honey after the *Shodhan* procedure.

➤ ***Astanga hridaya***

Vridha vagbhata compiled the description of *Keeta visha* mentioned in *Charaka* and *Susruta Samhita*. *Vagbhata* systematically presented separate chapters regarding the *Visha* especially *Keeta visha*. The 37th chapter of *Uttara sthana* in *Astanga hridaya* contained information about the symptoms and treatment of different types of *Keeta dansha*. The 43rd chapter also contains similar descriptions along with other information.

➤ ***Bhel Samhita***

Bhel Samhita mentioned *Visha dushta* conditions in the 18th chapter of *Sutra Sthana*. Here *Visha dushta* conditions such as; *Vastra* or *Aavarana*, etc. were mentioned with reference to the *Visha*, however this text not described any chapter related to the *Jangama visha* [7-10].

Conclusion

Agada tantra anciently described by *Kashyapa* and the practitioner who followed *Kashyapa's* toxicology known as *Vishavaidyas* and disclosed several information related to the *Agada tantra*. The basis of *Agada tantra* mainly established by *Kashyapa* and his school of toxicology also contributed greatly. *Acharya Charaka* put prime focus on *Visha* and diseases originated from the *Visha* along with their treatment options. *Acharya Charaka* in 23rd chapter of *Chikitsa sthan* mentioned symptoms and treatment of *Visha*. *Charak Samhita* described *Utpatti*, *Vega* and *Lakshana* of *Visha* and treatment of *Keeta visha*. *Susruta Samhita* encompasses the description of *Keeta visha* in eight chapter of *Kalpa Sthana*, here classification, symptoms and treatment of *Keeta visha* was elaborated.

Vagbhata presented separate chapters regarding the *Keeta visha*, the information mainly abstracted from the *Charak* and *Susruta Samhita*. *Bhel Samhita* mentioned *Visha dushta* conditions in the 18th chapter of *Sutra Sthana*. The ancient Ayurveda texts contributed greatly towards the development of *Agada tantra*.

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