

Agadatantra (Ayurvedic Toxicology): The Most Potent Source of Knowledge

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Agadatantra is mentioned as the 6th branch of the 8 branches of Ayurveda [1]. It is mentioned as the branch of Ayurveda where a vivid discussion is done about the different types of Bisha (poison) with special reference to their character, signs-symptoms and treatment [2]. Detail study of this branch of Ayurveda reflects that, it is rich with a number of valuable information's not only about the poisons but also about other fields like emergency medicine, diagnosis of critical state of the patient, criminal psychology, procedure of examination and re-examination of the persons suspected to be involved in crime, signs - symptoms and management of poisoning with different types of poisons, diagnosis of death etc.

Following is a brief description of the mark able and interesting things in relation to Ayurvedic Toxicology -

- [1] Need of protection of the kings from poison /harmful substances
- [2] An expert physician with a number of prescribed qualities should be appointed as the in charge of the royal kitchen [4].

- [3] The royal kitchen should be constructed at the prescribed direction and there should be provision of free air movement (door, window etc.). Sufficient space, place for keeping the necessary utensils etc. should be there. Even the need of fly, insect and mosquito proof net is mentioned [5]
- [4] The servants of the royal kitchen should be examined and interviewed thoroughly for a number of good qualities and they should be trained on the rules of personal hygiene (like cleanliness, cutting of nails, hairs, beards etc.). There is need of health examination of the workers of the kitchen time to time [6].]
- [5] The in charge of the royal kitchen should know to study the behavior of the workers in relation to their speech, behavior and appearance for detection of them to get involvement in any type of crime (Bishadana) [7].
- [6] If there is suspicion of involvement of any of the workers of the kitchen in any type of crime (Bishadana) then he/she should be detained

- and re-examined to avoid the chance of punishment to the innocents as some of the persons show abnormal behavior on facing an unexpected situation though not involved in the crime [8].
- [7] Poison can be given by using medias (vehicles) like food, drink, tooth brush (tooth paste), massage oils, comb etc. which are the daily usable for everyone [9].
- [8] Since there is chance of using poison with the aim to cause harm to the kings hence each substance to be used should be examined with reference to it's colour, consistency, smell, taste, sense on touch, behavior of birds, animals, fly, insect etc. (by offering them some quantity). The test for not having poison should be done by inspection, touch, testing a small quantity etc. Remedial measures including medicine should always be kept ready [10].
- [9] Classification of the poisons , their sources (plants, minerals, animals, reptiles etc.), special selter of the active toxic principle (root, flower, bark, gum, resin, leaf etc.), effects on exposure, 10 qualities, mode of action with special reference to the qualities, concept of slow poisoning with signs-symptoms and treatment are indicative of the minute observation of the ancient scholars [11].
- [10] Detail discussion on the poisons originated from the animals, reptiles etc. [12].
- [11] Use of poison against the enemy during war time through water, soil (on the road, war field, holy places etc. to induce suffering to the animals and humans), air etc. along with their character, signs and symptoms on the exposed human and animals with remedial measures [13].
- [12] Diagnosis of terminal state of a patient of poisoning and death like no haemorrhage on application of incision, absence of vital reaction on beating with a creeper or stick, no reaction on spraying cold water on the body etc. and also the signs and symptoms of snake bite with fatal envenomation [14].
- [13] A detail description of the snake with a concept of divine snake and terrestrial snake along with their number, character, cause of bite, character of poisonous and non-poisonous snake bites, signs and symptoms of different types of snakebite (includes physical appearance, change of the skin, teeth, gums, stool , urine etc.) [15].
- [14] 24 Treatment procedures of poisonous snakebite including application of tourniquet, excision, external application of medicines etc. The most unique, controversial and thought provoking concepts are - shunting of verses (mantra), application of fresh meat on incisions applied on the vertex of the patient , use of some medicines and procedures that are said to have the potency to help a patient to regain the lost life (mritasanjeevana) [16].
- [15] A chapter is dedicated for description of the remedial measures for the situation of mass poisoning when the soil, air and water of a huge area become poisoned and causes death and suffering of a huge number of population. It is a matter of astonishment that description of some antidotes (Agada) are available that are advised to apply even on the musical orchestra, flag, gate etc. to prevent and treat poisoning in some situations [17].
- [16] Detail description of the small poisonous creatures like rodents, insects, scorpions, spiders, frogs, fishes etc. are also very interesting and thought provoking [18].

Charaka Samhita and Susruta Samhita are the main sources of Ayurvedic system of medicine. In later period Bagbhata wrote two books, Ashtanga Hridaya and Ashtanga Sangraha where the concepts of Charaka and Susruta are mentioned elaborately with explanation . In some references he also added some concepts which can easily be explained with the concepts of the former ones .

Detail analytical study of the concepts of poisons may explore many valuable facts on not only Toxicology but also on general medicine, specially

applicable in the situations like COVID-19 pandemic.

A special attention on study and research of the Agada Tantra (Ayurvedic Toxicology) from the concerned authorities may prove to be a boon to the entire human society.

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