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Editor's Note:

The today's feature article entitled " **VAGBHATA - THE RENOWNED PHYSICIAN-SURGEON**" is edited and compiled by Dr. Neha Dave. We are publishing a series of articles on the great scholars of Ayurveda. This is the fourth in the series. This will provide ample informations on the distinguished scientists of Ayurveda of ancient India. We hope that our valued readers will enjoy reading different aspect of holistic health in every issue of AyurvedaNews.

Do enjoy reading AyurvedaNews. Each issue contains new information and new articles. We invite your views and ideas on the subject matter and content of our feature articles. Our wish is to help you and for this we need your input to help us to serve you. So please keep us posted with your views, ideas and preferences.

Dr. Kotecha's Visit to USA, COLOMBIA, FRANCE & GERMANY:

Dr. Rajesh Kotecha, M.D. (Ayurveda), CEO of Chakrapani Ayurveda, India will be visiting **USA, COLOMBIA, FRANCE & GERMANY** from March 28 to May 28th, 2008. He is again invited to give lectures, Panchakarma therapy, consultations and conduct workshops. We invite our visitors from above countries to attend any of his events to be organized during above said period. To get the details of his travel and to register for an appointment with him, kindly call / contact at below country specific addresses.

His program for the lectures, workshops, personal consultations and Panchakarma at different places is as below:

USA:

Mar 28 till Apr 03 2008 - Garry & Sun LLC, 3195 Mill Street, Reno, Nevada 89502 - call Karen 8266004
April 04 till 2008 -Apr 11 2007 - Omaha Healing Arts Center, Omaha, NE 68102- Sandy 402 3455078
Apr 12 - Apr 13 2008 - Des Moines Iowa - Call Gary at 775 530 9942
Apr 14 - Apr 16 2008- Villas Spa, Atlanta Georgia Contact Gary at 775 530 9942

Colombia: April 17th to April 29th - contact Ms. Gisele Dupuis De Moure at 635 4579 or 315 779 4421 or email at gdupuis@cable.net.co

Germany: May 18th to May 21st - Contact Dr. Ramin Mobasseri at 0049 16094469184 or email at health@gmx.net

France: May 22nd to May 28th - Contact Mr. Fernand at 0033 5 56 95 95 23 or email at sietpa@free.fr

Testimonial on our Ayurveda Training & treatment programs

Dear Dr Kotecha and Dr Neha,

Greetings from Korea! We arrived home about a week ago, after a long delay in Tokyo. It is much much colder in Korea, impossible to go out of the house with just a woolen blanket(!), but, mercifully, the apartment is warm.

I have warm memories of Jaipur, and it is much more so now because of my association with you and the Chakrapani institute. I am rather fond of everyone there, especially the two of you, who are establishing the centre into an excellent professional place for training and treatment, with a special touch of kindness, warmth, openness, and humane consideration.

I hope to see you again in December, when Roger and I will be back for a translation conference.

Our very best regards to you both and to Manish and Ajay,

Nameste
Zubaidah and Roger, South Korea

(Many thanks Zubaidah and Roger for wonderful words about us)

Kindly visit us at <http://learnayurveda.com/> for more information on our Ayurveda training programs.

Feature Article: VAGBHATA - THE RENOWNED PHYSICIAN-SURGEON

VAGBHATA - THE RENOWNED PHYSICIAN-SURGEON

He who indulges daily in healthy food and activities , who discriminates between good and bad and acts accordingly, who is not attached too much to the worldly affairs , who develops the habit of charity, considering all as equal, truthfulness, pardoning and keeping company of good persons become free from diseases.

BACKGROUND

Vagbhata , according to ancient Indian medical tradition is one of the three great medical authorities

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(Vridhdha Trayi or old Triad), the other two being Atreya and Sushruta. His position in Indian medicine has been described as analogous to that of Galen in the medieval medicine of the west.

While in ancient times the two medical treatise namely Astanga Sangraha and Astanga Hrudaya Samhita were said to have been composed by Vagbhata, since the start of the present century some controversy and confusion has arisen as to whether there was only one Vagbhata who composed both the work or there were two Vagbhatas, the elder and the younger who composed them. Prominent foreign orientologists and some of the Indians also believe that there were two Vagbhata. They do so on the basis of a passage in Astanga Hrudaya, which clearly states that this treatise was based on earlier treatise namely Astanga Samgraha whose author was another older Vagbhata. The Scholars who believe that here was only one Vagbhata, author of both the works, base their opinion on the logic that the ancient medical tradition and medieval commentators of these treatises accept one author for both of them. Better exposition and more mature views evident in Astanga Hrudaya, they say are due to the fact that the former work was composed by the author when he was much older, more experienced and capable of framing his own views instead of totally depending on the earlier writers. Besides that the author takes verses from Astanga Sangraha in verbatim and inserts them into Astanga Hrudaya, while references about Charaka and Sushruta Samhita, he mentions in his own language. Whatever future investigations may show, at present here seems to be no indisputable and adequate evidence to suggest that there were two different Vagabhatas as authors of the above two medical treatises.

Astanga Sangraha as well as Astanga Hrudaya describe that Vagbhata was the son of Simhagupta and he was born in the country of Sindhu, the area around the course of river Indus. He studied under a Buddhist teacher named Avalokita. In Astanga Hrudaya, the prayer at the beginning of each section seems to be addressed to the Buddha but various commands regarding the worship of gods, cows, Brahmanas, elders, physicians, kings, guests as well as the recommendations regarding the performance of proprietary rites, however, show Vedic influence. It is believed that Vagbhata though a Vedic Brahmana by birth, was influenced considerably by the teachings of Gautama Buddha and later in life adopted Buddhism as his religion. Though the time when Vagbhata flourished cannot be stated with any certainty yet the consensus of opinion is to place him and the two treatises somewhere between the end of the sixth and the end of the seventh centuries. Tibetan, Chinese and Arabian sources lend support this view.

CONTRIBUTIONS

Astanga Sangraha:

Astanga Sangraha is still studied all over India, more so in the South. It is composed in a combination of verse and prose form and gathers up into a harmonious whole the more or less conflicting medical systems current at the time, particularly those contained in the Charaka and Sushruta Samhitas. It, however, does contain much independent material also. Besides its inherent worth it has great value in verifying as well as supplementing the above two text.

Divided into six sections it contains a total of 150 chapters. Analysis of its contents gives a fair idea as to what comprised Ayurvedic medicine during those ancient times. In the first section on the Practice of Medicine, it describes the initiation of students, longevity and the methods of attaining it daily and seasonal observances, origin of diseases, properties of different food articles such as rice meat, herbs, fruits, characteristics of poisoned food, treatment after having taken poisoned food, precautions to be observed by the kings, incompatibility in food, personal hygiene, drugs and their subdivisions, collection, composition, taste, strength, qualities and actions of medicinal substances, emetic and astringent drugs, three humors Vata, Pitta and Kapha and their derangement, various diseases, examination of the patient, principles of treatment, snuffs, fumigants, gargles, treatment of eye diseases with soothing application and eye drops, venesection, extraction of foreign bodies, caustics, cautery and their uses.

Second section mainly on human anatomy describes the anatomy of pregnancy and foetus, management of difficult labour and diseases of pregnancy, anatomy of human body, vascular system, vital parts of the body, nature of man, different types of men and their characteristics, abnormal characters, prognosis. Third section describes causes and pathology of various conditions such as fever, hemorrhage, asthma, phthisis, delirium, tremors, piles, diarrhea, retention of urine, diabetes, deep-seated abscesses, abdominal diseases, anemia's, leprosy, skin diseases and diseases of the nervous system. Fourth section is on purgation and vomiting. Fifth and the last section describes management of children and their treatment, superhuman influences and diseases caused by them and their treatment, treatment of insanity, epilepsy, various diseases of the eyes including blindness and inflammation, diseases of the ear, nose, mouth, head, ulcers, wounds, fractures, fistulae, glandular enlargements, minor diseases, diseases of the genital organs, treatment of poisoning, snake, insect, spider and mouse bites, antidotes, rejuvenation and

the use of aphrodisiacs.

ASTANGA HRUDAYA

Astanga Hrudaya Samhita, in 120 chapters and divided into six sections, quotes Charaka, Sushruta, Bhela, Nimi, Kashyapa, Dhanvantari and other earlier authors and their works. The chief source, however, is Astanga Sangraha. It presents lucid description of the whole of Ayurvedic medicine with special reference to surgery as given in Sushruta Samhita. It does not mention the use of opium, pulse, feeling and other metallurgical processes.

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Interesting Health News:

Garlic effective in treating arsenic poisoning: Study

Garlic, known for centuries to keep vampires and bad spirits at bay, may now help Indians ward off arsenic poisoning. An animal study, involving rats, conducted by scientists from the Indian Institute of Chemical Biology in Kolkata, has found evidences to prove that garlic helps fight arsenic poisoning, caused by drinking contamination groundwater.

The six-member team, headed by Dr. Keya Chaudhuri, observed rats for five days during which time they were administered daily doses of garlic and arsenic, equivalent to the levels found in groundwater in India and Bangladesh.

Scientists then found that rats who consumed garlic extracts had 40% less arsenic in their blood and liver and also passed 45% more arsenic in their urine. Chaudhuri told TOI: "Garlic proved effective because it is rich in sulphur, which scavenged arsenic from tissues and blood."

According to the team, the 100 million people living in UP, Bihar, Jharkhand, West Bengal, Assam, Arunachal, Manipur and Tripura besides Bangladesh that have high quantities of arsenic in the groundwater, should eat one to three cloves of garlic per day as a way to minimize arsenic's poisonous effects.

Chaudhuri said: "When we mixed garlic extracts, rich in sulphur, with sodium arsenite in the lab, we saw that within 24 hours, the arsenic contents from the mixture precipitated completely. That's when we decided to test garlic extracts in human cell lines and in rats."

Rajdeep Chowdhury from the team added: "This finding should immensely help Indians and Bangladeshis who are worst affected by arsenic contamination of drinking water. It's natural, makes food tasty when added, and has no side-effects. Those living in the arsenic-contaminated belts of India must immediately increase garlic consumption."

The team has reported its study, "In vitro and in vivo reduction of sodium arsenite induced toxicity by aqueous garlic extract", in the latest issue of the journal 'Food and Chemical Toxicology.'

The Study says more than 70 million in Bangladesh and West Bengal are exposed to in-organic arsenic compounds through drinking water and are suffering from its chronic or acute toxic effects. This has led the International Agency for Research on Cancer to classify arsenic as a group 1 human carcinogen.

"The beneficial health properties of garlic, a major component of Asian diets, its antioxidant activities, accredited to the biologically active sulphur-bearing compounds encouraged us to look into its anti-arsenic activities. Garlic was found to have an overwhelming inhibitory activity over arsenic induced toxicity. The observations from lab experiments portrayed that garlic reduces arsenic induced cytotoxicity. Tests on rats also corroborate the therapeutic efficacy of garlic over arsenic."

"Garlic can be given as a dietary supplement to human exposed to environmental toxicants. Further studies are being initiated for the choices of appropriate dose, duration of treatment and possible effects on major organs," the study adds.

It is estimated that 57 million people are drinking groundwater with arsenic concentrations higher than WHO's standard of 10 parts per billion. Arsenic increases the risk of cancer of the lung, skin, bladder, liver, kidney and prostate.

Source: The Times of India

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