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Review Article

TADVIDYA-SAMBHASHA IN BRIHATTRAYI

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ABSTRACT

Ayurveda is an ancient science of life which has prevailed through numerous centuries. Any science gradually evolves since its first inception. *Ayurveda* differs from other branches of science as it is said to *anadi* and *shashvata* which is discussed in three major classics viz. *Brihatrayi* which include *Charak-Samhita*, *Sushrut-Samhita* and classics of *Vagbhata*. One may draw a conclusion that every *Ayurvedic* principle was already conceived by *Acharyas*. After going through the classical texts of *Ayurveda*, we find a number of *tadvidya-sambhasha* i.e. seminars and symposia mentioned in them. Most of these symposia start form a genuine query regarding hype or concept. Almost all the seminars and symposia are completed with a concluding remark by Lord *Atreya* in case of *Charak-Samhita* and Lord *Kashiraj Divodas Dhanvantari* in case of *Sushrut-Samhita*. Thus, we may say that the science of *Ayurveda* exists from the beginning of universe but various scientific discussions by *Ayurvedic* scholars took place resulting flourishing the science of *Ayurveda* and giving it the present status as a science of life.

Keywords: Seminars, Symposia, *tadvidya-Sambhasha*, *Ayurveda*, *Samhita*, *Atreya*, *Dhanvantari*, *Parishad*.

INTRODUCTION

All the streams of science have been evolved as a process of continuous development. This includes teaching, research as well as sharing of thoughts through various conferences, seminars and symposia. Many scholars around the world experiment on various subjects of their interest and then they share the results obtained and inferences drawn through publication and seminars. Thus, we may say that each science requires such collaboration and discussion sessions arranged by the subject experts. In case of *Ayurveda* also, various scholars contributed for the growth of this science through careful observation of nature¹. They shared these chunks of knowledge through various gatherings and scholarly discussion meetings i.e. *tadvidya-sambhasha* of various sages e.g. *Atreya Punarvasu*, *Bharadvaja*, *Kashyapa* etc. Those sages or we may say scientists of ancient India came together on various occasions for scholarly discussions and each one gave their opinion regarding the topic of discussion. In this article, the seminars and symposia mentioned in classical *Ayurvedic* texts are discussed with special reference to their motives, various opinions of participants, outcome or conclusion and certain hidden facts regarding these seminars.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The major classics viz. *Charak-Samhita* and *Sushrut-Samhita* have description of various *tadvidya-sambhasha* i.e. seminars and symposia that took place in ancient era. Thus, those classics are searched with their respective commentaries to understand and analyse the ancient concept of seminars and symposia.

Review of seminars and symposia

The literary meaning of the word *tadvidya-sambhasha* is scholarly discussion between two or more subject experts which is correlated with modern seminars and symposia. First of all we must know the exact meaning and definitions of the words seminar and symposia as per the lingual sources such as dictionaries and encyclopaedias. A conference is a formal meeting of people with a shared interest, typically taking place over several days². Seminar is a conference or other meeting for discussion or training or a small group of students at university, meeting to discuss topics with a teacher³. Symposium is a conference or meeting to discuss a particular academic or specialist subject⁴. All these three share similar concern i.e. analysis of a new or established concept through a series of scientific discussions. The various seminars that are mentioned in *Ayurvedic* classics shall be explored and analysed in such a way that one can identify which one of them is a seminar or conference etc.

The oldest of the classical treatise on *chikitsa*, *Charak-Samhita* contains 7 such symposia in total. *Sushrut-Samhita* contains one such symposium, while later treatises *Ashtang-Samgraha* and *Ashtang-Hridayam* contain no such description of symposia. Hence, only *Charak-Samhita* and *Sushrut-Samhita* are to be referred to understand the *Ayurvedic* concept of conference, seminars and symposia. The symposia mentioned in these classics are as follows;

Seminars and symposia in *Charak-Samhita*

1) *Ayurvedavatarana Parishad*⁵:-

The location for this conference is mentioned as a beautiful region somewhere in Himalayan mountain range. The main aim of this conference was to find out a solution for the diseases that originated

in all the living beings after end of *Satayuga*. Also, these diseases caused disturbance in the daily routine of the sages too. Thus they thought it to be necessary to find out a solution to bring end to this menace. There were many participants in this conference like the sage *Angira*, *Jamadagni*, *Vasishtha* etc. The *Charak-Samhita* namely mentions 53 sages with a remark that there were many more which are not mentioned by name. These sages gathered in the Himalayan mountain range and started discussion that health is the root of virtuous acts, acquirement of wealth, gratification of desire and final emancipation. Diseases are destroyers of health, well being and life. This has manifested itself as a great obstacle in the way of human life. What could be its remedy? - With this end in view, they entered meditation. Then, in their vision they found a saviour in *Indra* and got an assurance to the effect that he-the lord of the Gods would explain the proper way to counteract the disease.

Who should go to the abode of Lord *Indra* to ask the remedy of the ailments? The sage *Bharadvaja* said that he be appointed for this work. Accordingly, as deputed by the sages, he went to *Indra's* abode and saw *Indra*, the destroyer of *Bala* sitting in the midst of the gods and sages and glittering like fire. After having gone there, he, the wise one, paid his compliments to his victory and humbly conveyed the sacred message from the sages. Then lord *Indra*, considering the depth of wisdom expounded the science of life to the sage in brief.

2) *Vatakalakaliya Parishad*⁶:-

The location for this particular symposium is not mentioned in the text. The main aim of this symposium was to know about the good and bad properties of *Vata* mainly. But the later discussion also throws light on the properties and actions of *Pitta* and *Kapha* also. Thus, overall the topic of discussion was to know the good and bad properties and functions of *Tridosha*. There were total 8 participants in this symposium including *Acharya Punarvasu Atreya*. As the symposium started, all the sages proposed the following questions for discussion among themselves if what are the properties of *Vata*?, What does aggravate the *Vata*?, What are the factors for its alleviation?, How do the aggravating and alleviating factors respectively aggravate or alleviate the *Vata* which is incorporeal and unstable and as such inaccessible? What are the actions in normal as well as in aggravated conditions of *Vata* which is situated both within and outside the body? Thus, total 8 questions were raised in the very beginning of the symposium.

Then as the symposium proceeded, the sages started to express their view and opinions as follows. *Kusha Sankrutayana* enumerated the properties of *Vata*. *Kumarashira Bharadvaja* described the causes of vitiation of *Vata*. *Balikh Bhishak Kankayana* described the causes of alleviation of *Vata*. *Badisha Dhamargava* described process of vitiation and alleviation of *Vata*. *Rajarshi Varyovida* described actions of normal *Vata* which is situated both within and outside the body. *Marichi* questioned *Varyovida* if his description is applicable for the purpose of medicine also? Then, *Varyovida* explained the utility of his description. Later on, *Marichi* described actions of normal *Pitta*. *Kapya* described actions of normal *Kapha*.

After having listened to *Kapya*, lord *Punarvasu Atreya* said that all the sages have dealt with the subject quite well except that they have not made any general statement on this topic. In fact, all the three *dhatus*, viz. *Vata*, *Pitta* and *Kapha* while they are in their natural state, help in bringing about the action of the sense faculties as well as strength, complexion, happiness and a very long life span in living beings. This was the presidential remark by *Acharya Punarvasu Atreya* which was welcomed by all the sages.

3) *Rashipurush evam rogotpattivishayak Parishad*⁷:-

The precise location of this symposium is also not given in the text. The aim of this symposium was to determine the origin of man – an aggregate of soul, senses, mind and objects and his diseases. First, *Kashiraja Vamaka* who was well versed in the science of medicine approached the assembly of sages with respect and asked if the

diseases also originate from the same source as man or not? At this, Lord *Punarvasu* directed the sages as to clarify the point raised by the King of *Kashi*. *Parikshi*, a descendant of *Mudgala* having examined it said that the living being originates from the soul and so the diseases. Next in the series, *Sharaloma* was with the view that the mind, not the soul, covered with *Rajas* and *Tamas* causes the body and the diseases. *Varyovida* did not agree with the *Sharaloma* and stated that living beings and diseases are caused by *Rasa*, product of digestion causing nutrition. *Hiranyaksha* was not in the favour of accepting *Rasa* as the origin of soul. Instead, he concluded that living beings as well as their diseases originate from six *dhatus*, viz. *Panchamahabhutas* and *Aatman*. *Kaushika* didn't agree with the above view of *Hiranyaksha* and stated that the parents are the root cause of living beings as well as diseases. Disagreeing with the above view, *Bhadrakapya* said that the all the living beings and their diseases originate from *Karman*. *Bharadvaja* refuted the arguments put forth by *Bhadrakapya* and concluded that *svabhava* is the root cause of the existence of living beings as well as diseases. Disagreeing with *Bharadvaja*, *Kankayana* said that *Prajapati*, the son of *Brahma* with his infinite creative powers will represent the origin of the happiness and misery of the world-sentient as well as insentient. *Bhikshu Atreya*, refuting the above view said that *Kala* is the cause of living beings as well as diseases.

During the course of this controversial discussion of the sages, Lord *Punarvasu* concluded that one should not enter into such a controversy, as it is difficult to arrive at truth by taking sides with its partial aspects. Those who consider the varying controversial aspects of the truth as established facts, go on moving around without reaching goal like a person sitting on the oil press. The very same factors, which, in the state of their wholesome combination, are responsible for the creation of living beings, in the state of their unwholesome combination are responsible for the various diseases.

4) *Rasa-ahara-vinishchayarth Parishad*⁸:-

The location of this symposium is mentioned as the pleasant woods of *Chaitraratha*. The participants in this symposium were *Atreya*, *Bhadrakapya*, *Shakunteya*, *Poornaksha Maudgalya*, *Hiranyaksha-Kaushika*, *Kumarshira-Bharadvaja*, the king *Varyovida*, *Nimi* the king of *Videha*, *Badisha*, *Kankayana* the best among the physicians of *Bahlka* (Balkh). They all sat together and then started discussing some of the vital problems relating to the *rasa* and diet. The main aim of this symposium appears to be to decide the number of *rasas*. All the participants except *Atreya* proposed their theories for the number of *rasas*. *Bhadrakapya* said there is only one *rasa* not different from *jalamahuta*. *Shakunteya Brahmana* said there are two *rasas*, nourishing and emaciating. *Poornaksh-Maudgalya* said there are three *rasas*, nourishing, emaciating and having both properties. *Hiranyaksha Kaushika* said there are four *rasas*, palatable and unpalatable both having wholesome and unwholesome properties. *Kumarashira Bharadvaja* said there are five *rasas*, *parthiva* etc. Royal sage *Varyovida* said there are six *rasas*, *Guru*, *laghu* etc. *Nimi* the king of *Videha* said there are seven *rasas*, sweet, sour, saline, pungent, bitter, astringent and alkaline. *Dhamargava Badisha* said there are eight *rasas*, above seven with imperceptible. Lastly, *Kankayana* the physician of *Bahlka* said there are innumerable *rasas* as the material substrata are innumerable. Then after listening to the various opinions put forward by all the sages, *Acharya Atreya* concluded that there are only 6 *rasas* which are sweet, sour, saline, pungent, bitter and astringent. Also, *Atreya* countered all the other opinions with solid logics. Later in the course of discussion, *Atreya* tried to explain the concept of *viruddhanna* with an example of fish and milk⁹. *Bhadrakapya* objected that and said all the fishes can be eaten along with milk except *Chilichima*¹⁰. *Atreya* again countered that and explained in detail the concept and examples of *viruddhanna*¹¹. After his detailed description, the symposium was concluded.

5) Garbhavkrantivishayak Parishad¹²:-

The location of this symposium is not mentioned clearly in the text. In the beginning, *Atreya* explains the process of formation of foetus and mentioned six factors responsible for its formation viz. mother, father, *aatman* (spirit), *satmya* (homologation), *rasa* (nourishment) and *satva* (mind). Another sage *Bharadvaja* refuted this theory and countered causality of all the factors one by one. *Atreya* with utter confidence restated the causality of all the factors and established the same with logical explanation. Then again *Bharadvaja* questions the theory proposed by *Atreya* by saying that if the embryo arises from the assemblage of various procreative factors, then how is it integrated? And if somehow it is integrated then how does it take the shape of man? And if man is man's offspring then why are those, sprung of idiotic, blind, hunch-backed, mute, dwarfish, lisping, deformed, insane etc. unlike the parents? All these questions were perfectly answered by *Atreya* and he proposed the theory that only those organs become defective, whose original representative part in the *beeja* (spermo-plasm) has been rendered defective. If there is no such potential defect, then there is no manifest deformity either. In the end, *Atreya* advises *Bharadvaja* that he should accept the conclusion and abandon all the doubt and concludes the discussion¹³.

6) Garbha angapatyanga nirvrittivishayak Parishad¹⁴:-

In this context, *Acharya Atreya* was asked by his disciple *Agnivesha* if which of the organs of the foetus is manifested first in the womb of the mother. Lord *Punarvasu Atreya* replied to *Agnivesha* that the manner in which the foetus is formed in the uterus of the mother and the mode of manifestation of its various organs are already described in the fourth chapter of *Sharira-sthana*, but, there are various types of controversies on such problems among all the sages who are authors in the subject. He enumerated those as follows; *Kumarshira Bharadvaja* observed that the head of the foetus is first manifested in the uterus it is the receptacle of all sense organs. According to *Kankayana*, the physician from *Bahlika*, heart being the receptacle of consciousness is first formed. According to *Bhadrapakya*, *Nabhi* is first formed as it serves as the means to providing nourishment to the foetus. According to *Bhadrasaunaka*, rectum located near the colon is first formed as this is the site for *vata*. According to *Badisha*, hands and feet are first formed being the instruments of the individual for his activities. According to *Janaka of Videha*, sense organs being the receptacles of senses are first formed. *Marichi Kashyapa* is of the view that it is not possible to make the statement about the first formation of any organs as they can't be observed directly. *Dhanvantari* is of the view that all the organs are formed simultaneously. The view of *Dhanvantari* was rendered correct by *Atreya* as all the organs like heart etc. are formed simultaneously.

7) Madanphaladivishayak Parishad¹⁵:-

This symposium is mentioned in *Siddhithana* of *Charak-samhita* by *Acharya Dridhabala*. The location of the symposium is not mentioned in the text. The main aim of the symposium was to resolve the dispute over the most useful ingredients from amongst *Madanaphala*, etc. for *asthapana-basti* and to determine the excellence of enema with these *Madana-phala*, etc. in specific ailments. The participants of this symposium were *Bhrigu*, *Kaushika*, *Kapya*, *Shaunaka*, *Pulastya* and *Asita Gautama* with *Punarvasu Atreya* as the president. At first, *Shaunaka* said that among the fruits, *Jimutaka* is the foremost in efficacy as its effect to eliminate *Kapha* and *Pitta*. His statement was stroked out by King *Vamaka* as *Jimutaka* has low potency hence is less effective in disintegrating and voiding of stool. On the other hand, *Katu-tumbi* which is the good for emesis should be considered to be excellent because of its action to eliminate the *doshas*. *Gautama* refuted this view of *Vamaka* and said that *Katu-tumbi* is *anaphrodisiac* because of its hot, sharp, pungent and ununctuous effects. While *Dhamargava* which is excellent for eliminating *Kapha* and *Pitta* may be considered to be the best for *basti*. *Badisha* said that *Dhamargava* is the aggravator of *Vayu*, it

causes depression and it reduces strength. On the other hand, *Kutaja* should be considered as excellent because it does not reduce strength and it alleviates *Kapha* as well as *Pitta*. *Kapya* said *Kutaja* is very viscid, it causes elimination of *doshas* through the upward tract, and it causes aggravation of *Vayu*. On the other hand, *Krita-vedhana* which is *vatala* and which eliminates excessively aggravated *Kapha* and *Pitta* is best drug for *basti*. *Bhadra-shaunaka* said that *krit-vedhana* is not suitable for *basti* as it is pungent and it reduces strength in excess. Having heard all the interesting statements *Atreya* admired the efforts of the speakers and delivered the final judgement regarding the best among the fruits for enema. He said though all the participants have appropriately described the beneficial effects and shortcomings of different fruits, there is no drug which is absolutely free from shortcomings or which is absolutely free from good effects. Therefore, one must think of a drug which possesses more of the good attributes. Then he gave a general idea if which drug is suitable for which disease e.g. *Jimutaka* for *Kushtha*, *Katu-tumbi* for *meha*, fruit of *Kutaja* for heart-diseases etc. Then he stated that *Madanaphala* is not contraindicated in any disease and he described its properties. The explanation given by *Atreya* was duly honoured by the assembly of sages.

Seminars and symposia in Sushrut-samhita Garbhavkrantivishayak Parishad¹⁶:-

The location of this symposium is also not mentioned in the text. There were 6 participants in this symposium including *Dhanvantari* as the president. At first *Shaunaka* said that the head develops first in the foetus as it is the seat of chief *indriyas*. *Kritvirya* said that it is the heart because it is the seat of intellect and mind. *Parasharya* said that it is the *nabhi* as the body grows from it only. *Markandeya* said that it is the hands and feet as they are the causes for the movement of the foetus. *Subhuti-Gautama* said that it is the middle part of the body as the growth of the entire body is connected with it. *Dhanvantari* said that all these views are not correct as all the major and minor parts of the foetus develop simultaneously. Only because of minuteness these are not perceptible as that of the sprout of bamboo and unripe mango.

DISCUSSION

All the symposia that are described in the classical text viz. *Charak-Samhita*, *Sushrut-Samhita* etc. have one thing in common i.e. the chief speaker or presidential speaker in all the symposia are the ones that are considered as the teachers of the *tantrakara* like *Agnivesha*, *Sushruta* etc. Thus, in all the seminars, the final concluding remark is given by *Atreya Punarvasu* in *Charak-Samhita* and *Kashiraj Divodas Dhanvantari* in *Sushrut-Samhita*.

In most of the scientific discussions that took place in the era of *Atreya* and *Agnivesha*, the precise location is not mentioned except *Ayurvedavatarana* and *rasavishayaka parishada*. As *Atreya* was a nomadic sage (*Yayavara*), he and his disciples were wandering in the north Indian region. One gets their locations at Panchal region in the context of *Janapadodvamsaniya adhyaya*¹⁷, *Chaitraratha* forest in the context of *Atreya-Bhadrapakya adhyaya*¹⁸. Thus, as all the places that are mentioned in classical text belong to the north Indian region, one may say that *Atreya* and his disciples resided mostly in the north India.

As all three terms viz. conference, seminar and symposium have different meanings as well as concerns, all the scientific discussions that are mentioned in the classical texts must belong to one among conference, seminar or symposium. The very first gathering that took place in the Himalayan mountain range was necessarily a conference as it was a formal meeting of sages to find out a solution over a common problem. The discussion between *Atreya* and *Bharadvaja* over factors responsible for formation of foetus was a debate as rest of the sages and disciples of *Atreya* were observers¹⁹. Rests of the discussion are clearly symposia as there is a central theme and a common topic for scholarly discussion.

Acharya Punarvasu Atreya plays a unique role in all the symposia. In the *Vatakalakliya Madanphalavishayaka* and *Rashipurushotpatti* symposium, he accepts all the views put forward by the sages and concludes the symposium by amalgamation of all the opinions. In the *Rasavishayaka*, *Garbhavkrantivishayak* and *Garbha angapratyanga nirvritivishayak* symposium, he denies all the views of other sages through logical reasoning and establishes his own theories which are accepted by all the participants.

CONCLUSION

As *Charak-Samhita* is the most ancient classical text of *Ayurveda*, the writing style is also ancient and resembles that of *Upanishadas*. Hence, one can find the unique arrangement of subject matter in terms of various symposia, debates and discussion between *Acharya Atreya* and *Agnivesha*. *Sushrut-Samhita* is redacted in the later period hence; its subject matter is mostly in the form of preaching of Lord *Kashiraj Divodas Dhanvantari*. This unique style of arranging subject matter in the form of scientific discussions not only gives the readers a glimpse of teaching and learning schematics of *Upanishada* era but also throws light on the various opinions of the different scientists and thinkers. Thus, after studying and analysing these symposia, *Ayurveda* appears to be in the phase of continuous evolution since Vedic period which may have been continued till the era of *Charaka* and *Sushruta*. Thus, all the symposia mentioned in the classical texts hold their importance even in the modern era.

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