

Book Review: Ashtanga Hridaya - Sutrasthana (Vagbhatacharyarachit) Evam Maulik Siddhant

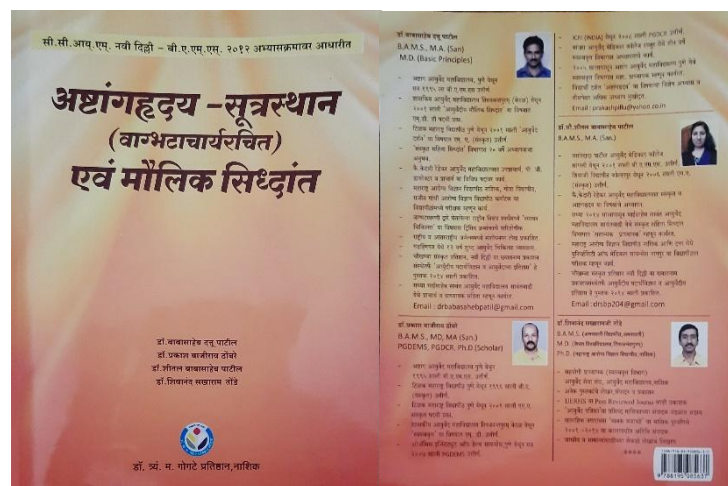
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Ayurveda *Samhita Grantha's* are the basic source of Ayurvedic wisdom. Among *Bruhadtrayi*, *Ashtanga Sangraha* was written by *AcharyaVagbhata* which is a compendium of then available literature. This book is without bias to either the *Charaka's* school of medicine or the *Sushruta's* school of surgery. Science always expands day by day. *Acharya Vagbhata* after sometime wrote condensed, precise and poetic book entitled '*Ashtanga Hridaya*'.

Ashtanga Sangraha- Sutrasthana was included in First Year B.A.M.S. syllabus from many decades. Since last few years Ashtanga Hridaya (Sutrasthana) was included in the syllabus instead of Ashtanga Sangraha. From the year 2012, Maulik Siddhant was also added to this and the subject was renamed as '*Maulik Siddhant Evam Ashtanga Hridaya*'. Though the subject title and content was changed at central level but there was a big void of authentic reference book for this new curriculum; especially for the students of Maharashtra state and for those who prefer Marathi language.

Study of *Ashtanga Hridaya* along with basic principles of Ayurveda is considered indispensable for the thorough knowledge of *Ayurveda*. Students comprehend *Samhita* in

the classrooms but for revision and home work they need a classic, authentic and flawless reference book. With the increasing interest for the study of classical text of *Ayurveda*; author and co-authors of this book worked hard to fulfil this gap.

Dr. Babasaheb D. Patil, Dr. Sheetal Patil, Dr. Prakash Thombre and Dr. Shivanand Tonde promptly displayed the scientific insights contained in the original text. With their expertise in the given subject they unravelled secrets of our science with simple explanations through this book. So, the reader of this book gets completely different narrative with utmost depth of the subject. Dr. Babasaheb Patil the first author of the book and Principal of one of the reputed college in India; strongly believes in the propagation of basic knowledge of Ayurvedic text in simple language. He devoted his time towards Ayurveda learning, writing, teaching and research with the only aim of propagation of Ayurveda knowledge.

Moreover Dr. Babasaheb Patil, Dr. Sheetal Patil, Dr. Prakash Thombre facilitate students to understand the main text with meanings in easy Sanskrit. Due to their sincere

efforts, readers can find science, medicine and applied Ayurveda all under one umbrella.

By writing this unique book Dr. Babasaheb Patil showed how far a seed of thought can grow, when gets proper nourishment and environment of intelligence and hard work.

Many special features have made this reference book a unique one from other books.

- 1) In the beginning of each chapter authors gave detailed information (*Sthana* and *Adhyaya*) about the contents of *Adhyaya* in other *samhitas*. So, with this reader of the book come to know where he can read these contents in *Brihadtrayee*. Due to these efforts those who want to do comparative study can easily refer those *Sthana* and *Adhyaya* from respective *Samhitas*.
- 2) At the end of each chapter, contents of the same are displayed by tables, flow charts and bar graphs. This will definitely enhance the understanding for the subject.
- 3) In today's era most of the First Year B.A.M.S. students do not have adequate knowledge of Sanskrit language. As *Ashtanga Hridaya* is poetic it is not easy to understand. In this book author has put meaning of Sanskrit words in easy Sanskrit after each verse which makes this book clear and easy to understand. Cherry on top is the use of English subtitles which make this book student friendly.
- 4) Also detailed commentary of important dictums and many references for further study are given. Explanatory notes have been added at many places to improve understanding of the students. Another peculiarity of this book is that the supported verses from other *Samhitas* are also included in this book. For eg. In *Dincharya Adhyaya*, verses about *Vyayam* from *Sushruta Samhita* are also included.
- 5) For this book Dr. Rohan Nage has taken pains to draw attractive yet simple ray diagrams of *Yantras*, *Shastras* and *Bandha*. Also due to diagrammatic representation students can easily understand *Pratiloma* and *Anuloma Shalya Aaharana Vidhi*.
- 6) Author has added an annexure for definitions of technical terms. With his understanding the author proclaims about certain differences of opinion while taking support of other *Samhitas*. For eg. In *Annaswaroop Vignaniya Aadhyaya Sutra* No.58, the authors proclaim that '*Natipathya*' word is not appropriate. This needs lot of courage and study.
- 7) Charts given at the end of *Annaswaroop Vignaniya* and *Shodhanadigan Sangraha* will be very beneficial for students, teachers and other members of Ayurveda fraternity.
- 8) Excellence and mastery of the author in translating and commenting the main text is unbiased. Authors' eradicate the mistakes of other translated reference books available on the basis of *Brihadtrayee* and its Sanskrit commentaries. For eg. In '*Ksharagnikarma Vidhi Adhyaya*' *sutra* no. 14, author proclaims its correct meaning on the basis of *Sushruta Samhita*.
- 9) In *Rutucharya* authors have represented *Rutu* (season) in relation with *Rashi* (zodiac sign), English calendar-months, *Hindu* calendar-months which will be very

useful for the learners. Also, the authors have given abstract of each *Rutucharya* (seasonal regime) after the original verses. So that seasonal regime can be understood very easily.

- 10) In the *Roganutpadniya Adhyaya*; pathophysiology of many reflexes like sneezing, thirst are explained which is like a treat for the students.
- 11) I was amazed about authors' attitude to offer applied knowledge to the students about *Kalpas* from *Ashtanga Hridaya*. In *Dwiwiddhopkramaniya Adhyaya* author states that contents of *Vyoshadi Yoga* mentioned in *sutra* no.25 to 28 is available in market as *Vyoshchitrakadi Kashaya*. Such type of notes makes students aware about applied aspect of *Ayurveda*.
- 12) As the authoritative dignitaries of CCIM included *Maulik Siddhanta* part in the study of First Year B.A.M.S. syllabus.

But till date standard reference books for this section are not available.

We think that Authors of this book have fulfilled this lacuna with elaborative description of *Maulik Siddhanta* part.

As this part is added to *Ashtanga Hridaya Sutrasthana* in the syllabus, the authors have included examples mainly from *Ashtanga Hridaya Sutrasthana*.

The subject topics included in *Maulik Siddhanta* part are basic tools to understand the *Samhitas*. But some of the topics are not easy to understand even for scholars. So, for the beginners it will be most difficult. To overcome this problem, authors have explained interrelated topics with simple examples. For eg., While explaining *Viparyaya Tantrayukti*, its relation and difference with *Arthapatti* is also mentioned which will clear the concepts of both *Tantrayuktis*.

As the book is written in *Marathi* language, it has a language barrier and is not beneficial for other National and International Ayurveda scholars, but it is definitely a boon for Marathi linguistic scholars from Maharashtra.

This book of Dr. Babasaheb Patil, Dr. Sheetal Patil, Dr. Prakash Thombre and Dr. Shivanand Tonde is a must-read book by every Ayurveda scholar who wants a thorough knowledge of the subject.

Due to commendable efforts this book doesn't come out as a mere translation of *Ashtanga Hridaya*, because faculties have taken care not to lose the original soul, concept and contents of the classical treatise.