

VAIDYA ARTICLE

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ABSTRACT

Vaidya the Physician is as eternal as medicine itself. *Vaidya* is a Sanskrit word meaning *Bhishaja* It is also used unchanged in modern indoaryan language. In India it refers to a person who Practices *Ayurveda*. Senior Practicioners or teachers were called *Vaidyaraaja* as a mark of respect. Some practitioners who have complete knowledge of the text and were excellent at their practices known as *Pranacharya*. Some royal families in *India* had a personal *Vaidya* in attendance and this people referred to as *Raj Vaidya*. In our *Samhita* the description of *Vaidya* has been given in a way which shows the *Vaidya* as healer and auspicious word which sounds a mild effect on the persons mind and

body. This review article is an effort to compile the description of *Vaidya* in our *Samhitas*, the manner and ethics, which are followed by the *Vaidya*.

KEYWORDS: *Ayurveda, Vaidya and Physicians.*

INTRODUCTION

It may be asserted with a fair degree of certainty that the institution of the *Vaidya*, the *Physician* is as eternal as *medicine* itself. It is not confined to a civilized state of society alone. Even when man was in the most primitive stages of his development, there must have been or the other of his species that came to the rescue of his mate or offspring or members of the tribe or clan in an hour of pain and travail. His remedies might have acquired any shape from that of consoling sounds to herbs and incantation or coarse methods of medical and surgical manipulation.

In *India* where history begins with the appearance on the scene of the Indo-Aryan claus, the institution of the *physician* is found to be well recognized and established ever since the days of the *Rigveda*. The Aswins loom large in the *Rigveda* as the *Physicians* of the *Gods* and the divine institution may safely be taken to reflect its counter-part in mundane society, the mundane *Physician* in a context which denotes that the profession had not yet become here dietary but was open to anyone to pursue.^[1]

Even in that early age of civilized society, *medicine* had already become a complex science and art and presupposed certain degree of knowledge and intelligence that was possible for the highest stratum of society. Thus it was the *Brahmana*, the natural teacher and priest of the society that was also the *Physician*. The sages held the soma herb supreme among the plant kingdom and its juice opened their vision to immortal truth.^[2]

The *Atharvaveda* is necessarily the source of the *Ayurveda*, for in it we find the preoccupation with the remedies for diseases, evil spirits and other ailments of man. There the *Physician* is still the magic man priest and *therapist* rolled in to one. But the various branches of medical aid have attained their distinctive ramifications and we have surgical extractions and the countering of the poisons.^[3]

In the post *Vedic* period which is the golden age of *Ayurveda*, the position of the *Vaidyawa*s at the height of its glory. In the *Charaka Samhita* we have a complete picture of the *Physician*, his equipment of learning and *therapeutic* accessories, his *dress and manners*, his standard of ethics and his general position in society as guide and leader.

A. Dress

Like his modern counterpart, the *Ancient Physician* of *India* was conspicuous by his clean and well-washed clothes, his short-clipped hair and nails and his-general demeanor of smartness and geniality. *Acharya Susruta* describes him thus:

“The medical graduate should enter into the medical profession resorting to the close clipping of his hair and nails, clean-lines, white raiment, holding of an umbrella and hand stick, wearing of the shoes, and avoidance of gaudy clothes and imbued with a spirit of helpfulness, brotherhood and sincerity towards all creatures.^[4]

B. Manners and Ethics

The *Physician* was expected to be a paragon of gentlemanly qualities. He should not be given to braggartism. Even though possessed of learning and skill in his sciences he should not be loud in proclaiming it to the world. *Charak* lies down:

“Even though possessed of knowledge one should not boast and speak of it over much. For through a man be virtuous otherwise, boastfulness makes him hateful to people.”^[5]

His general attitude must be genial, gentle, modest and sincere. He was to harbor no ill will against any one and should look upon the destitute, the poor and the helpless as his own kith and be ready to offer help to such.

His attitude to women was particularly aloof and detached. When he entered a patient's house he was to keep his head bent and not be curious about the things and persons about him. His mind must be devoted to the welfare of the patient alone. If he had to enter to treat a woman, he should never go unaccompanied and he should neither laugh nor smile nor exchange irrelevant words with her no gifts offered by her in the absence of the husband are to be accepted. Even if he discovers her attachment to him and her amorous overtures, he should not respond. Neither should he divulge them to others.

Acharya Vagbhata sums up admirably the picture of a true *Vaidya*, his attitude and equipment in the following verses:

“He who visits the patient only on invitation, well dressed and having perceived the good omens, who having entered reposes his mind on nothing else than the patient, who examines the patient's and his madly in the light of the etiological factors, who never divulges any shameful features of the patient's life and who knows the proper time and stage of treatment and uses it, he indeed is the true *physician* that achieves success in his treatment.”^[6]

C. Professional Ethics

The medical profession was pursued as a means of living originally by the third class of Aryan society i.e. the *Vaidyas*. The *Brahman* and the *Ksatriya* learnt the science, the former for researches in the higher spheres of the knowledge and for the relief of humanity purely as a mission of compassion, the latter for the advancement of the science and for the protection of oneself and his dependants from disease.

Yet all are four castes were entitled to study the science of *Ayurveda* for general enlightenment in the matter of purity, health, happiness and longevity.

“All may learn the science for the sake of a righteous and pure life”^[7]

Though the professional *Vaidya* was making a living out of his profession and often fixed up the fees due to him in any particular undertaking, he yet had a code of ethics to observe. He treated the poor and the destitute, the maimed and the travelers and mendicants free of charge. Even in cases where there was no previous agreement as regards the fee, it was obligatory on the part of the patient to pay up his fees and discharge his debt to the *Physician*. There was a widespread sentiment which obtains even today that among the debts that are particularly sinful if not paid, *the physician's* debt is one.

The ideal, a part from the exigencies of the *physician's* profession as regards fees, was always to keep in view the principle of compassion and service for the follow-men and *Charaka* lays down the ideal unrivalled grandeur in the following verses:

The *Vaidyas* besides these accomplishments was required also to be a good polemic. If he were to meet and be interrogated by a fellow of the profession on any point of theory and practice, he must be able to meet him in discussion and if the opponent persists in carping at him, he should deal with him severely and subdue him by reproaches and repulses in satirical terms.^[8]

The *Vaidya* was enjoined to seek the aid of other members of his class in diagnosis of different cases and in the determining of prescriptions and their pharmaceutical preparation. He must not quarrel with the fellows of his profession. A general spirit of geniality and kindness and a supreme ambition to advance the welfare of the people were demanded of him.

Lastly we observe that the one great preoccupation of the *Ancient physician* was to find out whether a particular case that came to him was curable or incurable. A whole science of the signs and symptoms that prognosticated the favorable and the unfavorable trends of disease were laid out in order to enable *Physician* to avoid trend of disease was laid out in order to enable *Physician* to avoid the path to infamy and reproach by handling cases that were incurable by any measure. Many factors must have been behind such a dread of incurable cases. The fear of unpopularity and consequent fall in patronage was evidently one factor. But even more persuasive was perhaps the dread of state punishment or penalty if a *Physician*

was found to have been responsible for the death of patient. A wise *Physician* sometimes undertook treatment of even incurable cases only after declaring it to be such before the relatives of the patients and tried severe methods and measures with the permission of the relation and the state official, in order to leave no stone unturned in saving the patient's life, while absolving himself of the responsibility of his failure.^[9]

AIM AND OBJECT

Do know about the description and importance of *Vaidya* in *Samhitas*.

CONCLUSION

Through this article it can be concluded that there exist a basic and scientific meaning of *Vaidya*, in our *Samhitas*. This article is just on afford to understand the *Vaidya*, its meaning and importance given in *Samhita*, the behavior of *Vaidya* towards the other *Vaidyas* and towards the Patients, the life style and personal attitude of *Vaidyas* towards the society. The *Samhitas* explore the *Vaidya*, as they are those persons which act as eternal medicine itself. Showing importance of *Vaidyas*.

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