

## REVIEW

C. Dwarakanath. *Digestion and Metabolism in Āyurveda*. Shree Baidyanath Ayurveda Bhavan (P) Ltd., Calcutta, 1967, pages xix+16+361. Price Rs.10.00.

The author of the book, Dr. C. Dwarakanath, is a distinguished scholar of the integrated school of Indian Medicine (*Āyurveda*) and is a devoted disciple of late Capt. Srinivas Murthy. He has put most of his ideas in his earlier work entitled *Introduction to Kāya Chikitsā* which deals exhaustively the biological mechanisms of *kāya* (body) and their application in *chikitsā* (treatment). In the present work as well as in his previous work his approach to the subject is quite clear. He has attempted to fit the old ideas in the modern garb or the old wine in new bottle so that the same may be understood in the light of modern scientific advances and the modern scientific world may be able to understand them and utilize them in advancing their concepts further to bring scientific revolution. The author has gone through a hard labour to fulfil this object and has been successful to a great extent for which he deserves congratulations. However, there are a few observations from the *Āyurvedic* standpoint as to how far he has been able to put the concepts in their true form. It seems that in over-enthusiasm of fitting these ideas into the modern counterparts the author has crossed the limit with the result that in most cases the thing has become quite distorted. A few instances are given here:

1. The *nābhi* has been taken as pancreas perhaps on the basis that it has been described as the seat of *Agni* but this is not the fact. *Nābhi* has attracted the attention of ancient scholars on embryological grounds when it plays the vital role in maintenance and development of the body. It is supported by Sushruta who says in the context of embryology that in *nābhi* there is *jyotisthāna* (seat of *Agni*) by which the body develops.

2. The description of *annapāka nāḍī* from *Atreya Saṃhitā* quoted by *Vaidyaka Shabda Sindhu* is quite a modern one and is translation of the modern findings and as such cannot be taken as ancient authority only because it is translated into Sanskrit.

3. By *koshṭha* and *mahāsrotas* he takes gross structures and those included in the list of *srotas* as minute channels but this sort of classification is neither supported by any reference nor by fact because *prāṇavaha*, *annavaha* etc. are gross channels and cannot at the same time mean minute channels transporting *rasadhātu* (page 11). By *srotas* he takes 'capillaries' but we know that capillaries have come to light only after invention of microscope. Even Harvey (1578-1657) could not explain that part of the circulation without microscope and he called it as 'marshland'. Only four years later in the

year 1961 when microscope came to rescue Malpighi detected the capillaries. So 'srotas' may include capillaries in wider sense but cannot be restricted to the same.

4. By *ūrdhwa āmāsaya* he takes stomach and by *adho āmāsaya* small intestine and by *pakwāsaya* large intestine. In the term *grahaṇi* he has included 'the entire small intestine, commencing from the antrum of the pylorus including the pyloric sphincter and extending up to the iliocaecal sphincter'. But if the entire small intestine is taken as *grahaṇi* what will be the fate of *antra (kṣhadra)*?

5. Similarly, the concepts of Prabhāva taken as isomerism and that of *vīrya* as potential and kinetic energy do not represent the *Āyurvedic* views correctly. Prabhāva is concerned with natural composition of the drug (द्रव्यस्वभावः प्रभावः) and *vīrya* as potency which is fixed for every drug. If the view of potential and kinetic energy is accepted, all drugs will be *śītavīrya* in potential stage and *uṣṇavīrya* in kinetic stage as in the case of sugar. In this way no *vīrya* could be decided for any drug whereas in *Āyurveda vīrya* is decided for the drugs such as *āmālakī śītavīrya citraka uṣṇavīrya*, and so on. Moreover, the word *vīrya* should be 'translated as "potency"' and not energy'. *Vipāka* is not action/function but a quality of digested food, but the author has said, 'The actions/functions performed by substances, thus transformed, have been described as *vipāka* (p. 188). Similarly, *sat* and *asat* in connection with *pramāṇas* (p. 139) should be translated as 'existent' and 'non-existent' and not 'correct' and 'incorrect' as mentioned by the author.

6. According to *Āyurveda*, *vāta*, *pitta* and *kapha* are substances (*dravya*) but the author has said in the context of *vāta* that it is a force rather than a substance (p. 151).

7. *Bṛmhaṇa* does not signify increase in bulk of body, largely due to accumulation of fat (p. 190) but which increases heaviness or weight of the body as supported by *Hemadri* and *Shabda Chandrika* quoted by the author himself.

8. *Atyagni* and *mandāgni* have been simulated with hyperthyroidism and hypothyroidism but according to *Āyurveda* by *mandāgni* there should be increase in *dhātus* whereas in hypothyroidism this is not the case.

9. The date of Caraka has been mentioned as fifth century B.C. I cannot say on what authority this has been done. Caraka is placed mostly during the reign of Kaṇiṣka (second century A.D.) or as contemporary of Patañjali (second century B.C.). Thus he may be placed between these two extremes. If Carakas of *Yajurveda* are taken then also he will go earlier than fifth century B.C.

10. (a) The derivation of the word मुख by मुक्लु मोक्षणे is neither possible nor supported by any authority. It is actually derived by खनी अवदारणे with *unādi pratyaya* मुट्.

(b) The term *pāka* has been defined as *parināti* (not that which causes *parināti*) by Medini in his *koṣa* (not on *Amarakoṣa*).

(c) The term *dhairyam* should be translated as restraint or control rather than courage and valour (*vide* धृतिर्हि नियमात्मिका—Caraka, *śarīr*, ch. 1).

(d) On page 114 it is said:

*kesha* (the hair of the head)

*loma* (the hair of the face)

*śmaśru* (the hair in other parts of the body)'

whereas between second and third 'the reverse' is correct, e.g.:

*loma* (the hair in other parts of the body)

*śmaśru* (the hair of the face).

11. The proof-reading has not been done carefully particularly in Sanskrit portion with the result that in spite of giving long errata some of the obvious mistakes still remain such as—

on page 181—the word 'Poshaka' should be 'Pōshya'

on page 181 and 210—the word 'Pōshya' should be 'Poshaka'

In spite of these shortcomings the work is commendable and a distinct addition in existing literature which may be thought-provoking for both *Āyurvedic* and Modern scholars.

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