

MEDICAL SCIENCE IN ANCIENT INDIA (AYURVEDA & YOGA)

Medical Science was highly developed in ancient times. Ayurveda, an indigenous system of medicine that was developed in Ancient India. The word "Ayurveda" literally means the science of good health and longevity of life. It is the oldest medical system of our planet. Susruta, Charak, Madhava, Vagbhatta and Jeevak were notable ayurvedic practitioners of ancient India.

The oldest medical book of the world – Atreya Samhita. Charak is called the father of ayurvedic medicine and Susruta the father of surgery.

Susruta:

- Susruta is considered a pioneer in the field of surgery. He believed surgery to be "the highest division of the healing arts and least liable to fallacy".
- He studied human anatomy with the help of a dead body.
- In Susruta Samhita, he has described over 1100 diseases including fevers of 26 kinds, jaundice of 8 kinds and urinary ailments of 20 kinds.
- In Susruta Samhita, the method of selecting and preserving a dead body for the purpose of its detailed study are also described.
- Susruta's greatest contribution was in the fields of Rhinoplasty (plastic surgery) and Ophthalmic surgery (removal of cataracts). Restoration of limb lost in wars was done by him.
- Susruta Samhita also gives a description of 101 instruments used in surgery. Some serious operations performed included taking foetus out of the womb, repairing the damaged rectum, removing stone from the bladder, etc.

Charak:

- Charak is considered the father of ancient Indian science of medicine.
- He was the Raj Vaidya (royal doctor) in the court of *Kanishka*.
- His book, **Charak Samhita** is an elaborate book on medicine. It has the description of a large number of diseases and gives methods of identifying their causes as well as their treatment.
- In Charak Samhita, more stress has been laid on removing the causes of disease rather than simply treating the symptoms of illness.
- Charak also had knowledge of the fundamentals of Genetics. The modern day genetics was started by Mendel.