

## Formation of “*Sapta Chatuska*” of *Astanga Hridaya Sutrasthana*

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### Abstract

Ayurveda, the science of life is the ancient Indian medicine which deals with longevity of life. The main purpose of Ayurveda is to maintain the health of the healthy individual (preventive aspect) and treatment of the diseased individual (curative aspect). There are three fundamental authoritative texts in ayurveda called *Brihatrayee* viz. *Charaka samhita*, *Sushruta Samhita* and *Astanga Hridaya*. The *Charaka Samhita* contains eight *sthanas*. The *sutra sthana* is the collective form of the whole *samhita* which is classified into seven *chatuskas* and *samgraha dvaya* for easy understanding of the contexts. This is the unique quality of *Charaka samhita* as we do not find such classification in the other *samhitas*. *Astanga hridaya* is considered as the most advanced piece of work among the *Brihatrayee*. Hence, a humble effort has been made to re-arrange the *sutrasthana* of *Astanga Hridaya* in the form of *chatuska* and to give probable explanation for their arrangement in specific order to demonstrate its worth.

### Keywords

*Ayurveda, Brihatrayee, Charaka, Sushruta, Samhita, Astanga hridaya, Sthana, Chatuska*



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## INTRODUCTION

The *samhitas* are the main texts of Vedas. The *samhitas* describe some important, inspirational and revolutionary ideas which provide a platform for the development of health care. The ideas presented were much ahead of their time and stands true till date. Each *Samhita* is arranged in a specific order depending upon the emphasis on various topics. The *sutrasthana* of *Astanga Hridaya* incorporates the whole subject matter of the *Samhita* to enable the readers for easy comprehension. *Sutra* literally means thread. *Sutrasthana* is the thread on which all beads or flowers of the garland are put together. Therefore the study and proper understanding of the *sutrasthana* brings a good connection of all the chapters of the *samhita*. *Sutram* of a garland cannot be seen from outside though it connects all the flowers together. It's breakage leads to the fragmentation of the necklace or garland which consequently becomes useless. Similarly without proper understanding of *sutrasthana*, the knowledge gets fragmented with no connection or link to each other and does not serve the purpose. It lays down a strong foundation so as to develop or build up the knowledge further. In the *sutrasthana*, we find that the fundamental

principles of *Ayurveda* are covered in the first fifteen chapters and the remaining fifteen chapters are the various applications of the fundamental principles which hold no additional information of knowledge that the first fifteen chapters have not already given. Such is the importance of this *sutrasthana*. Hence, a humble effort has been made to restructure the *sutrasthana* of *Astanga hridaya* in the form of *Chatuska* or group of four *adhyayas* in a specific order. The order of arrangement of these *adhyayas* is equally important as there is a specific reason or logic why every chapter is preceded and succeeded by particular topics.

## METHODOLOGY

A thorough manual and electronic search was done on *astanga hridaya* and available commentary on it and the contents and references were analysed and used for the study.

## DISCUSSION

1. *Swastha Chatuska* (wellness strategies)

**Content:** 1. *Ayuskamiya*  
(On longevity)<sup>1</sup>

2. *Dinacarya* (On daily regimen)<sup>2</sup>

3. *Ritucarya* (On seasonal regimen)<sup>3</sup>

4. *Roganutpadaniya* (On preventive medicines)<sup>4</sup>

The very first chapter of *Astanga Hridaya* “*Ayuskamiya adhyaya*” covers the entire subject matter of Ayurveda. The title generates curiosity and an inquiry in a sequential manner motivating the student or the readers to know more. It is the innovative style of introduction to the subject dealt with in the whole text or “*Vishayavataaran*”. The *prayojana* or the utility of the *samhita* is also mentioned in the *Ayuskamiya adhyaya*. Here, the *prayojana* is “*Ayu*” or long life as the name of the *adhyaya* indicates. The *Astanga Hridaya* begins with a *Mangala sloka* – “*ragadi rogan*”<sup>5</sup> –saluting to *Apurva Vaidya*. It is a common practice in every work to start with a *mangalacharan* –saluting the personal deity as a symbol of auspiciousness and to protect from hinderance till the completion of the work. The second sutra indicates *Adhikari* (eligible reader) beginning with “*Ayu kamayamanena*”<sup>6</sup> only those who have an ardent desire for *Ayu*, which being the instrument or means to attain *purushartha* are eligible to learn *Ayurveda*. The chapter covers the entire

subject that is attainment of *Ayu* (long life) and other chapters explain the various disciplines and methods to achieve that.

The second chapter “*Dinacarya*”<sup>2</sup> is very closely linked to the first chapter. The first chapter deals with the importance of *Ayu* and the need for its desire. But how one can practically achieve the fulfilment of desire? The answer is *Dinacarya*<sup>2</sup> i.e., by following daily routine and regimen. Hence the second chapter deals with various methods & practices to maintain health and prolong *Ayu* under the umbrella of *Dinacarya*<sup>2</sup>. Again there arise a question -how to observe *Dinacarya*. The answer to it is – *Dinacarya* is to be practised daily in accordance to the *ritu* or season (third chapter- *Ritucarya*<sup>3</sup>). Hence in the *Ritucarya adhyaya* there is explanation of how to observe *vihara* (*dinacarya*) everyday as it varies from season to season.

Then what would happen ? the answer is *Roganutpadaniyam*<sup>4</sup> or prevention of diseases. *Roga* means disease , *utpadana* means production and *anutpadana* means prevention of production. The whole Ayurveda has been classified into two parts- *Swasthavritta* and *Aturavritta*. In the textual order , *swasthavritta* comes first. *Swasthya* gets disturbed by *vegadharana*<sup>7</sup> even if one

strictly follows *dinacarya* and *ritucarya*. Hence comes the fourth chapter (*Roganutpadaniya*).

Thus, these first four chapters are kept under the first *chatuska* which may be named as *Swastha Chatuska*.

## 2. *Annapana chatuska* (Dietatics)

**Content:** 1. *Dravadravya vigyana* (knowledge of liquid materials).<sup>8</sup>

2. *Annaswarupa vigyana* (nature of food materials).<sup>9</sup>

3. *Annaraksha* (Protection of foods).<sup>10</sup>

4. *Matrasitiya* (Proper quantity of food).<sup>11</sup>

In the previous *chatuska* i.e., first four chapter, the *vihara* is mentioned for the maintenance of *Ayu* and prevention of diseases. So, *ahara* (food) has been explained in detail in the next chapter fifth-*dravadravya vigyaniam*. *Ahara* is of two types –*drava*(liquid) and *dravya* (solid). The fifth chapter deals only with the *drava* type of food starting with the description of “*toyavarga*”<sup>12</sup> as *toya* or *jala* is the *prana* for living being. In continuation, in the 6<sup>th</sup> chapter “*Annaswarupavigyaniyam*”, *adrava* (non-liquid) foods are described in detail. Even suitable food might cause diseases unless well protected. Hence various

methods of protecting food, features of poisonous foods and drinks<sup>13</sup>, incompatible food combinations<sup>14</sup> and its proper examination<sup>15</sup> are discussed elaborately in 7<sup>th</sup> chapter “*Annaraksha vidhi*”. In the 8<sup>th</sup> chapter “*Matrasitiya*”, there is explanation of *right amount of food*<sup>16</sup> to be taken at the right time<sup>17</sup> to prevent from occurrence of indigestion. It also lays down various rules and conditions of the food intake (*ahara vidhi*)<sup>18</sup>.

## 3. *Nirdesh chatuska* (General Instructions)

**Content:** 1. *Dravyadi vinyaniya* (Knowledge of substances etc.)<sup>19</sup>

2. *Rasabhediya* (classification of tastes).<sup>20</sup>

3. *Doshadi vinyaniya* (Knowledge of dosas etc.)<sup>21</sup>

4. *Doshabhediya* (classification of dosas)<sup>22</sup>

In the 9<sup>th</sup> chapter, ‘*Dravyadi vinyaniya*’, a beautiful narration of the qualities<sup>23</sup>, combinations and preparation of various food are mentioned for a discriminative understanding of their use. The chapter describes how a *dravya* brings about action (pharmacodynamics)<sup>24</sup> whether by *rasa* (action of taste) or by *guna* (the qualities they possess) or by *vipaka* (taste conversion after digestion) or *virya*

(potency) or by *prabhava* (special effect). The 10<sup>th</sup> chapter “*Rasabhedhiya*” follows next as the *rasa* alone can balance the derangement of *doshas*. Next arise the question what the *rasa* does? The answer lies in the 11<sup>th</sup> chapter “*Doshadi vigyaniya*” as the *rasa* can directly act on the *doshas*, various derivations of *doshas* along with *dhatu*s and *malas* because when *doshas* gets vitiated, it also causes vitiation of *dhatu*s and *malas* by increase and decrease. As it is said *dosha* is the single cause for all the diseases hence for a deeper understanding of the *tridosha*, 12<sup>th</sup> chapter “*Doshabhedhiya*” is mentioned which brings more information about the *sthana*(location)<sup>25</sup>, *karma*(function)<sup>26</sup>, *hetu*(cause)<sup>27</sup>, *akriti*(features) etc.

#### 4. *Chikitsa chatuska* (Management principles)

- Content:**
1. *Doshopakramaniya* (treatment of the dosas).<sup>28</sup>
  2. *Dvividhopakramaniya* (two kinds of treatments).<sup>29</sup>
  3. *Sodhanadigana sangrahaniya* (groups of drugs for purificatory therapies etc.).<sup>30</sup>
  4. *Shalyaharan vidhi* (removal of foreign bodies).<sup>31</sup>

In order, there is description of *upakram* in brief of two kinds-*Shaman*(palliative) and *sodhan* (purificatory). The 13<sup>th</sup> “*doshopakramaniya adhyaya* and 14<sup>th</sup> “*Dvividhopakramaniya*” chapters are devoted to *shaman* therapy. In this connection, *chikitsa* (treatment) in general of the deranged *dosha* is explained in the 13<sup>th</sup> chapter “*doshopakramaniya adhyaya* which deals with treatment options for deranged *doshas* and *ama*<sup>32</sup>(as *ama* gets formed from one another of greatly increased *doshas*). The same is more specified in the 14<sup>th</sup> chapter “*Dvividhopakramaniya*” classifying them into *Santarpana* and *Apatarpana*<sup>33</sup> with their management techniques. Next comes the *sodhana* treatment being the central part of management, the medicines used for the same are explained dividing them into various groups called *gana*<sup>34</sup> in the 15<sup>th</sup> chapter “*Sodhanadigana sangrahaniya*”. Now, the diseases which are not managed by *sodhan chikitsa* which needs surgical intervention for them 28<sup>th</sup> chapter “*Shalyaharana vidhi*” has been included in *chikitsa chatuska* as *Astanga Hridaya* is a complete treatise covering all aspects of medical science.

Now the question is, what are the pre-requisites for performing *chikitsa*? The

answer is *Snehana* and *Swedana*. So, the next chapters 16<sup>th</sup> -*Sneha vidhi adhyaya* (oleation therapy)<sup>35</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> - *Svedavidhi adhyaya* (sudation therapy)<sup>36</sup> are devoted to the procedure of *Snehana* and *Swedana*.

#### 5. *Sodhan Chatuska* (purificatory measures)

**Content:** 1. *Vamana virechan vidhi* (emesis and purgation therapies).<sup>37</sup>

2. *Vasti vidhi* (enema therapy).<sup>38</sup>

3. *Nasya vidhi* (nasal medication).<sup>39</sup>

4. *Siravyadh vidhi* (venesection)<sup>40</sup>

Now there arise a question – how to perform *sodhan karma* in the *Sarir* ? What are the procedures done for *Sodhan karma*, how it should be done ?whether system wise or *dosha* wise? The answers are well described in 18<sup>th</sup> - *Vamana virechan vidhi*, 19<sup>th</sup>- *Vasti vidhi* ,20<sup>th</sup>- *Nasya vidhi* and 27<sup>th</sup>- *Siravyadh vidhi* chapter where there is description of *vaman*<sup>41</sup>, *virechan*<sup>42</sup>, *vasti*<sup>43</sup>, *nasya*<sup>44</sup> and *siravyadh vidhi*<sup>45</sup>.

<i>Sodhana procedure</i>	<i>Targeted system</i>
Vaman ,virechan	GIT, Respiratory system
Vasti	Genito-urinary system
Nasya	Nervous system
Siravyadh	Circulatory system

6. *Anu karma chatuska* ( Supportive measures)

**Content:** 1. *Dhumpana vidhi* (inhalation of smoke therapy).<sup>46</sup>

2. *Gandushadi vidhi* (inhalation of smoke therapy).<sup>47</sup>

3. *Asyotana anjana vidhi* (eye drops, collyrium therapies).<sup>48</sup>

4. *Tarpana putapaka vidhi* (satiating the eye and other therapies)<sup>49</sup>

The *doshas* which are not completely expelled out by the *sodhana karma* are eliminated by some minor techniques like *Dhumpana*<sup>50</sup>, *Gandusha*<sup>51</sup>, *kavala*<sup>52</sup>, *sirovasti*<sup>53</sup>, *asyotana*<sup>54</sup>, *anjana*<sup>55</sup>, *tarpana*<sup>56</sup> and *putapaka*<sup>57</sup> etc .The *vaman*, *virechana* etc *pancakarmas* detoxify the *sharira* whereas *dhumpana*, *gandusha* etc *anukarmas* purify the *indriyas*. To maintain the integrity of the *indriyas* and overcome age related disorders these supportive measures are described in detail in the 21<sup>st</sup> - *Dhumpana vidhi* , 22<sup>nd</sup> -*Gandushadi vidhi* ,23<sup>rd</sup> -*Asyotana anjana vidhi* and 24<sup>th</sup>- *Tarpana putapaka vidhi* chapters.

As *Nasya* which helps in maintaining the function of *ghranendriya* i.e., Nose and *sneha* & *sweda* which helps in maintaining the integrity of *sparshanendriya* i.e., skin are already explained earlier, the measures

to maintain the rest of the *indriyas* namely *rasanendriya* (*Gandusha, kavala, mukhalepa*), *shavanendriya* (*karnapurana*) and *chaksurendriya* (*asyotana, anjana, tarpana, putapaka*) are described here.

7. **Shastrakarma chatuska** (Surgical measures)

**Content:** 1. *Yantra vidhi* (use of blunt instruments)<sup>58</sup>

2. *Sastra vidhi* (use of sharp instruments).<sup>59</sup>

3. *Shastrakarma vidhi* (surgical operation).<sup>60</sup>

4. *Ksharagnikarma vidhi* (alkaline and thermal cautery).<sup>61</sup>

Now what will be the measures in those diseases which are not manageable by only medicaments or *aushadha dravyas* and need surgical intervention? The answer is *shastra karma*. To perform *Shastrakarma* properly we need to have a sound knowledge of the tools or equipments which are used in *Shastrakarma*. The equipments may be blunt or sharp. The blunt equipments are narrated in detail in 25<sup>th</sup> chapter *Yantravidhi adhyay* and the sharp equipments in 26<sup>th</sup> chapter *shastra vidhi adhyay*. The 29<sup>th</sup> chapter *Shastrakarma vidhi adhyay* is concerned with various procedures of surgical measures along with pre and post surgical

methods. Of all the *yantra* and *shastra*, *kshara* (caustic alkali) is the best. Success can be obtained by its use even in diseases which are very difficult to cure and also because *kshara* can be used even in the form of a drink. *Agnikarma* is even better than *kshara* for the diseases that are treated by *agnikarma* do not recur and it can be used in diseases which have not been successful by *aushadhas, shastras* and even *kshara*.

### Conclusion

From the above discussion it can be concluded that *Astanga Hridaya* is a crisp and spot on presentation of the theme in a very logical order. It is not an exaggeration to say that *Astanga Hridaya sutrasthana* is richer than *Charaka samhita* and *Sushruta samhita*. The interpolation of *Sutrasthana* of *Astanga Hridaya* in the form of *Chatuska* as stated in this topic can give a new insight to understanding of this treatise in a very lucid manner.

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