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AYURVEDIC MEDICINAL CONCEPTS
CONTAINED IN EARLY BUDDHISM
AND IN SRI LANKAN BUDDHIST
TRADITION, AND THEIR PHILOSOPHICAL
SIGNIFICANCE AND PRACTICAL
APPLICATIONS.

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2002/2003

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2002/2003

Abstract

This study focuses on the close relationship between Buddhist philosophy and that of Ayurveda, and bringing Ayurveda closer to the society through Buddhism. This study has dealt with the collation of vedic traditions, and investigates on the manner in which Ayurvedic system of medicine has percolated through to the Sri Lankan traditions.

In the Second Chapter, the close affinity of Buddhism and Ayurveda has been identified, and an evaluation of the cross-fertilization of Indian Hindu traditions and Indian Buddhist traditions through Ayurveda. The salient characteristic that was observed is that the Buddhism as against Hinduism has cross-fertilized the Ayurveda system to a very high degree. The data collated reveal that the members of the Buddhist Maha Sangha had performed a magnificent role, in the compilation of the initial medical texts and in their revisions.

Through the Third Chapter a broad study has been done with regard to nature of physical ailment as elaborated in Buddhism and also investigation has been done with regard to surgery. A comparative study of basics of surgery, medical compounds as referred to in Vinaya (Discipline Code) Sutta Pitaka (Discourses) as enunciated by Buddha too has been undertaken. The basics of prevention of diseases as embodied in Buddhism too have been identified. A list of implements as enunciated by the Buddha in order to maintain a healthy environment too has been included. During the lifetime of Buddha, the techniques adopted by the great physician Jeevaka with regard to physical treatment and surgery, too have been evaluated. The code of ethics enunciated by the Buddha with regard to health too has been deeply investigated into.

In the Fourth Chapter the Buddhist mental therapy and its varied forms have been exten-

sively studied. The occasions of close affinity between mental therapy and Ayurvedic mental therapy techniques, has been identified and salient characteristics of Buddhist mental therapy techniques have been identified and dealt with. The ethical conduct of a psychiatrist has been recorded in terms of principles of Buddhism. It has been observed with main element is covered in this study that it is more fruitful and in the best interest to maintain a mental equilibrium as taught in Buddhism rather than to be dependent on psychology.

In the Fifth Chapter the medical sciences as incorporated in the traditional Sri Lankan society have been identified, and on the basis of medical sciences as prevalent during the Ravana era too have been fully explored. In this connection Sri Lankan chronicle data and archaeological evidences too have been incorporated. In terms of Ayurveda and Buddhist medical sciences, the practice of chewing betel, and its scientific and classical identifications too have been undertaken. Special attention has been devoted to indigenous optometry sciences, Ayurvedic hospitals, and medicinal troughs. In this regard Sri Lanka epigraphically evidences, which delineate Ayurveda, too have been collated and studied and the periodical development of Ayurveda in Sri Lanka too has been highlighted with proper identification.

In the original treatises of Buddhism namely in Sutta Pitaka and their commentaries, there is a large array of medicinal compounds, surgical therapies a great variety of health conservation methods and as such it is hoped that it will be a compendium for those scholars engaged on researches into this discipline.