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Marvels of Medical Science in Ancient India

ACHARYA SUSHRUTA and SUSHRUTA SAMHITA

Ancient Indians were pioneers in diverse fields of study and their genius was centuries ahead of their times. Feel the glory, basking in pride of their unparalleled achievements.

(Thread)



Sushruta (circa 7th or 6th century BC) was a surgeon who in present times is known as the “father of Indian medicine” and “father of plastic surgery” for inventing and developing surgical procedures. He lived in Kashi on the banks of river Ganga.(1)

His work documented in the Sushruta Samhita (compendium) is one of the oldest texts in the world on plastic surgery and regarded as one of the trilogies of Ayurveda. The other 2 being the Charaka Samhita and Astanga Hridaya.(2)

Sushruta compiled the Sushruta Samhita as an instruction manual for physicians to treat patients.(3)

The Samhita caters to surgical techniques listing over 300 surgical procedures and 120 surgical instruments. Additionally to 1,120 diseases, injuries and their treatments with over 700 medicinal herbs and their application.(4)

The present form of the compendium is believed to be the work of several physicians which succeeded Sushruta. Chapters were added on over a period of time. The original had 5 books and 120 chapters, which over time grew into 6 books and 186 chapters.(5)

AN ENGLISH TRANSLATION

OF

THE SUSHRUTA SAMHITA

BASED ON ORIGINAL SANSKRIT TEXT.

EDITED AND PUBLISHED

BY

KAVIRAJ KUNJA LAL BHISHAGRATNA

WITH A FULL AND COMPREHENSIVE INTRODUCTION, TRANSLATION OF DIFFERENT READINGS, NOTES, COMPARATIVE VIEWS, INDEX, GLOSSARY & PLATES.

(IN THREE VOLUMES.)

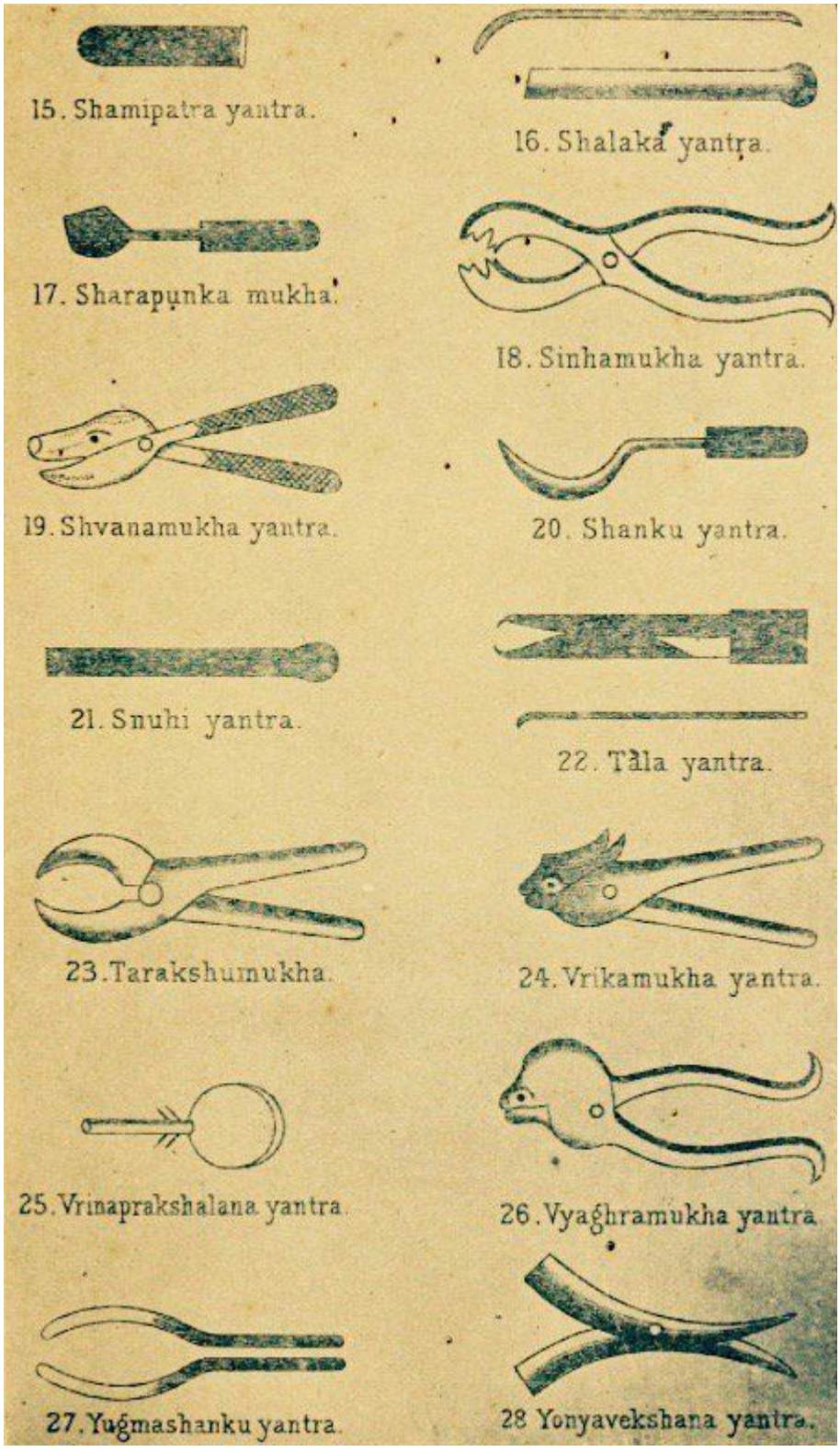
Vol. I.—SUTRASTHANAM.

CALCUTTA :
No. 10, KASHI GHOSE'S LANE.
1907.

In a number of chapters throughout the book, medical conditions are described and treatments suggested which include details regarding how a surgeon should perform surgeries from start to finish.(6)

These techniques imply on a variety of conditions ranging from reconstruction of nose and cheek to treatment of wounds amongst many others.(7)

Sushruta developed advanced knowledge of the human body through dissection thereby understanding of human anatomy.(8)

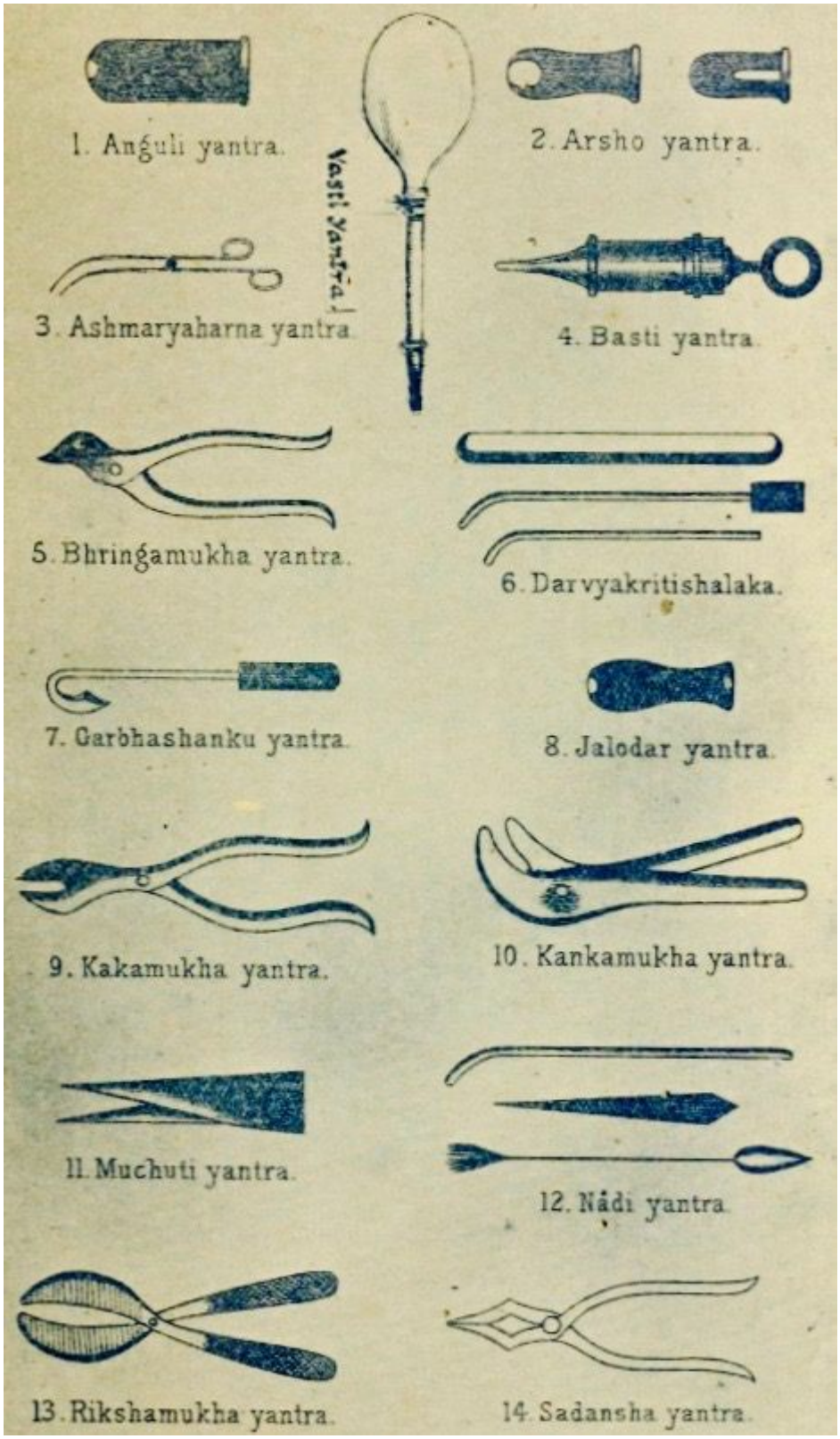


Sushruta’s view on healing is "an emphasis on the patient" and not just on the symptoms. A familiar concept in modern day.(9)

Physicians in current times construct medical history of a patient in addition to establishing trust and developing a belief on the success of treatment.(10)

These practices and policies are considered innovations in patient care in present times but Sushruta had already implemented them over 2,000 years ago.(11)

Sushruta attracted a number of disciples from far and wide. He would instruct them on surgical procedures by making them practice cutting on vegetables or dead animals to perfect surgical techniques.(12)



Although the practice of surgery was established since long in India by the time of Sushruta but in a less advanced form than what he practiced.(13)

Sushruta developed novel surgical techniques and most importantly invented the practice of cosmetic surgery especially rhinoplasty (reconstruction of the nose).(14)

