

INQUISITION TECHNIQUE OF AYURVEDA SCHOOLING – AN ANCIENT ART

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Abstract

Introduction - Medium of knowledge is education which helps to uplift skills to lead a healthy life. Gurukula was an education system in ancient India through which the knowledge was rendered in a systematic way from guru to shishya. The inquisitiveness to learn, gave a foundation for methodology to teach –learn- evaluate. Aim – To review on prashnaashtaka - the classical art of inquisition on the content of the text is intended as mentioned in Charaka Samhita. To apply and analyze the technique of questioning and answering-prashnaashtaka and to analyze its significance. Materials and Method – Literary study will be carried out through the available sources of Ayurveda classics there by analyzing the methods of ancient schooling techniques. Application of these techniques for every science and its importance will be discussed. Results – The study clarified the importance of inquisitiveness on the concepts to attain detail knowledge about the topic. Quest to learn from fair and valid question is the main reason for absolute and accurate knowledge. Discussion – classical method of analyzing any literature and a need of study protocol is being discussed. Importance of prashnaashtaka in gaining knowledge is being discussed, application of prashnaashtaka in Ayurveda and in manuscriptology is been dealt. Conclusion- The knowledge is gained by having inquisitiveness and expressing it in proper way by asking meaning full question. The importance of questioning and also answering according to one's knowledge is understood. Reason behind the structure of a book is known. Prashnaashtaka also helps in the study of manuscriptology.

Key words: Prashnaashtaka, charaka Samhita, manuscriptology.

Introduction

Education is a medium that provide knowledge and skills which helps the person to lead a good and a healthy life style. The Ancient Indian education systems is very popular as Gurukula system and it is very much structured which serves the purpose of learning. It is a type of education system where the student (shishya) live with teacher (guru) who is expert in various subjects from the Bhugola Shastra (astronomy), Jyothishya Shastra (astrology), Ayurveda (medical science), Vyaakarana (literature), Dharma Shastra (righteousness science), Vrikshayurveda (science of plant life), Pashu Ayurveda (science of animal life), Danurshastra (martial arts) etc.

The inquisitiveness of the student is given prime importance to educate and to help him to develop his skills. This creates a questionnaire method of gaining knowledge from guru to shishya. The depth of answer depends upon the depth of the question asked by shishya. The norm was such that guru would answer only if shishya ask the question to signify the anxiousness of the shishya to learn to embark the knowledge.

Hence in Ancient Ayurveda classics specially in Charaka Samhita the art and science of questioning and answering has been explained. An effort has been made to review the questioning and answering pattern.

Aim and objective of the study

- To review on prashnaashtaka - the classical art of inquisition on the content of the text is intended as mentioned in Charaka Samhita.
- To apply and analyse the technique of questioning and answering-prashnaashtaka and to analyse its significance

Materials and methods

Sources of data

Primary data from available sources of Ayurveda classics such as Charaka Samhita, Sushruta Samhita, Ashtanga Sangraha, Ashtanga Hridaya, Kashyapa Samhita, Harita Samhita etc.

Astrology texts like Bruhat jyothisha Shastra, Hora Samhita etc

Dharma shastra texts like Manu smriti, yaagnavalka smriti.

Methodology

The prashnaashtaka is applied over one question that is asked in Athulya Gotriya Shaareera Adhyaaya from Charaka Samhita.

Literature Review

The art of questioning and answering in Ayurveda is dealt through eight kinds of questions which is based on that particular science and text with their corresponding answers by the means of Prashnaashtaka, mentioned in Charaka Samhita Sutrasthana 30th chapter Arthe Dashamahamuleeya Adhyaaya.

PRASHNAASHTAKA

Prashnaashtaka comprises of two words that is Prashna and Ashtaka it means eight kind of questions

PRASHNA – Prashna is to inquiry to attain knowledge¹.

ASHTAKA - Eight in number.

Eight Prashnaashtaka are - Tantra (science)→ tantraartha(purpose of science) → sthaana(section)→sthaanartha(purpose of section)→adhyaaya(chapter) →adhyartha(purpose of chapter)→prashna(question on the content)→prashnaartha(purpose of question on the content)².

- **TANTRA** (science)- That which adheres or binds the principle constituents of the scattered things and the one which gives the basic, clear and complete knowledge is termed tantra^{3,4}.

Example - Here in the science of life – Ayurveda, complete knowledge of Shareera (anatomy and physiology of a body) is the tantra⁵. The treatise of Ayurveda which explains about anatomy and physiology of a body is also called tantra⁶, that has the collection of group of Sthaanas (sections)⁷.

Like example Charaka Samhita, Sushruta Samhita, Ashtanga Ayurveda, Ashtanga Sangraha etc.

- **TANTRAARTHA** (purpose of science) – The aims and objective of tantra (science) is called Tantraartha. According to the purpose of science, contexts are bifurcated and the science is understood⁸. That contexts are called prakarana⁹.

Example - In Ayurveda, tantraartha (purpose of science) is about maintaining the health of the healthy and pacifying disease in a sick person¹⁰. In Ayurveda, Tantraartha (purpose of science) is explained under ten categorization called Dashaprakaranas¹¹. (10 topics). Those are mentioned in table 1.

<u>Prakarana</u> <u>(topics)</u>	<u>Definitions</u>
Shareera	Body, that which is made out of the combination of five mahabhutas (penta - elemental conglomeration) and that having different parts is Shareera ¹² .
Vritti	That which is helpful for the growth and function of body that is solid and liquid food articles are called vritti ¹³
Hetu	That which is responsible or reasons for the formation of disease is classified into three, they are – asaattmendriya artha samyoga (non-conductive perception of senses), pragnaaparaadha (iniquity), parinaama (natural changes according to time) is hetu ¹⁴ .
Vyaadhi	The derangement of dhaatus in the body because of doshas is

	vyadhi ¹⁵
Karma	Chikitsa according to disease condition is karma ¹⁶
Kaarya	Attaining health after chikitsa is kaarya ¹⁷
Kaala	The seasons, day, night etc. that is nityaga and the avastha of the diseases for chikitsa is kaala ¹⁸
Kartru	The physician who is responsible to give chikitsa is karta ¹⁹
Karana	The materials or medicines that which is useful for the treatment is called karana. It is also called bshesaja ²⁰ .
Vidhivinishchaya	Vidhi is the method of administering the medication based on disease and kaala ²¹ .

• *STHAANA*(section) – Literary meaning of sthaana is that which provide space also it means position, place²². So here sthaana is that which is placed according to its content in a text²³. And it is the collection of Adhyaayas (chapters) are called sthaana²⁴

Example – In Ayurveda there are sthaanaas mentioned according to the major content of the science. In Charaka Samhita there are eight Sthaana they are Sutra Sthaana, Nidaana Sthaana, Vimaana Sthaana, Shareera Sthaana, Indriya Sthaana, Chikitsa Sthaana, Kapla Sthaana, Siddhi Sthaana²⁵.

• *STHAANARTHA* (purpose of section)- The sthaanartha is nothing but explanation given in the respected sthaana (section) about aims and objectives of that particular sthaana (section)²⁶.

Example – In Ayurveda sthaanaartha (purpose of section) is explained in the end of each sthaana(section). Here the analyzing chapter is from Shaareera Sthaana, the purpose of that is to explain about reason for formation of Shareera (body), reasons for formation of garbha (fetus) and its development in the womb, delivery of garbha (fetus) and anatomy of Shareera (body)²⁷.

• *ADHYAAYA*(chapter) - That which is useful for studies is Adhyaaya. Adhyaaya is the sub-classification of Sthaana. It is that where the collection of concept or topic that explained in detail and in one particular place. It is named according to the main topic of that adhyaaya²⁸. Collection of prakarana is Adhyaaya²⁹.

Example – In Ayurveda, adhyaaya is the chapters mentioned under the sthaana(section). Athulya Gotriya Shaareera Adhyaaya is the chapter mentioned under Shareera Sthaana that is analyzed.

• *ADHYAAYARTHA* (purpose of chapter) - The brief content of each chapter and is explained in the end of each chapter is called Adhyaayartha³⁰.

Example – In Ayurveda Adhyaayaartha is the purpose of the chapters, that is main contents of the chapter. They are, this chapter has important 36 questions based on the formation of normal and abnormal fetus, reasons for diseases and its remedy for not occurring again.

• *PRASHNA*(question) - After understanding the complete basis of the particular science by above mentioned six factors, prashna (question) is put forth. That is, prashna is the question asked on the basis of tantra in proper pattern without any conflict between the fundamentals of that respective tantra³¹. The sentences that are framed to solve our own doubts and to attain and enhance knowledge out of it is Prashna³².

Example – To understand Prashna (one question) from Athulya Gotriya Shaareera Adhyaaya is taken. That is

➤ सुचिरेण कथं स्त्री गर्भं प्रसूते?

How the female delivers a child even after 10 months (post term pregnancy)³³?

• *PRASHNAARTHA* (purpose of question) - Prashnaartha is that explanation to the given relevant question on the basis of tantra or Shaastra by the proper union of concepts³⁴.

Example –

➤ सुचिरेण कथं स्त्री गर्भं प्रसूते?

Table 2: Meaning of the words present in question	
पद (word)	पदार्थ (word meaning)
सुचिरेण	कालात् (ch.sha.2/10.gangadara)- तस्मिन्नेकदिवसातिक्रान्तेऽपि नवमं

	मासमुपादाय प्रसवकालमित्याहुरादशमान्मासात्। एतावान् प्रसवकालः, वैकारिकमतः परं कुक्षावस्थानं गर्भस्य॥ (ch.sha.4/25) If Garbha stays more than 10 months it is considered as suchirena.
कथं	How
स्त्री	Female
गर्भ प्रसूते	delivery of garbha

UTTARA(answer)

After knowing the method of asking the question to the person, then one should know the pattern of answer on the basis of that particular science.

• Pattern to Answer the prashnas³⁵

There are three stages of answering the questions. They are called vaakyasha (Direct meaning/ translation of sutra), Vaakyarthasha (Detailed explanation/ to the essence of meaning) and Arthaavayavasha (Extracting meaning of difficult words)

• **VAAKYASHA** - The complete subject in the text are explained by author in specific pattern, that is shallow understanding is vaakyasha³⁶

Example –

• आहारमाप्नोति यदा न गर्भः शोषं समाप्नोति परिस्रुतिं वा ।

तं स्त्री प्रसूते सुचिरेण गर्भं पुष्टो यदा वर्षगणैरपि स्यात् ॥³⁷

Anvaya - यदा आहारं न आप्नोति (तदा) गर्भः शोषं समाप्नोति वा परिस्रुतिं (करोति) तं स्त्री गर्भं सुचिरेण प्रसूते॥
यदा गर्भं पुष्टो स्यात् (तदा स्त्री प्रसूते) वर्षगणैरपि ॥

If the fetus does not get adequate nourishment and consequently gets dried up or is discharged, the woman delivers the child after long time which may take more than a year for delivery after the proper nourishment.

• **VAAKYARTHASHA** – vaakyarthasha is understanding the concept behind each topic in detail and the explanation of sentence should be in detail and also in short. The declaration of the statement should be done (pratigna) and it is proven by proper reasoning (hetu), by actual examples (drushtanta), by comparing with established examples (upanaya) and finally statement is concluded (nigamana). The sentences are understood by analyzing the statement by connecting with previously explained topics or with other concepts. Also the sentences are explained in such a way that all three intellectual people that is even clever student, moderately clever student and poor intelligent student also should understand it in appropriate way³⁸.

Example –

Pratigna(statements)

“सुचिरेण स्त्री गर्भं प्रसूते”

The woman delivers the child after long time which may take years for delivery after the proper nourishment.

Hetu(reasons)

यदा आहारं न आप्नोति (तदा) गर्भः शोषं समाप्नोति वा परिस्रुतिं (करोति), यदा गर्भं पुष्टो स्यात् वर्षगणैरपि ॥

If the foetus does not get adequate nourishment and consequently gets dried up or is discharged, the woman delivers the child after long time which may take years for delivery after the proper nourishment.

Table 3: Meaning of the words present in answer	
पद (Word)	पदार्थ (Word meaning)
आहारं	That which is taken through mouth is aahaara. It even includes solid food, water, juices, medicines etc.
आप्नोति	to obtain
यदा	When
न	no

गर्भः	The union of shukra (sperm), shonita(ovum) and jeeva(life) in the womb is called garbha
शोषं	Emaciate
समाप्नोति	acquire completely
परिस्रुतिं	discharge
वा	Or
पुष्टो	Nourished
यदा	when
वर्षगणैः	after one year
अपि	even
स्यात्	Perhaps

Drushtaanta(example) -

- Just like vishamaashana (having food not in proper time, less in quantity, more in quantity) lead to shosha (emaciation) in person³⁹
- Just like the plants become gradually dry (shosha) and suffer with stunted growth by facing obstacle in their natural process of development⁴⁰.

Upanaya (connecting the example with context) -

- Just like vishamaashana (having food not in proper time, less in quantity, more in quantity) lead to shosha (emaciation) in person similarly by less quantity of food which is supplied to garbha (child in womb) leads to shosha (emaciation) in garbha (child in womb)
- Just like the plants become gradually dry (shosha) and suffer with stunted growth by facing obstacle in their natural process of development in the same way the garbha shosha (child in the womb is emaciated) is caused due to lack of aahaara poshana (nourishment through food).

Nigamana(conclusion) -

यदा आहारं न आप्नोति (तदा) गर्भः शोषं समाप्नोति वा परिस्रुतिं (करोति) तं स्त्री गर्भं सुचिरेण प्रसूते॥ यदा गर्भं पुष्टो स्यात् (तदा स्त्री प्रसूते) वर्षगणैरपि ॥

If the foetus does not get adequate nourishment and consequently gets dried up or is discharged, the woman delivers the child after long time which may take more than a year for delivery after the proper nourishment.

- *ARTHAVAYAVASHA* – Later once again difficult words or sentences are taken and understood elaborately with the help of other scholarly texts⁴¹.

Example -

- Physiology of nourishment of child that which is present in womb.

The garbha is free from thirst and hunger. It will be dependent upon the mother for all its nourishment. Its manifested and non-manifested organs get nourishment by the process of upasneha (perfusion) and upasweda (thermal regulation). It gets nourishment by the process of upasneha (perfusion) sometimes through the hair follicles and sometimes through the naabhi (umbilical chord). The naabhi of the garbha is attached to the naabhi on one end and apara(placenta) on the other end. The apara(placenta) is in turn connected with the hridaya (heart) of the mother. From the hridaya (heart) of the mother, the rasa (nutrients) flows to the apara (placenta) through the pulsating siras (vessels). This rasa promotes strength (bala) and complexion (varna) of the garbha as it is composed of materials having shad rasas (food having sweet, sour, salt, spicy, bitter, pungent taste).

- Thus rasa (nutrients) of the garbhini (pregnant lady) serves three purposes-
 1. Svashareera pushti- nourishment for her own body.
 2. Stanyaaya- for lactation
 3. Garbha vridhhi- for the growth of the garbha.

Being supported by that aahaara the garbha is dependent upon the mother⁴².

- Reasons for shosha (emaciation) of the garbha (fetus)

A woman who sits in awkward position (utkata), on uneven(vishama), hard(Katina) seats; who suppresses the urges of vaata, mootra, pureesha; indulges in intensive or extreme forms of physical activities, takes excessively teekshna ushna aahaara, eats very sparingly(pramitaashana), her garbha becomes shosha, sometimes it dies in the womb, sometimes it gets delivered untimingly⁴³.

- Pathogenesis of shosha(emaciation) of child in womb by other author

When vaayu is taken different direction from its normal pathway in rasavaahini srotas then shosha (emaciation) is formed in garbha having vaata roga or heena anga⁴⁴.

- Upavishtaka and Nagodhara are the Conditions in Ayurveda that the garbha (fetus) stays more than 10 months

Upavishtaka and nagodhara are the two condition where the garbha (fetus) stays in the garbhashaya (uterus) for more than 10 months due to nidaana (cause).

Condition	Nidaana(causative factors)	Lakshana(symptoms)
Upavishtaka ⁴⁵	Ushna aahaara (hot food articles) Teekshna aahaara (food articles that have corrosive nature)	The pregnant women with large and well-formed foetus starts experiencing bleeding or other forms of uterine discharge. The garbha will cease growing and stay for a long time in the mother garbhaashaya (uterus)
Nagodhara ⁴⁶	Upavaasa(fasting) due vratha (regimen) sneha dveshi(not having oily food) vaata prakopa aahaara and vihaara (vaata vitiating food articles and activities) shokha(grief) rooksha aahaara (dry food articles)	Garbha (fetus) will not develop due to causative factors and getting weaned away from nutrition, and such garbha (fetus) will remain in the garbhaashaya (uterus) for a long period of time without developing.

- Treatment for upavishtaka and nagodhara

• Treatment explained for upavishtaka and nagodhara is applied even for shosha (emaciation) which has same causative factor as both.

• Gritha (ghee) and ksheera (milk) processed with bhautika (drugs having anti-evil spirits like vacha, guggulun etc.), jeevaneeya, brimhaneeya, madhura, vaatahara dravya

• Aama garbha (immature and undeveloped garbha like eggs) with ksheera (milk)

• Ample use of medicated ghrita (ghee) also nourishes the mother and the garbha (fetus)

• These medications course should be supplemented with yaana(walking), vaahana(moving), apamaarjana (physical cleansing), engaging in mild exercise and other forms of physical activities⁴⁷.

• Aama garbha (immature and undeveloped garbha like eggs) is given in garbha kshaya⁴⁸.

- Garbha pushti according to graha (planets)⁴⁹

Month	Garbha sthiti (foetal growth)	Grahasvaami (planetary god)

Prathama maasa (1 st month)	Kalala (combination of sperm and ovum)	Shukra (Venus)
Dvitiya maasa (2 st month)	Ghana (foetus)	Bhauma (earth)
Truteeya maasa (3 rd month)	Anga prathyanga nirmaana (formation of parts of foetus)	Guru (Jupiter)
Chaturtha maasa (4 th month)	Asthi majja nirmaana (formation of bone and bone marrow)	Soorya (sun)
Panchama maasa (5 th month)	Charma nirmaana (formation of skin)	Chandra (moon)
Shashta maasa (6 th month)	Roma kesha nirmaana (formation of follicular hair)	Shani (Saturn)
Sapthama maasa (7 th month)	Chaitanyata (express activities)	Budha (mercury)
Ashtama maasa (8 th month)	Rasaaswadana (the food which is taken by the mother is enjoyed by foetus)	Lagnesha
Navama maasa (9 th month)	Udvega (rage) of garbha (foetus) to come out from mother womb	Chandra (moon)
Dashama maasa (10 th month)	Prasava (delivery)	Soorya (sun)

- If the garha (planet) according month is disturbed, then that month will be difficult in pushti (nutrition) for garbha (foetus) inside the mother womb. If the graha (foetus) is strong in that month then pushti (nutrition) will be proper of the garbha.

Discussion

The technique of gaining knowledge is through asking questions. The effectiveness of answer depends on the method of question. This type of practice of interrogation is present since ages for example, in Garuda Puraana, Upanishad, Ayurveda etc. Questioning generally helps to uncover the challenges that every science is facing and generate better solution to solve the problems that will lead to innovation and growth. After reviewing the literature, it is understood that before asking question the first step is to understand the foundation of the particular science that is, its past, present and future and the purpose of science. This is because all sciences have its own way of understanding things. So the question will be authentic, particular to that science and so will be the answer also. This is understood by tantra and tantraartha. Every single science is divided into different sectors according to the purpose. Knowing the sector in detail will help in placing the question to the specific field and to get the answer still more precisely. This is sthaana and sthaanarta. Even though the sector is fixed and understood, to get exact proficiency in the field, it is compulsory to get awareness on the structure and objective of the field, this is called adhyaaya and adhyaartha. Finally understanding the science in all its nock and corner, the question is framed (Prashna) on the basis of particular science, on its particular sector, on its particular structure. Also there should be a clarity behind the purpose of asking specific question(prashnaartha). By all means the answer to the well-structured, specific, to the point question is answered in the organized pattern – vaakhya, vaakhyaartha, arthaavayava, according to the intellectual capacity of the person who is questioning. Answer is framed according to the three levels of intellectual personalities those are poor intellectual person, medium intellectual person, high intellectual person. Here vaakhya, direct meaning of the answer is stated for poor intellectual persons because they will be

having the less capacity to understand the concept. Vaakhyaartha, Detailed explanation of the answer is directed for medium intellectual persons because they will be having doubts in spite of stating an answer, to clarify that the statement is described by giving an example over the statement. Arthaavayava-the detailed description of each and every word in an answer, it is for the high intellectual person who are having the highest level of understanding the subject and that will be satisfied through this way of explanation. Hence by this we can understand that, the way of questioning as well as answering is to be in a well-structured manner to make understand the different levels of intellectual persons.

Application of prashnaashtaka is explained by giving an example from Charaka Samhita, Shareera Sthaana, Atulya Gotriya Shareera Adhyaaya, on question “How the female delivers a child even after 10 months (post term pregnancy)?”. The question is related to Ayurveda; this is understood that the concept of question is addressing the reasons for abnormal time of delivery of the foetus which comes under health sector. This question again deals with delayed delivery which explains about the birth of the child that represents the child health so, it placed in the section of Shareera sthaana. It is the 12th question among 36 questions in the chapter Atulya Gotriya Shareera, before to this question there are questions about reasons for normal delivery, reasons for secondary infertility, reasons for pseudocyeis (false pregnancy), reasons for male child, reasons for female child, reasons for twins etc. after explaining all the topics then the question comes why the mother delivers the child delay, this shows there should be connectivity between the contents of chapter. Here it is understood that after explaining normalcy then abnormal is explained. The answer is explained in three stages as it is discussed earlier it is according to the degree of perception of an individual. In vaakhya, the brief meaning of answer is mentioned. In vaakhyaartha, the detail meaning of the words in the answer is explained and the concept is described by giving an example, that helps to interpret the concept and understand. In arthaavayava, the answer is described in detail like here for the answer- “deficiency in nutrition to the child is due to inadequate nourishment of child through mother and consequently it gets dried” is explained by illustrating the normal way of blood circulation in foetus, common method of nutrition supply through mother, causative factors for the foetal emaciation, diseases equivalent to shosha (emaciation) its treatment, relation between the graha (planet) and month of pregnancy etc. in detail. So here the deep knowledge is gained by penetrating into the answer and narrating it in all perspective.

Application of prashnaashtaka in manuscriptology-

Manuscriptology is a branch of study in archaeology about the history of literature by the means of very old palm-leaf, manuscripts, rare paper manuscripts, epigraphy and underwater archaeology. How prashnaashtaka is helpful in study of manuscript is the query manifests. It is helpful in critical edition (textual analysis) of manuscript through differentiating the contents of the manuscript and analysing in the method of prashnaashtaka like the content pertaining to which science, purpose of it, sectors and purpose of sectors, bifurcating the contents and analysing it in the method of vaakhya, vaakhyatha, arthaavayava, gives the clarity and thorough essence of the manuscript.

Conclusion

Inquisition to learn is a key to attain knowledge. The question intended should be expressed properly and its meaning to be well understood.

The way of questioning as well as answering is to be in a well-structured manner and it should convey to different levels of intellectual persons.

The lineage between the chapters and its contents gives clear background to every context explained.

The structure of prashnaashtaka and the structure of answer helps in gaining the deep knowledge that is all pervasive manner.

Prashnaashtaka is also helpful in recognizing the essence of manuscript and can applied in manuscriptology.

Thus this method can be adopted in decoding and understanding unwrapped hidden concepts of any literature. Inquisitiveness should be a key to unlock the door of knowledge.

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