

## THE AYURVEDIC MAN: A HUMAN ANATOMICAL PAINTING

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### ABSTRACT

Ayurveda is the oldest indigenous medicine. It is the eternal life science with its own sound basic principles. Initially the knowledge was transmitted by oral learning method. Later the literature was created in Sanskrit language. There are several valuable medical manuscripts in Sanskrit which forms a strong basis of Ayurveda, but there are very few manuscripts which are in illustrated form. The Ayurvedic Man is a human anatomical painting which is entirely drawn from the Ayurvedic understanding of the human anatomy. In the painting all the channels and viscera are illustrated two-dimensionally on a single plane. The painting is surrounded by Sanskrit passages from Bhavaprakasha by Bhavamishra. This painting is stored in the Wellcome Library, London. This painting was acquired by the Wellcome Library, London from an art dealer in October 1986. Size of this painting is 62.5 x 40.5 cm, and the painting is created with pen and water color. Due to rarity of illustrated Sanskrit medical manuscript, this painting has been used widely for different purposes.

**KEYWORDS:** Ayurveda, Painting, Anatomy, Sanskrit, Bhavaprakasha.

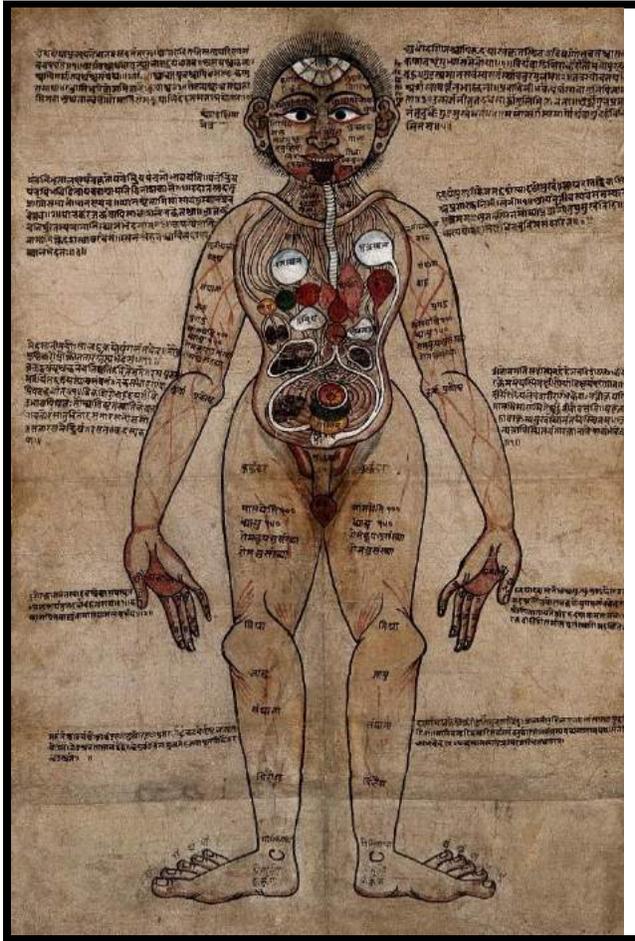


Figure 1: The Ayurvedic Man, Wellcome Library no. 574912i<sup>1</sup>

### Information about Painting

Stored at:  
Wellcome Library no. 574912i.

Physical description:  
1 painting: gouache, with pen and inc,  
sheet 62.5 x 40.5 cm.

Publication/Creation:  
Approx. 1800.

Present condition:  
Fragile.

Genre/Technique:  
Drawings.

Topic:  
Human anatomy, Ayurveda.

Languages:  
Sanskrit.

Exhibition:  
Exhibited in "Ayurvedic Man:

## INTRODUCTION

The Ayurvedic Man is a widely-known painting currently stored at the Wellcome Library shows an anatomical view of the male human body according to the classical Indian medicine system, Ayurveda. This painting was acquired by the Wellcome Library, London from an art dealer in October 1986.<sup>2</sup> Size of this painting is 62.5 x 40.5 cm, and the painting is created with pen and water color. This painting is special because it represents an interpretation of the interior of a human body as understood by Ayurvedic practitioners. Due to the rarity of this kind of illustration in Ayurvedic science, this painting has been used in many publications.

The Wellcome Library is founded on the collection formed by Sir Henry Wellcome, whose personal wealth allowed him to create one of the most ambitious collections of the 20th century. The Wellcome Library is located in London, England; which is a free museum and library that aims to challenge how people think and feel about health. Through exhibitions, collections, live programming and publishing, they create opportunities for people to think deeply about the connections between science, medicine, life and art.<sup>3</sup>

Ayurveda is a traditional Indian system of medicine which is based on the idea of balance in bodily systems. The Sanskrit term Ayurveda translates to “knowledge of life”.

Ayurveda is the oldest indigenous medicine system. It is the eternal life science with its own sound basic principles. The purpose of Ayurveda is to protect health of the healthy and alleviate disorders in the diseased.<sup>4</sup> Initially the knowledge was transmitted by oral learning method. Later the literature was created in Sanskrit language. This literature was transmitted in manuscript form until the widespread printing of Sanskrit texts became common in 19<sup>th</sup> century. Lots of Sanskrit Ayurvedic manuscripts still exist today in south Asian countries and the rest of the world. Sanskrit Ayurvedic manuscripts were normally not illustrated. In contrast, medical illustrations from China, Nepal, Tibet and Japan are much more common.

### Anatomical Figure in Painting

Anatomical figure in painting is labelled, inscribed, annotated and commented upon just like a Sanskrit Manuscript. Hence it is not only a painting, it is a diagram too. Some labels in this anatomical figure are in Sanskrit but several labels are in Middle Indo Aryan and New Indo Aryan.<sup>5</sup>

### Transcription of Anatomical Figure

The labels of anatomical figure are corrected and translated where possible. There are several labels which are not clearly visible so they are considered illegible.

**Face** (Clockwise from the top center of face)

Number	Transcription	Translation	Number	Transcription	Translation
1	अधयोगसिगत	-	10	ज्जायु७०	70 Sinew
2	आखिपरेलाक	Eyelash/ Eyelid	11	गिजा	Gums
3	शंख	Temple	12	हनुक्षिला	Jaw
4	श्वेतवामनेत्र	White left eye	13	संधय३८	38 Junctions

5	औषध्य	Herbs	14	गाला	Cheek
6	गाला	Cheek	15	शिरमर्म	Lethal point in a Head
7	गिजा	Gums	16	शंख	Temple
8	ज्वायु७०	70 Sinew	17	कपोलपरेखाआखि	Cheek-Eyelash-Eye
9	ज्वायु७०	70 Sinew	18	कपालरन्ध्र	8 Fissures in the Skull

Table 1 - Transcription of Face.

### Throat

Left Side			Right Side		
Number	Transcription	Translation	Number	Transcription	Translation
1	मला	Impurities	1	शुया	-
2	षितिया	-	2	मथ	-
3	रुद्रय्	-			
4	निल/नित्य/निम्य	-			

Table 2 - Transcription of Throat.

### Torso

Number	Transcription	Translation	Number	Transcription	Translation
1	रसस्थान	Place of Rasa	6	फोक्तो	Lungs
2	वोक्तो	-	7	शुक्रस्थान	Place of Semen
3	पित्त	Bile	8	इन्द्रिय	Senses
4	वात	Air	9	औजस्थान	Place of Oja (vitality)
5	कफ	Phlegm			

Table 3 - Transcription of Torso.

### Belly

Number	Transcription	Translation
1	शुडि / शुद्रि	Navel
2	मलाशय	Receptacle of Impurities
3	मूत्राशय	Receptacle of Urine

Table 4 - Transcription of Belly.

### Left Arm and Right Arm (Writings on left Arm and right Arm are similar.)

Number	Transcription	Translation	Number	Transcription	Translation
1	तृतीयस्कन्ध	Third Shoulder	6	मांसपेसि१००	100 Flesh Muscles
2	वक्ष्य	-	7	ज्वायु१५०	150 Sinews
3	संघाता	Aggregate Bone	8	रोमकूपअसंख्या	Uncountable

					Hair Follicles
4	बाहु	Arm	9	रोमअसंख्या	Uncountable Hairs
5	प्रगद्र	-	10	कुर्चाप्रकोष्ठ	Extremity Forearm

Table 5 - Transcription of Left Arm and Right Arm.

**Left Hand and Right Hand** (Writings on left hand and right hand are similar.)

The top of the palm is labeled हाकालो / हाक्यालो. The top joints of fingers in both hands are marked त. The fingers of left hand left to right and the fingers of right hand

right to left are labeled क, अ, म, त and अं which stands for कनिष्ठा (Little finger), अनामिका (Nameless finger), मध्यमा (Middle finger), तर्जनी (Scolding finger) and अंगुष्ठ (Thumb).

**Loins** (Writings on left side and right side are similar.)

Number	Transcription	Translation
Top Center		
1	शुक्रमार्ग	Pathway of Semen
Left Side and Right Side		
1	कुकुन्दर	Cavities of the Loins
2	मासपेशि१००	100 Flesh Muscle
3	ध्मायु१५०	150 Arteries
4	रोमकूपअसंख्या	Uncountable Hair Follicles
5	रोमअसंख्या	Uncountable Hairs

Table 6 - Transcription of Loins.

**Left Leg and Right Leg** (Writings on left leg and right leg are similar.)

Number	Transcription	Translation	Number	Transcription	Translation
1	तिग्रा	-	3	संघाता	Aggregate Bone
2	जानु	Knee	4	पिरौडा	-

Table 7 - Transcription of Left Leg and Right Leg.

**Left Feet and Right Feet** (Writings on left feet and right feet are similar.)

Number	Transcription	Translation
1	गोलिगथा	Ankle
2	पैनालो	-
3	कुर्कुवा	-
4	अं for अंगुली (On each Toe)	Toe

Table 8 - Transcription of Left Feet and Right Feet.

### Text in Painting

Text is always at the heart of Ayurvedic literature. Text legitimates and empowers art. Ayurvedic physicians, historians, pharmacologists and marketers uses the high textuality of Ayurvedic literature as a reference point and as a badge of validity. The text passages used in this particular painting are from a 16<sup>th</sup> century Ayurvedic *Grantha* called “Bhavaprakasha”, by the Author Bhavamishra.<sup>6</sup>

Bhavamishra was the son of Latakamishra. He belonged to an orthodox Brahmin family as evidenced by the surname ‘Mishra’ which is generally used by Brahmins. He is believed to belong to Magadha (lower and middle parts of Bihar state in India) since he has given the names of various kinds of food substances known to the people of this region in his treatise. Bhavamishra’s period is said to be 16th century AD.<sup>7</sup> Bhavaprakasha is compilation of all the available information and efficacious medical recipes from various ancient Ayurvedic texts in one place. Bhavaprakasha consists in total of 10268 verses, distributed and allocated in 3 sections (*Khanda*), 7 parts (*Bhaga*) and 80 chapters (*Prakarana*).

Text passages used in this painting are drawn from the 3<sup>rd</sup> chapter of Bhavaprakasha.<sup>8</sup> This chapter deals with embryology and Anatomy. Particular reason to use Bhavaprakasha text in this painting is not found.

### Transcription of Passages in Painting

There are total 10 passages in this painting. These passages are corrected and translated where possible. Corrected words are written in the bracket next to original transcription.

#### Passage 1 (Top left corner)

अथदोषा (दोषाः) प्रवक्ष्यंतेधातवस्तदनंतरम्  
आहारादिगतिस्तस्यपरिणामंचवक्ष्यते॥ 1 ॥  
आर्तवश्चाथधातूनांमलाजद्रयपधातव  
(मलास्तदुपधातवः) ॥ आमयश्च (आशयाश्च) कला॥  
श्चापिमर्माण्यर्थश्च (मर्माण्यथच) संचयः (सन्धयः) ॥  
2 ॥ (शिरा) श्वाधायुवश्चापि (स्नायवश्चापि) धमण्यः  
(धमन्यः) कण्डरास्तथा॥ रन्ध्रामि (रन्ध्राणि)  
भूरिवोजामि (स्त्रोतांसि) जालैःकुचाश्च  
(कूच्चाश्चरज्जवः) ॥ 3 ॥ सेवन्यश्चाथसंघाता  
(संघाताः) सिमता (सीमान्ताश्च) अथता (तथा) त्वच  
(त्वचः) ॥ रोमानि (लोमानि) रोमकूपानि  
(लोमकूपाश्च) देहतमतस्मयोगतः (एतन्मयोमतः) ।  
4 |

Translation - Now *Doshas* (humours) will be described and then *Dhatu*s (body tissues) along with digestion and metabolism of the food. The other components, with which body is composed and furnished are *Aartava* (menstrual blood), *Dhatu's Mala* (by products of metabolism), *Upadhatus* (products of primary body tissues), *Asayas* (receptacles), *Kalaa* (membrane), *Marma* (vital arcas), *Sandhi* (joints), *Sira* (veins), *Snayu* (tendons), *Dhamani* (arteries), *Kandara* (muscular ligaments), *Randhra* (apertures), *Strotas* (channels), *Jaal* (fasciae), *Kurcha* (anastomoses), *Rajju* (finer tendons), *Sevani* (tendinous fasciculi or sutures), *Samghata* (unions or junctions), *Simant* (parting of bones), *Twacha* (skin), *Loma* (hair) and *Lomakoopa* (hair follicles).

#### Passage 2 (Top right corner)

अधोदणि (दक्षिण) तश्चापिहृदया (हृदयाद्)  
ख/यकृत (यकृतः) स्थितः (स्थितिः) ॥ विषणौ  
(वृषणौ) भवतश्चारात् (भवतःसारात्)  
कफाश्लुङ्गुभ्यां (कफाश्लुङ्गुभ्यां) समेधीया  
(चमेदसाम्) ॥ 1 ॥ विर्य (वीर्य)  
वाहिशिराधारौतौमतौपुरुषा (पौरुषा) वहु (वहौ) ॥

गुडस्य (गुदस्य) मान (मानं) सर्वस्यसर्वस्थां  
(सार्द्धस्याच)चतुरङ्गुलम्॥ 2 ॥ तत्रस्योवतप  
(स्युर्वलयस) तिश्रं (तिस्त्रः) शङ्खावर्त्तनभास्  
(शङ्खावर्त्तनिभास्) तुना (ताः) ॥ प्रवाहिली  
(प्रवाहिणी) भवेत्पूर्वासाधागुलिपिता  
(सार्द्धाङ्गुलिमिता) मता॥ 3 ॥ उत्सर्जनीतुतदध  
(तदधः) (सा) सार्द्धाङ्गुलिमितामता  
(सार्द्धाङ्गुलसम्मिता) ॥ अर्द्धाङ्गुलप्रमानं  
(अर्द्धाङ्गुलप्रमाणं) तुबुधैःगुडमुखं (गुदमुखं) मतं॥ 4  
॥ मलोत्सर्गस्यमार्गोऽयंवायुदेहं (पायुर्देहे)  
विनिमितम् (विनिर्मितः) ॥ 5 ॥

Translation - Situated downwards to the right of *Hridaya* (heart) is *Yakrit* (liver). *Vrushanas* (testicles) are originated from *Kapha*(phlegm), *Rakta* (blood), *Maamsa* (muscles) and *Meda* (adipose tissues). They are the place of origin for *Viryavahi Siras* (semen carrying vessels) and symbolize *Purusatva* (masculinity). The entire organ *Guda* (rectum) measures four and a half *Angulas* (a measure equal to finger's breadth). There are 3 *Valis* (sphincters) which resembles with Conch. The first one is *Pravahini* and measures one and half *Angula*. Next to it is *Utsarjini*, which measures the same. The third *Vali* is *Samvarni* which measures one *Angula* and *Gudamukha* (anus) measures half *Angula*. This *Paayu*(rectum) is structured for the purpose of *Malotsarga* (excretion).

**Passage 3** (2<sup>nd</sup> on left side)

पञ्चभिभूता (पञ्चभिभूतास्) लक्ष (त्वथ) पञ्चकृतो  
(पञ्चकृत्वः) पञ्चेन्द्रिय (पञ्चेन्द्रियं) पञ्चमो (पञ्चसु)  
भावयंति॥ पञ्चेन्द्रिय (पञ्चेन्द्रियं) पञ्चषि (पञ्चसु)  
भविषित्वा (भावयित्वा) पञ्चवायामति  
(पञ्चत्यमायान्ति) विनाशकाले॥ 1 ॥ उदास्तदनु  
(उदानस्तदनु) प्राणो (प्राणः) समानोपानएवच॥  
व्यानश्चैतामि (व्यानश्चैतानि) मासावप्र(नामानिवायो)

स्थानं (स्थान) प्रववेत्तव (प्रभेदतः) ॥ 2 ॥  
पाचकरजकं (रञ्जकं) वापि  
(चापि)साधकालोचकेतथा॥ भ्राजकंचेतिप्रीतस्य  
(पित्तस्य) नामानिस्थानभेदनात् (स्थानभेदतः) ॥ 3  
॥ कफस्यैतानिनामानिकेदश (क्लेदनश)  
खावरंवनं (चावलंबनः) ॥ रसन (रसनः) श्रेहनाश्चपि  
(स्नेहनश्चापि) लक्षण (श्लेषणः) स्थानभेदतः॥ 4 ॥

Translation - *Dhamani* made of all five basic elements and they are communicating and networking *Jivatma* (individual soul) with the five sensory organs separately and thus helping the *Buddhi* (mind) in sensual perception. When life ends, they disintegrate and join the same five basic elements. The *Vata*(air) is known with five different names, depending upon the location which are *Udana*, *Prana*, *Samana*, *Apana* and *Vyana*. Depending upon the location *Pitta* (bile) is classified into five types, which are *Pachaka*, *Ranjaka*, *Sadhaka*, *Lochaka* and *Bhrajaka*. The five types of *Sleshma* (phlegm) according to location are *Kledana*, *Avalambana*, *Rasana*, *Snehana*and *Sleshana*.

**Passage 4** (2<sup>nd</sup> on right side)

हृदयां(हृदयं) पुण्डरीकेन (पुण्डरीकेण)  
सदृशंस्याद्अधोमुखं॥ जाग्रतस्तद्रिकसिति  
(जाग्रतस्तद्रिकसिति) श्वप्रनस्तु (स्वपतस्तु)  
निमीलिनी (निमीलति) ॥ 1 ॥ आयंतु (आशयस्तु)  
जीवस्यवेसन (चेतन) स्थानमुत्तमम्॥ अत (अतस्)  
तस्मि (तस्मिंसु) तमोव्याप्त (तमोव्याप्ते) प्राणितु  
(प्राणिनः) प्रसुखंति (प्रस्वपन्ति) हि॥ 2 ॥  
कक्षयोवर्क्षसे (कक्षयोवर्क्षसः) संधि (सन्धी) वत्रुनि  
(जत्रुनी) ममदारिते (समुदाहृत्ये) ॥ 3 ॥

Translation - The heart is similar to a lotus, facing downwards. On waking up, it blooms; on sleeping, it closes up. That is the resting place of the soul. It is the supreme location of the consciousness. And so, when

*Tamo Guna* (darkness quality) covers it, person fall asleep. The collarbones are defined as the junctions of the chest and the shoulders.

**Passage 5** (3<sup>rd</sup> on left side)

मेदसानीतयोः (मेदःशोणितयोः) सालाद् (साराद्) वृकयोर्युगलं भवेत्॥ तौतुपुष्टिकरौ प्रोक्तौ जतारस्तस्य (जठरस्थस्य) भेदसः॥ 11 ॥ वृकद्वयं (वृकःद्वयं) पृथक्नैव तिष्ठति हरिते (हारिते) मते॥ रमयुक्तामवीर्येण (रसयुक्तात्मवीर्येण) हृदयस्यावलंबनं (हृदयस्यावलंबनं) ॥ तृक (त्रिक) सन्धारणं वा (चा) पिपवदघात् (विदधात्यवलंबनः) ॥ 1 ॥ त्रिक (त्रिकं) शिरोबाहुद्वयसंधि (शिरोबाहुद्वयसंधि) उभावपियतः (ततः) सौम्या (सौम्यौ) तिष्ठतं (तिष्ठतस्) स्वातिके (चान्तिके) यतः॥ यतोरसात्तुवितो (रसान्विजानितो) रसनारसनौसमौ॥ लता (रसना) रसनेन्द्रियं॥ रसन (रसनः) ॥ कंदस्य कफः (कण्ठस्थ) ॥

Translation - As an essence of *Medas* (fatty tissues) and *Sonita* (blood) two *Vrikkas* (kidneys) are generated. Their primary function is to nourish and support the *Jatharashtha Meda* (fat present above suprarenal glands). In the opinion of Harita, the two *Vrikkas* (kidneys) do not stand separately. *Avalambaka Sleshma* provides support and stamina to *Hridaya* (heart) along with *Rasadhatu*. This *Kapha* (phlegm) also bears the *Trika* (sacroiliac joints). *Rasana Kapha* (phlegm) and *Jihva* (tongue) both have a common property – *Saumya* (moist and cool). That is why, they stay together and help each other in receiving taste sensation.

**Passage 6** (3<sup>rd</sup> on right side)

जीवोवसतिसर्वस्मिन्देहेतत्रविशेषतः॥ वीर्यरक्तेमलेयस्मिन्क्षीणयान्ति (याति) क्षयं (क्षणम्) क्षणात्॥ 1 ॥

वीर्यरक्तेपलेचशरीरारंभकेवा अनन्तोक्तपरि (वाग्भटोक्तपरि) मानमिमाणमितेष्वुद्धे (शुद्धे) जीवोवसति॥ यकृत्प्लीहाव (च) रक्तस्यमुखं (मुखं) स्थानंतयो (स्थानंतयोः) स्थितम्॥ अन्यत्रापिस्थितवंता (संस्थितवंतां) रक्ताना (रक्तानां) पोशकं (पोषकं) भवेत्॥ 1 ॥

Translation - Life dwells in the whole body, and especially in the *Virya* (semen), in the *Rakta* (blood) and in the *Mala* (excretory form of digested food). Being diminished in these, life is instantly destroyed. Life dwells in the *Virya* (semen), in the *Rakta* (blood) and in the *Mala* (excretory form of digested food), those are pure when the body is first made, and in the quantity according to the metabolic process described by Vagbhata. *Yakrita* (liver) and *Pliha* (spleen) are the main seats of *Rakta Dhātu* (blood tissues). Staying there primarily, it nourishes the blood which is present throughout the body in circulation.

**Passage 7** (4<sup>th</sup> on left side)

उरोरक्तासमं (रक्ताशयस्) तस्याद् (तस्माद्) अधश्चेष्टाशय (अधःश्लेष्माशयः) स्मृतं आलाशयं (आमाशयस्) तुतदधोदहनाशयः (तदस्थतलिङ्गं चरकोद्वदत) ॥ 1 ॥ कफापित्तवाशांताम् (कफाम्पित्तवातानां) आशया (आशया) मलमूर्तयः (मलमूर्त्रयोः) ॥ 2 ॥

Translation – *Raktashaya* (seat of blood) is located in *Uras* (thoracic area) and *Sleshmashaya* (seat of *Sleshma* (phlegm)) is situated just below it and *Aamashaya* (seat of undigested food) is situated in downward direction, whose details Charaka described. The receptacles of *Kapha* (phlegm), *Aama* (undigested food), *Pitta* (bile), *Vata* (air), *Mala* (bodily excretion), *Mutra* (urine).

**Passage 8** (4<sup>th</sup> on right side)



more errors in each short passages of painting which suggests that the artist was not a great expert in the Sanskrit texts or the Ayurvedic medicine. Language used in the painting's passages is Sanskrit but language used in painting's labelling is mixture of Sanskrit, Nepalese, Middle Indo Aryan and New Indo Aryan languages.

### CONCLUSION

The Ayurvedic Man is an image painted no earlier than about 1700 AD. The passages used in this painting are from classical Ayurvedic work called Bhavaprakasha by Bhavamishra. The extracts are taken from 3<sup>rd</sup> chapter of Bhavaprakasha, which deals with anatomy and embryology. Despite having many orthographical errors, due to its rarity and lack of illustrated manuscripts in the field of Ayurveda, this painting plays important role in the field of Ayurvedic Manuscript.

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