

HAHNEMANN HAD SANKARA'S INTELLECT AND BUDDHA'S HEART*

The other day a man of seventy stopped me in the street and said: "Homoeopathy saved my life". A couple of years ago he was a patient who had suffered a massive heart attack. The words did not surprise me. I have heard many such statements ever since I was a child. Many physicians in the world have witnessed miracles in most of the incurable cases and testified to the efficacy of homoeopathy. To narrow down incurability in a patient is a special discipline in homoeopathy.

Hahnemann concentrated on medicine like a monk on God

Hahnemann developed fanatical working habits that were to stay with him all through his life. Every fourth day he spent a sleepless night to give a scientific basis for the great therapeutic law-*similia similibus curentur* - which was known even during the era of Hippocrates. He toiled all his life and dedicated himself to medicine like a monk to God. The profound depth of his knowledge in botany, zoology, physics, chemistry, metallurgy and medicine, coupled with his mastery in the European languages, Greek and Latin, greatly helped him to make a comparative study of medical subjects and made him a genius in medicine.

His contribution to preventive medicine

He was the first man to emphasize the utility of preventive medicine long before vaccines came into being. Hahnemann clearly mentioned that an attendant on a small-pox case acquires lifelong immunity and he successfully used homoeopathic medicines in such epidemics as **prophylactics**. Even in the recent epidemic of encephalitis the remedy *Belladonna*, discovered by Hahnemann for manifold troubles, was successfully used as preventive and curative, as first experimented and testified by Dr. G.V. Chalapathy of Anantapur in one lakh cases.

Hahnemann is medicine itself

Hahnemann's original contribution to the science of Chemistry, e.g., wine test, colloidal suspension of gold soluble and the test for soluble mercury, have been almost forgotten by the chemists of today. His basic and indispensable treatise on the art and science of pharmacy was 'Apothecaries of Lexicon'.

Few people today in the field of the sciences of hygiene and public health, town planning, epidemiology and preventive medicine know or care to recognize that it was Hahnemann who first placed these subjects on a scientific base in the years 1782-1834, long before Petenkofer, the accredited pioneer of modern hygiene.

Hahnemann also formulated the germ theory of cholera in 1831 long before the so-called founders of bacteriology, Koch and Pasteur. His works on Botany, Entomology,

Sociology and Philology are not at all negligible. In the field of mental diseases by no means Pinel is regarded as the pioneer of modern psychiatry, which recognizes insanity as a disease requiring scientific and human treatment, instead of being held as in Hahnemann's time as "perversions of moral tendencies of soul produced by sin", deserving inhuman torture. Hahnemann conceived the same idea one year before Pinel and he reformed the Bicentre Asylum in Paris [1791]. Scientists in the field of medicine are gradually veering round to the view of Hahnemann by accepting and adopting many truths originally discovered by him.

Birth of a unique idea

During most of his career he practiced in a totally different medical age from ours, an age before the human body was minutely sub-divided among specialists, before electronic devices, radioactive substances and isotope scanning played their part in diagnosis. He provided an eternal truth in the concept of a disease and laid the foundation for a scientific therapy.

Great linguist

Since he was a great linguist and knew Greek, Latin, German, French, English, etc. Hahnemann was able to study thoroughly the existing medical books by eminent authors from different countries. As he was a great scholar in Physics, Chemistry, Botany, Zoology and other sister Sciences, he was able to match thoroughly the concept of disease and the treatment of the patient on scientific lines with enormous human experimentation on himself and on his near and dear ones. He was the first to make experiments with medicines on healthy human beings.

Hahnemann proved on himself nearly ninety medicines. He wrote many books on Chemistry. He translated into German fifteen medical works from English, six books from French, one from Latin and one from Italian. His literary work *The History and the Life of Echrols and Hiloins* was considered the best by the literary critics.

All his monumental work was possible because he was by birth an ardent student of truth. He was full of compassion and a great lover of knowledge.

Kings honoured him with titles, stamps were issued with his picture and coins were issued with his figure. Hahnemann, who could not have a square meal at one time in his professional career because he did not like to practice the unscientific and barbarous methods of treating the sick prevalent at that time, later led a glorious life in Paris.

After a long and useful life he died at the age of 88 in Paris in the year 1843. "I have not lived in vain" is the epitaph on his tomb lying in the great cemetery constructed for the great and noble men in Paris. It is my rare and greatest privilege that I visited Hahnemann's statue in Washington and the cemetery in Paris and offered floral tributes

to the great man in the history of medicine. I humbly offer my fondest tributes to Hahnemann. He had Sankara's intellect and Buddha's heart, to adapt the phraseology of Swami Vivekananda.

*Sankara a great intellectual of 8th Century A.D. was the most famous advaita philosopher, who had a profound influence on the growth of Hinduism through his non-dualistic philosophy.

*Buddha refers to Siddhartha Gautama (c. Sixth Century BCE), a ksatriya prince of the Sakyans (a people of Northern India and Nepal), who gave up a life of luxury and power to become a wandering mendicant. He was known as the most charitable and loving saint.