

Institute Lecture

Ayurveda and Modern Science

Professor M.V.S Valiathan
National Research Professor, Manipal University



Friday, 26th September, 2014, Time: 6.00 PM, Venue: L-17,
Lecture Hall Complex

Abstract

After uninterrupted practice from the time of the Buddha, marked by ups and down, Ayurveda remains a major national enterprise today. It continues to provide health care to millions, accounts for a large segment of professional education and growing herbal drug industry, and is recognised worldwide as Complementary and Alternative Medicine. It has become a bandwagon attracting cosmetics, dietetics and even tourism. Its encounter with Western Science began in the 16th century and the initial approach of European scientists and physicians to Ayurvedic practice was shaped by taxonomy which loomed large till 19th century. This period witnessed the endeavour of remarkable men such as Garcia da Orta, Van Rheede, Roxburgh, Ainslie and others and the birth of several scientific institutions in Kolkata. In the 20th century, a new window of exploration opened through pharmacological and toxicological studies of medicinal plants by RN Chopra followed by the rapid growth of natural products chemistry which gave India a leadership position in the World. Towards the end of the 20th century, molecular biology and immunology cast their mantle on Ayurveda, and these disciplines have placed powerful tools in the hands of investigators to study ancient concepts and procedures, which could not be done earlier. Ayurvedic biology is a new initiative comprising research projects which adopt this strategy and shows high promise. Sponsored by the Department of Science and Technology, the Task Force in Ayurvedic Biology supports projects which employ basic sciences such as molecular biology, immunology and biological chemistry to study the concepts, procedures and the mechanistic basis of therapeutic activity in Ayurveda. An illustrative study on Rasayana, done by two groups in India, will be discussed.

About the speaker

Professor Marthanda Varma Sankaran Valiathan graduated in medicine from the Kerala University and received training in surgery in the UK with subsequent specialization in cardiac surgery in the US. He became a Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons of England in 1960 and a Master of Surgery from the University of Liverpool two years later. He received the Fellowship of the Canadian Royal College in cardiac surgery in 1970.

Professor Valiathan served on the faculties of the Georgetown University Hospital, Washington; Postgraduate Medical Institute, Chandigarh and IIT, Chennai (Biomedical Engineering) before moving to Trivandrum as the architect of the Sree Chitra Tirunal Institute, Trivandrum where he remained as Professor of Cardiac Surgery and Director for twenty years. After leaving the Chitra Institute, Professor Valiathan served as the first Vice-Chancellor of the Manipal University. He is a Past-President of the Indian National Science Academy, Association of Indian Universities and currently, a National Research Professor.

Professor Valiathan's professional and scientific interests were cardiac surgery in children, studies on the causation of a tropical heart muscle disease, and the development of technology for cardiovascular devices. He has published a monograph and many scientific papers on these subjects. More recently, he has published a series of three volumes on Ayurveda based on the classics of Charaka, Suśruta and Vagbhata. A new book "An Introduction to Ayurveda" was published recently.

He is a recipient of many national and international honours, honorary doctorates and Awards including the Padma Vibhushan by the Government of India in 2005.

Tea at 5.45 PM

All interested are welcome.

Amalendu Chandra
Dean of Research and Development
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