

SUSRUTA, AN ANCIENT PLASTIC SURGEON

Explanation:

Susruta is recognised today as the father of Plastic Surgery and father of Anaesthesia. He was born in the sixth century B.C. and was a descendant of the Vedic Sage Viswamitra. He learnt surgery and medicine at the feet of Divodasa Dhanvantari in his hermitage at Varanasi. He was the first physician to advocate what is today known as the “caesarean” operation. Susruta in his treatise Susrutasamhita, has mentioned about many medical knowledge which has considerable medical relevance even today. Also, he listed 101 types of instruments in his treatise. His, Samdamsa Yantras are the first forms of the modern surgeon’s spring forceps and dissection and dressing forceps. Even today, his system of naming surgical tools after the animals is adopted.

Once, some 26 centuries ago in midnight. Susruta was awakened by a frantic knock at the door. He enquired who there was at the door. Susruta then took up a lighted torch and approached the door. When he opened the door, he saw a traveller kneeling down at the door with tears flowing from his eyes and blood from his disfigured nose. He sought help from

Susruta. Susruta comforted him and led him to a neat and clean room with surgical instruments on the wall.

He washed his face with water and the juice of a medicinal plant and then offered the traveller with a mug of wine and began preparing for the operation. He, with a large leaf of a creeper brought from the garden and measured the size of the stranger's nose. Susruta, then taking a knife and forceps from the wall held them over a flame and cut a strip of flesh from the stranger's cheek. The man's senses were numbed because of the wine Susruta provided him. Hence, he could not feel much pain. Susruta's idea of giving wine is today considered as provided the patients about to be operated as Anaesthesia.

So, we can say that India was much ahead in medical knowledge since ages.

Susruta was not only a great physician but also an excellent teacher. He always advised his pupils to know both theory and practical in order to be a good physician.