

MAHARŠI CARAKA AND HIS CONTRIBUTION TO ĀYURVĒDA

Bhuvnesh Kumar Sharma* T. Saketh Ram
& Ala Narayana*****

ABSTRACT

Maharši Caraka, the author of *Carakasamhitā* was a sage, physician of great culture and intellect. He redacted and improved the treatise, *Agnivēśatantra*. It was known as *Carakasamhitā* after his redaction and considered as the best treatise of *Kāyacikitsā* (General medicine). *Maharši Caraka* was not only a great physician but also an eminent scientist, a great preceptor and an efficient editor. He was a naturalist, philosopher, founder of basic principles of *Āyurvēda*, pharmacologist, pharmacist, *Pañcakarma* specialist, dietician and also a great poet.

Caraka means a person who travels from place to place for transmitting the art of medical practice and principles related to Ayurvedic medicine. *Maharši Caraka* did not mention any details about his life, time or identity except his name in his treatise, *Carakasamhitā*. *Cakrapānidatta*, the commentator of *Carakasamhitā* and *Bhāvamiśra*, the author of *Bhāvaprakāśa* described him as an incarnation of Lord *Śeṣa*. They opined that Lord *Śeṣa* incarnated to eliminate afflictions of mankind through *Carakasamhitā*. Priyavrat Sharma in his book *Āyurvēda kā Vajjñānika Itihāsa*, on the basis of Dharmic and social conditions described in *Carakasamhitā* opined that the time of *Caraka* was about 200 B.C., between the period of *Śuṅga* and *Mauryaśuṅga*. This article attempts to throw light on the towering personality of *Maharši Caraka* as a great physician.

Introduction

Origin of *Āyurvēda* was from *Brahma*, the creator. *Brahma* taught this science of life (*Āyurvēda*) to *Dakṣaprajāpati*. He educated this science of healing to *Aśvinikumāra*, who were the divine medical duo mentioned in *Rgvēda*. *Indra*, the Lord of the Heaven learned it from *Aśvinikumāra* and trained the sage *Bharadvāja* who was deputed by sages to learn the art of healing for the welfare of the human race. Sage *Bharadvāja* taught many disciples. *Punarvasu Ātrēya*, the son of sage *Atri* was also

*Research Officer (Ay.) **Senior Research Fellow / Ph.D. Scholar (Ay.) & ***Director, National Institute of Indian Medical Heritage (CCRAS), 3rd Floor, Osmania Medical College Building, Putlibowli, Hyderabad-500095, India.

one of them. *Punarvasu Ātrēya* also taught *Āyurvēda* to his students *Agnivēśa*, *Bhēla*, *Jatukarṇa*, *Parāśara*, *Hārīta* and *Kṣārapāṇi*. All of these scholars authored their own treatises on medicine. This treatise was written in the form of questions of *Agnivēśa* and answers of *Punarvasu Ātrēya*. It was redacted and improved by *Maharṣi Caraka* after some centuries as *Carakasamhitā*, the great compendium on *Kāyacikitsā* (General Medicine).⁵

Carakasamhitā does not offer any material or evidences of *Caraka*'s life viz. place of living, date of birth, about his parents, teachers etc. It was not clear whether “*Caraka*” was his name or of a clan. Only information available about him is that he was *Pratisamskartṛ* (redactor) of *Agnivēśatantra* from the following colophon:

Ityagnivēśakṛtē tantrē carakapratisamskṛtē.

(Carakasamhitā)

In ancient India the authors did not have any desire for admiration and fame for writing a great treatise. Their effort was only for *lōkakalyāṇa* (achieving the welfare of the society). True to this noble tradition, *Caraka* did not mention even a single information about his life history, identity or time period in *Carakasamhitā* except mentioning his name. While this is praiseworthy as a great virtue, it resulted in keeping the posterity in the dark about the inspiring anecdotes relating to the life-history of this great physician making the work immensely difficult. It can be explained satisfactorily if *Carakasamhitā* is compared with original *Agnivēśatantra*. But original *Agnivēśatantra* is not available today.

The reason for redaction and the circumstances leading to the redaction by *Caraka* are not detailed in *Carakasamhitā*. It is possible that the reason for redaction might have been to incorporate many concepts in a suitable form and to correct some mistakes or variations in copying the original work over many centuries. Spurious amendments might have been substituted in the place of mutilated portions. So *Caraka*, might have found essential to examine the treatise in the light of parallel compilations or versions available at that time and brought out a reliable copy through redaction. He did not limit himself only to the job of a redactor but abridged the content to increase the scope of the subject for further research at suitable places and thus prepared a well structured and refined new treatise through an old treatise.³

Views of different scholars

Caraka was a revered authority in the world of science and scholarship. Several authors, redactors, commentators, translators, reviewers, scholars and physicians have been treating *Caraka* with great veneration based on the available internal literary evidences.

Dṛḍhabala, the redactor of *Carakasamhitā* highly regarded *Caraka* by describing him as *Atibuddhi* (highly intelligent).³ *Caraka* was regarded as a *Maharṣi* (sage) by *Vṛddha Vāgbhaṭa* and *Vāgbhaṭa* in their treatises, *Aṣṭāṅgasaṅgraha*¹⁰ and *Aṣṭāṅgahṛdaya*.¹¹

Bhaṭṭārahāricandra in *Carakanyāsa*, *Jējjāta* in *Nirantarapadavyākhyā* and many commentators had respected *Ācārya Caraka* for his great contribution to *Āyurvēda* in their commentaries. *Cakrapāṇidatta* in *Āyurvēdadīpikā* and *Cikitsāsaṅgraha*, *Vijayarakṣita* in *Madhukōṣa*, *Śivadāsasēna* in *Tattvapradīpikā* and *Bhāvamiśra* in *Bhāvaprakāśa* referred him as a great medical authority. *Bāṇabhaṭṭa* a great Sanskrit poet and *Śāntirakṣita* refer to the name of *Caraka* respectfully in their works. *Jayanta Bhaṭṭa* referred *Caraka* as an example of those authoritative wise men who have the whole knowledge of *Āyurvēda*. Medical historians established *Caraka Club* in 1898 in New York (U.S.A.) as a mark of indication of respect to him.⁷

Meaning and Derivation of the Word “Carakā”

The word *Caraka* was used in various contexts. The word *Caraka* means an acrobat or tumbler dancing on bamboos as interpreted by *Sāyaṇācārya*. According to *Svāmi Dayānanda Sarasvatī*, *Caraka* means epicure (*Cara bhakṣaṇānām*). It means a spy as used by *Śrīharṣa* in *Naiṣadhya Carita*. It also means a nomad or a monk (*Parivrājaka*) who moves from place to place.

The word *Caraka* is derived from “*Cara*” (means to move) *dhātu* (verb) and “*Kan*” *Pratyaya* (suffix) in *Vācaspatyam*.⁹ It is mentioned that *Caraka* was not the name of any particular person, but it could be an honorific term indicating the profession of the peripatetic teacher. Any person who moves from place to place for teaching religion or philosophy is called a *Parivrājaka*. Likewise, a teacher of medicine who went to impart the art of medical practice and principles to his disciples was called *Caraka*.

According to *Bṛhajjātaka*, the medical experts who travelled from village to village not only for treating but also for teaching, were called “*Caraka*” (the wandering monk). The word “*Caraka*” was employed in this sense in Vedic literature also. *Caraka* were scholars affiliated to *Kṛṣṇa Yajurveda* and *Kāṭhakaśāsmhitā*. *Maharṣi Vaiśampāyana* was also known as *Caraka* and his disciples were also called *Caraka* according to *Kāśikā Vṛtti* on *Pāṇini Aṣṭādhyāyī* 4/3/107.⁸

Bṛhadāranyakōpaniṣad also refers to *Caraka* as the wandering monk in *Bhadra dēśa*. Three classes of students were described in this treatise. 1. *Māṇava* 2. *Antēvāsa* 3. *Caraka*.¹

1. *Māṇava* - one who serves the teacher and lived with him without a formal initiation was called *Māṇava*.
2. *Antēvāsa* – one who resides with the teacher after formal initiation as a regular student was entitled *Antēvāsa*.
3. *Caraka* – one who went to other teachers for higher studies for short period after completing a course of study under a teacher was named *Caraka*.

The ancient grammarian, *Pāṇini* has an aphorism, “*Māṇavacarakābhyām khañ*” (*Pāṇini Aṣṭādhyāyī* 5/1/11) pertaining to the above said first and third classes of students. In this context *Caraka* means a travelling scholar.¹

Conclave of Sages

There is a hypothesis that *Caraka* might have an institution and given the name *Caraka* to the conclave of sages, for the task of redaction of *Agnivēśatantra* in response to public need. Most of the scholars opine that *Caraka* was the name of a branch of *Kṛṣṇayajurveda* and the people who follow it were known as *Caraka*. Hence a person related to this Vedic branch was the author of *Carakaśāsmhitā*.⁷ This theory does not appear to be tenable as there was no clear evidence.

Bhāvaprakāśa appears to have blended mythology with legend or tradition to elevate the redactor of *Agnivēśatantra* and veneration for his excellent endeavour in redacting the most fundamental work on medicine. It recognizes *Caraka*, the redactor

of *Agnivēśatantra*, as a proper noun indicating an individual and not as a common noun applicable to any wandering physician monk.

Incarnation of Lord Śēṣa

A story on the incarnation of the Lord Śēṣa (the serpent king with thousand heads) was described in *Bhāvaprakāśa*, one of the three important books known as *Laghutrayī*. Lord Śēṣa incarnated himself on the earth as *Caraka*. He was proficient in Veda including *Āyurvēda*, which is *Upavēda* of *Atharvavēda*. He, with his kindness on seeing the plight of humanity being affected by numerous ailments and people dying prematurely, took birth as the son of a famous sage, named *Vīsuddha*, who was well versed in Veda and *Vēdāṅga* (branches of Veda). *Caraka* redacted the *Agnivēśatantra* according to the contemporary needs of medicine. He traveled from village to village and not only treated the patients but also taught the medical science (*Āyurvēda*). He was called *Caraka*, meaning a traveler in view of his mobility.²

Cakrapāṇidatta in *Āyurvēdadīpikā*, the commentary on *Carakasamhitā* begins by making salutation to the *Ahipati* (snake-king) whom he identifies with *Caraka* and *Patañjali*.³

Caraka and Patañjali

Some scholars have held, on the basis of statements made by *Nāgēśa* and *Cakrapāṇidatta* supported by *Vijñānabhikṣu*, *Bhōja*, *Bhāvamiśra*, *Svāmikumāra* etc. that *Caraka* was identical with *Patañjali*, the author of the *Pātañjala-Mahābhāṣya*, the commentary on *Pāṇini Aṣṭādhyāyī*.⁴

Patañjali is regarded as contemporary of *Puṣyamitra* who followed *Aśōka* as the ruler of *Sākēta* and who drove back the Greeks from India. He is placed about two centuries earlier than *Vikrama* era, i.e. 175 B.C. Bhandarakar also assigns him the same date after investigation into the *Pātañjala-Mahābhāṣya*, *Purāṇa* and historical records of western scholars. Thus if *Caraka* is inferred to be much earlier than 175 B.C. his identity with *Patañjali* can't be held to be valid. Again on the basis of the *Tripitaka* if he is dated to be so late as to be the contemporary of *Kaniṣka*, there being a difference of more than two hundred years between the time of *Puṣyamitra* and *Kaniṣka*, the identity of *Caraka* with *Patañjali* is still less probable. If the identity was

true, what can be the reason for the non-mention of the name of *Patañjali* in the medical treatise going by the name of *Caraka*, while in both the works on *Yōga* and grammar, the authorship is explicitly in the name of *Patañjali*. In the commentary on grammar, the author explains his other name, *Gōnardiya* meaning the citizen of the country known as *Gōnarda*, which is explained in a *Sūtra* as the eastern country, which is the modern *Gōṇḍa* according to Bhandarakar. There is another view regarding *Gōnarda* that as in the ancient history of Kashmir there is mention of a king of *Gōnarda*, the latter must be situated in Kashmir. The commentator on grammar was a citizen of *Gōnarda* and was identical with *Caraka*, but he did not mention the *Gōnarda* region in *Carakasamhitā* while he mentioned the regions *Pāñcālā*, *Pañcanada* and *Kāmpilya*. Thus the enquiry into the subject of the time, name and place helps only to confirm the distinctness of these two persons.⁴

Pātañjala-Mahābhāṣya is full of proverbial maxims, expositions in extensive as well as in brief, very varied in scope and difficult to grasp immediately. But in *Carakasamhitā*, the parts whose redactorship is assigned to *Caraka*, contain passages of deep import are yet composed in an easily intelligible style which is delightful to read and understand and which is uniform in its structure and course. Thus from the point of view of style also, these two works show different authorship. Besides being an independent and original author, writing a new and comprehensive treatise on grammar and a foremost *sūtra* composition of a masterly type on *Yōga*, *Patañjali* would not have found pleasure in the work of merely redacting the text of another's authorship, as in the case of the *Carakasamhitā*.⁴

The theory of *Caraka* being *Patañjali*, the author of the commentary on grammar or of the *Pātañjala-Yōgasūtra* or both, is based on the misunderstanding of the verses of praise of *Śeṣa* the Serpent-God composed by *Bhōja*, *Vijñānabhikṣu* and others. *Vijñānabhikṣu* makes obeisance to *Patañjali* for coming down to the mortal world in human form and purifying the mind, human speech and the body by science of *Yōga*, the science of grammar and the science of medicine (purifying the mind by *Pātañjala-Yōgasūtra*, purifying the human speech by *Pātañjala-Mahābhāṣya* and purifying the body by *Carakasamhitā*).⁴

Date

Dr̥dhabala (4th Century A.D.) was the first author, who refer to *Caraka* as the one who revised *Agnivēśatantra* and prepared a new treatise as *Carakasamhitā*.⁵ *Vṛddha Vāgbhaṭa* (6th Century A.D.) is another well-known person in Ayurvedic literature who gave clear evidence about *Mahar̥ṣi Caraka*. *Bhaṭṭāraharicandra* (6th Century A.D.) wrote commentary called *Carakanyāsa* on *Carakasamhitā* in the same period. According to *Tripitaka*, a Buddhist book (translated into Chinese), some scholars accept that *Caraka* was the physician of the king *Kaniṣka*. Dr. Julious Jolly in his book *Indian Medicine*, translated by C.G. Kashikar referred to *Caraka* as the court physician of the famous king *Kaniṣka* based on a Chinese source. *Caraka* attended the queen during difficult labour as an obstetrician. This statement was given by a French orientalist Sylvan Levi who discovered the name *Caraka* in the Chinese *Tripitaka* and established the time and identity of *Caraka*. According to above information it was stated that *Caraka* was contemporary to king *Kaniṣka* who belonged to 100 A.D.⁶

King *Kaniṣka* was the follower of Buddhism and his poets *Aśvaghōṣa* and *Nāgārjuna* were also Buddhists. It is observed in *Carakasamhitā* that there was evidence of mentioning about the rituals of Veda, *Brāhmaṇa* etc. and spirituality. For the personality like *Caraka*, who travels always for spreading *Āyurvēda* and treating the patient, it is not justifiable to comment that he worked with king *Kaniṣka*. Based on this, it proves that he may not belong to the time of king *Kaniṣka*. It may be possible that there was another physician named *Caraka* in the court of *Kaniṣka*.

By taking consideration of uniqueness with *Mahābhāṣyakāra Patañjali*, giving importance to Veda and worship of divine, cow and *Brāhmaṇa*, it proves that *Caraka* belongs to the period of *Śuṅga* (2nd century B.C.) because rituals of Veda were followed along with Buddhism during this period. The period of *Pātañjala-Mahābhāṣya* and *Pātañjala-Yōgasūtra* are same with the period of *Śuṅga*. Priyavrat Sharma in his book "*Āyurvēda kā vaijñānik itihās*" mentioned *Caraka* may belong to the time between *Śuṅga* and *Mauryaśuṅga* (2nd century B.C.) based on the Dharmic and social conditions

available in *Carakasamhitā*. Most of scholars hold this to be the probable period and identity of *Caraka*, with the material available at present.⁷

Nativity

The region where *Carakasamhitā* may have been written is often supposed to be the northwestern part of India. Hoernle regarded him as a native of Kashmir. Some historians accepting him as a court physician of *Kaniska*. Priyavrat Sharma accepted that *Caraka* was a native of north-western India on the basis of food articles that were referred to have been in much use in the inland and exported to other parts.⁵

Contribution

Caraka is not only a redactor but a redactor par excellence. He adopted the pioneering and resourceful method and provided a touch of freshness and originality. He changed *Agnivēsatantra* into a work of unrivalled qualities by his magical touch, which has survived till date.

Carakasamhitā is the wonderful contribution of *Caraka* to *Āyurvēda*. *Bhāvaprakāśa* revealed that the contribution of *Caraka* to the *Carakasamhitā* was done by redacting and composing *Agnivēsatantra* and compilation of other medical treatises composed by disciples (*Bhēla*, *Jatukarṇa*, *Parāśara*, *Hārīta* and *Kṣārapāṇi*) of the sage, *Ātrēya*.²

Priyavrat Sharma articulated his views that the *Agnivēsatantra* was written in *sūtra* style. It was modified and improved in the form of *Caraka's bhāṣya*. According to him the *Agnivēsatantra* may resemble with the *Bhēlasamhitā*. The chapters in *Carakasamhitā* are in mature style consisting of prose and verse arranged in a comprehensive manner. He mentioned that *Caraka* modified *Agnivēsatantra* in the form of *samhitā* consisting of *sūtra*, *bhāṣya* and *saṅgraha*.⁷

The stanzas under the caption '*bhavati cātra*', '*bhavataḥ cātra*' or '*bhavanti cātra*' were introduced by *Caraka*. This manner of quoting of verses is often found towards the end of a chapter, preceded by the verse, '*tatra ślōkaḥ*' '*tatra ślōkau*' or '*tatra ślōkāḥ*', which serves the purpose of abstract of the preceding contents.⁵ *Cakrapāṇidatta*, based on information provided by earlier commentators, identified the

latter verse as a forming part of *Caraka's* text and affirmed him as *Pratisaṃskartṛ*. Apart from the *Pratisaṃskartṛ sūtra*, *Caraka* differentiated three other types, called *Guru sūtra*, *Śiṣya sūtra* and *Ēkīya sūtra*.⁵ According to Priyavrat Sharma important contribution of *Caraka* are the elaboration of the discussions among assembly of sages, *Yukti* as a *Pramāṇa*, *Yuktivyapāśraya* methods of treatment, the importance of *Parīkṣā* and *Jñāna*, the description of descent of *Āyurvēda*, various types of *svēdana* (fomentation), the importance of *saṃśamana* (pacification) and *saṃśōdhana* (elimination), the description of new diseases and the description of the eight branches of *Āyurvēda* etc. The concepts related to *Sāṅkhya*, *Nyāya* and *Vaiśeṣika* are preserved in situ and *Caraka's* contribution in this regard serve the purpose of reference text for these subjects.⁴

The important contents of *Carakasamhitā* as contribution of *Maharṣi Caraka* to *Āyurvēda* are as follows.

Basic Principles of *Āyurvēda*

Every science has being developed and implemented on the basis of basic principles. *Carakasamhitā* is the best and complete text with respect to the basic principles (concepts) of *Āyurvēda*. Various basic principles of *Āyurvēda* are described in *Carakasamhitā*. Some important basic principles of *Āyurvēda* are *Triguṇa*, *Pañcamahābhūta*, *Dōṣa-Dhātu-Mala*, *Agni*, *Āma*, *Rasa-Guṇa-Vīrya-Vipāka*, *Hētu-Liṅga-Auśadha* etc.

Aṣṭāṅga Āyurvēda (Eight Branches of *Āyurvēda*)

Āyurvēda is classified into eight branches from time immemorial. To train physicians to become specialists in respective branches, specialized text-books, training centres and hospitals were established in different parts of country viz. *Vārāṇasī*, *Takṣaśilā* etc.

Among such schools, *Ātrēya* deals with *Kāyacikitsā* (general medicine), school of *Dhanvantari* deals with *Śalyāpahartṛka* (surgery), school of *Kāśyapa* with *Kaumārabhṛtya* (mother and child health care) and school of *Nimi* and school of *Karāla* with *Śālākya* (diseases of eye, ear, nose, throat, dental and head).

Carakasamhitā is a complete resource of *Ātrēya*-school, which deals with *Kāyacikitsā*. Apart from this the text also discusses the concepts of allied branches like *Śālākya*, *Śalyāpaharṭṛka*, *Viṣagaravairōdhikapraśamana*, *Bhūtavidyā*, *Kaumārabhṛtyaka*, *Rasāyana* and *Vājikaraṇa*. The intention of this is to empower the physician to handle any type of medical need, inspite of providing such information the book restricts itself to *Kāyacikitsā* and wherever the requirement arises for other branches of *Āyurvēda* it advises the consultation of respective specialists (*Tatra dhānvantariyāṇāmadhikāraḥ kriyāvidhau*). In the very preface of the book the author clearly states “*Parādhikārē na vistarōktiḥ*” means not to trespass the boundaries of the intended specialization.

List of References of Other Branches in *Carakasamhitā* ³

S. No.	Branches of <i>Āyurvēda</i>	Subject / Topic	Context / Reference
1.	<i>Śālākya</i>	Pathology and treatment of the diseases of eye, ear, nose, mouth, throat, teeth and head	<i>Ca.Ci.</i> 26/104-290
		Pathology of the diseases of head	<i>Ca.Sū.</i> 17/8-29
		Pathology and treatment of the diseases of head	<i>Ca.Si.</i> 9/70-110
2.	<i>Śalyāpaharṭṛka</i>	Incision on the abdomen for the surgery in obstruction or perforation of the intestines	<i>Ca.Ci.</i> 13/184-188
		Draining the fluid by inserting a canula into fluidy abdomen (distension of abdomen)	<i>Ca.Ci.</i> 13/189-190
		Aspiration in fully mature or suppurated <i>Gulma</i>	<i>Ca.Ci.</i> 6/44
		Incision in the <i>Kaphagulma</i>	<i>Ca.Ci.</i> 6/138-140
		Therapeutics of the two kinds of wounds.	<i>Ca.Ci.</i> 25

		1. Afflicted wounds due to injury 2. Wounds due to chronic morbidity like <i>Pramēhapiḍikā</i>	
3.	<i>Viṣagaravairōdhik apraśamana</i>	Toxicology	<i>Ca.Sū. 23</i>
4.	<i>Bhūtavidyā</i>	Pathology and treatment of exogenous insanity	<i>Ca.Ci. 9/16-97</i>
		Pathology of exogenous insanity	<i>Ca.Ni. 7/10-23</i>
5.	<i>Kaumārabhṛtyaka</i>	Mother and child health care (Pathology and treatment of Gynaec disorders, Colporrhea, Vitiation of the breast milk, diseases of the children)	<i>Ca.Ci. 30</i>
		Embryology	<i>Ca.Śā. 2, 3, 4/3-32, 6/21-26, 8</i>
6.	<i>Rasāyana</i>	Therapy to arrest premature aging (Vitalization)	<i>Ca.Ci. 1</i>
7.	<i>Vājīkaraṇa</i>	Therapy to ensure healthy progeny	<i>Ca.Ci. 2</i>

Ayurvedic Education, Training, Teaching and Discussion⁷

Carakasamhitā clearly explains the desirable qualities of students, teachers and Curriculum for imparting *Āyurvēda*. These guidelines hold good even today for Ayurvedic education. Few such guidelines are enlisted here.

1. A scholar of *Āyurvēda* should be proficient in the knowledge of the treatise in all the three ways viz. with *Vākyaśaḥ* (verbatim), *Vākyaṛthaśaḥ* (comment) and *Arthāvayavaśaḥ* (detailed elucidations). Study, teaching and discussion are described for acquiring the knowledge of *Āyurvēda* in *Carakasamhitā*.

2. There are 44 *Vādamārga* (method of discussion) which explain the Sense of the course of disputation between physicians are described in *Carakasamhitā*. These 44 *Vādamārga* are original contribution of *Carakasamhitā*.

3. Always there should be *Tadvidyasambhāṣā*, debate conducted between the members of same faculty for clarifying the doubts and to increase the knowledge.

Symposium/Seminars Described in *Carakasamhitā*⁷

S.No.	Topic / Subject of Seminar / Symposium	References
1.	Remedy for the human health & morbidity	<i>Ca.Sū.</i> 1/6-19
2.	Description of <i>Vāta</i> and allied aspects of human physiology	<i>Ca.Sū.</i> 12
3.	Origin of man and disease	<i>Ca.Sū.</i> 25
4.	Classification of <i>Rasa</i> (taste) and substances	<i>Ca.Sū.</i> 26
5.	Short discussion on Embryology	<i>Ca.Śā.</i> 3
6.	Detailed discussion on Embryology	<i>Ca.Śā.</i> 6/20-30
7.	Specific drug administration in <i>Basti</i> and Posology in animals.	<i>Ca.Si.</i> 11

The style of organizing such symposia to discuss, collect evidences and come out with a consensus which establishes hypothesis into theory stands as the best scientific method even today. Such material is abundant in *Carakasamhitā*, which reflects the astute scientific temperament of those people.

Diagnostic Methods

Diagnostic method of *Āyurvēda* is depends on the principle of *Tridōṣa*. Not only detailed description of *Nidānapañcaka* (*Nidāna*, *Pūrvarūpa*, *Rūpa*, *Upāsaya* and *Samprāpti*) as diagnosis of the diseases but also *Daśavidha Ātura Parikṣā* (*Prakṛti*, *Vikṛti*, *Sāra*, *Samhanana*, *Pramāṇa*, *Sātmya*, *Sattva*, *Āhāraśakti*, *Vyāyamaśakti* and *Vayaḥ parikṣā*) as examination of a patient are scientifically available in *Carakasamhitā*. Apart from *Cikitsā* (medicine), another six essential factors of "*Hētvādisaptakōṅaṇaḥ*" (*Samutthāna*, *Sthāna*, *Samsthāna*, *Varṇa*, *Nāma* and *Prabhāva*) are also explained as the part of diagnosis of the diseases.

Method of the Drug Research

Dravyānusandhāna Paddhati, the method of the drug research, which is described in *Carakasamhitā* is the ideal method of drug research even today. *Caraka* instructed clearly to study and learn the identification of the drugs from drug collectors.

Procedures of Pañcakarma Therapy

Procedures of *Pañcakarma* therapy (*Vamana*, *Virēcana*, *Anuvāsana Vasti*, *Āsthāpana Vasti* and *Śirōvirēcana*) are the magnificent treatment of *Āyurvēda*. *Caraka* told that the vitiated *dōṣa* alleviated by fasting, digestive drugs and pacification do at times aggravates *dōṣa* but those eliminated by elimination through *Pañcakarma* do not recur.³ *Caraka* has advised *Pañcakarma* medicine for all diseases except *Ūrustambha*. He described *Snēhana* (unction) and *Svēdana* (fomentation) procedures as *Pūrvakarma* in 13th and 14th chapters and also described *Pañcakarma* in 15th and 16th chapters in *Sūtrasthāna*. After this he composed *Kalpasthāna* and *Siddhisthāna* for detailed description.

Conclusion

The unique, unforgettable and priceless contribution of *Maharṣi Caraka* as *Carakasamhitā*, the best treatise of *Āyurvēda* has been an inspired source for Ayurvedic scholars since many centuries. Actually the Ayurvedic scholars should be well versed with the theory and practice of health promotion, preventive, curative and other aspects for the benefit of healthy and diseased people, as described in *Carakasamhitā* compiled, arranged and edited by *Maharṣi Caraka*. *Carakasamhitā* is the best testimony in itself of *Maharṣi Caraka*, the person who was a sage of great culture and intellect.

Abbreviations

Ca. - *Carakasamhitā*

Ci. - *Cikitsāsthāna*

Ni. - *Nidānasthāna*

Si. - *Siddhisthāna*

Sū. - *Sūtrasthāna*

Śā. - *Śārīrasthāna*

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सारांश

महर्षि चरक एवं आयुर्वेद में उनका योगदान

भुवनेश कुमार शर्मा, टी. साकेत राम एवं अला नारायण

चरकसंहिता के रचयिता महर्षि चरक एक ऋषि एवं महान् संस्कृति और सभ्यता के चिकित्सक थे। उन्होंने अग्निवेश-तन्त्र का प्रतिसंस्कार और परिवर्धन किया। प्रतिसंस्कार के पश्चात् यह ग्रन्थ चरकसंहिता के नाम से विख्यात होकर कायचिकित्सा के सर्वश्रेष्ठ ग्रन्थ के रूप में सम्मानित हुआ। महर्षि चरक एक महान् चिकित्सक ही नहीं अपितु एक श्रेष्ठ वैज्ञानिक, एक श्रेष्ठ आचार्य तथा एक कुशल सम्पादक भी थे। वह एक श्रेष्ठ प्रकृति अन्वेषक, दार्शनिक, मौलिक सिद्धान्त स्थापक, द्रव्यगुणवेत्ता, औषधयोगनिर्माता, पञ्चकर्म विशेषज्ञ, पथ्य विशेषज्ञ एवं कवि भी थे।

चरक शब्द का अर्थ वह व्यक्ति है जो एक स्थान से दूसरे स्थान पर भ्रमण करते हुए आयुर्वेदीय चिकित्सा के अभ्यास की कला एवं सिद्धान्तों का उपदेश करता है। महर्षि चरक ने चरकसंहिता में अपने नाम का उल्लेख करने के अतिरिक्त अपने जीवनकाल और परिचय आदि का उल्लेख नहीं किया है। चरकसंहिता के व्याख्याकार चक्रपाणिदत्त एवं भावप्रकाश के लेखक भावमिश्र इनको भगवान् शेष का अवतार मानते हैं। उनका मत यह है कि मानवमात्र के शारीरिक दुःखों को नष्ट करने के लिए चरकसंहिता का निर्माण करने हेतु भगवान् शेष पृथ्वी पर अवतरित हुए। चरकसंहिता में उपलब्ध धार्मिक और सामाजिक परिस्थितियों के आधार पर प्रियव्रत शर्मा ने अपनी पुस्तक आयुर्वेद का वैज्ञानिक इतिहास में चरक का काल शुंगकाल और मौर्यशुंगकाल के मध्य दूसरी शती ईसा पूर्व बताया है। इस लेख में महर्षि चरक जैसे महान् चिकित्सक के बुलन्द व्यक्तित्व एवं उनके योगदान पर प्रकाश डालने का प्रयास किया गया है।