



COMMENTATORS OF CHARAKA SAMHITA

¹Dr. Bhavanishree, ²Dr. Vaidya M Shrinath.

¹Final year Post graduate scholar,

²Professor

^{1,2}Department of Ayurveda Samhita Siddhanta (Basic Principles of Ayurveda)

^{1,2}Sri Dharmasthala Manjunatheshwara College of Ayurveda and Hospital, Thanniruhalla, Hassan – 573201, Karnataka.

ABSTRACT

The Charaka Samhita is not only a foundational text of Ayurveda but also a living document continually enriched by centuries of scholarly interpretation. This article offers an incisive introduction to the eminent commentators who have shaped its legacy—scholars like Acharya Dridhabala, Chakrapani Datta, and Gangadhara, Bhattara Harischandra, Swamikumara, Jejjeta, Shivadas sen among others. By examining their diverse perspectives and interpretative strategies, the paper elucidates how these commentaries have deepened our understanding of Ayurvedic philosophy, medical practice, and cultural adaptation over time. Grounded in historical and intellectual context, this study reveals the dynamic interplay between textual exegesis and the evolution of Ayurvedic thought, providing both newcomers and seasoned scholars with critical insights into the enduring impact of commentary literature on the Charaka Samhita.

KEYNOTES: *Charaka Samhita*, Commentators, Chakrapani Datta, Gangadhara, Bhattara Harischandra, Swamikumara, Jejjeta, Shivadas sen

I. INTRODUCTION

The Charaka Samhita is the foundational texts of Ayurveda in Indian system of medicine. The ancient treatise have been meticulously studied and interpreted by generations of scholars, leading to a rich tradition of commentaries on basic texts of Ayurveda. These commentators have played a pivotal role in preserving, transmitting, and evolving Ayurvedic knowledge across centuries. Their insightful interpretations, elaborations, and critical analyses have enriched our understanding of these seminal works and facilitated their practical application in clinical settings.

Charaka Samhita has over 45 different known commentators, in addition to some anonymous commentators. The various commentators of the Charaka Samhita compiled commentaries based in their own education and personal bias. Some authors wrote word for word translations, analysing each compound in comparison to other commentators, while others picked through the verses and selected information which they perceived to be genuine to be included in the commentary. Among those the available commentaries and commentators are discussed as below.

BHATTARA HARICHANDRA¹

- Time period 4th century AD he wrote commentary Charakanyasa on Charaka Samhita. Which is the earliest.
- According to the Maheshwara Pandit, he served as King Sahasranka's royal physician in the fourth century AD (375–413). (He was previously mentioned to Vagbhata and Jejjata.)
- The Kharanada Samhita was also redacted by him. According to the claims made by Arunadatta and Hemadri, it is known.
- In his book Harsha Charita, Banabhatta praised him as a multi-talented scholar (Bahumukha prajdashali). Although Acharya Drudabala mentioned 36 Tantrayuktis,
- The Charaka Samhita's whole commentary is now no longer available. Mastyanada Shastry of Lahore published the Sutrasthana's chapters 1-2-3 and 5. The Madras Government Library has a Manuscript of this commentary. Unfortunately, his works are at present unavailable.

SWAMY KUMARA²

- Time period 5th century AD
- *Charakapanjika* is his commentary on the Charaka Samhita. There is only a small amount of commentary available, namely up to the fifth chapter of Sutrasthana.
- A copy of the manuscript can be found at the Madras Government Library. The Sanskrit Library in Calcutta has the manuscript of Sutrasthana, which consists of two chapters.
- His time period can be regarded as the fifth century AD since he cited the name of Bhattara Harichandra from the fourth century, whose name was also cited by Jejjata from the sixth century. He is a member of the Shiva religion; he was referred to as a Buddha by someone.

JEJJATA³

- Time period of Jejjata is 6th century AD
- 'Nirantarapada-vyakhya' is the name of his commentary on the Charaka Samhita. It was published from Lahore and edited by Pt. Haridatta Shastri.
- He was a pupil of Vagbhata and the son of Kaiyyata. He lived in the sixth century AD. Bhattara Harichandra's commentary increased the popularity of his commentary.
- He also penned a commentary on Vagbhata and Sushruta Samhita.
- Part of his Charaka Samhita work is accessible. At the Government Oriental Library in Madras, only the following areas are accessible.
- Chikitsasthana spans from the 71st quotation in Chapter 5 to the 160th quotation in Chapter 23. Only 1 to 5 chapters make up Kalpa Sthana. From the 32nd citation till the finish, Siddhisthana is divided into the 2nd and 7th chapters

CHAKRAPANI DATTA⁴

- The period of *Chakrapani* is considered as 11th century AD.
- *Ayurvedadeepika* is his commentary on *Charaka Samhita*, whereas '*Bhanumati*' is his commentary on *Sushruta Samhita*.
- He was the son of *Narayanadatta* and a disciple of *Naradatta*. He worked as a court physician for *Nayanapala Dev*, the Bengali ruler of the *Gauda dynasty*
- He was credited with earning the names "*Charakachaturanana*" and "*Sushrutasahasra-nayana*" for his well-known commentary on *Charaka* and *Sushruta*. Among the great *Ayurvedic scholars*, he was a distinguished scholar.
- His other works include *Shabdachandrika*, *Vyaghra Daridra Subhankari*, and *Chakradatta or Chikitsasara Sangraha*, which were based on the *Siddhayoga Sangraha of Vrinda* (*Nishchalakara* wrote the *Ratnaprabha* Commentary). *Sarvasara Sangraha*, *Dravyaguna Sangraha*, and *Vyakaranatattwa Chandrika*.
- *Shivadas Sen* penned commentary on *Dravyaguna Sangraha* and *Chakradatta*. He constructed the *Chakrapaneeshwaralaya* temple in his hometown of Birbhumi, Bengal.
- Among all commentators, his analysis of the *Charaka Samhita* gained popularity. Unique contribution of *Chakrapani* to *Charaka Samhita* are *Nyayas*, *Drustanta*, *Padavakya*, *Padartha Vakya*, *Swabhavoparama Vada*, Linking of each chapter, Grammatical contribution, Quotation of other authors

SHIVADAS SEN⁵

- 15th century AD
- *Tatwachandrika* and *Tatwabodha* on *Ashtanga Hridaya* are his commentary on *Charaka Samhita*. There are just chapters 1 through 27 of the *Charaka Samhita Sutrasthana* available. He lived in the 15th century AD, which is later than the time of *Arunadata* and *Srikanthadatta*.
- Born in *Malanchika*, Bengal, his father, *Anantha Sen*, served as the court physician for King *Barbara Saha* of Bengal.
- His works are
 1. *Tattvachandrika* commentary on *Charaka Samhita*.
 2. *Shivadeepika* on *Dravyaguna Sangraha*.
 3. *Tantrapradeepika* commentary on *Chakradatta*.
 4. Commentary on *Ashtanga Hridaya* named *Tatvabodha*.
 5. A commentary on *Yogaratnakara*.

GANGADHARA ROY⁶

- Born in 1798 in Bengal's *Murshidabad*, he lived for 86 years until his death in 1884.
- '*Jalpakaipataru*' is the title of his commentary on the *Charaka Samhita*. It is a well-known commentary He was a well-known instructor of *Jyotishya*, *Ayurveda*, *Tantra*, *Vyakarana*, *Sahitya*, *Darshana*, and *Dharmashastra*.
- His writings includes :
 - ✓ *Charaka's Jalpakaipataru*,
 - ✓ *Paribhasha Ayurveda*,
 - ✓ *The Ramayana Bhaishajya*,
 - ✓ *Nadipareeksha*
 - ✓ *The Bhaskarodaya*,
 - ✓ *Dravyaguna Vivritti Rajavallabhiya*,

He authored 76 books on various topics in addition to almost ten Ayurvedic textbooks.

His followers worked in the Ayurvedic area, including *Kaviraja Harana Chandra Chakravarti*, *Maha-mahopadyaya Dwarakanath Sen*, *Yogendranath Sen*, *Kaviraj Shyamdasji*, *Kaviraj Umacharanji*, *Kaviraj Dharmadasji*, and *Kaviraj Vishwanath Sen*.

YOGENDRANATH SEN⁷

- 19th century AD
- Charakopaskara is the title of his commentary on the Charaka Samhita.
- He lived from 1871 to 1918. He was from West Bengal, the son of Dwarakanath Sen, and a follower of Kaviraj Gangadhar Roy. He served as president of the Kanpur-based All India Ayurvedic Congress. The Swami Lakshmi Ram Trust in Jaipur will republish it.

JYOTISHCHANDRA SARASWATI⁸

- Kaviraj *Jyotishchandra Charakdipika* is the title of his commentary on the *Charaka Samhita*. Only up to *Sutrasthana* was it published.
- He is from Bengal, and his opinions consistently conflict with those of Kaviraj Gananath Sen, who holds more contemporary views. He is a product of the 20th century.

HINDI COMMENTATORS

- Sri Ram Prasad Sharma (1889) wrote Hindi commentary which was published from Nirnaya Sagar Press, Bombay.
- Jayadeva Vidyalkara wrote *Tatwarthadeepika* commentary on *Charaka*.
- Atrideva Gupta worked in prestigious Ayurvedic colleges as Ayurvedic *Acharya* and wrote many commentaries.
- Kashinatha Shastri - The *Charaka* along with '*Ayurvedadipika*' of *Chakrapani* & Hindi commentary was published by Chaukhamba.
- Gorakhanath Chaturvedi - He wrote '*Vidyotini*' Hindi commentary on *Charaka* which is very popular.
- Acharya Vidyadhara Shukla He wrote '*Vaidyamanorama*' Hindi commentary on *Charaka* published by Chaukhamba.
- Brahmananda Tripathi wrote '*Charaka-Chandrika*' Hindi commentary; published by Chaukhamba

ENGLISH COMMENTATORS

- First English Translation written by A.C. Kaviratna of Kolkatta. 22 P.V.
- English, Hindi & Gujarati translation of *Charaka* was published under chairmanship of Pranajivan Mehata from Jamnagar in 1946.
- English Translation by Bhagawan Das & Ramkaran Sharma complete in 7 volumes; published by Chaukhamba.
- English Translation by Priyavrat Sharma in 4 volumes; published by Chaukhamba.
- English Translation by K.R. Srikanthamurthy published by Chaukhamba.

CONCLUSION

- More than 45 commentaries are written on *Charaka Samhita*. It had been translated into almost all Indian Languages and as well as some other foreign languages like Arabic, Greek, Latin, German, Persian, Simhali, Nepali & English.
- *Charaka* Arabic Translation named '*Saraka*' by Ali Iba Zain was published during 8th century AD

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