

Vaibhav Dadu

The Vimana Sthana of the Charaka Samhita as a Knowledge and Measurement Unit



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Dr. Vaibhav Dadu

Preface

The *Charaka Samhita* is well known *Ayurveda* classic accredited for its deliberations on basic principles of *Ayurveda* that have remained the source of inspiration for the *Ayurveda* knowledge seekers. It is considered to be a complete text having no shortcomings. It is also termed as the *Kalpadruma* by the revered commentator *Gangadhara Roy*. As the legend says, the *Kalpadruma* is a tree that fulfils ones wish and has a plenty to offer. Similarly, the *Charaka Samhita* is a treasure trove of *Ayurveda* knowledge having unfathomable capacity to deliver the desired.

Although, all the eight sections of the text namely the *Sthaana* are unique in their content, the *Vimana Sthana* is a special unit conspicuous by its presence in the *Charaka Samhita*. The other classics like the *Sushruta Samhita* and the *Ashtanga Hridayam* of *Vagbhata* lack the *Vimana Sthana*. Therefore, the *Charaka Samhita* is a complete knowledge package for the *Ayurveda* seekers.

The *Vimana Sthana* is special as the definition of *Ayurveda* per se suggests the measurement of the beneficial and non-beneficial items for the life span as quoted in the *Charaka Samhita* -

Hitahitam sukham dukham ayustasyahitahitam

Manam ca tatcha yatroktam Ayurvedah sa uchyate (Ch. Sa. Su.1)

The *Vimana Sthana* is the knowledge and measurement unit. It specifies the mode of the measurement of the *doshadi* along with the very significant topic of the teaching & research methodology in *Ayurveda*. Therefore, here an attempt has been made to bring to light the significance of the *Vimana Sthana* in the expansion of the knowledge vistas of the ancient science of life, *Ayurveda* with

special focus on the contemporary concept of the research and teaching methodology in *Ayurveda* system of medicine.

The author has made all the sincere efforts to achieve the goal of scientific elucidation of the facts based on the classical texts and commentaries along with his personal experience for which he may be credited. But in spite of all the efforts the lacunas may remain for which the author sincerely apologizes and seeks to rectify the same if brought to notice. The suggestions to improve are highly welcome as there is always a scope of improvement.

Thank you one and all

Yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "V. Dadu". The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined.

(Dr. Vaibhav Dadu)

MD *Ayurveda* (Gold Medallist)

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Chapter 1

Charaka Samhita - An Introduction

The *Ayurveda* literature mainly the *Charaka Samhita* is a knowledge encyclopaedia considered as the best amongst the major triad or the *brihatrayee*. The other two are the *Sushruta Samhita* and the *Ashtanga Hridayam*. The formation of *Charaka Samhita* per se signifies the concept of literary research in *Ayurveda*.

The formation of the *Charaka Samhita* has been done in four stages:

- a. **The narrator *Atreya*** – The available *Charaka Samhita* was narrated to the seer *Agnivesha* by the seer *Atreya*. Thus the *Guru Atreya* laid down the foundation of the greatest text of *Ayurveda* known as *Charaka Samhita*. His period is believed to be around 1000 B.C. i.e. 3000 years back.
- b. **The primary author, *Agnivesha*** – The disciple of the teacher *Atreya* and *having* a sharp intellect accredited for the creation of the first text of the *Ayurveda* in a very concise form known as the *tantra*, the *Agnivesha*. Thus the narrator *Atreya* and the disciple *Agnivesha* share the same page in the history. The deliberations on the four limbs of treatment i.e. *Chikitsa Chatushpada* in the lines of the *Upanishads* and the concept of the wishes or desires is an indication of his might in the *Ayurveda* knowledge.
- c. **The secondary author or the redactor, *Charaka* (2nd Century B.C.)**
Charaka is one of the most well known names associated with *Ayurveda*. One of the stalwarts of *Ayurveda* who has redacted the *Agnivesha Tantra* and made it to the *Samhita* form known as *Charaka Samhita*. *Charaka* is

considered to be an incarnation of the lord of the serpents, *Shesha*. Also, he is considered to be the community which was the branch of *Krishna Yajurveda*. He is also believed to be a nomadic sage. The contributions of *Charaka* include the description of the six categories, epistemology of the school of *Nyaya* and the inclusion of the disciplinary regimen known as *Swasthavritta* in *Ayurveda* parlance.

- d. ***Dridhbala* (4th century)** – The final strata of the completion of the *Charaka Samhita* is the addition of the chapters missing from the erstwhile text redacted by the seer *Charaka*. Thus, the missing 41 chapters (17 of the *Chikitsa Sthana*, 12 of the *Kalpa Sthana* and 12 of the *Siddhi Sthana*). The methodology used by the *Dridhbala* is the selective and the collective methodology called the *Unchha* and *Shila Vritti* respectively.

The classification of *Charaka Samhita*:

The *Charaka Samhita* is divided into eight sections or *Sthana* namely the *Sootra*, *Nidana*, *Vimana*, *Shareera*, *Indriya*, *Chikitsit*, *Kalpa* & *Siddhi Sthana* respectively. The sequence of these sections is of great significance as it is in tandem with the aims and objectives of the indigenous system of medicine, *Ayurveda*. The first and foremost target is the maintenance of health by following the *Ayurveda* system of life. The methodology of *Ayurveda* living and the Basic doctrine of *Ayurveda* which is its foundation are vividly explained in the first section or the *Sootra Sthana* known as the ‘brain’ of the *Charaka Samhita*. The essence of the knowledge of the whole text is extracted in its *Sootra Sthana*. The whole treatise is directed by the *Sootra Sthana*. The predominance of the *Sootra Sthana* can be gauged by its analogy to the nectar. The *Sootra Sthana* is the nectar of knowledge and is the collection