BHATTĀRA HARICANDRA

by

V. V. S. SAISTRY & A. N. PANDEY.

I: Introduction

Of the Ancient Ayurvedic Medical Treatises, Caraka Śāṁhitā is undoubtedly the oldest work, even though redacted by Caraka and Dhṛṣṭabala. The oldest commentary, namely Carakanyāsa, written on this work was by Ṣhaṭṭāra Haricandra. He was known as both Ṣhaṭṭāraka and Haricandra. He was not only the first to write the commentary on Caraka Śāṁhitā but also the pioneer in the commentators of Ayurvedic texts. Cakrapāṇi, Arunadatta etc., followed him implicitly. Almost all other commentators referred to him reverentially in their works.

The fact that Carakanyāsa was the standard and scholarly commentary on Caraka Śāṁhitā was accepted by many an authority through their references in their works. Svāmi Kumāra, in his commentary called Caraka Paññikā, refers to Haricandra and is commentary on Caraka Śāṁhitā along with Bharadvāja, Ātreya, Agnivesa and others (No. 13091. Catalogue of G. O. M. L., Vol. XXIII, Madras). Jejjāta, the pupil of Vāgbhaṭa, in his commentary on Madātyaya Cikitsā says: “This chapter written by the great preceptor is well expounded by Ṣhaṭṭāra Haricandra”. Indu says: “The ignorant one, who attempts to expound the doctrine of Caraka without consulting the commentary of Haricandra, verily attempts to drink up the whole ocean” (Āstānga Saṅgraha Vyākhya, No. 13071, A descriptive catalogue of the Sanskrit Manuscripts in the Government Oriental Manuscripts Library, Madras, Vol. XXIII). Cāṇḍraṇa praises Haricandra in the beginning of his commentary on Tīṣaṭa’s Cikitsākalikā: “As there exist the commentaries of Haricandra and the learned Jejjāta, it is sheer presumptuousness for any one else to attempt to comment on the texts of Ayurveda”. Probably Cāṇḍraṇa refers here to the commentaries on Caraka Śāṁhitā. Cakrapāṇidatta refers to Haricandra in his Ayurveda Dīpikā Vyākhya and at one place remarks that Vāgbhaṭa follows Haricandra’s opinion regarding the method of warding off endogenous diseases. Vijayarākṣita in his Madhukosā Vyākhya on Mādhavanidāna draws on the Carakanyāsa of Ṣhaṭṭāra Haricandra a number of times to explain his point of view.

II: Parentage of Bhattara Haricandra:

It is very difficult to give any information regarding the parentage of Haricandra, since he did not mention in his commentary. P. V. Sharma, in his Carakacintana, refers to a statement made in the Pādataditākam of Viṣyāmalaka, according to which Ṣhaṭṭāra Haricandra is stated to be the son of Īśānacandra of Kāṇkāyana gotra. In Caraka Śāṁhitā
the Bahlīka physician, Kānkāyana, was referred to as participating in many seminars conducted by Ātreyā Purnārvasu on the slopes of Himalayas. It is just possible that during the times of Caraka and after, the descendants of Kānkāyana intermingled with the local population and settled in India. Bhāṭṭāra Haricandra may be one of that progeny.

Maheśvara, the author of Viśvaprakāsakoṣa, states that Bhāṭṭāra Haricandra was one of his ancestors (Viśvaprakāsakoṣa : 1-5) and gives his genealogy from Haricandra.

Haricandra
| Śrī Kṛṣṇa
| Dāmodara
| Malhāra
| Keśava
| Brāhma
| Maheśvara

Therefore, it is clear that Maheśvara belongs to the 7th generation from Bhāṭṭāra Haricandra. Except the above two, no other reference is available regarding either the ancestors or descendents of Bhāṭṭāra Haricandra.

III: Date of Bhattara Haricandra:

Bhattara Haricandra was referred to by Caṇḍraṭa in his commentary on Cikitsākalikā (about 1000 A.D.), Maheśvara in his homonymical dictionary, Viśvaprakāśa (1111 A.D.), Arunadatta in his SarvāṅgasuṇḍaraVyākhyā (1220 A.D.) and Hemādri in his Āyurveda Rasāyana Vyākhyā (13th century A.D.). Therefore he can be safely placed as flourishing before 1000 A.D. He may even be a few centuries anterior since he was referred to by Svāmikumāra, who according to P. V. Sharma is a contemporary of Bhāṭṭāra Haricandra.

On the basis of the following references Bhattara Haricandra is considered as flourishing during 6th century A.D. :—

(1) Reference as the Court Physician of Sāhasāṅka :—Maheśvara in his Viśvaprakāṣakoṣa states: “He whose name was Haricandra, whose behaviour was as aggreable as moon, held in a wholly unrivalled way the position of an irreproachable court physician to king Sāhasāṅka and adorned the treatise of Caraka with his own commentary” (Viśvaprakāṣakoṣa 1-5). This reference indicates that Bhāṭṭāra Haricandra was the contemporary of King Sāhasāṅka. “Sāhasāṅka” being a possessive compound formed of sāhasa
“strength” and anka “mark”, can be a title of any king, who on his own strength, acquired and ruled over an empire. Therefore the identity of Sāhasānka has become a difficult problem. There are at least four kings who were known as Sāhasānka:

1) Candragupta II (375-413 A.D.)

2) Skandagupta (455-467 A.D.)

3) Yaśōdharman of Mālwa (6th century A.D.)

4) Śrī Candra Deva of Kanauj (11th century A.D.)

The King Sāhasānka is very often identified with Vikrama or Candragupta II. Therefore Yādavji placed Bhaṭṭāra Haricandra during the period of Candragupta II. But this identification is not justified. According to Mahēśvara, Bhaṭṭāra Haricandra was the court physician of King Sāhasānka. Since Haricandra was not mentioned among the famous “Nine Gems” of Vikrama’s court, the King Sāhasānka cannot be identified with Chandragupta II and the same holds good with the identification of Sāhasānka as Skandagupta. Yaśōdharman was a king of Mālwa, who defeated Mihirakula, the Hūṇa chief and freed Mālwa and neighbouring region from the Hūṇa depredations. He belonged to the first half of the 6th century A.D. Wilson suggests the possibility of Sāhasānka being a title of Śrīcandra Deva, who (according to a copper plate inscription from Nidigal) founded towards the end of the 11th century, the ruling dynasty of Kanauj which realm he acquired “by his own strength”. But since Bhaṭṭāra Haricandra lived centuries before 1000 A.D. and quoted by Svāmikumāra, Jejjāta and Cāndraṭa, identification of Śrīchandra Deva as Sāhasānka is not justified.

Since there were six generations between Mahēśvara and Bhaṭṭāra Haricandra, a safe guess can be 5th or 6th century A.D. P. V. Sharma considers that Yaśōdharman of Mālwa should preferably be identified as Sāhasānka and that Haricandra should be taken as a contemporary of Vāgbhāṭa I. According to J. Jolly, Haricandra flourished in the 6th century A.D.

Reference in literature: Many scholars consider the medical author Haricandra is identical with the litterateur of the same name who was referred to in Hārṣa Carita by the great poet Bāṇa Bhāṭṭa (7th century A.D.) and by Vākpati in his Prākrita work called “Gaudāvahā”. Even if this is true Haricandra can be taken as flourishing in 6th century A.D.

(3) The Nyāya as postulated by Bhaṭṭāra Haricandra in his commentary resembles the subject as was dealt by Diṅnāga, the great Buddhist philosopher, who belonged to 5th century A.D. and therefore Bhaṭṭāra Haricandra can safely be placed in the 6th century A.D.

While delving into the date of Bhaṭṭāra Haricandra, it will not be out of place to discuss the question of the anteriority between Bhaṭṭāra Haricandra and Vāgbhāṭa. Cakrapā-
While referring to Bhattāra Haricandra in his commentary stated that Vāgbhaṭa followed Haricandra’s opinion. On the basis of this statement some scholars considered that Bhattāra Haricandra was anterior to Vāgbhaṭa. But here it should be noted that whenever Cakrapāṇi referred to Vāgbhaṭa, he was always referring to Aśṭāṅga Hṛdaya but not to Aśṭāṅga Saṅgraha. Neither Bhattāra Haricandra referred to Vāgbhaṭa nor Vāgbhaṭa to Bhattāra Haricandra. But since Jejjaja, the student of Vāgbhaṭa-II, copiously referred to Carakanyāsa, Bhattāra Haricandra can be placed before Vāgbhaṭa-II. In addition to the above arguments and also on the basis of comparative study between Carakanyāsa and Aśṭāṅga Saṅgraha, it is easy to conclude that Bhattāra Haricandra was a contemporary of Vāgbhaṭa-I.

IV: A Versatile Genius:

Normally an Ayurvedic Scholar and Physician is expected to be conversant with not only Ayurveda but also Vyākaraṇa, Nyāya, Tarka and other subjects like Yoga. Even now from older generations, persons who are versatile in these subjects can be shown as examples. In the same manner Bhattāra Haricandra also seems to be a versatile genius.

That Bhattāra Haricandra was a famous litterateur is known by a reference to him by the great poet Bānabhaṭṭa of 7th century A.D. in his Harṣa Caritam: “The charming diction and style and the beauty of assonance of Bhaṭṭāra Haricandra give him a sovereign place among the writers of prose” (Harṣa Caritā cha. I, 12). Another tribute to his literary genius is paid by Vākpati of 8th century A.D. in his Prakṛti work called Gaudavahā: “Who takes delight in reading Bhāṣa, Jvalanamitra (Agnimitra), Kuntideva and Raghukāra (Kalidāsa), as also in diction and style of Subandhu and Haricandra” (Gaudavahā, verse No. 800). Even though the name Bhattāra Haricandra has been clearly mentioned in respect of his meritorious style of prose writing, some authorities consider the Haricandra of Bānabhaṭṭa and Vākpati as different from Bhattāra Haricandra of Carakanyāsa. But a close study of the style of language used by Bhaṭṭāra Haricandra in his commentary will clearly reveal his knowledge and control on it.

In addition, Bhaṭṭāra Haricandra was also a scholar in Tarka and Nyāya. This is evident from the method he dealt the subject of Tantryukti in his commentary. As already been mentioned, Bhaṭṭāra Haricandra followed Dīnaṅga, the great Buddhist legician in certain respects. Because of this and the respect Bhaṭṭāra Haricandra has shown towards Bouddhadharma in his commentary, some authorities considered that he is a Buddhist. But in the beginning of this commentary, Carakanyāsa, Haricandra has invoked the blessings of the Sun God. Therefore it is clearly evident that Bhaṭṭāra Haricandra was not only a Hindu but also a Brahmin.

V: His Works:

(1) Caraka Nyāsa—commentary on Caraka Samhitā:—The most important of his works is the commentary on Carakasamhitā called Carakānyāsa. The complete com-
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mentary is not available, even though there are indications that he had written commentary for the whole books. According to his statement this commentary has known as ‘Śiṣyopādhyāyakīnīyāsa.’ This clearly indicates that Bhattāra Haricandra was a teacher of Ayurveda and he prepared this commentary while teaching Carakasāṁhitā to his students.

The commentary for the first three chapters of Sūtrasthāna of Carakasāṁhitā, written in Canarese and Sanskrit scripts is available in the Government Oriental Manuscripts Library, Madras. Yadavji Trikamji states that Mustaram Shastri published this commentary from Rāvalpindi long ago but that publication which was based on the manuscript of G. O. M. L., Madras, is also not available now.

This Vyākhya is started with an invocation for the blessings of Sun God by the author and after that he described the importance of sage Caraka. He has also described the descent of Ayurveda from Brahma and invoked blessings from all the teachers. In his commentary he referred to Brhaspati and Śukra also. Bhattāra Haricandra in his commentary has referred to the Kśārapāṇītantra indicating that the old texts were available during his period. The eight-fold division of Ayurveda was also well known during these times.

While commenting on the subject matter of Carakasāṁhitā, he defined and described Pada, Sutra Vākyā, Prakarana, Adhāya, Catuska, Sthāna and Taṁtra. There seems to be a difference of opinion in the number of Taṁrayuktis between Bhattāra Haricandra and others. According to Bhattāra Haricandra, the Tantryuktis are forty in number, according to Caraka 36 and according to Susruta 32 only, the difference between the Carakasāṁhitā, and its commentator Bhattāra Haricandra being four in the number. They are (1) Parīpṛāṣṇa, (2) Vyākarana, (3) Vyutkṛanta bhidhāna and (4) Hetu. But Cakrapāṇi states that these four need not be explained as addition because the first is explained by Udeśa, the second by Vyākhya, the third is only a variation of Nīrdeśa and the fourth is understood by the Pramāṇas as stated in Pratyakṣa. Bhattāra Haricandra has also described Vyākhya, Kalpanā, Arthāśraya, Tācchilya and Taṁtradosa, Vyākhya is 15 varieties, Kalpana 7 varieties, Arthāśraya 20 varieties, Tācchilya 17 varieties and Tantradosa 15 varieties.

(2) According to Indu, Bhattāra Haricandra was stated to have edited Kharnādasamhitā but this book is not available now.

(3) In his introduction to Aṣṭāṅgahṛdaya, Hariśāstri Paradkar states that Bhattāra Haricandra has written a commentary on Aṣṭāṅga Hṛdaya. But this cannot be accepted since Bhattāra Haricandra is considered to be a contemporary of Vāgbhata-1.

(4) According to Jolly, Bhattāra Haricandra has also composed a medical Saṁhitā of his own.

(5) He is said to have written two literary works:

(1) Gadyabandha and (2) Mālātī.
Among all his works, only Carakanyāsa is now available partly, even though there are many meritorious medical subjects for which he was admired again and again by later medical commentators. It is a fact that the medical as well as the literary world have become poorer due to the non-availability of his masterly compositions.

**SUMMARY**

Ṛṣṭṭāra Haricandra, the writer of Carakanyāsa or Siṣyopādhyāyākinyāsa, was not only the oldest commentator on Caraka Saṁhitā but also was one of the pioneers among the commentators on Āyurvedic texts. He was always referred to respectfully by all other commentators. Nothing definite can be stated about the parentage of this great scholar. However, P. V. Sharma holds that he belonged to the Kānkāyanā-clan, while Maheśwara, the author of Viśvaprapakāsa koṇa, not only declares himself to be a descendant of Ṛṣṭṭāra Haricandra but also gives the genealogical table from him.

After a careful consideration of the external references about Ṛṣṭṭāra Haricandra, he can safely be placed before 1000 A.D. He was said to be the court physician of King Sāhasāṅka. But there were four Kings known as Sāhasāṅka, whose periods ranged from 3rd century to 11th century A.D. According to P. V. Sharma, Yaśodharman of Mālvā, should be identified as Sāhasāṅka, who flourished during 6th century A.D. and thus fixing the period of Ṛṣṭṭāra Haricandra also. J. Jolly also considers that Ṛṣṭṭāra Haricandra flourished in 6th century A.D.

Ṛṣṭṭāra Haricandra was a versatile scholar having command over Vyākaraṇa, Nyāya, Tarka, etc. besides Ayurveda and his versatility was admired by the great Sanskrit poet Bāṇabhātta of 7th century in Harṣa Charitam and by Vākpati of 8th century A.D. in Gauḍāvahā.

The Caraka Nyāsa though completely written on Caraka Saṁhitā is now available only partly. The name of this commentary as said by Ṛṣṭṭāra Haricandra is Śiṣyopādhyāyākinyāsa suggesting that this must have been written for teaching his students. Ṛṣṭṭāra Haricandra is also said to have edited Kharanāda Saṁhitā and written a commentary on Aṣṭāṅga Hṛdaya also. According to J. Jolly, one medical Saṁhitā was ascribed to Ṛṣṭṭāra Haricandra, but Caraka Nyāsa is the only available work of Ṛṣṭṭāra Haricandra and that too partly.

**REFERENCES**


(3) Jolly, Julius: Indian Medicine, Poona, C. G. Kashikar, 1951.


(14) Yadvji Trikamji: Charak Samhita, Bombay, Nirnaya Sagar Press, 1941.

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and the food dealers, "I do not like that vegetable."

The following is a list of common vegetables:

- Cabbage
- Broccoli
- Spinach
- Carrots
- potatoes
- Tomatoes
- Bell peppers
- Corn
- Lettuce
- Green beans

These vegetables are rich in vitamins and minerals that are essential for a healthy diet.