SWAMI KUMARA

by

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I. Introduction

Chronologically Swami Kumara is to be considered after Bhattara Harichandra among the Commentators of Charaka Samhita. Swami Kumara is also known as Panjikakara because of the name of his commentary Panjika. There seems to be a slight discrepancy about the actual name. In the commentary Charaka Panjika, he is mentioned as Swami Kumara. But he is referred to as Swami Daasa by Chakrapani (Charaka Samhita Chikitsa Sthana 3-218) and Vijayarakhita (Madhavanidana 1-14). P. V. Sharma, in his Charak Chintan, identifies him as Skandaswami and Kumaraswami, probably because Skanda and Kumara are the synonyms of the same God (Amara Kosa Swargavarga). According to the rules of Poetry and Grammar, usage of synonymous expressions for a famous person in order to maintain the metre of the verses and to protect from Chhando-bhanga, is justified. Jajjata referred to Swami Kumara in his commentary and also by Dalhana in his Nibandhasangraha Vyakhya of Susruta Samhita, even though he had to differentiate from the other Panjikakaras on Susruta Samhita namely Gayadasa and Bhaskara who were referred to as "Panjikakarau", a dual number.

II. His Parentage

The only available work of Swami Kumara, Charaka Panjika does not reveal any information about his parentage, native place, patronage etc. Since he begins his Panjika with his prayers of Lord Siva, we have to conclude that he is a devotee of the said God. Therefore being a Saiva by tradition, his name Swami indicates his perfection in attaining the absolute liberation or kaivalya. P. V. Sharma on the basis of Chaturbhani states

1. On the basis of the reference to Gayadasa by Vijayarakhita while commenting on Madhavanidana 2-18 to 23 which are taken from Charaka Samhita Chikiststhara 3, Gayadasa was considered to have written a commentary on Charaka Samhita. Therefore a pertinent question here is whether, by the word "Swaminidasas", Chakrapani was referring to both Swami Kumara and Gayadasa?

2. Dalhana, at the beginning of his Nibandhasangraha Vyakhya of Susruta Samhita, referred to Gayadasa and Bhaskara as "Panjikakarau". Gayadasa has written Bruhadpanjika and Bhaskara has written the Laghupanjika. Dalhana always referred to Gayadasa and Bhaskara either by name or by the name of their commentaries. Therefore when Dalhana refers to Panjikakarau, it is always possible that he was only referring to Charaka Panjika and Swami Kumara. Dalhana in about 19 places referred as Panjikakera in singular number which may possibly mean Swami Kumara. According to the statement of Dalhana referring to panjikakara not accepting that particular version of the portion of Susruta Samhita, makes us to conclude that Swami Kumara also wrote a commentary on Susruta Samhita (refer to Dalhana on Susrutasutra 10-5, Susruta Ultras 3-4, 7-7 and 28, 39-116 to 118 and 127).
that Swami Kumara lived in either Avanthi or Ujjayani. The actual word referred to is “Avantikah Skandaswarni”. Even though the name Swami Kumara is not directly referred to, P. V. Sharma, contends that Skandaswamy may be taken as a synonym for Kumara Swami or Swami Kumara. This statement can be accepted, since it is surmised that Swami Kumara is a Saivite and also by tradition Ujjayani was a famous place of Saivism, Mahakala, one of the 12 Jyotirlingas, being situated there.

It is learnt very recently that an Indian physician namely Kumara Bhatta had been a very popular preceptor of Ayurveda among the people of Thailand. This information had been brought to notice by the Indian physician Shri Narayana Sastri, who visited Thailand in 1967-68. The Ayurvedic scholars of Thailand consider this Kumara Bhatta an Indian and mention his name very reverentially. Since they could not specifically identify him, they believe that Indians must have a clue. Some scholars consider that this Kumara Bhatta of Thailand is the same as Swami Kumara. But we do not have any proof that Swami Kumara visited this place. In the same way, there is no proof against Swami Kumara’s popularity as a Physician not attaining a universality and spreading into distant lands.

III Date of Swami Kumara

The verses quoted at the beginning of his Panjika may throw light upon his date. Swami Kumara himself accepts that he has made an investigation into the work of Bhattara Harichandra before he started his own commentary of Charaka Samhita. This can only lead us to one conclusion that Swami Kumara was posterior to Bhattara Harichandra. Since Swami Kumara has been quoted by Jajjata (7th century A.D.) and Harichandra flourished in 6th century, it is also justified that Swami Kumara was either the contemporary of Bhattara Harichandra or more possibly his disciple. P. V. Sharma also contends that Swami Kumara was a contemporary of Bhattara Harichandra. Therefore the upper limit can be fixed as 6th century and the lower limit as the 7th century A.D.

IV Charaka Panjika of Swami Kumara

The commentary of Charaka Samhita written by Swami Kumara is known as Charaka Panjika. In Sanskrit, the word Panjika denotes a special meaning. According to Abhidhana Chintamani: “Panjika is that which gives accurate record of words and meanings, therein registered after an analysis or an investigation.” This correlates with the statement of Swami Kumara at the beginning of his commentary. “After a thorough investigation of Harichandra’s Charakanyasa which illuminated the minds of the learned sages, Swami Kumara has taken up the work with the wonderful passages made easy and recorded as the Panjika”.

The Panjika is started with an invocation for the blessings of Lord Siva and after that the author pays homage to Charaka in preference to other deities and sages associated with Ayurveda and Charaka Samhita, namely Brahma, Prajapati, Aswini etc. He
continues with his homage to Bhattara Harichandra. Here Swami Kumara also recognises or identifies Charaka as Patanjali who had corrected the errors of speech by Vyakarana and of the mind by the Yoga. The same opinion was expressed through an identically quoted verse by both Bhoja in his Nyayavartika and Vijnanabhiikshu in Yogavartika: I bow with folded hands to Patanjali who purified the mind of its impurities by (writing a work on) Yoga, the voice of its impurities by his grammar (Maha Bhashya), the physical body of its impurities by his work on medicine and who was superior to all the sages (of his time)

This commentary, Charaka Panjika, on the first five chapters of Sutrasthana, is available in the Government Oriental Manuscripts Library, Madras.

REFERENCES


