



Review Article

THE ANCIENT ART OF DISCUSSION: INSIGHTS FROM CHARAKA SAMHITA

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ABSTRACT

Charaka Samhita is an ancient Indian medical treatise that has stood the test of time. It covers a vast range of topics from fundamental principles of Ayurveda to the diagnosis, treatment and prevention of diseases. Its Wisdom has inspired generations of scholars and seekers of knowledge, shaping the evolution of Indian thought and culture. In order to attain scientific knowledge, three different means of knowledge (*Trividha jnanopaya*) are mentioned in *Charaka Samhita*. It includes *Adhyayana* (learning), *Adhyapana* (teaching) and *Tadvidya-Sambhasha* (discussions and debates). Among them, *Tadvidhyasambhasha* plays an important role in shaping the current form of *Charaka Samhita* making it accurate by rectifying the mistakes. This article is intended for analyzing various instances of *Tadvidya-Sambhasha* and their outcomes in *Charaka Samhita*.

INTRODUCTION

Charaka Samhita, authored by sage Agnivesha and redacted by Sage Charaka, is an ancient Indian medical treatise that has stood the test of time. It is a comprehensive guide to the principles and practices of Ayurveda medicine, encompassing philosophy, pharmacology and therapeutics. It remains as a cornerstone of Indian traditional medicine, offering insights into the intricate relationships between *Satva*, *Atma* and *Sharira*. In order to attain scientific knowledge, three different means of knowledge (*Trividha jnanopaya*) are mentioned in *Charaka Samhita*. It includes *Adhyayana* (learning), *Adhyapana* (teaching) and *Tadvidya-Sambhasha* (discussions and debates).^[1] Among them *Tadvidya-Sambhasha* is given prime importance in *Charaka Samhita* to reach at appropriate conclusions on a topic. This article is intended for analyzing various instances of *Tadvidya-Sambhasha* and their outcomes in *Charaka Samhita*.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

In order to obtain knowledge regarding *Tadvidya-Sambhasha* and its examples, the related references have been collected from *Charaka Samhita* with *Ayurveda dipika* commentary.

The collected references has been systematically analyzed, contrasted and represented.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Tadvidya-Sambhasha is one among the *Trividha jnanopaya*. It is defined by Chakrapanidutta as the discussion with experts of that peculiar subject. A physician should discuss with other physicians. Discussion with experts promotes pursuit and advancement of knowledge, provides dexterity, improves power of speaking, illumines fame, removes doubts in scriptures, if any, by repeatedly listening the topics, and creates confidence with doubtless knowledge, brings forth some new ideas, the reason is that whatever secret ideas are gradually delivered by the teacher pleased over the devoted disciple, the same are expressed by him in enthusiasm during discussion in order to gain victory. Hence the experts recommend discussion with the specialists.^[2] *Tadvidya-Sambhasha* are of two types vis *Sandhaya-Sambhasha* (friendly discussions) and *Vigruhya-Sambhasha* (hostile discussions).^[3]

Sandhaya-Sambhasha

As per Chakrapanidutta, *Sandhaya-Sambhasha* is also called *Samvada*. It is meant for knowledge. It should be discussed with one who is having general and specific knowledge of related topic, opinions and counter-opinions, powerful expressions, devoid of irritability, having clear knowledge, without jealousy, able to be convinced and who can convince others. It is also called *Anuloma sambhasha*.^[4]

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Vigruhya-Sambhasha

Vigruhya sambhasha is also called *Vada*. It is either in the form of *Jalpa* or *Vithanda*. During such discussions, if the participant advance arguments in support of their own views and contradict the opponent's view, it is *Jalpa*. Whereas *Vithanda* is opposite to *Jalpa*, in which the participant without having any positive approach only finds faults in the opponent's views.^[5]

Examples of Sandhaya sambhasha in Charaka samhita

Charaka samhita itself is an outcome of *sandhaya sambhasha* between Lord *Punarvasu Athreya* and his disciple *Agnivesha*. For example, the *Janapadodhivamsaniyam* chapter of *Vimanasthana* progressed as a result of a discussion between Lord *Athreya* & *Agnivesha* while strolling in the forest on the bank of Ganges, near *Kampillya*, the capital city of *Panchala*. Some other instances of *Sandhaya sambhasha* are listed as follows:

Table 1: Sambhasha parishad on Vatakalakaliya

S.No	Name of Sage	Opinion
1.	<i>Kusha (Samkriyayan)</i>	<i>Shat Vataguna</i>
2.	<i>Kumarasira Bharadvaja</i>	<i>Vriddhikarana</i>
3.	<i>Kankayana (Bahlika bhishak)</i>	<i>Prashamakarana</i>
4.	<i>Badisha Dhamargava</i>	Mode of action of <i>Prakopa</i> and <i>Prashama</i>
5.	<i>Varyovida Rajarshi</i>	<i>Karma</i> of normal and abnormal <i>Vata</i> inside and outside the body
6.	<i>Marichi</i>	<i>Kupita-akupita Pitta karma</i>
7.	<i>Kapya</i>	<i>Kupita-akupita Kapha karma</i>
8.	<i>Punarvasu Athreya</i>	Conclusion

Debate on Organogenesis

This debate on *Prathama anga utpatti* is mentioned in *Sharira vichaya* chapter of *Sharira Sthana*. Here the views of Eight Sages are given with proofs and *Athreya* agreed to Lord *Dhanvantari's* view of simultaneous formation of all organs. The points of discussion are enlisted in table No 2.

Table 2: Sambhasha parishad on Organogenesis

S.No	Name of Sage	Opinion on first formed organ
1.	<i>Kumarasira Bharadvaja</i>	<i>Shiras</i>
2.	<i>Kankayana (Bahlika bhishak)</i>	<i>Hridaya</i>
3.	<i>Bhadrakapya</i>	<i>Nabhi</i>
4.	<i>Bhadrashounaka</i>	<i>Pakvashaya guda</i>
5.	<i>Badisha</i>	<i>Hasta pada</i>
6.	<i>Vidaha Janaka</i>	<i>Indriya</i>
7.	<i>Marichi Kashyapa</i>	<i>Achinthya</i>
8.	<i>Dhanvantari</i>	Simultaneous formation

Examples of Vigruhya sambhasha in Charaka samhita**A) Sambhasha in Mahachatuspada**

Mahachatuspada chapter of *Sutrasthana* started with a hostile discussion between Lord *Punarvasu Athreya* and Sage *Maithreya*. The latter argued that the results of using therapeutics and not using therapeutics are the same. For one who is taking therapeutic measures may sometime succeed in recovering from the diseases and may sometimes die as well. Similar is the case with one who does not use therapeutic measures. *Punarvasu Athreya* countered the opinion by stating that it depends upon the prognosis of diseases with the help of similes. He concluded the debate by stating that, a physician who can distinguish between curable and incurable diseases

will not subscribe to the wrong notions said by *Mithyabuddhi* like *Maitreya*, and say that he will certainly succeed in curing diseases.^[7]

B) Debate on *Purusha-Vyadhi Karana*

The debate on *Purusha-Vyadhi Karanam* is mentioned in *Yajja:purushiya* chapter of *Sutrasthana*. The debate was started by *Kashipathi Vamaka* by putting forth a query, "Do diseases originate from the same source, which is also the origin of humans?"^[8] Ten sages took part in the discussion by stating their own theories and refuting the other theories. The points of discussion are enlisted in table No 3.

Table 3: Sambhasha parishad on Purusha Vyadhi Karana

S.No	Name of Sage	Opinion on <i>Purusha Vyadhi Karana</i>
1.	<i>Parikshi Moudgalya</i>	<i>Atmavada</i>
2.	<i>Saraloma</i>	<i>Satvavada</i>
3.	<i>Varyovida</i>	<i>Rasavada</i>
4.	<i>Hiranyaksha Kushika</i>	<i>Shatdhatu vada</i>
5.	<i>Koushika</i>	<i>Matr-Pitravada</i>
6.	<i>Bhadrakapya</i>	<i>Karmavada</i>
7.	<i>Bharadvaja</i>	<i>Svabhavavada</i>
8.	<i>Kankayana</i>	<i>Prajapathya vada</i>
9.	<i>Bhikshu Athreya</i>	<i>Kalavada</i>
10.	<i>Punarvasu Athreya</i>	<i>Conclusion</i>

Lord *Punarvasu Athreya* concluded the discussion by stating that it is difficult to arrive at the whole truth by considering only partial aspects. Those who argue and counter over points go on circumventing without reaching any conclusion, like a person who operates an oil press (*Tila pidaka chakra nyaya*).^[9] He concluded that the wholesome combination of all the nine elements gives rise to the well-being of human beings and their unwholesome combination bring about various kinds of diseases.

C) Debate on *Rasa samkhya*

The debate on *Rasa samkhya* is mentioned in *Athreya Bhadrakapya* chapter of *Sutrasthana*. The debate took place at the beautiful forest of *Chaitraratha*, with ten sages took part in the same. The points of discussion are enlisted in table No 4.

Table 4: Sambhasha parishad on Rasasamkhya

Name of Sage	No of Rasa	Type of Rasa
<i>Bhadrakapya</i>	1	<i>Udaka</i>
<i>Shakunteya Brahmana</i>	2	<i>Chedaniya & Upashamaniya</i>
<i>Purnaksha Moudgalya</i>	3	<i>Chedaniya, Upashamaniya, Sadharana</i>
<i>Hiranyaksha Koushika</i>	4	<i>Svaduhita, Asvaduhita, Svadurahita, Asvadurahita</i>
<i>Kumarasira Bharadvaja</i>	5	<i>Bhouma, Udaka, Agneya, Vayavya, Antariksha</i>
<i>Varyovida Rajarshi</i>	6	<i>Guru, Laghu, Shita, Ushna, Snigdha, Ruksha</i>
<i>Nimi: Vaideha</i>	7	<i>Madhura, Amla, Lavana, Katu, Tikta, Kashaya, Kshara</i>
<i>Badisha Dhamargava</i>	8	<i>Madhura, Amla, Lavana, Katu, Tikta, Kashaya, Kshara, Avyakta</i>
<i>Kankayana</i>	Innumerable	Innumerable
<i>Punarvasu Athreya</i>	6	Concluded that <i>Rasa samkhya</i> is 6 by refuting others opinions with proof. They are <i>Madhura, Amla, Lavana, Katu, Tikta and Kashaya</i>

Debate on *Shat Garbhakara bhava*

This debate on six factors mentioned for *Garbha* formation is mentioned in *Khuddika Garbhavakranti Sharira* of *Sharira Sthana*. It is a hostile discussion between *Punarvasu Athreya* and *Bharadvaja*. *Punarvasu Athreya* mentioned six factors responsible for foetus formation viz., *Mata, Pitha, Satmya, Atma, Rasa* and *Satva*.^[10] *Bharadvaja* refuted this theory and *Punarvasu Athreya* with restated the causality of all the factors and concluded the same with logical descriptions.

Debate on *Phalamatrasiddhi*

This debate on the most effective fruit to be used for *Basti* is mentioned in *Phalamatrasiddhi* chapter of *Siddhi Sthana*. Seven sages were took part in the discussion by giving their opinions and refuting others. The points of discussion are enlisted in table No 5.

Table 5: Sambhasha parishad on Phalamatrasiddhi

S.No	Name of Sage	Opinion on best fruit for <i>Basti</i>
1.	<i>Shounaka</i>	<i>Jimuthaka</i>
2.	<i>Vamaka</i>	<i>Katutumbi</i>
3.	<i>Asita Gautama</i>	<i>Dhamargava</i>
4.	<i>Badisha</i>	<i>Kutaja</i>
5.	<i>Kapya</i>	<i>Kritavedana</i>
6.	<i>Bhadrashounaka</i>	Rejected <i>Kritavedana</i>
7.	<i>Punarvasu Athreya</i>	Concluded <i>Madanaphala</i> as best

CONCLUSION

The esteemed treatise of *Charaka Samhita* covers a vast range of topics from fundamental principles of Ayurveda to the diagnosis, treatment and prevention of diseases. Its Wisdom has inspired generations of scholars and seekers of knowledge, shaping the evolution of Indian thought and culture. *Tadvidhyasambhasha* played an important role in shaping the current form of *Charaka Samhita* making it accurate by rectifying the mistakes. The arguments and counter arguments mentioned in the *Charaka samhita* over a specific subject helps the scholars to dive deep in the specific subject by understanding the right and wrong notions. So *Tadvidhyasambhasha* should be considered as a means to be employed beneficially in medical training and as a useful tool in the further improvement of medical knowledge.

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