## Charaka

## Madras Red Fort Doctors Foundation

## Sage Charaka is one of the renowned and revered sages of India, known for his distinctive service in the field of Ayurveda. He is highly revered as the “Indian father of medicine”. An alternative system of medicine like Siddha, Ayurveda is highly prominent in India, where the roots of this process had started since the time immemorial. The process of healing and curing has taken the world by storm, where a lot of people from other parts of the world showed interest to learn, and excel in the process. Along with several other sciences, curing, operating and several other therapies were highly famous, where one could claim the Indian system of medicine as the pioneers of Medicine. Needless to say, it was the immense gift of several Rishis, Saints and another learned man, who had sacrificed their lives, and showed immense dedication, to help mankind.

## Birth of Sage Charaka

## Sage Charaka was born in 300 BC. It is believed that the Sage lived in Haraka and was the resident of Kapisthal. It is now called Jalandhar. It is located between Iravati or Ravi River and the river Chandrabagha, which is now called River Chenab, which flows in rivers in Panchanada or Punjab. The city of Panchanada had a special mention in the great epic Mahabharatha. He is referred to as a wandering saint, where he used to travel from place to place to cure the ailments of many people.

### **How did Maharishi Charaka receive the gift of Ayurveda?**

The legend goes that the Lord Brahma created Ayurveda. He then transmitted this knowledge to his son, Daksha Prajapati. Daksha passed it down to the twin Vedic gods Ashwini Kumaras who then became the physicians of the gods and the Devas of Ayurveda. The twin gods presented Ayurveda to Indra, the king of gods. Indra had three physicians as his disciples, namely Acharya Bharadwaj, Acharya Kashyapa, and Aacharya Divodas Dhanvantari.

From Acharya Bharadwaj’s teaching, his student Agnivesha developed the fundamental Ayurvedic text of internal medicine. Aginivesha wrote all his study in the form of an ancient script, known as ‘Agnivesa Samhita’. Agnivesha’s disciple, Acharya Charak then revised this body of work and compiled it into an easily understandable Ayurvedic guide called ‘Charaka Samhita’ and passed down the knowledge of Ayurveda from gods to sages.

## Contributions of Sage Charaka

## The word Charaka refers to wandering scholars or wandering physicians. His book “Charak Samhita“ is called the encyclopedia of Ayurveda. His works are highly relevant even today, where he used his acumen to find solutions to many underlying problems of the body.

## He had made extensive research on various human anatomy, embryology, pharmacology, blood circulation. He has also found an innumerable cure for diseases like tuberculosis, diabetes, and heart disease, etc.

## He was able to classify the medicinal uses of many herbs such as 10,000. His emphasis on using the herbs along with food has significant health benefits. He also suggests that “Food is Medicine”, where all the aliments could be curbed with the appropriate use of proper medicine. He has proposed the correlation between the mind, body, and soul where a lot of healing takes place through the sound mind.

## He has proposed the fundamental principle agreement for medical practitioners even two centuries before the Sage Hippocrates proposed his idea. It is evident that many people across several countries used his ideas, and developed the system of medicine.

##### **Sage Charakya and Ayurveda:**

He fundamentally classified the system of medicine into seven branches, which are:

* **Kaaya Chikitsa-**Mental Health
* **Kaumarbhrtya Chikitsa-**Pediatrics
* **Aganda Tantra-**Toxicology
* **Shailya Chikitsa-**Surgery
* **Shaakalya Chikitsa-**Head, eye and throat medicine
* **Raasayana Tantra-**Pharmacology
* **Vaajikarana Tantra-**Reproductive Medicine

Sage Punarvasu, a renowned sage was the Guru and Tutor of Sage Charakya. He was the physician of King king Nagnajit belonging to the Ghandhara Kingdom. There are three treatises, which are Charaka Samhita, Sushruta Samhita, and Ashtanga Sangraha, among them Sage Charakya had gained a lot of popularity in Charaka Samhita.

### **Charaka Samhita**

According to Charaka Samhita, anything and everything in the universe is composed of vata, pitta, and kapha. They are considered as the force of nature in Ayurveda that helps us understand the universe better. In essence, they are derived from the five basic elements: Space, air, water, fire, and earth. It contains over 8,400 metrical verses and is divided into eight divisions (ashtanga sthanas) viz., sutra, nidana, vimana, sharia, indriya, chikitsa, kalpa and siddha sthanas. Each division is further divided into numerous chapters, it describes existing knowledge about medical aspects and the logic and philosophy behind the medical systems.

Ayurveda is one of the greatest gifts India has gifted mankind and Maharishi Charaka played a significant role in this. Ayurveda is not just a medicinal system. It is a life guide that steers us along the path of happy and healthy living.

## Ancient treasures are innumerable. What currently, the people now are enjoying is nothing but the great discovery and selfless innovation which led to the great inventions. The contributions of Sage Charakya will still be reverberated across the globe and would be remembered by every scholar, who knows the value of Ayurveda medicine.