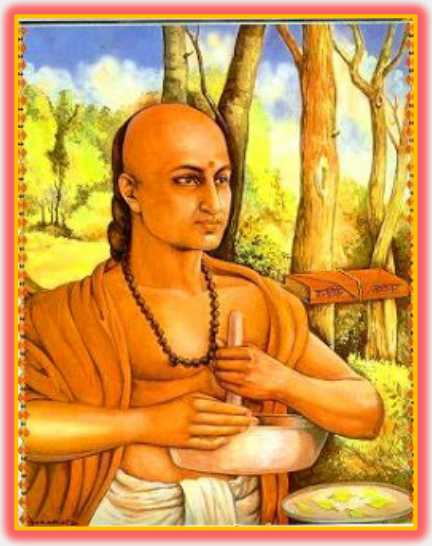
INTACH

ANCIENT SCIENTISTS AND MATHEMATICIANS OF INDIA: CHARAKA

India's contribution to the world of Medicine has been important and historic. With developments in Ayurveda, Alchemy, Surgery, the country has produced numerous scientists and texts. One of the most established contributors to Medicine is Charaka, who made breakthrough discoveries in Ayurveda.



Charaka

CHARAKA: LIFE AND WORK

Born in c.400-300 B.C.E, Acharya Charaka is referred to as the 'Father of Indian Medicine.' Some sources believe that he resided in Kapisthala village in the Punjab region. Charaka was a disciple of Sage AtreyaPunarvasu, who was a great pioneer of Ayurveda and his disciples established the six schools of Ayurveda. Charaka was one the principle contributors to Ayurveda and wrote the treatise 'Charaka Samhita.'

WHAT IS AYURVEDA?

Ayurveda is a branch of medicine which is more than 3000 years old and has indigenous origins. It is a holistic form of healing, stating that there needs to be a balance between the mind, body and soul to maintain a healthy life. Ayurveda uses medicine obtained from plants and animals to cure patients. There are six schools of Ayurveda, established by the disciples of Sage AtreyaPunarvasu-Agnivesha, Jatukarna, Parshara, Bhela, Ksharapani and Harita. All of them composed a Samhita.

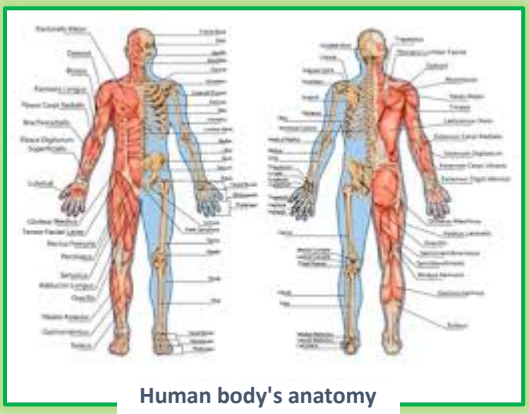
CHARAKA'S CONTRIBUTION AND THE CHARAKA SAMHITA

MEDICINE AND CHARAKA

Charaka was a learned man who gave many medical explanations. Cited as the 'first doctor' to talk about the digestive system, metabolism and immunity resistance. He firmly stated that the health and life of a person could be expanded by simply following a healthy lifestyle. Charaka listed that there are humours (fluids and semi-fluids) in the body called vata, pitta and kapha. Diseases occur when there is a disbalance between these three.



Ayurvedic remedies

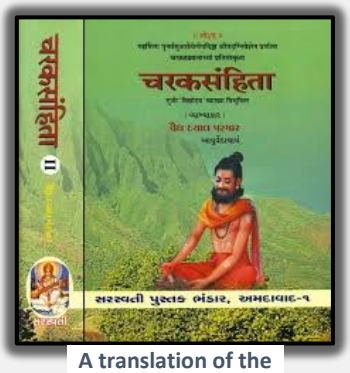


Human body's anatomy

Charaka also mentioned that there are 306 bones in the human body, including teeth. He studied and was well- informed in genetics.Charaka wrongly said that the heart had one cavity, but was right in saying that it is the control centre of the body.

THE CHARAKA SAMHITA

This text is the brainchild of Charaka and it contains 8400 verses. Written in Sanskrit in a poetic manner, the Charaka Samhita is a rich work on Ayurveda. Sources say that the Samhita is an edited of an earlier work, the Agnivesha Samhita by Agnivesha. This text was so popular that it was translated into Latin and Arabic as well. It contains information regarding aspects like the relation between health and seasons, the right diet, cures for diseases etc. According to the Charaka Samhita, Ayurveda is divided into eight parts- Kayachikitsa, Shailyachikitsa, Shaakalyachikitsa, Balachikitsa, Aganda tantra, Saalya tantra, Raasayana tantra, Vaajikarana tantra.



A translation of the Charaka Samhita

DID YOU KNOW?

Charaka was a student of the ancient university of Taxila, which was famous worldwide. He later went on to teach there as well

ACTIVITIES

1. Write about the Charaka Club in New York.

   _____
   _____
   _____

2. Find out about other scientists of India and their works that have contributed to Medicine.

   _____
   _____
   _____

3. Ask your parents and grandparents about the home remedies they know. How do you think they are related to Ayurveda?

   _____
   _____
   _____

4. Identify the plants:
   - A plant used as a remedy in cough and cold, found in every house _____
   - A flower that is yellow and loves the sun _____
   - A plant that has a bitter taste but many anti-bacterial properties _____

5. Grow some Ayurvedic plants like neem, tulsi, hibiscus etc. in your home.

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