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## An Introduction To Charak Samhitokta Rishi Hiranyaksh and Evaluation of His Contribution To Ayurveda

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### Abstract

**Background:** Ayurveda developed through an extensive intellectual tradition in which numerous sages participated in systematic discussions on health, disease, causation, diagnosis, and therapeutics. Among these scholars, Rishi Hiranyaksh, also referred to as Kaushika, is mentioned in the classical Ayurvedic literature as a participant in important scholarly assemblies associated with Acharya Punarvasu Atreya and other eminent physicians. Despite these references, contemporary Ayurvedic scholarship has paid comparatively little attention to his individual contribution.

**Aim:** This study aims to explore the identity of Rishi Hiranyaksh as mentioned in classical literature and evaluate his contribution to the development of Ayurvedic concepts.

**Materials and Methods:** A literary review was undertaken using primary and secondary Ayurvedic and Pauranic sources, particularly *Charaka Samhita*, *Kashyapa Samhita*, *Madhava Nidana*, *Harivamsha Purana* and *Mahabharata*, along with their available commentaries and translations. References pertaining to Hiranyaksh were identified, critically examined, and arranged thematically to understand his contribution to Ayurveda.

**Observations:** The review reveals that Hiranyaksh participated in the scholarly discussions on disease-aggravating etiological factors (roga-utpada hetu) and classification of Rasa. In *Charaka Samhita* (Sutrasthana 25/14–15), his views indicate that Atman and Manas are distinct from Rasa and that inappropriate interaction between the sensory faculties and their objects constitutes an important mechanism in disease causation. He further emphasised the significance of the Shad-dhatu Purusha in understanding the constitution of the human being and the development of disease. In *Charaka Samhita* (Sutrasthana 26/8), he classified Rasa into four categories based on its beneficial or harmful effects. His views are also preserved in *Madhava Nidana*, where characteristics of pure Rakta are attributed to him, and in *Kashyapa Samhita*, where he describes the sevenfold classification of diseases according to Dosha involvement.

**Discussion:** The available references indicate that Hiranyaksh contributed to several fundamental areas of Ayurvedic thought, including sensory-pathological mechanisms, Dhatu-based understanding of disease, Rasa classification, assessment of Rakta, and Dosha-based disease classification. His participation in interdisciplinary scholarly assemblies demonstrates the collective and dialogical nature of early Ayurvedic knowledge formation. The attribution of his opinions across different classical texts further indicates the continuity and transmission of his medical concepts through successive Ayurvedic traditions.

**Conclusion:** Rishi Hiranyaksh emerges from the classical literature as an important but relatively under-recognized contributor to Ayurveda. His concepts concerning sensory interaction, Shad-dhatu Purusha, Rasa, Rakta, and Dosha-based disease classification reflect the analytical and systematic character of early Ayurvedic medicine. Further critical study of references to Hiranyaksh in other classical texts may help clarify his historical position and the extent of his contribution to the Ayurvedic knowledge tradition.

**Keywords:** Rishi Hiranyaksh; Kaushika; Charaka Samhita; Shad-dhatu Purusha; Rasa; Rakta; Ayurveda

## Introduction :

Sage Hiranyaksh was the son of the legendary sage Vishwamitra. His mother's name was Shalavati. His stepbrothers were Galava, Sankruti, Yagyavalkya, Devala, Kacchapa, Harita, Panin, Kaushika, and Badarayana. He attended the famous conference of rishis held beneath the Himalayas almost seven thousand years ago, along with his father, sage Vishwamitra, and his brothers. His views on Ayurveda appear in famous Ayurvedic texts such as the Charaka Samhita and the Kashyap Samhita. The commentator Shrikanta Datta also quotes him in the famous diagnostic book Madhav Nidan. He had interactive conversations with Acharya Punarvasu and Acharya Kashyapa on various Ayurvedic topics. This highlights his importance as a contributor to Ayurveda. No other information about the sage Hiranyaksh is available in the Pauranik literature.

Among the relatively lesser-known personalities associated with the ancient Ayurvedic tradition is **Rishi Hiranyākṣa**. Unlike several prominent sages whose biographies and literary contributions have been extensively discussed, comparatively limited information is available regarding Hiranyākṣa. Traditional accounts indicate that he was the son of the renowned sage **Viśvāmitra** and **Śālāvati**. He is also described as having several stepbrothers, including Gālava, Saṃkr̥ti, Yājñavalkya, Devala, Kacchapa, Harita, Pāṇini, Kauśika and Bādarāyaṇa. This genealogical association places Hiranyākṣa within a distinguished lineage of ancient scholars and ṛṣis. Hiranyākṣa's significance, however, is more evident in Ayurvedic literature than in Purāṇic biographical narratives. He is traditionally

associated with the great assembly of sages in the Himalayan region, where eminent ṛṣhis deliberated on the growing burden of disease and ways to protect human life. His association with this assembly, along with his father Viśvāmitra and other sages, indicates his participation in the collective intellectual tradition that helped develop and transmit Ayurvedic knowledge.

More importantly, key Ayurvedic texts, including the Charaka Saṃhitā and Kāśyapa Saṃhitā, cite Hiranyākṣa's views. These references matter because they show that the Ayurvedic scholarly tradition recognised Hiranyākṣa as an authority whose views were worthy of preservation in classical medical literature. His association with discussions involving eminent authorities such as **Achārya Punarvasu** and **Achārya Kāśyapa** further highlights his position within the ancient intellectual network of Ayurveda.

Another important reference to Hiranyakṣa appears in Shrikant̥ha Datta's commentary on Mādhava Nidāna, one of the key classical works devoted primarily to Ayurvedic diagnosis. The preservation of Hiranyakṣa's views in such a diagnostic tradition suggests that his intellectual influence was not confined to a single branch of Ayurvedic knowledge. However, the exact nature and extent of his contribution require critical examination of the original textual references.

Available information about Hiranyākṣa in Purāṇic literature appears limited. Consequently, unlike many other ancient ṛṣis, Purāṇic sources alone make it difficult to construct a comprehensive biographical account of him. His historical and

intellectual identity must therefore be reconstructed primarily through references preserved in Ayurvedic Samhitās and their commentaries. This makes a focused literary study of Hiranyākṣa particularly relevant for the history of Ayurveda.

It is also important to distinguish the **Ayurvedic ṛiṣhi Hiranyākṣa** from the well-known **Hiranyākṣa** appearing in Purāṇic mythology as an asura. Similarity of names can lead to erroneous identification if the textual context is not carefully examined. Therefore, this study considers Hiranyākṣa specifically in the context of his references in Ayurvedic literature and associated scholarly traditions.

The study of Hiranyākṣa matters not only because of his genealogical association with Viśvāmitra, but also because oral and textual transmission of Ayurvedic knowledge has preserved his opinions. References to his views in the *Charaka Samhitā*, *Kāśyapa Samhitā*, and the *Mādhava Nidāna* tradition show that he was recognised as an Ayurvedic scholar. His association with learned assemblies and interaction with prominent Ayurvedic authorities further suggests that ancient Ayurveda developed through an extensive network of intellectual dialogue rather than through the contributions of a few isolated individuals.

The present study therefore aims to introduce Ṛiṣhi Hiranyākṣa and critically evaluate his contribution to Ayurveda based on available classical references. Particular attention is given to his references in the *Charaka Samhitā*, *Kāśyapa Samhitā* and *Mādhava Nidāna* commentary, along

with his association with the ancient assemblies of sages. Such an examination may help bring to light the contribution of a relatively obscure but significant personality in the intellectual history of Ayurveda and may also contribute to a broader understanding of the collective scholarly tradition underlying the development of Ayurvedic knowledge.

## Review Of Literature :

### Parents and Siblings of sage Hiranyaksha

Sage Hiranyakṣa was the son of the legendary sage Vishwamitra. His mother's name was Shalavati. His other brothers were Galava, Mudgala, Sushruta, Yagyavalkya, Madhuchhanda, Jaya, Devala, Kacchapa, Harita, Panin, Bhabru, Parthiva, Devrata, Shalankayan, Bashkala, Karisha, Kaushika, Saindhawayana, Badarayana, Amagharshan, Lohita, and Yamadoota.<sup>[1][2]</sup>

Acharya Hiranyakṣa participated in the symposium on types of Rasas. Here, he is also referred to as Kaushika, i.e., a person belonging to the Kaushik lineage.<sup>[3]</sup> Acharya Hiranyakṣa participated in the symposium on disease-aggravating aetiology. In his commentary Dipika, Acharya Chakrapani notes that Kushika is referred to as Hiranyakṣa. Hence, it is proved that sage Hiranyakṣa was the son of legendary sage Vishwamitra.<sup>[4]</sup>

### Contribution To Ayurveda

Acharya Hiranyakṣa participated in the symposium on disease-aggravating aetiology. In this symposium, he interacted with sages such as Kashiraj Vamaka, Maudgalya, Sharaloma, Vayorvid, Kaushika, Bhadrakapya, Bhardwaja, Kankayana, Bhikshu Atreya, and Atreya.

Punarwasu. Acharya Hiranyaksha holds that neither the soul nor the mind is made up of plasma. Diseases arise from incompatible contact between sensory organs and their senses. Incompatible contact could be intense, low or perverted. The person under treatment consists of six main *dhatus*. Vitiation of *dhatus* leads to diseases. Sankhyacharya also mentions the *shad dhatu Purusha*.<sup>[5]</sup>

Acharya Hiranyaksha participated in the symposium on types of Rasas. At the symposium, he interacted with sages such as Kashiraj Vamaka, King Nimi and Videha, Mahamuni Badisha, Kumarshira Bhardwaja, Purnaksh Maudgalya, Rajarshi Vayorvid, Kaushika, Bhadrakapya, Bhardwaja, Kankayana, and Atreya Punarwasu. Acharya Hiranyaksha holds that Rasa has four types: 1. Sweet and beneficial, 2. Sweet and harmful, 3. Bitter and beneficial, 4. Bitter and harmful.<sup>[6]</sup>

Sage Hiranyaksha had described the qualities of pure blood. As per him, pure blood is like red velvet mite in colour, unctuous, warm, and it does not stain the clothes, i.e., leaves off easily when washed.<sup>[7]</sup>

As per Acharya Hiranyaksha, diseases are of seven types. On the basis of involvement of single dosha - 3 types of diseases; Viz. 1. Vataj, Pittaj, Kaphaj. On the basis of involvement of two doshas - 3 viz. 1. Vata-Pitta, Kapha-Vata, and Pitta-Vata; and due to intermixing of all three doshas is the Tridosha type of disease.<sup>[8]</sup>

## Observations :

The critical review of the available classical references yielded the following observations:

### 1. Identity and lineage of Rishi Hiranyaksh

The Pauranic literature identifies Hiranyaksh as a descendant of the Kaushika lineage and associates him with Rishi Vishwamitra. The *Harivamsha Purana* mentions Hiranyaksh in the lineage of Vishwamitra and Shalavati. His association with the Kaushika lineage is particularly significant because the commentator Chakrapani identifies the Kaushika/Kushika mentioned in the *Charaka Samhita* discussions with Hiranyaksh. Thus, the textual evidence provides a basis for correlating Hiranyaksh with the scholar referred to as Kaushika in the Ayurvedic compendia.

### 2. Participation in Ayurvedic scholarly assemblies

Hiranyaksh is repeatedly mentioned as a participant in important scholarly discussions conducted among eminent physicians and sages. In the discussion on disease-aggravating etiological factors, he appears alongside Kashiraja Vamaka, Maudgalya, Sharaloma, Vayorvid, Bhadrakapya, Bharadwaja, Kankayana, Bhikshu Atreya and Punarvasu Atreya.

Similarly, in the discussion concerning the nature and classification of Rasa, Hiranyaksh is mentioned among several distinguished scholars, including King Nimi of Videha, Badisha, Bharadwaja, Maudgalya, Vayorvid, Bhadrakapya, Kankayana and Punarvasu Atreya.

These references establish Hiranyaksh as an active participant in the intellectual tradition represented in *Charaka Samhita*, rather than merely as a name appearing in a genealogical context.

### 3. Contribution to the concept of disease causation

In *Charaka Samhita*, Sutrasthana 25/14–15, Hiranyaksh argues that Atman and Manas are not composed of Rasa and that diseases may arise from inappropriate interaction between the sensory faculties and their respective objects.

The sensory interaction is understood through three forms of improper contact—excessive, deficient, and perverted or abnormal. This observation shows an early, systematic recognition of the role of abnormal sensory engagement in disease pathogenesis.

### 4. Contribution to the concept of Shad-dhatu Purusha

Hiranyaksh states that the individual under consideration in the context of disease is constituted by six principal Dhatus. The concept of **Shad-dhatu Purusha** provides a structural and functional framework for understanding the human organism.

His statement also links Dhatu integrity to disease, suggesting that disturbance or vitiation of these fundamental components has pathological consequences.

### 5. Contribution to Rasa classification

In *Charaka Samhita*, Sutrasthana 26/8, Hiranyaksh, identified as Kaushika, gives a functional classification of Rasa. His classification is based not merely on sensory perception but on its beneficial or harmful consequences.

Accordingly, four categories are described:

1. Sweet and beneficial
2. Sweet and harmful
3. Bitter and beneficial

### 4. Bitter and harmful

This observation shows that Hiranyaksh considered a substance's clinical consequences alongside its sensory characteristics, giving Rasa a functional and therapeutic dimension.

### 6. Contribution to the description of Rakta

A further reference to Hiranyaksh is preserved in *Madhava Nidana*. According to the quotation attributed to him, pure Rakta possesses characteristic colour, unctuousness, warmth, and the property of not readily staining cloth.

The description provides observable physical characteristics for assessing Rakta and represents an early example of using qualitative features to evaluate physiological or pathological status.

### 7. Contribution to disease classification according to Dosha

*Kashyapa Samhita*, Sutrasthana 27/3, attributes to Hiranyaksh a classification of diseases into seven categories based on Dosha involvement:

- Vataja
- Pittaja
- Kaphaja
- Vata-Pittaja
- Kapha-Vataja
- Pitta-Kaphaja
- Tridoshaja

This classification reflects the fundamental Ayurvedic principle that disease manifestation can result from the involvement of one, two, or all three Doshas.

### 8. Continuity of Hiranyaksh's concepts across classical literature

The opinions attributed to Hiranyaksh are not confined to a single Ayurvedic text. His views

occur in *Charaka Samhita*, *Kashyapa Samhita*, and *Madhava Nidana*. This transmission across texts suggests that his ideas were incorporated into the continuing Ayurvedic intellectual tradition.

## 9. Overall observation

The available evidence indicates that Hiranyaksh made contributions to multiple dimensions of Ayurvedic thought—**aetiology, sensory pathology, human constitution, Dhatu theory, Rasa classification, Rakta assessment, and Dosha-based disease classification**. His presence in several scholarly assemblies further indicates that early Ayurveda evolved through collective debate and exchange among different intellectual traditions.

## Discussion :

The available textual evidence suggests that Rishi Hiranyaksh occupies an interesting position in the history of Ayurvedic knowledge. Unlike some prominent sages whose biographies and works are extensively described, information regarding Hiranyaksh is scattered across different classical sources. Nevertheless, his consistent attribution in the *Charaka Samhita*, *Kashyapa Samhita*, and *Madhava Nidana* indicates that the Ayurvedic textual tradition preserved his views as important.

## Hiranyaksh and the tradition of collective knowledge generation

One important observation from this review is Hiranyaksh's repeated representation in scholarly assemblies. The *Charaka Samhita* presents Ayurveda not merely as a body of knowledge transmitted by a single teacher but as a tradition developed through discussion, questioning,

consensus. Hiranyaksh's participation in discussions with Punarvasu Atreya and other renowned scholars illustrates this dialogical character.

The reference to him as **Kaushika** is also noteworthy. Chakrapani's commentary provides an important interpretative link between the Kaushika mentioned in the *Charaka Samhita* and Hiranyaksh. Pauranic references to Hiranyaksh in the Kaushika/Vishwamitra lineage further support this identification. However, this identification should be understood as a textual and commentarial correlation rather than an independently established historical fact.

## Hiranyaksh's concept of disease causation

Hiranyaksh's contribution in the discussion of disease-aggravating factors is particularly significant. His statement that abnormal interaction between the sensory faculties and their objects can produce disease reflects the Ayurvedic concept of **Asatmya Indriyarthasamyoga**. The three forms of inappropriate sensory contact—excessive, deficient, and perverted interaction—systematically explain how sensory experience may become pathogenic.

This concept matters because it broadens the understanding of disease causation beyond purely physical factors. The organism continuously interacts with the external environment through the sensory faculties. Disturbances in the intensity, adequacy, or quality of this interaction may influence physiological equilibrium. Thus, Hiranyaksh's view contributes to the broader Ayurvedic understanding of disease as a

consequence of disturbed interaction between the individual and the environment.

From a contemporary conceptual perspective, this may be considered an early recognition that behavioural and environmental exposures can influence health. However, avoid equating the Ayurvedic concept directly with any single modern biomedical mechanism without appropriate experimental evidence.

### Significance of Shad-dhatu Purusha

Hiranyaksh's statement on **Shad-dhatu Purusha** is another important contribution. By describing the human being in terms of six fundamental Dhatus, he provides a structural framework for understanding the organism.

The subsequent statement that diseases arise from disturbance of these Dhatus indicates that health is associated with maintenance of their equilibrium and integrity. This approach is consistent with the broader Ayurvedic principle that pathological changes occur when the normal state of bodily constituents is disturbed.

This observation gains further importance because the Shad-dhatu concept was discussed in the context of a scholarly debate. It therefore represents not merely an isolated theoretical statement but part of a larger philosophical and medical discussion concerning the constitution of the human being.

### Contribution to the understanding of Rasa

Hiranyaksh's classification of Rasa in *Charaka Samhita* Sutrasthana 26/8 is distinctive because it incorporates **beneficial and harmful effects** into the classification. Rather than considering Rasa solely from the perspective of sensory taste, his

categorization distinguishes between combinations of taste and consequence.

The four categories—sweet-beneficial, sweet-harmful, bitter-beneficial, and bitter-harmful—indicate that the clinical significance of a substance cannot be determined exclusively from its sensory property. The same general taste category may have different consequences depending on its context, quantity, suitability, and effect on the individual.

This observation aligns with a central Ayurvedic therapeutic principle: assess a substance by its effect on the particular individual and clinical situation rather than by a single isolated property. Hiranyaksh's contribution therefore demonstrates an early functional approach to interpreting Rasa.

### Hiranyaksh and Rakta assessment

The reference preserved in *Madhava Nidana* provides another dimension of his contribution. The description of pure Rakta through visible and tactile characteristics—appropriate colour, unctuousness, warmth, and absence of persistent staining—illustrates the Ayurvedic practice of evaluating bodily substances through observable qualitative parameters.

Such descriptions were especially important in an era when laboratory investigations were unavailable. Using colour, consistency, temperature, and other physical characteristics allowed physicians to develop clinical criteria for judging physiological and pathological states.

Attributing these observations to Hiranyaksh in *Madhava Nidana* also shows that concepts associated with earlier scholars continued to be transmitted and incorporated into later diagnostic literature.

## Contribution to Dosha-based disease classification

The sevenfold disease classification attributed to Hiranyaksh in *the Kashyapa Samhita* aligns with the fundamental Ayurvedic framework of Dosha involvement. Three diseases arise from individual Doshas, three from combinations of two Doshas, and one from simultaneous involvement of all three.

This classification matters because it directly relates to Ayurvedic pathogenesis and clinical assessment. Determining the Dosha involved is fundamental to understanding disease manifestation and selecting appropriate management.

This contribution also demonstrates that Hiranyaksh's interests extended beyond philosophical discussion to practical disease classification.

### Hiranyaksh as an interdisciplinary contributor

Taken together, the references suggest that Hiranyaksh's contribution was multidimensional.

His views encompass:

- sensory interaction and disease causation;
- Shad-dhatu Purusha;
- Rasa and its functional consequences;
- qualitative assessment of Rakta; and
- classification of diseases according to Dosha involvement.

These subjects cover fundamental areas of Ayurvedic physiology, pathology, pharmacological understanding, and diagnosis. Therefore, Hiranyaksh should not be viewed merely as a peripheral name in the history of Ayurveda. Available textual evidence suggests he was an active intellectual participant whose opinions

contributed to several domains of Ayurvedic thought.

### Historical limitations and need for further research

This study relies primarily on textual references and commentarial interpretation. Insufficient independent biographical evidence exists to establish a complete historical profile of Hiranyaksh. Furthermore, identifying Hiranyaksh with Kaushika depends heavily on classical commentators such as Chakrapani.

Therefore, conclusions regarding his exact chronology, independent authorship, or the historical circumstances of his participation in Ayurvedic assemblies should be expressed cautiously. Future research should examine manuscripts, variant readings, additional Pauranic references, Nighantus, commentaries, and other classical medical texts for further references to Hiranyaksh.

### Overall interpretation

The study indicates that Rishi Hiranyaksh is an important example of the relatively under-explored contributors to the Ayurvedic knowledge tradition. His statements preserved in different classical works demonstrate an analytical approach to disease causation, human constitution, sensory interaction, Rasa, Rakta, and Dosha-based disease classification.

Studying such lesser-known sages is valuable because the history of Ayurveda cannot be adequately understood through its most prominent Acharyas alone. Reconstructing the contributions of scholars such as Hiranyaksh may provide a more

complete picture of Ayurveda's collective intellectual development and its rich tradition of scholarly dialogue.

### Conclusion :

Rishi Hiranyaksh, also identified as Kaushika in the relevant Ayurvedic commentarial tradition, emerges as an important yet comparatively under-recognized contributor to the development of Ayurvedic knowledge. The classical references reviewed in this study show his active participation in scholarly discussions with Punarvasu Atreya and other eminent sages on fundamental Ayurvedic concepts.

His contributions span several important domains, including disease causation through improper sensory interaction, the concept of Shad-dhatu Purusha, the functional classification of Rasa, the qualitative assessment of Rakta, and the classification of diseases according to Dosha involvement. His views indicate an analytical approach in which physiological constitution, environmental and sensory interaction, and Dosha-Dhatu disturbances were considered important determinants of health and disease.

The occurrence of concepts attributed to Hiranyaksh in *Charaka Samhita*, *Kashyapa Samhita*, and *Madhava Nidana* indicates the continuity and transmission of his ideas within the Ayurvedic literary tradition. His participation in scholarly assemblies further reflects the collective, interactive, and debate-oriented development of Ayurvedic knowledge.

Although available biographical information on Hiranyaksha is limited and some historical identifications depend on commentarial

interpretation, the textual evidence establishes his significance as a contributor to Ayurvedic thought. Further critical examination of manuscripts, commentaries, Pauranic literature, and other classical Ayurvedic texts may reveal additional information about his life, chronology, and intellectual contributions.

Thus, Rishi Hiranyaksha deserves recognition as a lesser-known but significant contributor to the classical Ayurvedic tradition, and systematic study of such scholars can enrich our understanding of Ayurveda's historical evolution and intellectual foundations.

### Declaration :

**Conflict of Interest : None**

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**Declaration :****Conflict of Interest : None****ISSN: 2584-2757****DOI :10.5281/zenodo.23492300****Dr. Subhash Waghe Inter. J.Digno. and Research**

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