

D A L H A N A

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ABSTRACT

Dalhana, the celebrated commentator of the Sushruta Samhita, and the author of 'Nibandha Sangraha' is one of the ancient Luminaries of the Indian system of medicine. Dalhana perhaps can be counted among the few ancient luminaries who attained the fame and commanded respect from the intellectual circles with just a single work. His contribution to the ancient Indian system of medicine as the author of 'Nibandha Sangraha' is priceless. He belonged to an illustrious family of vaidyas of the 12th century. Patronised by the King Sahajapala Deva. Dalhana made an extensive study of the works of the authors who belonged to the period before him. He has also evidently undertaken extensive tours throughout the country to get himself acquainted with the prevalent traditions and the systems of medicine.

INTRODUCTION :

There are few luminaries in the history who became immortal by just a single work. Dalhana, perhaps can be counted among those few. He attained fame, glory and respect through his single work 'Nibandha samgraha' which is characterised by wealth of materials relating to medicine and particularly surgery as developed in ancient India. Dalhana's contribution to the ancient Indian system of medicine, as the author of 'Nibandha Samgraha' is priceless and as a consequence the respect he

commands from both the ancient and contemporary medical and intellectual circles is matchless. His work 'Nibandha Samgraha' a commentary on 'Suśruta Samhitā, the oldest known treatise on medical science and the earliest known work dealing extensively with the subject of surgery, stand out as a marvellous endeavour of a rare genius for various reasons. In the introduction of his commentary Dalhana calls himself the 'Viveka Bṛhaspati'. It can be understood that, he must have been conferred with this title by his contemporary Vaidyas. (Murthy, P 61)s

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“Candravivekabṛhaspatiśrīśahapā-
ladeva nṛpati vallabhah”

(Suś.sam.sūt.1st chap. Ḍalhaṇa
commentary maṅgalācaraṇa)²

HIS PARENTAGE, PERSONALITY AND THE PLACE OF BIRTH :

Ḍalhaṇa was born in a reputed
Vaidya family of Aṅkolā a village
near Mathurā This place is in the
Bhādānaka region where mostly
vaidyas lived. The source for this
information is Ḍalhaṇa himself.
Ḍalhaṇa in his commentary has given
clear information about his place,
geneology and patronage in the
following introductory verse.

“Sadbuddheḥ prasavaḥ padam
Suyāśasaḥ

Sadvaidyavandhyaḥ Śrīyāmāvāsaḥ

Sukṛtī Kriyāsu nipuṇaḥ Śrī
Ḍalhaṇākhyo Bhiṣak

Śrībhādānakanāthasāhalaṅṛpasyā-
tīva yo vallabhah

Śāstram tasya nibhaṇḍhasaṅgraha
itikhyātam dharitrītale”

(Suś. utt. 26th Chap., Ḍalhaṇa, last
śloka, ending of the chapter)²

The personality of a person can
be judged through his writings. On
the basis of his works, information
with regard to the life and works of
Ḍalhaṇa can be gathered from the only
commentary ‘Nibandha Saṅgraha’

written by him. Ḍalhaṇa was very
genius, renowned scholar and one
of the topmost vaidyas of his period.
By virtue of his merit he was very
close to the king Sāhala or Sahapā-
ladeva, as given by himself in his
introductory śloka. Ḍalhaṇa having
a purvasive genius was well versed
apart from Ayurveda in several
branches of learning like Vyākaraṇa,
Darśana, Jyotiṣa, Tantra, Vedas,
Sāhitya etc. Learning of these basic
subjects is very much essential for
understanding the Ayurveda in depth.
(Vyas, p. 7-8).⁹

The place Aṅkolā in the Bhādānaka
region has not been identified
exactly. According to some scholars
probably it comprised of the modern
Revari Tehsil, Bhiwani and its
adjoining villages, and a part of the
old Alwar State (Majumdar, p. 107).
While others hold it as modern
Bayana, in the old Bharatpur State
(Rajasthan) (Majumdar, p. 55).

GENEOLGY :

Ḍalhaṇa belonged to a renowned
Sauravanshiya Brāhmaṇa family
which consisted mostly of renowned
vaidyas. Ḍalhaṇa has mentioned his
geneology including the information
about his father and fore fathers in the
Introductory and concluding verses
more than once but has not given his
mother’s name.

Sahasrākṣam gaṇadhīsam swagurum
ca saraswatīm

Janakam Janayitrim ca śāstrādaṁ
praṇamāmyaham

(Suś. Saṁ Sūt. 1st chap., Ḍalhaṇa
commentary Maṅgalācarṇa.)⁶

The geneology table given by
the author is as under :

GOVINDA
JAYAPĀLA
BHARATAPĀLA
ḌALHAṆA

DATE :

There is a dispute regarding the
period of CAKRAPĀNI DATTA and
ḌALHAṆA. Since Ḍalhaṇa makes a
mention of Cakrapānidatta in his
work, it is clear that, Cakrapānidatta
was the elder of the two (Su.
U. 49/19/p. 756). The important
clue for the date of Ḍalhaṇa could be
had from his intimate association
with the king Sahajapāla Deva or
Sāhala (Su U. 26/46 p. 651).
Ḍalhaṇa was patronised by the King
Sahajapāla. Since, historians have
fixed this king's time in last quarter
of 12th century A.D. (Mukhopadyaya,
p. 17).⁴ it can be inferred that Ḍalhaṇa
too belongs to the same period.
Moreover as Ḍalhaṇa quotes Cakra-
pānidatta (11th cent. A.D.), his date
may be fixed conveniently in the last
quarter of the 12th century A.D.
(Kutumbiah, p. xxxvii)⁵ and (Hoernle,
p. 16)¹.

HIS PRECEPTOR :

In the introductory verse, Ḍalhaṇa
has offered salutation to his teacher,
parents and also to God Surya and
Gaṇeśa (Suś. Sūt 1/1/p. 1)². In his
commentary Ḍalhaṇa mentioned
several authors by their names but
Bhāskara has not been quoted by
name anywhere except in the
introduction. At various places he
quotes 'Āchary' (Su.Sū. 15/7/p.67)³,
without naming. This may be due
to the Indian tradition, in which guru
is not to be referred by name.
According to some scholars Ḍalhaṇa
was perhaps the disciple of Bhāskara
whose pañjikā he has referred only
once in introduction. He was
fortunate to have Bhāskara, the
illustrious teacher of Nāgārjuna
(Author of yogaratnamālā) and
Keśava (author of Siddhimantra) as
his preceptor (Sharma, p.4)⁷.

NIBANDHA SAṂGRAHA :

The 'Nibandha Saṁgraha' a
commentary on Suśruta Saṁhitā
written by Ḍalhaṇa can be described
to be a unique work among all the
other commentaries. His approach
is both systematic and methodical.
Ḍalhaṇa's versatility as a scholar,
and intellectual is more than evident
in the literary excellence of the
'Nibandha Saṁgraha'. While discus-
sing various allied topics, he has
taken great care to see that the focus
of discussion is not shifted away
from the basic concepts.

It requires tremendous skill on the part of the author if the subject that too a complicated one like the medical science is to be explained in simple language. But Dalhāṇa has proved that he has that skill abundantly. Since his work is meant for the students, keeping in view their limitations, he has allowed his work to be as simple as possible. Perhaps he must have seen the students of his times, struggling hard to understand the works of the earlier authors. Having come from an illustrious family of vaidyas and having been patronised by the King Sahajapāla, Dalhāṇa naturally had all the facilities for an extensive study and excursions. He must have had access to most of the commentaries written by the earlier authors. He makes a mention about the reasons for the simplicity of the language in the introductory paragraph of his work (Su. Sū. 16/32,81)². He had also travelled far and wide in the country as is evident in his reference to the traditions of East, West, North &

South and central regions of the country. He first of all surveyed the entire field of Ayurvedic literature so that he could offer the most suitable explanation of the text also quoting various opinions as far as possible. On this basis he could also present the alternative textual versions along with his explanation on different specialities. He quoted various works of reputed authors such as Bhoja and Bhāluki on Śalya, nīmi and Sātyaki on Śālākya, Uśanas and Ālambāyana on Agada etc. dealing with the respective specialities.

After passing through the above process, he framed his own hypothesis independently. Sometimes cursorily it looks that he is following some earlier commentator like Jeṣṭha or Gayadāsa blindly; but this is not the case. He rejects both of them alternatively or together and sometimes all of them, where his independent view can't be adjusted accordingly. The long list of authors and works quoted by Dalhāṇa is as follows :

Authors / Works

- | | | |
|-------------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| 1. Agniveśa, | 2. Ātreya, | 3. Ālambāyana, |
| 4. Uśanas, | 5. Aupadhenava | 6. Aurabhra, |
| 7. Karavīra, | 8. Karāla, | 9. Kāṅkāyana, |
| 10. Kāśyapa, | 11. Kumāratantra, | 12. Kṛṣṇātreya, |
| 13. Kṣārapāṇi, | 14. Gārgya, | 15. Gālava, |
| 16. Gopurarakṣita | 17. Cakṣusyaṇa | 18. Caraka |
| 19. Jamadagni | 20. Jatūkanya | 21. Jivaka |

22. Dṛḍhabala	23. Nāgārjuna	24. Nimi
25. Parāśara	26. Parvataka	27. Puṣkalavata
28. Bandhaka	29. Bhadrāśaunaka	30. Bhāluḥki
31. Bheda	32. Bhoja	33. Laghu Vāgbhaṭa
34. Vāgbhaṭa	35. Videha	36. Viśwāmītra
37. Vṛddha kaśyapa	38. Vṛddha Bhoja	39. Vṛddha Vāgbhaṭa
40. Vṛddha Suśruta	41. Vaitaraṇa	42. Vyāsa Bhaṭṭaraka
43. Sātyaki	44. Sāvitra	45. Hārīta.

Commentators and their works

1. Amitaprabha Tikā	2. Upaskāra	3. Kārttika Kuṇḍa
4. Gayadāsa	5. Gūḷhapadabhaṅga- ṭippaṇa.	6. Gauḍa
7. Cakrapāṇi	8. Candranandana	9. Nandī
10. Pañjikākāra	11. Brahmadeva	12. Bhaṭṭāra
13. Sukīra	14. Nyayacandrikā	15. Bhāskara
16. Bṛhat Pañjikā	17. Mādhava	18. Lakṣmaṇaṭippaṇa Kāra
19. Vaṅgadatta	20. Varāha	21. Vāpyacandra
22. Candrikākāra	23. Sudhīra	24. Suvīra
25. Jejjāta.		

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सारांश

डल्हण

— पी. के. जे. पी. सुभक्ता

सुश्रुतसंहिता के टीकाकार तथा निबन्धसंग्रह के रचयिता के रूप में प्रसिद्ध आचार्य डल्हण आयुर्वेद के सुप्रतिष्ठित प्राचीन आचार्यों में से एक हैं। जिन्होंने अपनी केवल एक ही कृति में अत्यधिक ख्याति प्राप्त की ऐसे लब्धप्रतिष्ठ विद्वानों में डल्हण भी संभवतः एक ही ऐसा कहा जा सकता है। आयुर्वेद के क्षेत्र में निबन्ध संग्रह के रूप में इनका अमूल्य योगदान है। इनका सम्बन्ध 12 वीं शताब्दी के एक सुविख्यात वैद्यकुल से माना जाता है। डल्हण ने राजा सहजपाल देव के संरक्षण में पूर्वाचार्यों की कृतियों का विस्तृत अध्ययन किया और सारे देश में प्रचलित चिकित्सा परम्पराओं की स्पष्ट जानकारी प्राप्त करने हेतु व्यापक भ्रमण किया।