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Physicians and Patients:

Textual and Visual Representations in Pre-modern South Asia

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“Treating Diseases by Knowing Health: Patient and Physician in Dialogue”

Ancient *āyurvedic* texts present physicians who are engaged with the knowledge of diseases in view of preventing and curing unhealthy mental and physical conditions. Patients, on the other hand, can be assessed as active in both knowing what is happening in their mind and body and recognizing their habits, modifying them, if necessary. This paper explores the relationship between patient and physician especially by examining passages of the *Carakasamhitā*: Patient and physician act according to a medical ethic within which respect and trust are prominent features and dialogue an important device. This analysis also reveals that both patient and physician participate in a dialogue on the meaning of health and illness in which a medical ethic shared by orthodox and non-orthodox confessional views seems to be implied.