



KASHYAPA SAMHITA: A REVIEW OF HISTORY & ITS CONTRIBUTION TO KAUMARBHRITYA

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ABSTRACT

Kashyapa Samhita, the only available source book on Kaumarbhritya, is presented in the form of compilations of teachings of Acharya Kashyapa by his disciple Vriddha Jivaka. With the lapse of time, the book was lost in oblivion and then resurrected by Vatsya, who procured it from Anayasa. This article reviews the history of this ancient text and various aspects related to its stages of development. The article also summarizes the contribution of Kashyap Samhita in field of kaumarbhritya, one of the eight branches of Ayurveda, which deals with care and diseases of children.

KEYWORDS: Ayurveda, Kashyap Samhita, Kaumarbhritya, Vatsya, Vriddha Jeevaka.

INTRODUCTION

Vriddha Jivaka Tantra, popularly known as *Kashyap Samhita* is the only surviving classical text on Kaumarbhritya, one of the eight branches of *ayurveda*. It is a compendium based on the teachings of Acharya Kashyap, which was compiled by Vriddha Jivaka and redacted by Vatsya. *Kaumarbhritya* is the branch of ayurveda dealing with care of infants and children, diseases and treatment of Dhatri (wet nurse or care taker of child), milk, its qualities and treatment of milk related disorders and diseases due to bal grahas.^[1] It must have been a fully developed, well flourished and practiced art of medicine in the ancient era of ayurvedic history.

There were experts of the field as mentioned in Kalidasa's *Kumarbhrityakusala* and Kautilya's *Arthashastra* (*kumarbhrityakusala-raghu*. 3.12 and *kautilya arthashastra* 1.16.10). *Dalhana* in his commentary on first chapter of *uttar tantra* of *Sushruta Samhita* mentions the treatise of *Parvataka*, *Jivaka* and *Bandhak*. Much of the ayurvedic classics related to the subject suffered loss with the passage of time and most of them are not available today. However, we have been lucky enough that *Kashyap Samhita*.

Which was also lost in oblivion was found by Nepal's Rajguru Pt. Hemraj Sharma and he took the pious task of putting the *tadapatra* manuscript together and got it published for the first time in year 1938 by *Choukhamba Sanskrit Sansthan*, Varanasi. Still many of the chapters of various *sthana* (sections) could not be collected as the *pandulipi* or manuscript was incomplete and broken in

many portions. He has also composed the highly educative 'Upodghat' on *Kashyap Samhita*. It is in Newari script and deposited in Durbar library in Kathmandu. Present available book is probably one fourth or even less of its original form.

History

Rajguru Hemraj Sharma has mentioned in 'upodghat' that "source material of this *samhita* is a book written on *tadapatra* (palm leaves). The size of papers (leaves) is 21.5" * 2.25" having six lines in each. The book begins with page 29 and ends with 264, in-between also pages, lines or words are missing. In spite of the script of the book being very old, the difference in writings indicates that it has been probably completed by two writers. The shape of script, indications of page numbers by letters at certain places, number of chapters and verses, length and width of leaves of *tada* indicate that probably this available book was written about 700-800 years back".^[2]

Presently, a hindi translation of *Kashyap Samhita* by Sri Satyapal Bhishagacharya and English translation by Prof. (Km) P.V. Tewari, published by *Chaukhambha Sanskrit Sansthan*, Varanasi and *Chaukhambha Visvabharati*, Varanasi respectively are available.

The following is a deeper view of history of *Kashyap samhita*:

a) Kashyap: He was the preacher of *Kashyap samhita*. His full name is believed to be *Marichi Kashyap*. Several other scholars have been in history with the same name as *Kashyap*. One of them was the expert of toxicology,

who is mentioned in Mahabharat (ancient epic of India). Another scholar with this name was Vriddha Kashyap, who has been mentioned in third chapter of sidhhi sthana of Kashyap samhita and cited by acharya Dalhan.^[3]

b) Vriddha Jivaka: He was the one who compiled the teachings of acharya *Kashyap* in form of Vriddha Jivaka tantra or Kashyap samhita. It is said that the prefix 'Vriddha' which means 'old' or 'elder' was yet was old in wisdom. Attached to name of 'Jivaka' as he attained a vast knowledge in a small age i.e. though he was young in age. Also, it is said that young Jivaka, son of Richika took bath in the holy river Ganga near Haridwar, and emerged as an old man. The prefix also serves to differentiate him from another scholar of ayurveda with the name 'Jivaka', who was a specialist in shalya or surgery.^[3]

c) Vatsya: Vatsya who was a devotee of Lord Shiva, Kashyap as well as Yaksha redacted this book after procuring it from a yaksha named Anayasa. Vatsya was a descendant of Bhrigu and Vriddha Jivaka, thus also called 'bhargava' i.e., belonging to family of Bhrigu. It is also possible that Vatsya derived this name on the basis of place of his origin i.e. Vatsa Desha, which had Kaushambi as its capital. Anayasa yaksha also belonged to Kaushambi, thus it is logical that Vatsya obtained the book from him.^[3]

Khila Sthana of Kashyap Samhita

Kashyap samhita is divided into eight sthanas (sections) excluding Khila sthana. Khila sthana in the book was added later on, because in initial enumeration of eight sections of the book (sutra, nidana, vimana, shareer, indriya, chikitsa, siddhi and kalpa) it is not included, but is added in subsequent description.^[4]

It is believed that the Khila sthana was added by Vatsya, while some authors believe it to be added by an anonymous author after Vatsya.^[5] When this Khil sthana was being written, probably major part of the original book was available, as it mentions that "twenty four types of measurements of diet are described in Rasa Vimana chapter".^[6] However, this chapter is not found in presently available Kashyap samhita.

Other books with the title 'Kashyap samhita'

1. A work called Kashyap samhita is noted in Burnell's catalogue of Tanjore library (mss no. XLT p-70). In Aufrecht's catalogue also this manuscript is included (p-88). This book is in the form of discussions between Uma and Maheshwara (Deities in Hindu mythology) and deals with the etiology and treatment of diseases including prayers to Rudra, Shiva and Vishnu. This book has very scarce matter pertaining to kaumarbhritya.^[7]
2. A manuscript entitled '*Kashyap rog nidanam*' is enlisted in GOML Vol. XXIII no. 13112. This book is incomplete and gives types and distinguishing characteristics of different diseases and their

3. treatment. However, this book is nowhere near to presently accepted Kashyap samhita.^[7] Dalhana in the commentary on twenty seventh chapter of *Uttar tantra* of *Sushruta samhita* has cited a book named '*Kashyapadi tantra*'.^[7]
4. A book on toxicology, named '*Kashyap samhita*' is published from Madras. It deals with snakes, insects, poisonous drugs etc. and is not related to kaumarbhritya.^[7]
5. In the library of Sampurnanand Sanskrit Vishwavidyalaya, there is a manuscript entitled '*Kashyap samhita*' in which good number of drug preparations containing metallic contents are included. Hence it cannot be earlier than 12th and 13th century.^[7]
6. Another manuscript with the name '*Kashyap samhita*' has been found in Newari language kept at Saraswati Bhawan, Varanasi. But it deals mainly with etiology and treatment of diseases and does not propound kaumarbhritya as its main subject. It also includes considerable usage of rasa preparations in treatment, which renders its time to be after 11th A.D.^[7]

Contributions of Kashyap Samhita in Kaumarbhritya

Kashyap samhita is the only available treatise on Kaumarbhritya today. Following are its contributions in this field:

1. Kaumarbhritya is the main subject matter of Kashyap samhita. This is the only classical text which places *kaumarbhritya* on first position while enumerating the eight branches of ayurveda.^[8] It compares significance of *kaumarbhritya* in *ashtanga ayurveda* to that of lord Agni (fire) amongst various deities.^[9]
2. Acharya Kashyap has described eight types of sweda (sudation) namely, hasta sweda (hand sudation), pradeha (sudation with an ointment), nadi (pipe sudation), prastara (bed sudation), sankar (bolus sudation), upnaha (poultice sudation), avgaha (bath sudation) and parisheka sweda (shower sudation). Hasta swedan is indicated exclusively for infants upto four months.^[10]
3. Kashyap samhita has classified children according to financial condition of their parents as ishwar putra (upper class), madhyam putra (middle class) and daridra putra (poor class). He holds the view that though all diseases afflict children equally but their satmya (tolerance or immunity), fee paying capacity, affordability to good quality diet and medicine varies.^[11]
4. Acharya Kashyap has devoted a separate chapter of sutra sthana on the topic 'karnavedhana' or ear lobe piercing. This chapter is incomplete in presently available Samhita but the slokas (verses) suggest that the chapter contained detailed information regarding when, how, where to pierce and the complications of ear lobe piercing. He has even prohibited less experienced vaidya

(physician) to perform karnavedhana of children of royal or affluent families.^[12] This suggests that this art was greatly developed and performing it required considerable expertise.

5. Kashyap described drug doses of children with respect to their age or weight. He says that a newborn should be given medicine in a dose equal to weight of a vidangaphala (fruit of *Embelia ripens*), the dose should be increased according to the weight of baby but should not be greater than the weight of an amlaka fruit (*Embellica officinalis*).^[13]

6. Kashyap samhita also gives dose of ghrita (Ghee) according to age from birth to eight months.^[14] The treatise also describes dose according to formulation and modes of administration namely, churna (powder), kashaya (decoction) and kalka (paste).^[15]

7. The classic has described ten balgraha and vitiation of breast milk by balgraha. Under influence of shakuni (a type of balgraha), breast milk gets bitter and pungent, becomes sweet and bitter under influence of putana and has features of all three doshas when inflicted by skanda and shashti graha.^[16]

8. Clinical features of child consuming different types of breast milk have been described. The child has increased quantity or frequency of faeces and urine when he consumes sweet milk whereas retention of urine and faeces is seen in babies consuming astringent milk. Oil colored milk imparts good strength and one who consumes ghrita colored milk becomes very rich. Smoke colored milk makes the baby famous and pure milk imparts all positive qualities in baby.^[17]

9. Kashyap has described in detail stanya or breast milk including its formation,^[18,19] ejection,^[20,21] qualities of pure milk,^[22] properties of milk^[23] and its nectar like qualities.^[24]

10. Stanyashodhaka medicines (for treatment of breast milk vitiation) are described and also their administration according to dosha and congenial and non congenial diet during the treatment is dealt with.^[25,26,27]

11. Medicines to increase breast milk production have been enumerated.^[28]

12. Kashyap acharya has devoted a separate chapter for Lehan (electuaries) in which he has dealt with indications and contraindications of lehan, swarnaprashan (administration of gold preparations) and various lehan yoga (lehan formulations).^[29]

13. Kashyap samhita has a chapter named 'Dantjanmika' which throws light on proper timing of teething, qualities of teeth erupted in fourth to seventh months, qualities of ideal teeth and gums, names and number of teeth.^[30]

14. Acharya Kashyap has expounded 'vedanadhyaya' which deals with clinical features of various diseases in children and is useful in clinical practice.^[31]

15. In the 'shishyopnayaniya' chapter of vimana sthana (third section of this treatise), acharya has described the procedure of shishyopnayan sanskara (induction ceremony of desciple) and ideal qualities of a shishya (student) and guru (teacher).^[32]

16. Dhatri chikitsa (treatment of wet nurse) has been dealt with in a separate chapter and it is said that the wellbeing of a baby is dependent on Dhatri.^[33]

17. Phakka roga (malnutrition) has been exclusively described by acharya Kashyap. It is divided according to basic etiology as kshiraja, garbhaja and vyadhija phakka (due to breast milk, pregnant mother and chronic diseases respectively).^[34]

18. Kashyap samhita has described 'arikilak', a skin disease of children.^[35]

19. Kashyap has divided childhood in garbha (fetus), bal (infant) and kumar (child).^[36]

20. Jataharini is described in 'Revati kalpadhyaya'. It deals with the various diseases which lead to mortality of fetus and neonates.^[37]

21. Kashyap has described importance of Dhupa kalpa (fumigation) in children.^[38]

22. He has elaborately dealt with Panchkarma in children.^[39]

23. 'Kukunaka', an eye disease in infants has been described by Kashyap samhita.^[40]

24. This samhita stresses upon the importance of diet in children and terms it as 'mahabhaishajya'.^[41]

25. Kashyap has described ideal type of water to be taken in various seasons.^[42]

26. Kashyap samhita has described 'charmadal' in children dependant primarily on breast milk.^[43]

27. The samhita has described suryadarshan, chandradarshan, nishkraman, phalprashan and annaprashan sanskara.^[44,45,46,47]

28. Several issues of psychology are also described as can be seen in description of toys to be placed in kumaragaar (nursery). They should be beautiful but not fearful. The environment should be pleasant and child should never be frightened.^[48]

CONCLUSION

Kashyap samhita has dealt mainly with the care of children, their diseases and treatment. It also elaborates child nutrition, development, psychology, ideal physical and mental characteristics, lehan and various childhood *sanskaras* (*sacraments*). It is thus undoubtedly the most authoritative text of Kaumarbhritya. The current scenario of knowledge of Kaumarbhritya holds its source to this classic, which would have been in greater depths, if we had the text in its complete original form.

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