Kashyapa-Samhita: A Review

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Abstract

Ayurveda is the science of life in general and especially the system of medicine. Ayurvedic approach of treatment includes the prevention and promotion of health as well as cure of the diseases. These two objectives of Ayurveda are fulfilled through the proper knowledge of eight clinical specialties of Ayurveda i.e. Ashtanga-Ayurveda. Kayachikitsa (Medicine), Kaumarbhritya and Balroga (Pediatrics), Grahavidya or Bhutvidya (Science of Demonology), Urdhanga (ENT & Ophthalmology), Shalya-Tantra (Surgery), Damshtra (Toxicology), Jara or Rasayana (Rejuvenation and Geriatric Medicine) and Vrisha or Vajikarana (Aphrodisiacs) these eight specialties are known as Ashtanga-Ayurveda. Different Ayurvedic Samhitas (authentic classical texts) were composed initially comprising of Ashtanga-Ayurveda viz. Charaka-Samhita, Sushruta-Samhita, Bhela-Samhita, Harita-Samhita, Kashyapa-Samhita and Samhitas of Vagbhata. These Samhitas excels in one specialty along with subject matter of other specialties such as Charaka-Samhita excels in the area of Kayachikitsa, Sushruta-Samhita excels in surgical description and Kashyapa-Samhita (KS) excels in the area of Kaumarbhritiya and Balroga (Ayurvedic Pediatrics). Kashyapa-Samhita (KS) also known as Vriddha-Jivakiya Tantra is written by Vriddha Jivaka on the base of teachings of his teacher Kashyapa. In due course of time, it went out of tune with the age and was almost lost. Then Vatsya, of the same clan, received it from a Yaksha named ‘Anayasa’ and redacted it. This Samhita follows the pattern of earlier Samhitas like Charaka-Samhita as it contains Ashta-sthanas (eight sections) in addition to Khilsthana. The Siddhisthana precedes the Kalpasthana where as in Charaka-Samhita it follows the Kalpasthana. The eight sections of KS contain 120 chapters and Khilsthana which is unique in this Samhita contains 80 chapters. Although this text is not fully available to us as many chapters and subject matter in between the lines is missed. So, what we see today is incomplete and mutilated form of the text yet it contains many useful information and knowledge. Therefore, author has decided to review this Samhita to bring its valuable knowledge in the notice of common populace.

Keywords: Ayurveda, Balroga, Chikitsa, Kashyapa, Samhita

Introduction

Ayurveda is the science of life in general and especially the system of medicine. Ayurvedic approach of treatment includes the prevention and promotion of health as well as cure of the diseases. Different Ayurvedic Samhitas (authentic classical texts) were composed initially comprising of Ashtanga-Ayurveda viz. Charaka-Samhita, Sushruta-Samhita, Bhela-Samhita, Harita-Samhita, Kashyapa-Samhita and Samhitas of Vagbhata. These Samhitas excels in one specialty along with subject matter of other specialties such as Charaka-Samhita excels in the area of Kayachikitsa, Sushruta-Samhita excels in surgical description and Kashyapa-Samhita (KS) excels in the area of Balroga (pediatrics).

Kashyapa-Samhita also known as Vriddha-Jivakiya Tantra is written by Vriddha Jivaka on the base of teachings of his preceptor Kashyapa. In due course of time, it went out of tune with the age and was almost lost. Then Vatsya, of the
same clan, received it from a *Yaksha* named ‘Anayasa’ and redacted it. Presently KS is published on the base of single manuscript available to the guru of the king of Nepal, Pt. Hemraj Sharma. Pt. Harprasad Shastri mentioned about the 38 pages containing incomplete *Kashyapa-Samhita* which seems to be different text. Another KS also comes into existence which deals with *Nidana* and *chikitsa* in general and has sufficient description of *Rasasavdhis*.

It is different text subject matter wise and seems to be the text of 12th-13th century A.D. KS follows the pattern of earlier *Samhita* like *Charaka-Samhita* as it contains *Ashta-sthana* (eight sections) in addition to *Khilasthana*. The *Siddhisthana* precedes the *Kalpasthana* where as in *Charaka-Samhita* it follows the *Kalpasthana*. The eight sections of KS contain 120 chapters and *Khilasthana* which is unique in this *Samhita* contains 80 chapters. Although this text is not fully available to us as many chapters and subject matter in between the lines, is missing. So, what we see today is incomplete and mutilated form of the text yet it contains many useful information and knowledge. Therefore, author has decided to review this *Samhita* to bring its valuable knowledge in the notice of common populace.

**Kashyapa, Vriddhajivaka and Kashyapa-Samhita**

There is the description of many *Kashyapa* in History. One *Kashyapa* is stated to be the expert of *Visha-vidya* (toxicology) who is by name mentioned in *Mahabharaat* also. Two *Kashyapa* are mentioned in the first chapter of *Charaka-Samhita* *Sutrasthana* i.e. *Kashyapa* and *Maricha Kashyapa*. Acharya P.V. Sharma says that *Maricha Kashyapa* is the preceptor of *Kashyapa-Samhita*. *Vriddha Kashyapa* has been mentioned in third chapter of *Siddhisthana* of KS presenting his doubt which differentiate him from the preceptor of KS. *Dalhana* and other commentators have mentioned the name of *Vriddha Kashyapa*.

The author of *Kashyapa-Samhita* is different from the *Jivaka* who was an expert of the surgery. As per P. V. Sharma, probably the *Vriddha Jivaka*, the author of KS was senior to *Jivaka* that’s why adjective ‘Vriddha’ has been added with his name. *Vriddha-Jivaka* was the son of *Richika*. P.V. Sharma in his text ‘*Ayurveda ka Vaigyanik Itihas*’ considers him contemporary to Lord Buddha and hence the time period of *Kashyapa Samhita* seems to be near around 6th century B.C. Vatsya who belongs to the clan of *Vriddha Jivaka* and *Vatsa Desha*, redacted this *Samhita* near around 6th or 7th century AD as cultural and other data such as mention of *Shashthipuja, Hunas* etc. relate to the same.

Regarding the name of KS, if we see the colophon given at the end of certain sections, we find “*Vridhadhajivakiye Indriyasthane*”s, “*Vridhadhajivakiye Chikitsasthane*”s, which shows that the original name of this text is *Vriddhadhajivakiya-Tantra*. It is the only *Samhita* (classical text) of *Kaumarabhritya* and *Balroga* (Ayurvedic Pediatrics) but unluckily available in mutilated form. Present KS is edited with help of incomplete single manuscript by Pt. Hemraj Sharma, the guru of the king of Nepal, with scholarly introduction in the beginning.

**Review of Kashyapa-Samhita**

*Kashyapa-Samhita* possesses nine *sthana* (sections) namely *Sutrasthana, Nidansthana, Vimansthana, Shardhasthana, Indriyasthana, Chikitsasthana, Siddhisthana, Kalpasthana* and *Khilasthana*. As per historical study, there were 120 chapters from *Sutrasthana* to *Kalpasthana* and 80 chapters in the *Khilasthana*. Present edition of KS is incomplete as 17 chapters in the beginning of the text and 26th to 80th chapters of *Khilasthana* are unavailable as per Vidyotini Hindi commentary of KS by Satyapal Bhishagacharya. The main subject dealt with is *Kaumarabhritya* which is stated as the first and foremost among the eight specialties of *Ayurveda*. In other topics, KS mostly follows *Charaka* and *Sushruta*. For instance, number of bones (360), definition of *Manas*, nine *dravyas*, *lokammitt-purush*, ten *pranayatanas* are according to *Charaka* while 107 *Marmas*, *Aja Rasayan* are according to *Sushruta*. The present review paper focuses upon the brief review of the subject matter in available portion of KS.

**Language and pattern of the Text**

*Panchajana* word has been used twice i.e. in *Sutrasthana* 23rd chapter and Udavarta-chikitsa chapter. *Panchavada* word has been used in *Sutrasthana* 28th chapter. ‘Avadana’ text are popular in Buddhism. *Guru-shishya Samvad* (teacher-student interaction) is abundantly available in *Kashyapa-Samhita* similar to *Charaka-Samhita*. In most of the chapters *Vriddha Jivaka* asks his queries and *Maricha Kashyapa* solve them one by one. This interaction makes the teaching and learning more productive and scientific. The style of beginning of the chapter is similar to *Charaka Samhita* but the pattern of colophon is different. KS mentions the name of the chapter and its serial number where as *Charaka Samhita* mentions the name of the text, its author and redactor along with the name of chapter and its serial number. At the end of some sections of KS, the name of author and its redactor are mentioned. Pattern of describing the text in different *Sthana* (sections) is almost similar to *Charaka-Samhita*.

**Religious aspect**

Indication of worshipping of god, cow, *brahmin*, old (aged) and *acharya* (teacher) is given in *Sharirasthana*. ‘*Devagrih*’ term has been used for temples of god. Worship of *Rudra* has been advocated in the treatment of *Jwara* and *Rajyaksha roga*. *Narayana* word has been used for lord Vishnu. *Shashthipuja* is mentioned. There is the dominance of *Shaiva, shakta* and tantric tradition in KS.
Social Aspect

Four varnas viz. Brahmaan, kshatriya, vaishya and shudra are mentioned and are considered suitable or fit to gain the knowledge of Ayurveda. In Revati kalpa adhyaya, different types of professions are mentioned such as vanik, bharajivi, kitava, karshaka, malakara, sauchika, gopa and so on. Different types of clothes are mentioned such as, karpasa (cotton), kaushaya (silk), ajina kambala and so on.

Political and Economical Aspect

Children are divided in three groups on the base of economic status i.e. Ishwar-putra (ward of rich persons), madhyam-putra (ward of middle class) and Daridra-putra (ward of poor parents). Many Adhipati, raja (king), rajmatra and rajopam (king like persons) words are seen in Kashyapa Samhita Sutrasthana, kalpasthana and khilsthana.

Geographical Aspect

Different geographical regions by name are mentioned especially Kankhala. Possibly this KS is composed in Kankhala region. Kashmir, China, Balhik, Kashi, Kalinga, Banga are mentioned in the context of diet according to region. Desha-Satmya adhyaya of Khilsthana includes the names of different regions of the country. Kurukshetra, madhya-desha, Magadha, Maharashtra and Kalinga are by name mentioned in Desha-Satmya adhyaya of KS.

Literary Aspect

Thorough study of the KS reveals so many significant facts such as scientific detail of Kaumarbhritya, teacher-student’s interactions, scientific discussions and exchange of knowledge. In this series of discussions, different scholars from India and outside India actively participated. To name few of them are Bhargav Pramati, Rajarshi Varyovid, Balhik Bhishak Kankanayan, Rajarshi Daruvah, Hiranyaksha, Vaideh Nimi, Gargya, Atreya Punarvasu, Vridha Kashyapa, Vaideh Janak and so on. Most of these scholars are mentioned in Charaka-Samhita also. The subject of KS is mainly similar to Charaka-Samhita and Sushruta-Samhita. KS mainly focused upon Kaumarbhritya and declares it as the first and foremost Anga (specialty) of Ayurveda.

Vimansthana of KS has only one chapter i.e. ‘Shishyapakramaniya Adhyaya’ out of eight chapters. Ayurveda is accepted as panchama-veda in this chapter and the study of Ayurveda is indicated four Brahmaan, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra for different purposes.

In the beginning of Sharisthana of KS, the subject matter is missing that’s why the serial number of chapters is not available. Five incomplete chapters out of eight chapters are available in Sharisthana.

In Indriyasthana, only Aushadha-bheshojya Adhyaya is available which deals with the Arishta lakshana (fatal signs and symptoms), bad and good dreams. This chapter highlights the difference between the Aushadha and bhoshaja which relates Aushadha with rational therapy where as Bhoshaja with divine or spiritual therapy.

Chiktisasthana of KS contains incomplete 18 chapters out of 30. Most of the chapters are similar to other Samhitas but Uroghat-chikitsa, Plila-Halimak-chikitsa, Phakkara-rog chikitsa and Dhatri-chikitsa chapters are specific contribution of KS.

Only eight chapters are available in Siddhisthana of KS which are incomplete. Nomenclature of the chapters is generally similar to Charaka-Samhita but very less subject matter is available. Few of the chapters have specific name in this section such as Rajyogiyasiddhi, Trilakshanasiddhi, Kriyasiddhi and Mangalasiddhi.

Kalpasthana of KS has 9 incomplete chapters out of twelve chapters. It is specific as it contains the Kalpa (preparations) of medicines, diet and even Samhita kalpa also where as Charaka-Samhita Kalpasthana contains the Kalpa of Vamana and Virechana karma only. Sushruta-Samhita Kalpasthana deals with the subject matter of toxicology. Dhupa-Kalpa Adhyaya, Revati-Kalpa adhyaya, Bhojan-Kalpa Adhyaya and Samhita Kalpa Adhyaya of KS are specific in terms of subject matter. ‘Arishtagar’ term for hospital is used in KS Kalpasthana.

Kilisthana of KS is unique as no other Samhita contains this section. Possibly it was added by Vatsya, the redactor of Kashyapa-Samhita having 80 chapters but at present only 25 chapters are available. This section provides unique information in the form of seven pharmaceutical preparations i.e. Churna (powder), shikaksha (cold infusion), swaras (juice), abhishav (wine), phanta (hot infusion), kalka (paste) and kwath ( decoction). Ahara has been stated to be the Mahabhaishojya (superior medicine) in this section. Seventy-five types of Yushas are described in this section. Situkaroga (puerperal disorders) are discussed as of 64 types. Amlapitta roga has been described which is called as Suktaka also. Trisama-gutika is described which was the popular remedy during Gupta and post-Gupta period.
Madhu-visheshaniya, Kshiraguna-visheshiya, Paniyaguna visheshiya, Mansaguna visheshiya and Desha-Satmya Chapters are specific in KS as no other Samhita includes separate chapter on these topics. Khilsthana includes different types of topics as the basic idea of redactor was to add remaining subject matter to make the text complete.

Conclusion

After thorough study of the text, it can be stated firmly that the text of Kashyapa-Samhita mainly focuses upon the Kaumarbhriitya (Ayurvedic Pediatrics). KS is composed by Vriddha-Jivaka and redacted by Vatsya. It is available in distorted and mutilated form which creates a big gap in proper understanding of the subject. More than half of its portion is missing. Original KS dates back to 6th century BCE. The pattern and planning of section are almost similar to Charaka-Samhita. It has so many unique discourses like Leha-Adhyaya, Dantajanmik-Adhyaya, Vedana-Adhyaya, Lakshanadhyaya, Aushadha-bheshjiya Adhyaya, Revati Kalpa-Adhyaya, Bhojana kalpa, Samhita kalpa Adhyaya, Yusha-Nirdeshiya Adhyaya, seven types of pharmaceutical preparations, sixty types of Sutika Roga, Graha-roga and so on. These chapters need special attention of the Ayurvedic scholars to carry out the research work. Therefore, in spite of being mutilated and distorted form of KS, it has so many topics useful for clinical practices and research.

Conflict of Interest: None

References


