CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

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We have seen from the earlier discussions that the Sanskrit literature of India, right from Vedic times gives ample evidences to showcase the art and science of cooking in all aspects. The food including even meat and the intoxicants are used as offerings in sacrifices and for human consumption. Later meat eating and the consumption of intoxicants became confined only to the ritualistic practices even for Brahmins.

In the medieval period, animal sacrifices got replaced by symbolic representation. Other food items are used as substitutes for meat offerings. The Purânic writers were of the opinion that the slaughter of animals were not necessary for sacrifices. Still the Ayurvedic treatises support meat eating and drinking of intoxicants as a part of medical treatments.

7.1 Dietetics and Culinary art

The subjects dietetics and culinary art also have been given prime importance by almost all Ayurvedic treatises. Apart from these Ayurvedic treatises, the works like Kṣemakutūhala, Bhojanakutūhala and Pākadarpaṇa also deal with these topics in an exclusive manner.

Among them, Bhojanakutūhala is significant for its style of narration. The text contains three pariccheda-s as stated earlier. The
first and second parccheda-s of the text systematically deal with the
topics dietetics and culinary art. Here the author goes into the details
of all aspects related to food like the properties and effects of each
and every food substances, dining vessels, dining procedures, post-
dining activities, poisonous food, remedies for indigestion,
practising good food habits , avoiding bad food habits and different
customs related to food.

The explanations on mutually incompatible foods
(saṃyogaviruddha), matching foods (saṃyogahīta), apt vessels for
eating and cooking (bhojanabhājana), correct time to eat
(bhojanakālāḥ) and rules relating dining procedures (bhojanavidhiḥ)
indicate the systematic methodology and scientific temperament of
the text.

We can see that the author is not satisfied with the dietetic and
culinary aspects of food. Hence he adds certain other discussions
which seems primarily unrelated to food science. The last section of
the first parccheda discusses the process of anointments
(anulepanavidhī) and advantages of apt clothing
(upabhogārhavastraguṇāḥ). More than that in the second
pariccheda, all the belief systems and taboos on food are discussed in
the viewpoint of Smṛti literature.

The third parccheda of BK shows a clear cut deviation of the
topics which also primarily seems to be irrelevant to food science.
The discussions moves away from food science to the different other
topics like bedroom, sleep, intercourse and dreams. The actions
after food consumption mainly at the night time, the description
and prescription of bedroom, the measures to be taken and the methods to be adopted for a happy conjugation are the topics discussed herewith. At the first glance one may feel that these topics do not bear any connection with food. In this text what is pertinent to us is the curiosity on foods. We must assume that the topics in the third pariccheda can be claimed to have direct or indirect relation to food science. In that viewpoint it can be justified that the author incorporated most of these discussions for the reason that all these actions are done after the food consumption. It seems that the author has dealt with the prescriptions and procedures of happy conjugation intentionally in the third pariccheda. The sexual act is also a kind of "bhojana". Just as there are prescribed rules and customs regarding food consumption so are there the prescribed rules and prescribed customs and taboos regarding the conjugal pleasure. It is an inevitable part of mundane life. Hence it comes under the purview of bhojana. That is why the author quotes profusely from Dharmaśāstra literature and rarely from Ayurvedic works. It is to be noticed that he prescribes some medicines and describes medical treatments for happy conjugation, healthy conception and proper child care.

Moreover the author had a holistic vision on food science which is interlinked with almost all the subtle aspects of human life. Hence it is clear that through his text the author has compiled all sorts of discussions on food that pertaining to dietetics, culinary art, belief systems, taboos and the holistic vision which is unique in its

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510 The words bhojana(food) and bhoga (enjoyment) both these Sanskrit words are derived from the /bhuji/.
type. The other two texts of this genre, *Pākadarpaṇa* and *Kṣemakutūhala* only discuss the culinary aspects of different delicacies.

### 7.2 Dishes of regional importance

The preparations like *poḷī, roṭikā, lapsikā, śaṅkhapāḷā, saṃyāva* or *karaṇī, harīṣā* etc. are very popular dishes in the different regional names in North India as well as in South India even today. It is noticed by the author himself that, some dishes have regional importance also. *Tāpaharī* which is famous in North-India, *samītāmodaka* (*palasudīpa* in vernaculars) and *drāvaka* type of *modaka*, popular in Gujarat, are some of them. The discussions of food habits of regional importance have to be studied in detail as it may shed some light on the cultural history of India.

### 7.3 Samitā and Māṣa dishes – beneficial or harmful?

Most of the dishes described in this text are made up of *samitā* and *māṣa* (black-gram). We have stated earlier that *samitā* is same as the present-day *maida*.

*Samitā*, a derivative of wheat, is derived through natural processes. Śūranāḍ Kuṇjan Pillai, the editor of Trivandrum Sanskrit Series edition of the first *pariccheda* of BK, notes that *samitā* is popular in the name “*maida*” in Maharashtra which also attests the linguistic relation between these two words. Hence as it is derived by natural processes it is beneficial. Instead of it what we use in the name of *maida* is a chemically bleached wheat which contains traces of alloxan, an undesirable chemical
hazardous to health. This chemical bleaching makes the wheat harmful. Hence Maida is harmful while Samitā is beneficial.

The author quotes the Ayurvedic treatises for substantiating his view that māśa is an inferior grain for that it is very difficult to digest. A question may be asked as to why this much of varieties of such an inferior grain is prescribed in the text. This can be well answered that most of the māśa dishes explained here are prepared with different other ingredients like ginger, asafoetida, cumin seeds, pepper etc. which in combination with māśa removes the harmful effects of it and makes the digestion easier.

7.4 Brahmin author and the meat dishes

Raghunātha has elaborated not only the vegetarian but also non-vegetarian dishes. It may be noticed that he is an orthodox brahmin. We may wonder how a brahmin, that too orthodox, who is ordained to refrain from meat-eating by scriptures (Dharmaśāstra-s), has ventured to describe the preparation of many non-vegetarian food items. And how had he attained the knowledge of these preparations? In this regard, it is to be noted that his patron, King Ekoji’s palace kitchen had a tradition of preparing Marathi and European dishes for distinguished guests. The later king Šarabha maintained three kitchens in his palace. One of these was meant exclusively for non-vegetarian food items. Krishnaswami maintains in his introductory remarks of Šarabhendra Pākaśāstra⁵¹¹, that the

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⁵¹¹ Šarabhendra Pākaśāstra is a culinary work written by Šarabhendra in marathi language and Krishnaswami is the editor of it.
king Śarabha have set apart three different kitchens for three
different tradition of cooking in his palace.

1. The kitchen for purely non-vegetarian dishes (type)
2. Brahmanical kitchen (vegetarian type)
3. English kitchen (style).

Here it may be noticed that the other two texts viz., Kṣemakutūhala and Pākadarpaṇa also have descriptions of meat preparations.

7.5 Literary skills of the author

Raghunātha Sūrin displays his narrative skills adorned with
the poetic rheotries in the work. Let us examine some of the
beautiful verses of the author.

After discussing the different qualities of Haritaki author
concludes the discussion thus.

himādrijāyāśca himādrijāyāḥ
guṇān samagrān yadi veda vedaḥ/
dhanvantarir yatra tarir na deva
bhave bhaved bhūribhavo bhavo’pi//

Haritakīprakaraṇa BK I.647

It can be seen that the anuprāsālaṅkāra is skillfully employed here.

The poisoning effect of oil is given by the author in the section
of oils thus. “There is no difference between poison and oil, the
dead and the sleepy, debt and servitude and fool and firewoods”.
viṣasya tailasya na kiñcid antaraṇī
mṛtasya suptasya tathā na kiñcit/
ṛṇasya dāsasya na kiñcid antaraṇī
mūrkhasya kāṣṭhasya tathā na kiñcit/

Tailaparakaraṇa BK I.1051

We can see that the expression is highly poetical and that suggestive function is adroitly employed.

7.6 Limitations of the text

At times the text is not self explanatory. In the Siddhāṇnaparakaraṇa, the preparation of several dishes are described. But neither the procedural details nor the measure or ratio of the ingredients used to make a dish are explained everywhere. Thus one may find it difficult to practically prepare the dishes described in BK. Probably the author thinks that the quantity of each ingredients for the preparation of dishes are decided by the cook himself with their taste and preferences.

Though not a limitation, a curious point to be note here is that the author do not describe a single dish containing egg.

7.7 Scope for further study

- Raghunātha Sūrin often quotes the Bhāvaprakāśanighaṇṭu and Rājanighaṇṭu. We know that the profusion of nighaṇṭu works is unique in the field of Ayurveda. And it seems that they were very popular.
The critical edition of second and third pariccheda-s of BK which are hitherto not undertaken leave the scope for further study. The taboos on food based on Smṛti literature and the holistic vision on food in the second and third pariccheda-s deserve a focussed study.

The other texts, Pākadarpaṇa and Kṣemakutūhala dealing exclusively the different aspects of culinary art are also not studied well. Many more texts may be there unnoticed in the public manuscript libraries and in private collections.

Rasagolla has been a matter of discussion that, this sweet dish got a geographical indicator tag from the Central government of India for the state of West Bengal⁵¹². The state government of Orissa raised objections as this dish has been prepared from very earlier period in almost all festive occasions of Orissa and hence giving such a geographical indicator tag is simply setting apart their claims to the dish. In settling such issues the study of texts like BK from a historical angle would help a lot.

The food culture of the modern society has left us with many dietary problems consequently resulting in different types of lifestyle diseases. In this scenario, the study of texts like BK thrusts the principles of dietetics in Ayurveda is relevant in all manners. In the new age of lifestyle diseases and fast food culture, the publication of those texts and the scientific enquiry into them would

⁵¹² West Bengal seeks GI tag for rasagolla, The Hindu, Sep 23 2015
provide a vast knowledge of indigenous food sciences and traditions of ancient India. The study of the perceptions of food science and technology as detailed in the texts of this genre leads to the better understanding of food culture prevalent in the ancient and medieval India.

The tradition of dietetics and culinary art in India is very rich and old. It has its roots in Vedic literature. And it got developed in the ages of Sūtra period and the periods of epics and classical literature. Transforming itself through the compilative works like Arthaśāstra and Mānasollāsa, it has a beautiful culmination in the texts of Kṣemakutūhala, Bhojanakutūhala and Pākadarpaṇa. Here we have only dealt with three Sanskrit treatises wherein the subjects Pākaśāstra and Pākakalā are discussed. Food history and culture of ancient India upto medieval period as reflected in Sanskrit literature will be complete only with the study of all these three works. Even among these, BK is a unique work dealing with food science and the preparation of dishes. Moreover it has recorded its valuable observations even from the angle of Ayurveda and Dharmaśāstra thereby a high esteem is embraced to the work.