CHAPTER 3

The Sanskrit treatises on Dietetics and Culinary art

Chapter III

The Sanskrit treatises on dietetics and culinary art

In the last chapter, we have examined the Sanskrit sources starting from the Vedic literature, śūtra, epic literature upto its classical sources with a historical perspective of dietetics and culinary art. Now we shall discuss the Sanskrit sources which deal primarily and exclusively with dietetics and cookery. The texts of this genre can be represented diagrammatically in the following manner.

Sanskrit Sources on Cookery and dietetics

- Ayurvedic treatises
- Compilative works
  - Arthaśāstra
  - Mānsollasa
  - Śukranīti
  - Śivatattvaratnākara
- Texts on dietetics & cookery
  - Kṣemakutūhala
  - Bhojanakutūhala
  - Pākadarpaṇa
- Saṃhitā-s
- Nighaṇṭu-s
- Other Ayurvedic and dietetic texts
3.1 Ayurvedic treatises

Ayurveda is the age old medical science of ancient India. This science relies upon the theory of *tridoša* in which three *doša*-s are vāta, pitta and kapha. The equilibrium state of these three *doša*-s is called svāsthya. The fluctuation of these *doša*-s makes one unhealthy. So, this science instructs us on how to maintain the equilibrium of these three *doša*-s both in the state of the health and in the state of diseases. For maintaining this equilibrium in the state of health, one should give a sizable importance for the basic concept of dietetics. So, here in this section we are about to discuss the important chapters on dietetics and culinary art of these Ayurvedic treatises. The Ayurvedic treatises can be categorised into three.*saṃhitā*-s, nighaṇṭu*-s* and other texts.

3.1.1 *Saṃhitā*-s

In the Vedic literature, we come across different *saṃhitā* texts like those: Vājasaneya, Bāṣkala, Kauśītaka and Śāṅkhāyana. Here in Ayurveda we have another *saṃhitā* tradition in the name of Caraka, Suśruta, Śārṅgadhar, Kaśyapa and Bhela. Of them *Carakasaṃhitā*, *Suśrutasaṃhitā* and *Śārṅgadharasaṃhitā* have got some relevent informations on dietetics and culinary art.

3.1.1.1 *Carakasaṃhitā*

This text enjoys the prime position among Ayurvedic treatises. The text is written in the form of advices of the sage Ātreya to the sage Agniveśa. It is believed that Caraka edited these discussions
around 3rd century CE which became popular by the name *Carakasaṁhitā*.

The text contains eight sections viz. *Śūrasthāna*, *nidānasthāna*, *vimānasthāna*, *śarīrasthāna*, *indriyasthāna*, *cikitsāsthāna*, *kalpasthāna* and *siddhisthāna*. *Śūrasthāna* contains 30 chapters. Of them the first 28 chapters are divided into seven subsections namely *catuṣaka*-s viz. *bheṣajacatuṣka*, *svāsthyacatuṣka*, *niradeśacatuṣka*, *upakalpanācatuṣka*, *rogacatuṣka*, *yojanācatuṣka* and *annapānacatuṣka*.

In the last sub section *annapānacatuṣka*, the chapters like *annapānavidhi* and *vividhāśitapīṭīya* deal with food-science. The chapter *annapānavidhi* explains the rules of intaking of food and drinks. This chapter includes the properties of different types of grains, meats, vegetables, fruits, beaverages, water, sugarcane and food stuffs. Another chapter namely *vividhāśitapīṭīya* of *śūrasthāna* explains the nurturing of body by food, the diseases caused by food etc. The author also explains on foods which are mutually incompatible. Other two chapters viz. *mātrāśitīya* and *tasyāśitīya* discuss the quantity of food intake in general.

### 3.1.1.2 *Suśrutasañhitā*

The importance of this text is that the text is the first one to deal with the surgical aspects of Ayurveda. The Ayurvedic discourses of the teacher Divodasa are believed to be summarised by his disciple *Suśruta*, who wrote the work *Suśrutasañhitā* in 4th century CE. It contains six sections-*Śūrasthāna*, *nidānasthāna*, *śarīrasthāna*, *cikitsāsthāna*, *kalpasthāna* and *uttaratantra*. *Śūrasthāna*
contains 46 chapters. Here the food and drinks are described on the basis of liquid and solid items. The chapters namely Dravadravyavidhi and Annapānavidhi explain food and drinks. Dravadravyavidhi describes the properties of different types of liquids like water, milk, butter, butter milk, ghee, oils, sugarcane and beavaries. The subsequent chapter, annapānavidhi explains the types and the properties of grains, meat, fruit, vegetables, flowers and salts. Kṛtānavarga, the subsection of annapānavidhi describes the preparations and properties of different types of gruels like peya, vilepi, maṃḍa, pāyasa, mudgayaṣa and kṛṣara, meat dishes like ullupta, vesavāra, etc. The chapter annapānavidhi also discusses the rules on taking food, the place of dishes to be served in a plate or leaf and the vessels that can be used.

3.1.1.3 Śāṅgadharsāṃhitā

Śāṅgadhara is believed to be written this work in 13th century CE. Apart from the discussions of medicinal preparations, the text gives some unique observations in relation to dietetics. The section namely Āhārādigatikathana describes the passage of food inside a human body. Another section kvāthavidhi describes the preparation of different types of cooked rice dishes like yavāgu and vilepi.

3.1.2 Nighaṇṭu-s of Ayurveda

The tradition of nighaṇṭu has also got a wide acceptance among Ayurvedic scholars. According to Shanthkumar Lucas “The Ayurveda Nighaṇṭu may be defined as a glossary containing synonymous groups, the names of the drugs, plants, animals,
minerals or anything that is administered either as food or medicines, to the human body. Rājanighaṭu explains the importance of nighaṇṭu as-

\[ nighaṇṭunā vinā vaidyo vidvān vyākaraṇanī vinā/ \]
\[ āyudhaṇ ṇ ca vinā yoddhā trayo hāsyasya bhāvanam// \]

(A physician without the knowledge of nighaṇṭu, a scholar without the knowledge of grammar and a soldier without weapons, all these three are laughed at in this world).

From this statement it is clear that the knowledge of nighaṇṭu is indispensable for a physician.

The early nighaṇṭu-s like Aṣṭāṅganighaṇṭu, Paryāyatāratnamālā, Nighaṇṭusēṣa, Abhidhānaratnamālā and Mādhavādravyagūṇa give only the synonyms of food items and medicines. But the later nighaṇṭu-s like Dhanvantarīnighaṇṭu, Madanapālanighaṇṭu, Rājanighaṇṭu, Kāyadevanighaṇṭu and Bhāvaprakāṣanighaṇṭu add the properties, reaction of the physique to them and uses of food items and medicines. Here in the present chapter, later nighaṇṭu-s such as Dhanvantarīnighaṇṭu, Madanapālanighaṇṭu, Rājanighaṇṭu, Kāyadevanighaṇṭu and Bhāvaprakāṣanighaṇṭu are studied in the view point of food science.

### 3.1.2.1 Dhanvantarīnighaṇṭu

The author of this nighaṇṭu is believed to be Dhanvantari. It is generally considered as a 11\textsuperscript{th} century CE work and is one of the
important works on *dravyaguna*. It contains seven chapters which are *guḍūcyādivarga*, *satapūśpādivaraga*, *candanādivarga*, *karavīrādivarga*, *āmrādivarga*, *suvarṇādivarga* and *miśrakādivarga*. It seems to be the first *nighaṇṭu* in which the synonyms, properties, actions and the uses of drugs are described. The second chapter of this work includes the synonyms and properties of spices. The sixth chapter contains synonyms and properties of different types of grains.

3.1.2.2 Madanapālanighaṇṭu

It is a 14th century CE work written by Madanapāla. This *nighaṇṭu* contains 13 chapters. The chapters namely *phalavarga*, *śākavarga*, *pānīyādivarga* and *ikṣvādivarga* discuss different food materials. Another chapter *Dhānyakṛtānnādivarga* discusses the different food preparations and the properties of gruels. *Māṃsavarga* describes the synonyms and properties of the meat of various birds and animals. *Miśrakavarga* has the description of *anupāna* and seasonal regimens.

3.1.2.3 Rājanighaṇṭu

*Rājanighaṇṭu* is known by different names such as *Abhidhānacūḍāmaṇi*, *Nighaṇṭurāja* and *Dravyābhidhānaganata-saṅgraha*. It is a 14th century CE work written by Narahari Paṇḍita. Here the nomenclature of *dravya*-s and their synonyms are given in the basis of *rūḍhi*, *svābhāva*, *deśokta*, *lāṅcchana*, *upamā*, *vīrya* and *ītarāhvaya*.295

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295 *nāmāni kvacidiha rūḍhiḥ svabhāvāti*
The *nighaṇṭu* contains 16 chapters. The dietetic aspects are discussed in the sections like śālyādivarga, pippalyādivarga, mūlakādivarga, āmrādivarga, pāṇīyādivarga, kṣīrādivarga and māṃsādivarga. Śālyādivarga discusses different types of grains and their properties in detail. Pippalyādivarga explains the names and properties of cumin seeds, ginger, black pepper etc. Mūlakādivarga deals different types of root vegetables in detail. Some varieties of fruits are discussed in āmrādivarga. Pāṇīyādivarga describes different types of water, properties of water based on its source, varieties of sugarcane, honey and beverages. Milk and milk products are discussed in kṣīrādivarga. Māṃsādivarga explains the properties of meats of different animals.

### 3.1.2.4 Kaiyadevanighaṇṭu

The author of this *nighaṇṭu* is Kaiyadeva who is known by the name *Pathyāpathyavibodhaka* also. It is a 15th century CE work. It contains nine chapters. The chapters namely dhānyavarga, dravyavarga, kṛtānnavarga and māṃsavarga describe the foodstuffs (*annadravya*). The chapter kṛtānnavarga explains the preparation and properties of different dishes like *lapsikā, kulmāṣa, parpaṭā, lāja*, and *dhānā*.

### 3.1.2.5 Bhāvaprakāśanighaṇṭu

Bhāvamīśra is the author of this *nighaṇṭu*. It is a 16th century CE work. This *nighaṇṭu* is considered as the latest among classical

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* deśoktasya kvacic ca lāñchanopamābhyaṃ/
  vīrīṇa kviṣītārāhmanyātideśāti
  dravyāṇāṃ dhruvamiti sapta coditāni//

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works in the field of *dravyaguṇa*. It contains 22 sections. The sections like āmrāḍiphalavarga, dhānayavarga, śākavarga, māṁsavarga, kṛtāṇnavarga, ikṣuvarga, dugdhavarga, dadhivarga, takravarga, navanītavarga and ghṛtavarga, explain the properties of almost all food materials. The chapter *Kṛtāṇnavarga* explains the cooking process of many food items, the preparation of meats and the leafy vegetables.

These *nighaṇṭu*-s have a detailed description of almost all of the food substances as well as medicinal substances. The study of these *nighaṇṭu*-s will make more easy to the study of Ayurvedic treatises also.

### 3.1.3 Other Ayurvedic and dietetic texts

#### 3.1.3.1 *Aṣṭāṅgasamgraha* and *Aṣṭāṅgahṛdaya* of Vāgbhaṭa

*Aṣṭāṅgasamgraha* and *Aṣṭāṅgahṛdaya* are considered later treatises as compared to the early *Saṃhitā*-s. Vāgbhaṭa, the author of these two texts lived on 5th century CE\(^{296}\). The author first wrote *Aṣṭāṅgasamgraha* which is a compendium of eight different sections of treatment which are śalya, śālākya, kāya, bhūta, agada, kaumārabhṛtya, rasāyana and vājīkaraṇa. Though the earlier texts on Ayurveda have discussed these topics, they are not presented in a systematic or in a comprehensive manner. Vāgbhaṭa compiled the earlier conceptions and presented the subject very systematically in

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\(^{296}\) See introduction of *Aṣṭāṅgahṛdaya* p.15, ed. by PT. Bhiṣagāchārya Hariśāstri Parādkar Vaidya, Krishnadas Academy.1982
the text, *Aṣṭāṅgasāṅgraha*. He felt that the text has become a voluminous text which is unapproachable for the beginners and wrote another one which is the summary of the former text. The new work is known as *Aṣṭāṅgahṛdaya*.

*Aṣṭāṅgahṛdaya* is divided into two-पुरवान्त्र and uttarāntara. In the पुरवान्त्र there are five divisions which go by the names sūstrasthāna, nidānasthāna, śarīrasthāna, cikitsāsthāna and kalpasthāna. In sūstrasthāna of *Aṣṭāṅgahṛdaya* the chapters like dravadravyavijñānīya (liquid and solid food items), annasvarūpavijñānīya (innermost form of food) and annasaṃrakṣaṇīya (the and the protection of food items) discuss the topic food-science. The chapter dravadravyavijñānīya contains subsections on water (*jala*), milk (*kṣra*), sugarcane (*ikṣu*), oil (*taila*) and liquor (*madya*) describes their varities and properties in a detailed manner. The sixth chapter annasvarūpavijñānīya contains the subsections dealing with the varities and properties of cereals (*śūka*), pulses (*śimbī*), cooked food (*kṛtānna*), meats (*māmsa*), vegetables (*śāka, phala, kanda and patra*), fruits (*phala*) and different medicines (*vividhausadha*). The subsection on cooked foods (*kṛtānna*) deals with different types of food items and their properties. The seventh chapter annasaṃrakṣaṇīya describes the mutually incompatible food items (*viruddhāhārāḥ*) in detail. In the eighth chapter mātrāśitiya, different styles of food intake like samāśana, adhyaśana and viṣamāśana are described. In śarīrasthāna of *Aṣṭāṅgahṛdaya*, the first two chapters deal with the types of food suitable for the pregnancy and post pregnancy periods.
3.1.3.2 Mādhavanidāna

The work Mādhavanidāna is written by Mādhavakara who lived in between 8th and 9th cent. CE. This text is also known by the name Rugvinīścaya. The author lists out different types of diseases along with their causes, symptoms and complications. The food and medicines which are apt for curing different types of diseases are also mentioned.

Dietetic Treatises

3.1.3.3 Pathyāpathyaviniścaya

It is a work dealing with the consideration on pathya and apathyā items for healthy living. Kesavaprasad Sharma is the author of this work. It is published from Khemaraj Shrikrishnadas Publishers, Bombay. Priyavrat Sharma fixes the date of the author in between Bhavamiśra(16th cent. CE) and Śivadāsa Sena(15th cent. CE) 297. The work contains 62 chapters. Of them, the section on food-science includes the descriptions on the properties of rice, fruits, vegetables and non-vegetarian dishes. The digestion of food, the formation of dhātu-s and some dietetic preparations which are useful in diseases are also subjected in this work.

3.1.3.4 Ayurvedīyapathyāpathyavimarśa

This is a later work published in 1970 authored by a modern Ayurveda practitioner, Vaidyaratna Paramānanda. The text

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comprises of twelve chapters. The author describes the subject on dietetics quoting some of the ancient texts and also with his own practical experiences. The author has published the work in English as well as in Hindi.

The first chapter establishes the relation between body and food. The subsequent chapters deal with types of food and the properties of food stuffs. At the end of the work, the author discusses the prescribable food and mutually incompatible food items.

3.2 Compilative Works

3.2.1 Mānasollāsa

The text is written by Someśvara III. The work is also known by the name Abhilāṣitārthacintāmaṇī. Mary Ellen Snodgrass, the author of Encyclopedia of kitchen history records a pertinent observation that in Europe the history of cookbook-writing was started only in the 13th century and in India it preceeds by a period of one hundred years. And Mānasollāsa is the first ever work on culinary art.

“A century before, cookbook writing began in medieval Europe, King Somesvara III described the dishes cooked in the palace kitchens at his capital Kalyana, India”

This encyclopedic work is valuable as a record of the state of knowledge on many topics at that time, and draws from many older

\[\text{Encyclopaedia of Kitchen History p.267 Taylor and Francis, New York, London 2004} \]
treatises on medicine, magic, veterinary science, the valuation of precious stones and pearls, fortifications, painting and music, culinary art, games and amusements and the many other subjects. It is divided into five sections (viṃśati-s), each containing twenty chapters (adhyāya-s). In the third section of Mānasollāsa, two chapters are dedicated to food. These are (annabhoga) enjoyment of food and (pānīyabhoga) enjoyment of drinking water and juices.

The chapter also describes the common cooking methods such as boiling, pan frying and deep frying. A detailed account of vegetables, meats, spices, flavoring and souring agents and culinary techniques are also given in this chapter. Spices like black pepper, long pepper, ginger, cinnamon, cardamom, cumin, coriander, asafoetida and saffron are also described.

We have dealt with the references of food science in Arthaśāstra in the previous chapter. Similarly Śukranīti and Śivatatvaratnākara also include chapters related to the royal kitchen, dishes, utensils and the storehouse.

3.3 Texts on Cookery

Now we turn to treatises which deal exclusively with food-science. As has already been noted, Kṣemakutūhala, Bhojanakutūhala and Pākadarpaṇa are the three such works.

3.3.1 Kṣemakutūhala

Kṣemaśarman is the author of Kṣemakutūhala. He was one among the members of the royal court of King Vikramasena of Ujjain in Central India. The author gives his lineage through twenty
verses in the first chapter itself. His father was Manmatha and his mother was sitā. The author himself states that he completed this work on the Monday, the thirteenth day in the bright half of month kārttika in the Vikrama era 1605\textsuperscript{299} (ie.1548CE).

The text consists of twelve chapters which are called utsava-s. In the first utsava, Kṣemaśarman states about the seven types of dravyapāka-s\textsuperscript{300} and the contents of the work through some verses\textsuperscript{301}. In the second, the utensils for cooking have been described. In the third, the qualities of the physician and cook are also explained. In the fourth, about the seasons and the routines to be followed in each season are described. In the fifth, daily routine is prescribed. In the sixth, topics related with meat food are described. The cooking of fish has been described in the seventh. In the eighth, the different types of vegetables have been given. In the ninth, preparations from flour have been described. In the tenth, the cooked food stuffs have been described. In the eleventh, appetizers have been explained. In the twelfth, dairy products and cool drinks have been dealt with.

### 3.3.2 Bhojanakutūhala

Raghunātha Gaṇeṣa Navahasta, a Marathi Brāhmin is considered to be the author of Bhojanakutūhala. He is also known by the name Raghunāthasūrin. He was one among the court members of Ekoji the Maratha king of Tanjavur. His father was Gaṇeṣabhaṭṭa.

\textsuperscript{299} bāṇākāśasute nāde vatsare vikramāṅkite /
ūṛje śuklatrayodaśyāṃ granthaḥ pūrṇyoynamāndaive // Kṣemakutūhala XII.128

\textsuperscript{300} bharjanaṃ talanaṃ svedaḥ pācanaṃ kvathanaṃ tathā /
śaṃśaṃ puṭapākaśca pākaḥ saptavidho mataḥ // Kṣemakutūhala I.37-38

\textsuperscript{301} See Kṣemakutūhala I.23-36
The work known to be written in 17th century CE. It is divided into three chapters which go by the name pariccheda-s. The first pariccheda was published by Śūranād Kuṇjan Pillai from University of Kerala, Trivandrum in 1960. The remaining pariccheda-s are not published yet.

The first pariccheda titled dravyaṅgāṅgakathana contains the discussions on different food articles and their dietetic effects according to the prominent Ayurvedic treatises. Here in the text, there is a section named siddhāṇnaprakaraṇa devoted to the preparation of different varieties of food items. This pariccheda also discusses on different topics like food timings, food habits, dining vessels, procedural details of eating and post dining activities.

The second pariccheda named bhakṣyābhakṣyaprakaraṇa discusses the edible and non-edible food items as described in the Smṛti literature. This pariccheda includes a particular section known as rajasvalāprakaraṇa which gives a detailed discussion on menstruated ladies and their recommended food.

The third pariccheda termed Vibhāvarīvilāsa deals with different topics which primarily seems to be irrelevant to food science. 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.

The next three chapters of the present study contains a detailed analysis of the contents of BK.
3.3.3 Pākadarpaṇa

The author of the text is said to be King Naḷa of the Nalopākhyāna episode in MB. Hence the text is also known by the name Naḷapākadarpaṇa. The text is edited by Vāmācaraṇa Bhaṭṭācārya and published by Chaukhambha Sanskrit sansthan, Varanasi. The editor Vāmācaraṇa Bhaṭṭācārya had an opinion that the author Naḷa is the son of King VĪrasena who belonged to Candra vaṇāśa.

The text comprises of 11 chapters known as prakaraṇa-s. In the first chapter the Naḷa (who is none else than the author), is introduced as one who comes to the royal court of Ṛtuparṇa and says that he is well versed in Science on Horses (aśvavidyā) and Science on cooking (pākavidyā). The author explains the qualities of a cook (sūda) and his assistant (pariveśaka). He glorifies the food and states eight types of food-defects. Then he explains the different processes of cooking food items. This is followed by a description of the cooked rice (odana), soups (sūpa), ghee (sarpī), spices (vyañjana), meat (māṃsa), other eatables gruel (yavagu or yūṣa), rice mixed with ghee, butter, curd and the liquids like milk, water and other drinks. Food-stuffs which are mutually incompatible (viruddhāhāra) are also explained. The text is written very systematically, explaining the theories of Ayurveda wherever necessary. The qualities of some food items and their recipes are also

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302 svadeśaṁ hi parityajya bāhukākhya’yamāgataḥ/
aśvānāṁ vāhane rājan prthivyāṁ nāsti matsamaḥ//
arthajñānasya caivāhaṁ draṣṭavyo naipuṇena vā/
annasaṃskāramapi ca jānāmi pīśitasya ca// Pākadarpaṇa v.2-3,p.1
given. But many of the ideas described in the work can be seen as a summation of what that has been stated in other two works viz. *Kṣemakutūhala* and *Bhojanakutūhala*. Hence it can be concluded that the author is a later contemporary to the other two. Perhaps for the sake of publicity and antiquity the author might have ascribed it to King Naḷa of Naḷa episode.

Thus we have discussed the tradition of dietetics and culinary art of ancient and medieval India through its Ayurvedic texts which include *saṃhitā*-s and *nighaṭṭu*-s, compilative works like *Arthaśāstra* and *Mānasollāsa* and the texts on cookery which include *Kṣemakutūhala*, *Bhojanakutūhala* and *Pākadarpaṇa*. We can see that, all of these treatises describe the properties and effects of most of the food ingredients in a very detailed manner. Of them, *Pākadarpaṇa* is a text based on culinary art and *Kṣemakutūhala* and *Bhojanakutūhala* are texts based on both the notions of dietetics and culinary art.