Introduction

Agadtantra is the branch of Ayurvedic science which was well developed in the era of Charakacharya and Susharutacharya. Obviously in those times, as human being were living close to Nature, the contact with toxic plants & toxic animals such as Snakes, flies, Dogs, and wild animals was unavoidable. As the saying goes ‘Need is the mother of invention’, the study of various toxic substances including plant kingdom and animal kingdom, various inorganic substances, mineral poisons was sheer necessity, so there are various separate samhitas written by Alambayan, Latyan and other Acharyas dealing exclusively with Agadtantra (Toxicology).

In today’s context Agadtantra is confined to some verses in Brihatryees and Laghutryi related with toxic plants & toxic animals, their sources. Active principles, symptoms observed on human beings after their administration by various routes and treatment.

In many states of India Toxicology means modern Toxicology. To some extent it seems all right as today’s legal implications are applicable to this branch of Medical Sciences. In some states especially Kerala, even today many persons successfully use traditional knowledge of Toxicology (Agadtantra) on many poisonous animal bites including snakes bites. Thus they apply traditional knowledge of Agadtantra with confidence and with good and encouraging results.

Presently traditional treatment of snakebites is practiced at the Visha Chikista Hospital at Pappinsery near Kannur in Kerla along with administration of Polyvalent Antivenin. So also treatment of Snake bite in particular in its traditional form is practiced at the Visha Chikitsa society at Kankol in Kerala about 30 km. away from Payyanur where ten bedded hospital is established for this purpose.

A large number of traditional healers are still administering treatment of Snakebite in different parts of Kerala. The people who took Visha Chikitsa as their profession and who are interested in Agadtantra study following books.

1) Vishanaarayaneeyam,
2) Ashtang Hrudaya,
3) Harmekhala,
4) Lakshnaamrut.

Recently one from above list viz. Vishanarayaneeyam was studied. In its preface the name of Kashyap Samhita written by Sage Kashyap especially on
Agadtrantra is mentioned. This Samhita is in the form of dialogue between Sage Kashyap and Gautama.

These manuscripts are in Sanskrit language and some of them translated into Malayalam. Elsewhere in India except Ashtang Hrudaya others are unknown to even Ayurvedic Scholars. One of them is a Manuscript especially written on Agadtrantra by Sage Kashyap, which is known as Kashyap Samhita in Kerala. In Ayurvedic field when we think about Kashyap Samhita we undoubtedly refer to Kaumarbhrutya Tantra written by Vrudha Jeeval. In the largest Hindi edition written by Sri Satyapal Bhishagacharya the reference of other Kashyap Samhita is mentioned as below:

But this manuscript is written by Sage Kashyap especially on Agadtrantra. So it is the need of the hour to study this Kashyap Samhita (dialogue between Kashyap and Gautama which is related to Agadtrantra) critically: translate it into English which is
world’s language and study it in a scientific way so that one can add some important knowledge which will be helpful for mankind. Also it will be a great addition to today’s Agadatantra.

So I have chosen this particular Kashyap Samhita (dialogue between kashyap and Gautama which is related to Agadatantra) for critical study

At present total Five Manuscripts named is Kashyap Samhita are available as mentioned as below:

1. This Kashyap Samhita (dialogue between Kashyap and Gautama which is related to Agadatantra) came to H.H. Sri Yatiraja Swami of Melkote through the priest of the sacred temple in Nepal. This manuscript was not in perfect condition. In this Kashyap Samhita (Agadatantra) Sage Kashypa expounds to Gaurama in metrical form the nature of Serpents, their poisons and cures. The names of the work is found among the 108 Samhitas of the Paancharaatra School of worship mentioned in the ancient work “Padma Samhita”. A large part of it deals with Mantrika incantations which remove serpents or render their poisons innocuous. The later portion deals with knowledge of the snakes, sixteen varieties of snakes, classification and types of poisonous drugs, Hymns(mantras) to destroy effects of poisons/venoms of insets and animals and description of herbal antidotes to treat their poisons.

2. Second manuscript of the same title is from Govt. Oriental Library, Madras. Third manuscript of the same title from Theosophical Library at adyar is mentioned.

3. In Kashyap Samhita (Vrudha-jeevakiya which deals with Kaumarbhritiya) probably one fourth or even less of its original form has been made available by Rajguru Pandit Hemaraja Sharma of Nepal in 1938 prefixed with Upodghata. The source of this book is a manuscript written on leaves of Tada. The size of leaves is 21.5”*2.25” having six lines in each row. It begins with page no.29 and ends with page no. 264. Beginning middle and end part of the manuscript is not available. The difference in writing indicates that it has been completed by two authors. According to description available in this manuscript it suggests that Sage Kashyap wrote a medical treatise with his intellectual vision & penances under the command of Lord Bramha. This knowledge was passed to Jeevaka who abridged it. The child, jeevaka was not accepted by other sages. The story tells that this child was transformed into a gray haired, wrinkled old man called Vriddha Jeevaka. After that Vatsya the descendant of Vriddha Jeevaka recovered the text from Yaksh Anaayaraa by pleasing him and popularized it. It has 8 sections (sutra, nidan, viman, aatmaniscaya/sharer,
indriya, chikista, siddhi and Kalpa) afterwards Khila sthana is added in it. The Era of this manuscript is as old as Charaka and sustra samhitas. It is not in complete form. Its main subject is Kaumarbhurata which contains diseases of children, their development, their nutrition, feeding, Hasta Sveda, etc is described especially for children. It is one of the 8 parts of Ashtang Ayurveda. It also gives information about Vedana (pains), lashanani (symptoms), Balgraha and vishama Jvara especially in children.

4. In Indian medical bibliographies there is mention of work “Kashyapa Tantra” and “Kashyapa Roga-Nidanam”. The former manuscript is not available. The manuscript entitled “Kashyapa Roga-Nidanam” is enlisted in G.O.M.L. Vol.XX III No.13112. This book is incomplete and gives varieties and distinguishing characters of different disease, the methods of their diagnosis and treatment.

5. Another work called Kashyap Samhita is noted in the Catalogue of Brunnell’s Tangare manuscript MSS No.XLT p.p70. It is in the form of discussion between Uma and Maheshvara and deals with etiology and treatment including prayers to Rudra, shiva and Vishnu to eradicate various diseases of Vata, Grahani, Arsha, etc. at the end only 4 1/2 verses are given for treatment of diseases of children.

6. In the library of Sampurnananda Sanskrit Mahavidhyalaya one manuscript entitled “Kashyap Samhita” is mentioned in which various Recipes containing metallic preparations are described.

**History of Gautameeya Kashyap Samhita:**

The Gautameeya Kashyap Samhita which is selected for the study is the collection of the matter among the three Manuscripts named as ‘Ka’, ‘Kha’ and ‘Ga’ Manuscripts. All the three Manuscripts are incomplete. By editing these three Manuscripts the present printed Gautameeya Kashyap Samhita is prepared.

The first Manuscript ‘Ka’ was found in the Manuscript Library at Addyar near Chennai. The second manuscript ‘Kha’ is available at Govt. Manuscript Library. The third Manuscript ‘Ga’ is found at Govt. Manuscript Library, Madras. By comparison of the three manuscripts this authorized book was published by Sri Yathiraja Sampathkumar Swami of Melkote and printed at the Kabeer Printing work, Chennapuri with great efforts.

**Authorship, Era, Contents and Cultural date:**

In present era there are total Five Manuscripts available having the same name as ‘Kashyap Samhita’ and are mentioned as below:
This Kashyap Samhita chosen for study (Dialogue between Kashyap and Gautama which is related to Agadтанtra) came to H.H. Sri Yatiraja, Swami of Melkote through the priest of the sacred temple in Nepal. This manuscript was not in perfect condition. In this Kashyap Samhita (on Agadтанtra) Sage Kashyap expounds to Gautama in metrical form the nature of Serpents, their poisons and cures. The name of this Kashyap Samhita is found among the 108 Samhitas of the Paancharaatra School of worship mentioned in the ancient work “Padma Samhita”. A large part of it deals with Mantrika incantations which deal with serpents or render their poisons innocuous. The later portion deals with knowledge of the snakes, sixteen varieties of Mooshaka’s, classification and types of poisonous entities, Hymns(Mantras) to destroy effects of poisons/venoms of Insects and animals and description of herbal antidotes to treat their poisons.

This Kashyap Samhita is available at Saraswati Bhavan Library, Varanasi written in Devnagari script (serial no. 1257 and Accession no. 45395).

The comparison between Gautameeya Kashyap Samhita and Brihattrayees is explained here with help of various tables.

1. ‘Ka’ Manuscript is edited first in the Sangraha of Pujari of Narayan Mandir of Yadavgiri which was written on palm leaves containing Twelve Adhayas and having various irregularities and many changes.

2. ‘Kha’ Manuscript discovered at Addyar Manuscript Library which was written on paper in Telugu language and in Andhra Lipi and was similar to ‘Ka’ manuscript.

3. ‘Ga’ Manuscript was found at Madras Govt. Library, Madras which was written on palm leaves having Thirteen Adhayas with many irregularities and is confusing.

By taking into consideration these three Manuscripts Ka, Kha and Ga this Samhita was prepared.

In first four Adhayas there is no difference in the three manuscripts.

Up to 46 pages matter is same.

The Visha vaidyas both institutionally trained Vaidyas and Contemporary Toxicologists in Kerala are not using the treatment which is mentioned in Gautameeya Kashyap Samhita. This Gautameeya Kashyap Samhita is in Sanskrit script and not translated in Malyalam. Most of them are even not aware of
Gautameeya Kashyap Samhita. No work has been done on Gautameeya Kashyap Samhita regarding its critical study. They usually use Visha-Narayaneeyam, Visha-jyotsnika etc.