Review Article

A critical review of antiquity, authorship and contents of Haramekhala: A medieval work on humanities

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Abstract

Ayurvedic science of life is one of the great contributions of India to the systems of health science. Apart from classical medical works, much information related to this Indian system is found elsewhere in other branches of science, such as Philosophy, Joutishya, Natya, Kavya, etc. Still much Ayurvedic information is clubbed in other compilations meant for general purpose. However, it is unfortunate that not all such works came into lime light; and still remain in the dark for many reasons. Haramekhala written by Mahuka is one such work, which contains Ayurvedic information along with various other themes, such as cosmetics. The author Mahuka lived in Dharanivaraha rajya of central India during Chapa Dynasty in 9th–10th century A.D. Haramekhala also known as Prayogamala comprises of five Paricchedas written in Prakrita language, later added by translations in Sanskrit called Chaya and foot notes in Sanskrit called Tika. The detail about this book is described in this article.

Key words: Cosmetics, Dharanivaraha, Haramekhala, Mahuka, Prakrita, Prayogamala

Introduction

Haramekhala is a special work having the purpose to cover day-to-day activities of a person. Subject matter of Haramekhala also covers human health and disease, controlling a person or enemies, treatment for animal disorder, various cosmetics and perfumeries and so on. Thus it is a masterpiece on different aspects of human requirements of the ancient times—a book on “Humanistic.” Name of this book includes two words, HARA+MEKHALA, where Mekhala means Mala—the garland and Hara denote to Lord Siva. Thus Haramekhala refers to a special garland to Lord Shiva.¹ The persons who aim at achieving Dharma, Artha, Kama, and Yasha in their life are called “Vidagdha.” For them the knowledge of Haramekhala is very necessary, as it contains every matter in it. The work Haramekhala cannot be called a treatise on Tantra/incantations or Medicine or Worldly experiences rather it gives in a nutshell all essential sciences of such kind. Thus it is also called as “Prayogamala.”²

Antiquity

This book comprises original Slokas in Prakrita language, Chayas—the renderings which are mere shadows or translations of original and the Tika—the notes in Sanskrit. Antiquity of any work can be accessed through the language used. The language in this work it is Prakrita.

Prakrita is a group of middle Indo-Aryan languages. These are the spoken languages of local people in different periods of time starting from 6th century B.C. till 11th century A.D. During this period it underwent three stages of evolution. In its final stage, (from 6th century A.D. to 11th century A.D.) it attained fullest form of evolution. The languages like Apabhramsa/Abahatta, Brij Bhasha, and a variety of dialects were originated in this period, which eventually blossomed as Modern languages such as Marathi, Gujarati, Hindustani, and so on. In Haramekhala the Prakrita language used is similar to that of Ardhamagadhi and/or of Apabhramsa/Abahatta. These two languages were chiefly used by Jains of Central India during the period of 9th century A.D.³
In one place author Mahuka mentions his dwelling as Dharianivara Rajya (H.M.5/280). It is discussed that Dharianivara belongs to Chap dynasty started from Vikrama (820 A.D.) ruling in and around Vardhamana or modern day Vadhvan. They were the feudatory of Palas of Konovoch ruled during 9th-10th century A.D. Avani Varman II—a ruler of Calukya dynasty belong to Khayavar in Gujarat said to have defeated Dharianivara around 916 A.D. From this we can assume that the author Mahuka belongs to the same period (9th-10th century A.D.) during which Dharianivara was a separate territory. Reference of Hamekhala Nighantu quoted by Kshiraswami in Amarakosa Vyakhy (11th A.D.), Niscalakara (13th A.D.) in Cakradatta commentary, Cakrapani (11th A.D.), and Srikantadatta (12th A.D.) in his Vyakkyakumavali has been provided. A manuscript of Hamekhala in Nepali language has been recorded to the period 1374 A.D. By all these external evidences we can assume that the period of Hamekhala written by Mahuka is around 9th-10th century A.D.

A reference given by Mahuka himself in his work can be considered as an internal evidence for the period of the book. That is, 

वल्ल (पूश्च) लेख्यव्य सामायमाणे । सामायिने समाया विद्यमाणहातस्माः ॥ (H.M. 5/278)

वीविकादिर्दयालता सहारात्यथे वर्धिष्ठताथे मथासावमेवा हर्सेखाला युपक्षस्वयमार्गास्तः निर्मितिः तीर्था ॥ (Chaya)

From the passages of the original, renderings and the commentary it is assumed that the date of Mahuka is 9th century A.D., corresponding to 887 of Vikrama Era, in which the Mekhala was completed.

Author

The author of this Mekhala is Mahuka, son of Madhava, grandson of Kavimandana lived at Citrakuta (At present located in Satna District of Madhya Pradesh). It is clear in the verse,

भज्जितार राज्यं विद्यमानदलव्यासरं सुरते ।

रविशिव विषादस्त्रायो महाभेन हर्सेखाला ॥ (H.M. 5/280)

मत्तमदर्षस्तिन्द्रं विषादो निविदाना ।

महाकादमेने हर्सेखाला प्रेमसंगम वीरता ॥ (Chaya)

Apart from the above no other information about his parents, teacher, position, and so forth, are available. From the name Hamekhala (garland for Shiva) we can assume that the author was a worshipper of Shiva; quoting Vasikaranaya yogas, Vighata mantyas, and other Tantric procedures may be a Tantric. A passing reference in fifth Pariccheda indicates that Mahuka had a disciple and probably he wrote commentary—Chaya on Hamekhala. In Siddhayogswara Tantra—commentary on Daknana Tantra it is mentioned that Mahuka was the disciple of Durgaya. Unfortunately no other details about his disciple and his teacher are found.

By studying Hamekhala it is known that some other works are also attributed to Mahuka. At the end of fifth Pariccheda after 274 Shlokas, there is a list of variety of drugs, synonyms, etc, calling the work as Hamekhala Nighantu. Thus probably Hamekhala Nighantu is the appendix added to Hamekhala itself. A splendor collection of Mantras and religious procedures entitled as “Puttalikapanchavimshatika” is added after 1814 Shlokas of 4th Pariccheda. In this there is the discussion of various rites for killing the enemies, hymns which cause Vasikaranaya, various hymns related to Tantric procedures, and so on, with the necessary incantation and medicines. The author indicates that these Mantras and procedures have been collected from various sources and it is an abstract pertaining to various Siddhis. It is hoped that Mahuka himself had such an idea of compiling it along with Hamekhala. Another reference of existence of a work called Hamekhala Tantra is quoted.

In the manuscript of Hamekhala original Shlokas are in Prakrita language followed by same translation into Sanskrit in the form of Shlokas known as Chayas. Later these Chayas are given an explanatory note in Sanskrit referred as Tika. It is not clear either from external or internal evidences that who wrote these Shlokas in Sanskrit after the original compilation in Prakrita. It is assumed that Mahuka himself may have written these Shlokas or his disciple or both to make it understandable to all scholarly community. However, the Tika (explanations/footnote) in Sanskrit is definitely a later addition.

Manuscript and publication

The only original manuscript that forms the basis of the publication of Hamekhala was obtained from Brahmasree C. Narayanan Bhattacharjee of Paramburilom of Tiruvella near Kottayam. Later this Manuscript was published by the Department of Publications, Oriental Manuscripts Library, Trivendrum, by the authority of his Highness Maharaja of Travancore in the year 1938. The manuscript was very old written about 800–900 years before and was deplorably worn and unreadable. Sri K. Sambasiva Sastri edited this book in two parts. The first part contains 2nd, 3rd, 4th chapters and the second part contains 5th chapter. The 1st chapter of the text was not obtained by him.

Topics covered

The second Pariccheda contains 103 Shlokas along with its Chayas and Tika. This chapter mainly includes preparations for artificial inducement of diseases, such as Chardi, Atisara, and Kusta, along with their treatments.

The third Pariccheda contains 71 Shlokas with its Chayas and Tika. Here mainly various Vasikaranaya yogas are mentioned.

The fourth Pariccheda contains 389 Shlokas. We can consider this chapter as completely related to medical field where the author mentions various diseases and the treatments pertaining to both human and animals.

The fifth Pariccheda contains 281 Shlokas most of them related to cosmetology. Here Mahuka declares that these informations were collected from various sources which were dealt by enlightened persons and he only arranged them systematically. Interestingly, none of these preparations are found in Brihatrayi.

Unfortunately, in all the Pariccheda many of the Shlokas in Prakritas/Sanskrit and notes are either missing or incomplete. It is enlisted in Table 1. Contents of each chapter with its reference are given in Table 2.
Table 1: List of missing/incomplete Shlokas and notes in Haramekhala

| Pariccheda | Prakrita Shloka (main text) | Sanskrit Shloka (Chaya) | Notes (Tika) |
|------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|--------------|
| 2nd Pariccheda | 7, 14, 19 | 12, 23, 38, 47, 57, 61, 71, 97, 103 |
| 3rd Pariccheda | 24, 69, 81, 276, 303, 293 |
| 4th Pariccheda | 121, 264, 312, 314, 315, 328, 331, 334 |
| 5th Pariccheda | 62, 66, 104, 137, 170, 203-206, 214-219, 220-224, 225-229, 254, 256 |

Table 2: Subject matter of individual Pariccheda of Haramekhala

| Chapter | Contents | Reference |
|---------|----------|-----------|
| Second chapter | Inducement of various diseases and their treatments |
| Mada | 2, 5 |
| Chardi | 5 |
| Virechana | 6 |
| Rudhiritasara | 7 |
| Mukharoga | 8-10 |
| Mukatva | 11-12 |
| Katipavana | 13-15 |
| Kusta | 16-19 |
| Rajahsravana | 22 |
| Malanirodha | 23-25 |
| Mutanirodha | 26 |
| Varangadukha | 29-30 |
| Unmada | 31, 90 |
| Shandatva | 32, 36, 41s-44 |
| Yonisthamba, Ratinirodha | 33-35, 37-40 |
| Garbhasthambhana | 85 |
| Inducing blindness in | 86 |
| Garbhastha shishu | |
| Affliction with Luta Kaka | 20, 21, 27, 28 |
| and others along with their eradication | |
| Inducing Manastapa and Vidvesha along with its solutions | 3, 45, 46, 48-53, 56 |
| Making the breast adrusted | 47 |
| Inducing Moha by various methods with its solutions | |
| Dhupa | 57-59 |
| Dipajwala | 60 |
| Amoda | 69 |
| Inducement of dancing/Nartana Kesasuklikarana | 61-64 |
| Adhara suklikarana and its treatment | 66-67 |

(Contd...)
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Table 2: (Continued)

| Chapter            | Contents                                   | Reference  |
|--------------------|--------------------------------------------|------------|
| Treatment of Nali vrana | 227–229                                    |            |
| Treatment of Arbuda, Granthi, Gandamala | 231–235                                    |            |
| Treatment of Apasmartha | 236                                        |            |
| Treatment of Grahabhadha | 237–240                                    |            |
| Treatments of Jangama | 241–248, Vishajanya vikara 251–253         |            |
| Treatment of wounds due to weapons | 216–226                                    |            |
| Treatment of Garavisha | 249, 255                                   |            |
| Treatment for Madya Visha | 254                                        |            |
| Treatment for Pitaka | 277, 278                                   |            |
| Treatment of Jvalagardhambha | 279                                        |            |
| Treatment of Sitalika | 280–283                                    |            |
| Treatment for Raktapradara | 284–290                                    |            |
| Treatment of Kashtha Raja | 291–292                                    |            |
| Treatment for Vandyata | 293–295                                    |            |
| Contraceptives | 296–299                                    |            |
| Preparations which check Abortion | 300–304                                    |            |
| Preparations for easy delivery | 305–316                                    |            |
| Treatment of Yonivedana | 317, 318                                   |            |
| Treatment of Makkalla Sula | 319                                        |            |
| Increasing the Breast milk | 320, 321                                   |            |
| Treatment for Stanavedana | 322                                        |            |
| Preparation to make the abdomen thin after delivery | 323     |            |
| Treatment for Kikisiska | 324                                        |            |
| Treatment of Yonivibraamsha | 324–328                                    |            |
| Treatment for Yonidourangandhata | 330–333                                   |            |
| Roma Satana Yogas | 334–336                                    |            |
| Treatments of diseases related to children | 337–352                                    |            |
| Rejuvenators | 353–367                                    |            |
| Vajikarana Yogas | 368–370                                    |            |

(Contd...)

Chapter | Contents                                   | Reference  |
Fifth chapter | Treatment of various animals Jalasourabhypotheadanam | 371–388  |
| Aromatic Tooth powders | 3–8,131–133 | |
| Aromatic Mouth fresheners | 9–11 | 12,16–32 |
| Adharaparsadhana | 13,14 | 15 |
| Netra Prasadana | 15 | 33–57 |
| Aromatic oils/Sugandha tail | 58 | |
| Dhupa Yogas which gives aroma to Bhandavessels | 86, 87, 90 | 91 |
| Pata cloths | 59–61 | 62–85 |
| Beddings, hairs, fanning | 88, 89 | 92–115 |
| Udvartha Curnas | 116–120 | 121–130 |
| Aromatic Bathing powders | 134–158 | 159–161 |
| Aromatic Lopa Yogas | 162, 163 | 164–195, 209–248, 264–266 |
| Production of aroma of various flowers | 196–208 | 249–295 |
| Eradication of original aroma of flowers Purification of Haridra, Rocanika | 164–195, 209–248, 264–266 | 162, 163 |
| Artificial production of aromatic drugs along with their preservation Asava parikarma | 196–208 | |
| Preparation of Sahakara Taila | 249–256 | 257–263 |
| Preparation of Karpura Taila | 267 | |
| Keeping the vessel clean by applying Sahakara Taila | 268, 269 | 270–272 |
| Preservation of Sahakara Dravana procedure of various flowers | |

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हरमेखला – एक समालोचनात्मक अध्ययन

आई. अर्चना, जेहु गणपति भट्ट

हरमेखला समस्त संसार के लिए भारतवर्ष का एक महत्वपूर्ण योगदान है। मूल संहिताओं के अतिरिक्त भारतीय धिक्कतसाधारण के संबंधित बहुत सी जानकारी अन्य भारतीय शास्त्रों में भी उपलब्ध है जैसे दर्शन, ज्योतिष, नाट्य, काव्य इत्यादि। परंतु अन्य स्थानों पर संक्षिप्त हरमेखला संबंधित यह जानकारी जनहितार्थ है। यह दुर्दैव कि बात रही है कि ऐसी अनेक रचनाएं प्रकाशित हुई नहीं और अनेक कारणों से अभी भी अंधकार में हैं। महुक लिखित हरमेखला ऐसी ही एक रचना है जो हरमेखला के साथ साथ अन्य कल्पनायें जैसे श्रुंगार आदि का संकलन दर्शाती है। लेखक महुक ९ – १० वीं शती के मध्य भारत के चय सम्राज्य अंतर्गत घरनिवर्ह राज्य के निवासी थे। हरमेखला जो कि प्रयोगमल नामसे भी जाना है प्रकृत भाषा में लिखे हुये ५ परिच्छेद अनुवाद में विभाजित है। कालांतर में उसमे संरक्षित भाषान्तर एवं संरक्षित विम्यर्जन जिनमे अनुक्रम से छाया एवं टीका कहते हं, सामिललित किए गये। यह शोधपत्र इस पुस्तक के सन्दर्भ में विवरण पर आहारित है।

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