The ancient Hindu literature on Kama (Love) is reviewed with reference to the early works on which the Vatsyayana's Kama Sutra is based and the later works which follow it. Sexuality as described in the ancient treatise is considered under the heads of sexual foreplay, techniques of coitus, and genital oral sexuality and in the light of the modern researches. The relevance of the Kama Sutra to the present day is stressed.

The Hindu conception of a full life postulates the harmony of three activities Dharma, Artha and Kama. The fullness of a normal, mature life could not be achieved by neglecting any one aspect. Kama is the life of the senses, and it is conceived as the human counterpart of creation with the union of Purusha (matter) with Prakriti (energy) and Shiva and Shakthi (Panikkar 1963). This has led to the concept of Ardhanarishwara. The rules for regulating lives of men and women with regard to the sexual life was laid down by Nandi, the follower of Mahadeva in one thousand chapters under seven heads:

1. Sadhurana (general topics)
2. Samprayogika (embraces, etc.)
3. Kanya Samprayuktaka (union of males and females)
4. Bharyadhikarika (on one's own wife)
5. Paradika (on the wives of other people)
6. Vaisika (on courtesans)
7. Aupamishadikas (on the arts of seduction, tonic medicines, etc.)

The seven heads were abridged by Shvetra Kera and further by Babhravya and each head was elaborated by Suvaranabha, Ghotakamukha and others. As many of the works were not easily accessible, Sage Vatsyayana composed his Kama Sutra as a compact volume.

Vatsyayana's personal name was Mallanaga of Vatsyayana Gotra and hence he was known by his Gotra. The Kama Sutra was composed in the period first to fourth centuries A.D., Kalidasa who belonged to the fifth century A.D., makes numerous allusions to the Kama Sutra in his works.

According to Vatsyayana, Kama is the enjoyment of appropriate objects by the five senses of hearing, seeing, feeling, tasting and smelling assisted by the mind together with the soul. The work is not merely one on erotics sensuality and seduction like Ovid's The art of love. But, major part of Vatsyayana's work deals with courtship, marriage and wifely duties and conjugal happiness. In his own words at the conclusion of his treatise, Vatsyayana says: After reading and considering the works of Babhravya and other ancient authors, the thinking over the meaning of the rules given by them, the Kama Sutra was composed, according to the precepts of Holy Writ, for the benefit of the world by Vatsyayana, while leading the life of a religious student and wholly engaged in the contemplation of the Deity.

This work left its impressions in art: the maithuna or the union sculptures are to be found in the temples of Konark, Khajuraho, Belur Halebidu, etc., Such scenes are to be found in the Buddhist paintings at Nagarjunakonda and Ajanta and Jain temples. The work was taught to young women and members of the royal household, not only in India but also in the neighbouring Asian countries like Cambodia (Panikkar 1963). Other Indian works on love such as:

1. Rati Rahasya or secrets of Love
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(Koka Shastra)

2. The Panchasakya or the Five Arrows by Jyotirisha.

3. The Smara Pradipa or the Light of Love by Gunakara.

4. The Rasamanjari or the Sprout of Love by Bhanudatta.

5. The Anunga Runga or the Stage of Love also called Kamaledhiplava or A Boat in the Ocean of Love by Kullianmull are based on the Kama Sutra and used in the country subsequently and even to the present day (Burton and Arbuthnot 1985).

The book is divided into the same seven heads as in the original work of Nandi. It is proposed to consider only the third and the relevant portions of the seventh parts.

Classes of Human Beings

The importance of disharmony between the proportions of the male and female organs in the attainment of stimulation and sexual satisfaction is recognized by the modern gynaecologists like Van De Velde (1954). This idea was known to Vatsyayana, who classified men and women into three categories according to the size of their sexual organs, lingam and yoni.

Men: Hare Bull Horse
Women: Deer Mare Elephant

The union between corresponding pairs was considered as equal and affording mutual sexual satisfaction. The unequal union between man and woman is known as High union i.e. between Bull and Deer and Horse and Mare; highest discrepancy is found in the union of Horse and Deer. The union between Mare and Hare and that between the Elephant and Bull are known as low unions and the lowest union is that between Elephant and Hare. The ideal congress for these different unions are dealt with subsequently.

Vatsyayana also recognizes three classes of men and women according to their force of passion or carnal desire:

Men: Small Middling Intense
Women: Small Middling Intense

A man is called a man of small passion whose desire at the time of sexual union is not great, whose semen is scanty and who cannot bear the warm embraces of the female. Women are also described similarly. This division would correspond to the strength of sexual appetite and genital arousal in each partner.

Lastly, there is a division of men and women into three types according to time:

Men: Short-timed Moderate-timed Long-timed
Women: Short-timed Moderate-timed Long-timed

Probably we come to the areas of orgasm in the male and the female. Even to the present day the nature and mechanism of this phenomenon is not completely resolved, more so in the case of the woman in spite of the elaborate research conducted by Kinsey et al (1953) and Masters and Johnson (1966) and many other studies quoted by Bancroft (1983). It is not surprising to find reservations in the mind of Vatsyayana in this area. He recognizes the difference in the speed of satisfaction in either sex and especially in the woman reaching the climax later than her partner. We also find some confusing and contradictory opinions about the female secretion of semen.

Foreplay

Vatsyayana wants the congress to occur in the pleasure room decorated with flowers and fragrant with perfumes. The man should receive the woman, who will come bathed and dressed and offer her refreshment. He should seat her on the left side and embrace her with his right arm and engage her in conversation with reference to arts, music and lewd jokes. The foreplay is
a woman in sexual union is achieved mainly in the position called by the various authors as the face to face, man on top (Sadock and Sadock 1980) or the normal or habitual attitude (Van De Velde 1954).

This posture is described in great detail after the foreplay. The man proceeds with the manual manipulations of the vulva (‘as the elephant rubs anything with his trunk’) and then effects the sexual union by the undermentioned manoeuvres:

1. Moving forward-placing the organ properly and directly on the woman’s.
2. Friction or churning-turning the erect organ all round inside the vagina.
3. Piercing when the vulva is lowered, the upper part is stimulated.
4. Rubbing-stimulation to the lower part of the vagina.
5. Pressing-when the erect organ is kept pressed in the vagina.
6. Giving a blow-when the phallos is removed and then reinserted.
7. Blow of a boar-when one side of the yoni is struck.
8. Blow of a bull-when both sides of the yoni are rubbed.
9. The sporting-a sparrow-when the erect organ is raised and lowered alternatively inside the vagina.

It could be seen that male stimulates all parts of the vulva. Vatsya does not make any reference to the clitoris specifically.

**Woman on top or astride position**

This position is described as the ‘part played by the woman acting the part of the man’. The indications for this position are:

1. The man is fatigued without being satisfied.
2. To satisfy the curiosity of the man.
3. To satisfy her own curiosity.

The woman should obtain her spouse's consent for this position. The contraindications are:

1. The woman in periods.
2. Recent confinement.
3. Obesity of the woman.

The manoeuvres to be practised by the woman are:

1. The pair of tongs: the woman holds the phallus tightly in her vagina for a considerable time.
2. The top—the woman turns round while in union.
3. The swing—when the man raises his hip and the woman turns round.

The woman on top position provides the greatest degree of stimulation to the woman (Van De Velde 1954, Sadock and Sadock 1980). The greatest possible stimulation of the cervix by the penile tip is here combined with all the stimulations peculiar to other positions. This was well recognised by Vatsyayana “Though a woman is reserved and keeps her feelings concealed, yet when she gets on the top of a man she then shows all her love and desire”.

Side by Side Position

(Lateral attitude, face to face) In the side position the male should invariably lie on his left side and cause the woman to lie on her right side and this rule is to be observed in lying down with all kinds of woman. Compare Ovid’s words “Of love’s thousand ways, a simple way and with least labour, this is to lie on the right side (for woman) and half supine withal”.

Sitting and Standing Positions

These are described under the names: supported congress and suspended congress. Suvamanabhā suggests practice in water, but Vatsyayana is of the opinion that this is improper, because it is prohibited by the religious law.

Rear Entry Positions

Amongst the various approaches to this position Vatsyayana describes the “The congress of a cow”. A woman stands on her hands and feet like a quadruped and he mounts her like a bull. He also wants the man to observe and imitate the performance of the animals like Dogs, Goats, Deer, Asses, Cats, Tigers, Elephants, Boars and Horses.

Other positions are described which serve the partners when the sexual organs are markedly disproportionate. For the Deer woman the following positions are advised, which would widen the patency:

1. The widely opened position: In this the woman lowers her head and raises her middle parts.
2. The yawning position: In this she raises her thighs and keeps them wide apart.
3. The position of Indrani: In this she places her thighs with her legs doubled on them upon her sides.

Attitudes of Flexion

The following procedures could probably be considered as attitudes of flexion in the Van De Velde sense:

1. Splitting of a Bamboo: In this the woman places her legs on the shoulders of the man.
2. Fixing of a Nail: In this one of her legs is placed on the head and the other is stretched out.
3. Crab’s position: In this both the legs are contracted and placed on her stomach.
4. Packed Position: In this the thighs are raised and placed one upon the other.
1. *Like-like Position*: The shanks are placed one upon the other.

The above flexed attitudes are recommended by Van De Velde when the vagina is slack and widely distended, as in the case of multiparous woman. Vatsyayana would have commended the positions for the Hasthini woman (elephant woman).

Extended Attitudes (Van De Velde)

The following positions mentioned by Vatsyayana could be grouped here:

1. *The clasping position*: In this the legs of both the partners are stretched straight out over each other.

2. *The pressing position*: Here the woman presses her lover with her thighs.

Vatsyayana recommends the above positions for the Hasthini woman's low and lowest congress, which opinion is shared by Van De Velde.

*Mare's Position*

In this the woman forcibly holds in her vomi the lingam after it is in. The advantages of this position are mentioned by Sadock and Sadock (1980). With the flaccid penis held tightly between her thighs the woman finds increased contact with her vulva from the penis and may reach orgasm, sometimes the pressure of her thigh causes a re-erection of the penis.

Genital Oral Positions

Discussed by Sadock and Sadock (1980) these are to be found in the Kama Sutra in the Chapter entitled Auparishhtakamouth congress. Even though Vatsyayana does not unreservedly advocate this type of sexuality he describes the various stages of fellatio between a man and an eunuch:

1. *Nominal congress*: In this the eunuch holds the man's lingam with his hand and placing it between his lips, moves about his mouth.

2. *Biting the sides*: In this the eunuch covers the end of the lingam with his fingers, collected together like the bud of a plant or flower and presses the sides of it with his lips, using his teeth also.

3. *Pressing outside*: In this the eunuch puts the lingam further into his mouth and presses it with his lips and then takes it out.

4. *Kissing*: In this the eunuch holds the lingam in his hand and kisses it as if he were kissing the lower lip.

5. *Rubbing*: In this after kissing it the eunuch touches it with his tongue everywhere and passes the tongue over the end of it.

6. *Sucking a mango fruit*: In this the eunuch puts the half of it into his mouth and forcibly kisses and sucks it.

7. *Swallowing up*: In this the eunuch with the consent of the man, puts the whole lingam into his mouth and presses it to the very end, as if he were going to swallow it up.

Vatsyayana agreeing with the religious teachers and the sacred books prohibited this type of sexuality with married women, but allows it with the courtseans and "unchaste and wanton women", women servants etc. He also refers to cunnilingus practiced by man on woman in the "crow's position".

He makes allusions to homosexual genital oral sexuality amongst men and women. Vatsyayana must be aware of the importance of oral sexuality as could be seen from his rather grudging concession to genital oral sexuality "There are some men, some places and some times with respect to which these practices can be made use of".

Surprisingly, there is no reference to self-stimulation in the Kama Sutra. Only a passing reference is made to sodomy.

There are some prescriptions for in-
creasing sexual vigour. To mention one —
drinking milk mixed with sugar and having
the testicle of ram or a goat boiled in it.

He also recommends a number of oily
preparations to be rubbed on the penis to
increase its size and ointments to be used on
the vulva to reduce its patency in the Hasthini woman.

Vatsyayana also mentions the use of
Apadravyas or things which are put on or
around the lingam to supplement its length
or its thickness, so as to fit it to the yoni. Various articles like a tube made of wood
apple or a reed softened by oil and extracts
of plants could be used in connection with
or in place of the lingam. The wise and cautionous Vatsyayana adds: “The means of pro-
ducing love and sexual vigour should be
learnt from the science of medicine, from
the Vedas, from those who are learned in
the arts of magic and from confidential rela-
tives. No means should be tried which are-
doubtful in their effects which are likely to
cause injury to the body”.

Conclusions

The ancient wisdom of Vatsyayana
shines brightly when compared with the views of modern writers on sexuality. As pointed out earlier, the Western writers on
the subject deal only with the ideas prevalent
in the Greco-Roman times and Judaoc-
Christian religions (Somasundaram 1985).
The sexual ethics voiced by the great Tamil
poet Thiruvalluvar of II Century A. D. was
discussed to fill a lacuna. It is not that simi-
lar wisdom was not available in other parts
of the orient. The Arab classic ‘The perf-
umed Garden’ by Nezawi and the Persian
classic, ‘Abode of spring’ by Jami are other examples. The Kama sutra antedates them
by centuries and the notions expressed in it
are accurate and pertinent to date. It could
very well be used for counselling in sex and
marriage therapies in India.

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