

## A note on the New Edition of Bhela Samhitā\*

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### ABSTRACT

Bhelasamhitā is available only in one fragmentary manuscript at Tanjavur. This has been published twice in 1921 and 1959. The recent critical edition by Literary Research Unit, Tanjavur is improved in many respects. In the previous editions, some correct readings of the original were substituted by other readings due to lack of deep knowledge of āyurvedic classics. Many incorrect readings were not corrected. Some portions were omitted. In this edition all these are rectified. Some corrected readings were improved by better substitutes and missing portions were supplemented from other classics.

It is well known to the scholars of Āyurveda and other related fields that Bhela, one of the disciples of Ātreya compiled his own treatise. Only one manuscript of this treatise - Bhelasamhitā - was found in the Tanjore Maharaja Serfoji's Saraswati Mahal Library, Tanjavur. This was published in 1921 from Calcutta University and later in 1959 by Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series Office, Varanasi.

Recently the Literary Research Unit at Tanjavur under Central Council for Research in Indian Medicine and Homoeopathy has brought out a critical edition of Bhelasamhitā after studying the manuscript deeply and comparing it with the published editions. The India Office Library, London has a manuscript of Bhelasamhitā but the catalogue mentions that it is a copy of the manuscript in Tanjavur Library. Hence this was not consulted in the preparation of the present edition.

The Calcutta edition was based on a copy of the manuscript copied probably by a Sanskrit scholar who was not acquainted with Āyurveda. The work was edited by Mahāmahopādhyāya Anantakṛṣṇa śāstri, who was an eminent scholar of Advaita Vedānta and other darśanas but not of Āyurveda. Evidently the editor appears to have made efforts to correct only grammatical mistakes in the text. The lack of know-

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\*Bhelasamhita: edited by Vaidya Viśārada V. S. Venkatasubramanya Sastry and Vaidya Viśārada C. Rajarajeswara Sarma, 1977, Literary Research Unit, TMSSM Library, Tanjavur, CCRIMH, New Delhi.

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ledge, terminology and tradition of Āyurveda appears to have been responsible in substituting the correct readings also. Some other mistakes appear to have been the mistakes committed by the scribe who copied the original manuscript. Some small portions of the text were also omitted here and there.

Vaidya Girijadayal Shukla's edition appeared in 1959. Though Shukla was a scholar of Āyurveda, he limited his study only to the Calcutta edition and appears to have not made any efforts to peruse the original manuscript. He only improved some readings with better substitutes. The portions omitted from the original manuscript and also the correct readings of the manuscript could not get any justice at the hands of Shukla.

Some instances are given in this article to illustrate defects of different types in these two editions. This shows how the editing of manuscripts by incompetent persons without deep study of not only the book but also of the subject, affects the text, subject and all other aspects.

In Gulmacikitsita chapter, one prescription, by name Kṣārāgada is mentioned. Its preparation is similar to Kalyāṇakakṣāra yoga. This is found in Aṣṭāṅgasaṅgraha also as a prescription mentioned by Bhela. But this is erroneously edited in the two previous editions as Kṣārāghṛta, a preparation of medicated ghee. This is corrected as Kṣārāgada.

The Kāsachikitsita chapter is available in the manuscript upto the Agastyarasāyana. This yoga (prescription) abruptly ends with the list of drugs and the later portion which generally gives the effects of the medicine is missing. The next chapter available is Śīrorogacikitsita in which the beginning portion is missing. It starts with the later portion of lepa yoga (ointment) giving the uses and effects of the lepa yoga. In the previous editions, the component drugs of Agastyarasāyana and the effects and uses of lepa yoga for śaṅkha kaśīraśśūla are joined together to appear to deal with only one yoga for the head disease called śaṅkhaka śīraśśūla. In this edition these two yogas are edited separately. The full yoga of Agastyarasāyana from Caraka Saṃhitā is also given in the footnote for reference and to substantiate the correction.

Several correct readings have been changed in the previous editions and they are corrected now. Some examples are given. In the 25th verse in fourth chapter of *Sūtrasthāna*, *gairika* is edited as *gaurīśa*. As the context is the treatment of *śvitra*, *gairika* is more appropriate. Similarly in verse 30. *avapīḍa* is edited as *āpatata* but now the original *avapīḍa* is restored. In the context of the treatment of *kuṣṭha*, the word *āpatata* does not make any sense. *Avapīḍa*, which means *mūrdhavirecana* by *kalka* is more appropriate. Application of *mūrdhavirecana* is supported by statements in *Suśrutasaṃhitā* and *Aṣṭāṅghṛdaya* where nasal insufflation is advised for *kuṣṭha* every three days.

In the 3rd verse in 6th chapter of *Sūtrasthāna* the original version, *tathāprāptāḥ samīritāḥ* is presented as *tathāprāptān samīritān*. The suppression of natural urge to pass stools, urine etc. causes several diseases and diminishes the life span and the same urges passed with force and strain, though natural urge is not there, also cause some diseases and decrease the life span. The change of words in nominative case to accusative case is unwanted and gives no proper sense. The original is the correct reading and hence is restored.

In 8th and 9th verses in 7th chapter of *Sūtrasthāna* rules are laid down regarding sexual intercourse. Here also the fifth case words are presented as second case words.

In original text-

वर्षासु नवरात्रात्तु दशरात्राच्छरद्यपि ।  
पञ्चाहाद्द्वेमसमये सप्ताहाच्छिशिरे तथा ॥  
पक्षाद्वसन्ते

Previous editions ;

वर्षासु नवरात्रांस्तु दशरात्राञ्छरद्यपि ।  
पञ्चाहान् हेमसमये सप्ताहाञ् शिशिरे तथा ॥  
पक्षान् वसन्ते .....

This means that one should have intercourse once in nine nights during rainy season, in ten days during *śarat*, in fifteen days during winter. in seven days during autumn and in a fortnight during spring. The change of fifth case to the second case of the word day or night changes the meaning and conveys that one should have coitus for nine

days during rainy season, for ten days in winter, for seven days in autumn and for a fortnight in spring.

The original version *ārogyāya ca sarvadā* edited as *ārogyam na ca sarvadā* (sūtra 8-10) has changed the meaning opposite to the original. Hence original is restored.

The change of *vaṃkṣaṇa* as *tatkṣaṇam* is also not appropriate (sūtra 10-11).

In 'artha ityāha hṛdayam' artha is replaced by *ūrdhvam*. Artha is a synonym of *hṛdaya* here but not *ūrdhva* hence artha stands (sūtra 20-1).

*Sa sattvairupahanyate* is a reading (nidāna 8-13) in the earlier editions, whereas the original text has the reading *na sattvairupahanyate*. The context is the diagnosis of *apasmāra*. The reading in earlier editions states that the patient of *apasmāra* is attacked by evil spirits which is not correct. In other classics also mention is made that *apasmāra* patients are not attacked by evil spirits. The original reading which is restored also means he is not attacked by evil spirits.

The change of 'na ca na' to 'kācana' also changed the meaning in the verse in *śārīrā* 2-73. The original statement that no man or woman is sterile by birth is changed to mean that no woman is sterile by birth, which is not appropriate since in *Bhelasamhitā* itself it is stated that no man or woman is sterile by birth in sūtra 16-4.

In a prescription for *raktārśas* one drug is mentioned as *vātaghnī* which does not indicate any specific drug. This is replaced by *dhātakī* which is the original reading. (Ci. 16-37)

"*Elā ca pippalīmūlam...*" is in a prescription *ayorajīya*; *pala* is replaced by *ela*. This prescription is found in *Gadanigraha* with *pala* reading only, which is restored. (Ci. 17-34)

The treatment of *kṛmihṛdroga* is same as that of persons with worm-infested stomach. '*Kṛmikoṣṭhinām*' of original is corrected as *Krimikuṣṭhinām* which means that the treatment should be the same as that of infested *kuṣṭha* which is not correct. Hence the original reading is given. (Ci. 19-23)

There are several instances of readings which require correction. These have not been attempted to by the previous editors. Some examples are given below.

There is a verse prescribing śodhana treatment (evacuation) for a patient of kuṣṭha. (Sū 4-30).

“It is prescribed to administer nasal insufflation every three days, vomiting in a fortnight, month (?) and blood letting after the completion of one ayana (six months)”. In other classics, purgation once in a month is also advised which is missing in this verse. Further the word month is there without any related reference. To avoid the ambiguity of the word month and to insert the necessary information on purgation, the original reading ayane cāpi sampūrṇe is corrected as recayedayane pūrṇe which adds to the meaning that purgation should be done every month.

In the 6th verse of chapter 6 of sūtra it is found that ‘by retaining forcibly the urges of kṣayathu, udgāra and kāsa, headache is caused’. Though the sense of the sentence is not wrong, there is repetition and omission when the earlier and later portions are read. In the beginning certain natural urges are prohibited from retention and then the bad effects of retaining them are given. Retention of kāsa is not mentioned but that of nidrā (sleep) is found. If the original reading kāsa, is replaced by nidrā then all the urges mentioned earlier stand covered. Further the effects of retention of kāsa are given at the end of the chapter. In view of these the word kāsa is replaced by nidrā.

A statement in the original reading “under-dose of śodhana medicine destroys the life of human beings” is changed to mean over dose of medicine etc. by substituting ati in place of hīna (Sū 14-5).

The text has been compared with earlier printed editions and attempts are made to substitute more appropriate readings wherever required based on the content and subject and other saṃhitās.

The first available verse (Sū Chapter 4-4) has one word ‘radhuka’ in original, which is corrected as tutthaka in previous editions. The prescription is suggested for oral and external administration in kuṣṭha. Tutthaka is not advised to be included in its raw form for oral therapy and hence ‘radhuka’ is corrected as madhuka (liquorice root) which is very similar in script to the word radhuka.

The patient of leucoderma is advised (Sū 4-8) to be allowed to stand in a place devoid of sun. Here in a place devoid of sun (nirātape) is added in previous editions, as in original the word is missing. In continuation it is said that the patient should be taken to a place of shadow (chayāyām upaveśayet). If he is already in shadow taking him to a place of shadow does not arise. So the word 'nirātape' is corrected as 'cainamātape' meaning 'he should be allowed to stand in the sun'. This has support in Carakā Samhitā (Ci 7-263) where a śvitra patient is advised to stand in the sun according to the patient's strength.

The names of fever, manifested in different animals as well as inanimate objects are given in Sū XIII-12. The name of the fever in elephants is written as phālanā and in previous editions it is corrected as pālana. This is incorrect. The fever of elephants is mentioned as pākala in other books. Hence the correction 'pākala'.

In Sū XXV-7, certain people are advised not to be treated with śodhana (evacuation procedures). One letter is missing in the verse in the original and the addition of 'tu' by the earlier editors gives the meaning as follows : 'evacuatory procedures are to be applied for persons weakened by exposure to wind, and sun etc.' But in fact for these persons application of evacuatory procedures is prohibited. In view of this 'na' is substituted for 'tu' meaning that to such persons samśodhana procedures are not to be applied for.

(Ni. III-5) In the places of occurrence of gulma, one word 'vakṣau' is in original. The word is not correct grammatically; to mean 'in the chest' it should have been 'vakṣasi'. This is corrected earlier as 'vikṣepāt' meaning 'by exertion'. This has no sense here. This is corrected as 'kukṣau' meaning 'in the abdomen'; abdomen is also mentioned as a place where gulma occurs.

Wherever the text is felt incomplete, attempts have been made to furnish the required subject matter from other samhitās or by editor's words under footnote.

Some of the recipes which have been mentioned by name only with no details have been compiled from other standard samhitās and furnished in the footnote.

Portions not found in the manuscript but quoted by Sodhalācārya and others under the authority of Bhelācārya, have been compiled and presented under the footnote at relevant places.

There are some portions appearing to be dealing with some specific subject but which are not conveying any correct sense. These are given in the text as they are, with relevant portions of other saṃhitās as footnotes.

The relevant portions with more illustrative texts from various standard saṃhitās have also been quoted wherever felt necessary for comparison.

For the convenience of the readers, editors have supplemented the work with necessary headings and numbers indicating the chapters at the beginning.

Erroneous readings found in the manuscript have been rectified by suggesting apt readings; and such erroneous readings as found in the manuscript have been furnished under the foot note for the sake of maintenance of the text of original manuscript.

Some passages not available in the manuscript but quoted by different individuals as from Bhelācārya's work with no mention of context where they occur, are given at the end of introduction.

## सारांश

## भेलसंहिता के नवीन संस्करण पर एक टिप्पणी

ले० सी. आर. आर. शर्मा तथा बि. रामाराव

भेलसंहिता तंजौर में एक खण्डित पाण्डुलिपि के रूप में उपलब्ध है। सन् १९२१ और १९५९ में इसे प्रकाशित किया गया है। साहित्यिक अनुसन्धान इकाई, तंजौर के नवीनतम समीक्षात्मक संस्करण में इसका काफी हद तक परिष्कार हुआ है। इसके पूर्ववर्ती संस्करण में शुद्ध मूलपाठ आयुर्वेद संहिताओं के गहनज्ञान के अभाव के कारण अशुद्धरूप से उद्धृत होगये हैं जिनका सम्यक् प्रकारेण परिष्कार नहीं किया गया है। कुछ में मूलपाठ ही छूट गये हैं। प्रस्तुत आलोचनात्मक संस्करण में इन सभी त्रुटियों को अधिक उपयुक्त पर्यायों द्वारा और सुधारा गया है तथा जो मूलभूत अंश छूटगये हैं उनको अन्य संहिताओं से इसमें जोड़ा गया है।