

INFLUENCE OF TANTRA ON *āyurvēda* AND *Kāmasūtra*

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ABSTRACT

A close study of ancient works of *āyurvēda* and *Kāmasūtra* shows that the knowledge of anatomy and physiology of different parts of reproductive organs particularly of female genitals is lacking. Hymen, defloration and clitoris do not find any mention in earlier works. Works of medieval and late medieval period mention the different parts and their utility and function especially in the sexual enjoyment. Worship of vagina or Yonipuja was a common practice in some sects of Tantrists like Kaulas, Kapalikas and others. This practice resulted in the close observation of different parts and thereby knowing their importance and role in the sexual enjoyment, which was also a part of the practices of Tantrism. This knowledge appears to have been incorporated in works like Bhavaprakasa of *āyurvēda* and Paururavamanasijasutra and others of *Kāmasūtra*. They describe three Nadis in the female genitalia and clitoris others.

It is well known that *āyurvēda* and *Kāmasūtra* were prevalent in a highly developed state in India since a very long time and even before the appearance of Tantrism. *āyurvēda* is now famous all over the world for its excellence and *Kāmasūtra* of Vatsyayana has an unparalleled place in erotic literature. Kenneth Walker in his introduction to the Anangaranga of Katyanamalla commends *Kāmasūtra* as a systematic study of the relations between men and women in Hindu life.¹ In his words *vātsāyana* does not advise his readers to indulge in all forms of love making, which he described. He even condemns some of the methods as being of a lustful rather than of an erotic nature². The society depicted by *vātsāyana* is very different from the present day

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society. In his times to be a fashionable man it was not necessary to have more than one wife but it was impossible for a man to be fashionable or prestigious without having many mistresses.³ But not only the physiology but also psychology of sexual intercourse remain much the same as they were in the years in which *Kāmasūtra* or Anangaranga were written⁴.

āyurvēda works like *Kacchapuṭhatantra* and *Rāsēndramaṅga* of *Nāgārjuna* show clear evidences of the influence of *tantra* on *āyurvēda*. They deal with methods and procedures of tantric type of objectives like *vasikarana* (making persons attracted towards oneself), *marano* (killing) *stambhana* (paralyzing) etc. *Haramēkhala* of Mahuka of 9th c. is a *Prakṛti* work. It mentions several procedures and prescriptions and other means to induce several effects on enemies. Apart from the above actions of tantric nature, several other effects are described. Some of them are-inducing several diseases like dumbness, blindness, skin disorders, retention of urine and stools, making the fetus blind, making bitter, the sweet eatables, making the lower lips white and so on. Another important topic of *Haramēkhala* is *Puttalika* *pancavimsati*. It is of witchcraft type. Preparation of a toy and its consecration by chanting and tantric procedures and then burying the toy at a selected place are involved in this to achieve *vasikarana* and *marana* etc., and also to induce diseases. The person who is the target of this will suffer from the diseases or ill effects as long as the toy is lying buried. If it is taken out the person is relieved of the ill effects and becomes normal.

Sexual intercourse, food, sleep and fear in human beings are said to be common with animals. *Vātsāyaṇa* also states that carnal desires are similar to taking food or desire for eating as they are the basic necessities of life (body).⁵ In human beings the private parts of male and female are important since they are the seats of culmination of sexual act though other parts like lips and breasts are involved in the foreplay preceding the main act.

In *āyurvēda* diseases of female genital organ are described in all classics under *Vātsāyaṇa*. A study of these descriptions in *āyurvēda* and also the relevant passages in *Kāmasātra* gives an impression or doubt that ancients either ignored or did not have the knowledge of the anatomy of female external genitals. It is difficult to be convinced that

śuśṛta, who advocated dissection of dead body to learn anatomy, has no knowledge of the external anatomy of the genital organ. Labia majora, labia minora, clitoris, hymen, vaginal orifice and vaginal canal are parts of vulva. They play significant role in the satisfactory enjoyment. An art or science of erotica without reference to these cannot be said to be complete. Ancient Egyptians practiced female circumcision which is prevalent even now in some African countries and which shows their recognition of the importance of clitoris in the sexual act.

Kāmasūtra of *Vātsāyana* does not refer to these parts or their importance and functions they perform. This may not be an evidence to assert that *Vātsāyana* was ignorant of these parts. While referring to the first night *Vātsāyana* cautions men to be very careful and not to be harsh because women are very shy and hesitant⁶ but not because of the pain of defloration. Anangaranga of Kalyanamalla has no reference to this. āyurvēdic classics describe in detail the *ratricarya* (regimen of night). The qualities and characteristics of women to be enjoyed and fit for coitus are mentioned but the importance and functions of different parts do not find place.

The word *yoni* is a general term and according to the context it may refer to vulva or vagina or vaginal canal and it supports the view that there was no identification of different parts of the vulva. The words like *madanatapatra* or *madanacchatra* are found in later works of *Kāmasūtra* to refer to clitoris, though at some places it refers to vagina. There have been some attempts to interpret some words In Vedic literature to refer to different parts. Srivastava tried to establish that some words refer to different parts as below:

śēpha=erect penis; *adhisavana*=hymen; *bhaga*=clitoris;

Yoni=vaginal canal; *upasthi*=vagina; *muski*=both labia;⁷

These interpretations are not acceptable to all scholars. Usages of these words in the said meanings are not found. Further the use of *bhaga* to mean clitoris is not convincing.

Anangaranga written in the first half of 16th c. describes the vulva. There are six verses on *yonisvarupa* (form of vulva) and it classifies *yoni* into four types. Further

it states that in vulva there is a nadi, which is like kamankusa (penis). It also states that it is called manmathacchatra and is at the upper part of vaginal orifice. One *nāḍī* called purnacandra is in the middle. Kalyanamalla also mentioned that in the first act women get satisfaction very late and later early and that this is opposite in men.⁸

* It may be mentioned that in female circumcision clitoris or part of it is excised. Clitoris is an erectile organ homologous to penis and is full of nerve centers and its arousal plays an important role in enjoyment. Hymen is a membranous part covering the opening of vagina, which is ruptured during the first sexual act or defloration.

Bhavaprakasa by Bhavamisra of 16th c. appears to be the earliest āyurvēdic work to throw some light on this in the following passage:

There are three nadis near the opening (mukha) of vagina (of ladies) and they are called samirana, candramasi and gauri they are described now. Samirana is very important in the vagina. The semen ejaculated at its face becomes, fruitless-thus says Candramauli. Semen ejaculated on the candramasi results in (conceiving and) delivering a female child and this lady gets satisfaction in the act very early. Gauri, which is in the inner part of vagina is also naturally significant and delivers (i.e. semen dropped at this nadi), a male child.⁹

Late medieval works on Kamasutra refer to the above *nāḍī* and to the significance of clitoris and defloration. The words *yōni* and *madanacchatra* or *madanatapatra* are also not used specifically. The commentary of Kancinatha on Ratirahasya of Kokkoka mentions that the word *kāmatapatras* used by lakṣanikās as synonym of *yōni*,¹⁰ though Ratirahasya describes clitoris and the vaginal *nāḍī*. This development in the knowledge of female genital anatomy might have taken place due to some influence or deep study of the female anatomy during this period i.e. centuries between Kamasutra and later works. Tantrism started gradually developing with many methods and procedures of different nature, which became very popular. Followers of vāmacara of *śakti* cult and others like *kṣāpanakas*, *kāpalikas* were practicing *yōnipūja* in different forms. The five practices called *Pañcakarma* - items starting with the letter 'ma' -popular, such as *madya* (wine), *matsya* (fish), *mamsa* (meat), *mudra* (different symbols shown by the fingers and hands), and *maithuna* (sexual intercourse). I could

not get any books explaining these practices in detail to establish the influence on *āyurvēda* and *Kāmasūtra*. My enquiries with some learned followers and sadhakas of sakta cult revealed that all such things are not incorporated in books but are imparted by tradition-sampradaya orally.

Trikōṇa is a symbolic form of goddess and is worshipped by kaulas and trikona is also used as a synonym of *yōnī*. There are descriptions of *yoni* in some kavyas in Sanskrit and Telugu. Naisadha of Sriharsa in Sanskrit and Vipranarayanacaritra, Ahalyasankrandanam, Kridabhiramam and some other works in Telugu describe *yoni* and these descriptions point to the external appearance without parting the labia. Illustrations of *yoni* in some books of erotica also show the external appearance only without parting the labia. Being the works of literature it is natural. Candrarekhavilapamu of Kucimanci Jaggakavi of 18th c. is a kavya in Telugu, which is considered very obscene. This book refers to all the parts of vulva and a commentary on this clearly explains their shape and function or anatomy and physiology. Among the sakta works some references to these parts are found in the commentary of Saundaryalahari of *Sri śaṅkarācārya* by recent authors.

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The commentaries by Sanga *śēṣācalaśāstri* and by Tummalapalli Ramalingesvararao Sarma almost identically describe as follows:

Adharacakra has three konas and has bindu (point) in it. For kaulas, *Trikōṇa* itself is *bindu* and hence they worship *Trikōṇa*. Purvakaulas draw the *yoni* on *Bhūrjapatra* (leaf of *Bhūrja* tree used for writing) etc and worship, while uttarakaulas worship the vagina or vulva of woman directly. Men and women of kautas worship the bindu nakedly. While worshipping the direct vulva they worship the manmathacchakra as the bindu. Digambaraksapanakas worship the urdhvatrikona placing the woman upside down.¹¹

TRR Sarma explains that the manmathacchakra is a muscular part of the size of bengal gram seed in the upper part of vagina.¹²

The commentary on *Kāmakalā Vilāsa* of Punyananda also refers to the worship of direct trikona of woman by the followers of kaulacara. They call *Trikōṇa* (vagina or

vulva) with the name svadhsthana, *yōnicakra* or kulagrha and believe trikona as *śakti* and bindu (clitoris) as *śiva*.¹³

Among the late medieval works of *kāmaśāstra*, Paururavamanasijasutram used the word svadhsthana to denote vulva and it clearly noticed the significance of defloration in sexual satisfaction (of men?). It states that the pleasure and happiness at the time of the rupture of yoni (it is to be understood as hymen) is greater than the eternal bliss - brahmananda.¹⁴ Anji and udanji are the words used to denote male and female private parts. The word *sardagrđi* probably denotes clitoris since it is explained as the flower of *yōni*¹⁵ (upasthendriyakusumam).

The fact that there is no mention of these details of female genitalia in works of *Kāmaśāstra* and *āyurvēda* need not lead us to conclude that ancients did not possess the knowledge. There are some sculptures of Siva in a dancing posture called padalalatikam or padatilakam in the brhadisvara temple of Thanjavur and in some other places in Tamilnadu. In this pose the right leg is raised upwards so that the toe touches the forehead. It is said that there was a competition between Siva and Parvati in the art of dance. Both started dancing and even after a long time no one could excel the other. At last Siva adapted this posture and Parvati did not do it because it was prohibited for ladies. Scholars explain that this posture was prohibited for ladies to avoid any possibility of rupture of hymen.

All the above explanations and references support to conclude that yonipuja was popular among kaulas and other sects of tantrism. This worship made the people to observe the parts and their functions in detail. Many practitioners of medicine were also followers of *śākta*, *vāmacara* and other cults, which led them to describe the details and significance in the books.

NOTES

1. Walker 1963 p-14
2. Ibid p. 17
3. Ibid p. 18
4. Ibid p.19

5. *Kāmasūtra* 1856 p-70. Add
6. Ibid p.606...add
7. Srivastav 1979p.266.
8. Anangaranga 1987 pp. 39-41...add
9. Bhavaprakasa 1959 p.39... add
10. Ratirahasya 1994 p. 10. ..add
11. Saundaryalahari 1915 p.294 and 1995 p.277-279.
12. Ibid 1995 p.279.
13. *Kāmakalāvīlāsa* 1959 p. 174
14. Paururava- 1967 p,7.
15. Ibid p.9. Add
16. Ibid p.9. Add

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4. **Kamasutra** of Vatsyayana with Jayamangala comm.: Hindi comm. by Madhavacarya, Gangavisnu Srikrishnadas, saka 1856. Mumbai.
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सारांश

तन्त्रशास्त्र का आयुर्वेद तथा कामशास्त्र पर प्रभाव

बी. रामा राव

अत्यन्त प्राचीन आयुर्वेद तथा कामशास्त्र के ग्रन्थों के अवलोकन से यह ज्ञात होता है कि प्रजनन अंगों - विशेषकर स्त्री के जननेन्द्रियों की रचना, क्रियाओं इत्यादि विषयों का उल्लेख या वर्णन उनमें विस्तृत रूप में नहीं पाया जाता। किन्तु मध्य तथा अन्तिमयुगीन काल के ग्रन्थों में इनका प्रस्ताव देखने में आता है। कौलाचार तथा कापालिक आदि तान्त्रिक साधकों में योनिपूजन अधिक प्रचार में था और इसी साधना से यौन के विभिन्न अंगों का अवलोकन तथा संभोग में उनकी प्रधानता को समझने का अवसर प्राप्त हुआ, जो इन तान्त्रिक साधनाओं के अन्तर्गत आता है। तन्त्र शास्त्र की इन्हीं विषयों का उल्लेख भावप्रकाश, पौरुवमनसिज सूत्र एवं अन्य कामशास्त्र ग्रन्थों में पाया जाता है। इनमें योनी के तीन नाडी तथा भगांकुर आदि का वर्णन उपलब्ध है।