

## A IMPACT OF SOCIAL LIFE FOR FOOD AND DRINKS, HAIR-STYLE AND HAIR DECORATIONS IN MEDIEVAL KARNATAKA

<sup>1</sup>Padmavati S. Chavan

### Food and Drinks

Food habits of pre-Vijayanagar times have with little change come down to our own days. Cookery was known as a science (Supasastra) and it developed to a finesse. Sound dietetics was a subject intimately connected with the welfare of the royalty and is discussed at length by Somadeva Suri. Somesvara has devoted 268 verses to food alone, and the varieties of vegetarian and non-vegetarian dishes he describes are astonishing. And in ancient times, food was equated with life itself.

### Rice

Rice formed the staple food of the masses; but wheat, barley (jave) and millets (jola) were also used. Gandhasali was popular and inscriptional evidence indicates that this variety of rice was grown extensively in rural areas. The Manasollasa enumerates seven types of rice and the proper way of cooking them. The water used for washing rice (tandula kshalitam toyam) before cooking it was seasoned with spices; it was named vyanjana and used for savoring boiled rice.

The Lokopakara and the Manasollasa mention a mode of cooking rice by removing the ambila or manda, the excess water strained from boiled rice. This way of cooking is fairly common to this day. This ambila was further used in preparing a savory known as ambila palidya by adding ground cardamom, cummin seed, pepper, clove, coriander, etc. Kalasagulu was prepared by mixing thick creamy curd with boiled rice and seasoned with cardamom, pepper and other spices. Spiced rice, like kalaveya kulu and huliyanra were popular.

### Normal Meal

Rice was eaten with soups and gold-colored broths. Modes of preparing soups from moong (green gram), kadale (bengal gram), lentils, black-gram, etc., are described. Several types of vegetables were used in cooking. Raw fruits (phalasaka) like plantains and jackfruit were used for curries. Tubers (kandasaka) like surana, roots like radishes (mulaka), flowers of pumpkin and plantain (pushpasaka), varieties of leaves (patra saka) and beans (simbi saka) were cooked together or separately, by adding spices or by seasoning. The Lokopakara describes methods of removing the bitterness of several seeds and cereals.

### Fruits

Fruits were grown in abundance and were used by the rich and the poor alike. This has been observed by foreign travelers to India during this period. Abu Zaid found pomegranates in plenty. Friar Jordanus (1323-1330 A D.) had noticed lemons as sweet as sugar, grapes, pomegranates, jackfruit (chaqui) and mangoes. He was of opinion that mangoes were like plums and that they were indescribably sweet and delicious. Ibn Batuta, while describing different kinds of orange, says, '...then the sweet orange (narang) is very abundant in India. As for the sour orange, it is rare. There is a third species of the orange, which is half way between the sweet and the sour. This fruit is as large and sweet as lime. It is agreeable in taste. The Somanatha Charitra mentions a typical fresh-fruit stall (navya phala vikrayada pasara) selling plantains, lemons, oranges, jackfruit, mangoes, pomegranates, jamuns (nerile), along with coconuts and sugarcane. The Parsvanatha Purana adds kembale or red plantains to the list. The mango was considered the king of fruits. Nayasena's Dharmamrita, describing a sumptuous dinner given to a greedy Brahmin Vasubhuti, lists a number of fruits, like plantains, dates, oranges, mangoes, guavas and citrons. The Manasollasa prescribes eating of fruit during dinner. Inscriptions also mention the jackfruit, mango, hog-plum, plantain, etc.

### Sweets and Snacks

It is evident from the list of snacks in literature that the people of Karnataka had a sweet tooth. Payasam or khir was popular and it was a compulsory item of offering (naivedya) to a deity. The Manasollasa recommends milk of a buffalo which has calved long back (chiraprasuta) for preparing payasa of saraveshtika (saravalige) and sevaka (sevice) or a type of noodles. This was good for lapping up (lehane yogyam). Saravalige payasa finds a glorious place in Kamalabhava's Santisvara Purana, wherein it is compared to bright autumn moonlight in which the stars (noodle pieces) were faintly visible. Payasa formed an essential part of a feast. The Manasollasa describes a preparation of condensed curd, sikharini. It is similar to srikhanda of Maharashtra. Water is removed from curds by straining through a cloth; sugar and powdered cardamom are added to the condensed mass. Chavundaraya recommends the adding of cloves, saf-

fron (nagakesara), ginger, pepper, jaggery and honey to it, finally fumigating with camphor. Mandage (mandaka) often finds mention in literature. The method of preparing it was elaborate: washed wheat was dried, ground and sieved; the flour was mixed with ghee and a pinch of salt; the dough was then rolled into balls, shaped into cakes on palms or by a rolling pin and roasted on a huge earthen pot kept upside-down and plaited fourfold, before the thin layers hardened. An inscription of 1192 A.D, refers to halumandage or mandage in milk, as an offering to a deity.

### **Non-Vegetarian Food**

Though a sizable population was vegetarian due to Jaina or later Virasaiva influence, a number of meat dishes described by Somesvara indicates that the nobles and the royalty were predominantly non-vegetarian. Contemporary commentaries of Vijnanesvara and Apararka on the Dharmasastras allow the use of meat under special circumstances. The Agni Purana says, 'A man suffering from any sort of wasting disease should take special care to improve his appetite, and take essence of meat every day whereby he could get rid of his malady.' Fish preparations are permitted. "There is no harm in eating such fish as pathina, rohita and simhatunda." Meat roasted on spits also finds place in this encyclopedic work. The Yasastilaka mentions an incident in which the king Yasodhara ordered fish to be delivered at the rest-house of Brahmins, where it was to be served after being sliced and cooked. In connection with the rebirths of Yasodhara, it is told that, as a goat, he was under the care of the chief cook of the royal kitchen for a few months. Amritamati was very fond of meat and was teaching the cooks how to roast it. Finally, the young goat (Yasodhara) was also butchered for Amritamati's table.

### **Drinks and Beverages**

Somadeva discusses properties of fresh water in detail and concludes that it is amrita or nectar when properly used and visha or poison otherwise. The Manasollasa mentions water from various sources and recommends water from rains, rivers, springs, tanks and lakes for daily use, after it is filtered through a clean white cloth. It further insists on boiling drinking water. Water exposed to the rays of the sun and the moon was not to be used at night and vice versa. It further recommends adding to drinking water pieces of mango, patala and champaka flowers, powder of cloves, camphor and sandalwood, and purifying it with triphala.

Different types of water are prescribed for different seasons; rain water for autumn, water from tanks and lakes for winter, pool-water for spring, spring water for

summer and underground water for rainy season. The king should sip water very often during a meal; this imparts taste to the food and helps digestion. He is also advised to sip water whenever he feels thirsty, even at odd times. Leather bags (charmapatra) and earthen pots are recommended. The Lokopakara describes cold drinks (panaka or sherbats) prepared from fruits like jujube (badari), myrobalan, pomegranate, tamarind and citron (madala) to quench thirst. The Manasollasa also lists panakas prepared from different fruits and explains in detail the modes of preparing them. For obtaining an excellent panaka, sour juice was added to milk, the liquid part of whey was strained through a cloth and with this liquid was mixed some juice of ripe tamarind fruit. Fresh coconut water is also maintained as a tasty drink. Ibn Batuta greatly relished it and he writes: 'The coconut tree is one of the most wonderful trees. One of the marvels about its nut is that if cut while yet green, one could drink its highly delicious and cool water, which generates heat and acts as an aphrodisiac. The Parsvanatha Purana adds the cooling orange juice (tanirasa) and sugar-cane juice (ikshurasa) to the list of cold drinks .

### **Seasoning**

Spices like green and dry ginger, turmeric, garlic, cumin seed, mustard, black pepper (melasu), bhadrāmuste (a kind of sedge), baje (fragrant and medicinal roots) and cloves are mentioned in inscriptions. To this, the Lokopakara adds clove bark and leaves, saffron, kachora (long zedoary), cardamom, asafetida, camphor and coriander. The Manasollasa enriches the list with methi (fenugreek), nisajiraka (black cumin), rajaka (black mustard) and onions for preparing meat dishes. Cinnamon does not find place in these sources probably because it was not available in India at that time. Again, the Lokopakara explains how garlic and onion could be used in different vegetarian preparations, though these were taboo for Brahmins and Jains. On the other hand, Somesvara recommends asafetida rather than onion and garlic for meat preparations. Rocksalt (saindha lavana) was used for specific purposes. Curd was flavored to taste. Chillis do not seem to have made their appearance in the South Indian cuisine at the time. In the Lokopakara, we find a compound of trijataka which included powder of saffron, bark and leaves of cloves, and of chaturjataka, which in addition to these included cardamom. Clarified butter was the most popular cooking medium followed by teal oil and mustard oil (sarshpa taila); in coastal regions coconut oil was used, as observed by Ibn Batuta.

### **Seasonal Food**

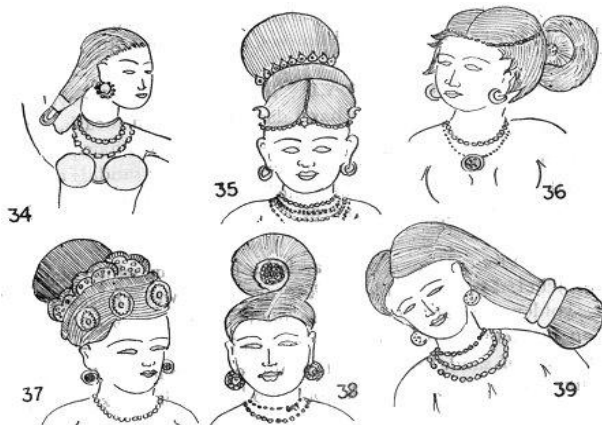
The Yasastilaka recommends sweet, bitter and astringent food for autumn; sweet, salty and sour dishes for

winter and rainy seasons; pungent and astringent varieties during spring and light food in summer. Further, it elaborates that in winter one should take fresh food, preparations of milk, pulses and sugarcane, curds and things prepared with ghee; oil too is beneficial. In spring, one should avoid heavy, cold and sweet dishes, and use little ghee. On hot days, one should take sali rice, moong soup, ghee, with preparations of lotus stalks, fresh shoots and bulbs, fried barley flour, sherbets, curds mixed with sugar and spices, coconut milk and water, or milk with plenty of sugar. In the rainy season, the food should be dry, light, oily and warm; preparations of old sali rice, wheat and barley should be taken. In the autumn, the diet should consist of ghee, moong, wheat flour, milk products, patola (species of cucumber), grapes, amalaki fruit (myrobalan), sugar, sweet bulbs and greens. The Manasollasa also holds similar views and advises the king to partake of astringent dishes in spring; sweet and cooling in summer; salted in rainy season; sweet, oily and hot during autumn; and hot and sour in winter. This ensures quicker metabolism of the food in keeping with the changing seasons.

### Forbidden Food

The Agni Purana advises a brahmacharin (celibate) to refrain from eating unwittingly beet-root or garlic or from drinking wine. He was to avoid cakes, sushkala (dried fish), krisara (khichadi or milk with rice and pulse), partridge flesh and thickened milk... Flesh of five-digited animals such as porcupine (sallaka), iguana (godha), rhinoceros and tortoise was permitted; that of other animals was prohibited. Somadeva forbids eating germinated paddy and ghee kept in a brass vessel for ten days. Bananas with curds and buttermilk, milk with salt, broth of pulses with radishes fried barley powder turning compact like curds, and sesame preparations at night were to be avoided.

### Hair-Style and Hair-Decorations



Hair was cleaned, washed, dried and fumigated with special incense and then combed and arranged in different styles. Pigtails were popular among young girls and on special occasions, these were interwoven with flowers. Different devices were used to keep the hair in the particular slant desired; such a device or stay held to hold up a loose knot (sormudi) in position. Long hair was arranged in a knot and the left-over locks were plaited into a pigtail. A mudi or bun was decorated with a pearl net and sometimes with a ribbon. Short hair was neatly combed and held by a small conical ring. Nicolo Conti had noticed that men and women twisted the hair on the top of the head like a pyramid, sticking a golden bodkin in the center. People with less hair but craving elaborate coiffure went in for artificial switch and wigs. Such make-shifts cannot be easily made out in sculptures. However, many strings, clips and abnormally large buns suggest the use of artificial devices. Hair balls helped shape nicely groomed buns vertically (balalmudi). Hair-knots were arranged on the left and right upon the head. Sometimes hair curls (bambal kural) were employed. At times, hair would be arranged in two buns.

### References

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