

TITLE - WORLD'S FIRST ENCYCLOPAEDIA



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3. Bimba-pratibimba !

4. Jeevan Mrutyuchya Seemareshewarun !

5. Barawya Shatakateel Khadyasanskruti !

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Awards

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Abstract:

This paper introduces 'World's First Encyclopedia' entitled अभिलषितार्थ चिन्तामणि. Following are the important points dealt with in this paper:

1. This book is composed in the 12th century A.D.

2. It is composed by king Someśvara (III) of Cālukya dynasty.

3. The Cālukya dynasty was famous for scholarship.

4. The title of the book suggests that it performs the function of a wish yielding gem चिन्तामणि.

5. According to Dr. Shivashekhara, Someśvara (III) alone is the author of this book.

6. This is the last book introducing pure Hindu culture before the aggression of Muslims.

7. Vast number of subjects, discussed in it in details

8. Hence, the book has taken the form of the storehouse of knowledge.

Key words: King Someśvara, Cālukya, 12th century A. D., Hindu culture, storehouse of knowledge.

TITLE - WORLD'S FIRST ENCYCLOPAEDIA

Introduction

An encyclopedia is a book of information on every branch of a subject, usually alphabetically arranged or it can be called as the treasure or the storehouse of knowledge. This paper is prepared to throw light on the world's first ever encyclopedic work by king Someśvara (III) of Cālukya Dynasty. He composed this work in the 12th century A. D. The special feature of this work is that it is composed in Sanskrit in poetic form. The title of the first encyclopedia is अभिलषितार्थ चिन्तामणि. It is also known as मानसोल्लास. We came across this reference while working with Dr. Varsha Joshi on Indian foods. We are presenting this paper so that it will be useful for other scholars as a reference material.

The Cālukya Dynasty

King Someśvara(III), the author of this work belonged to the Cālukya dynasty. This Dynasty was quite famous in Karnataka. The kings of this dynasty ruled over major part of India, for more than four hundred years. During this period Art and Literature developed to a great extent. Many Kannada poets and Sanskrit scholars flourished during this period, and they wrote a lot of books. Many famous Sanskrit and Kannada poets had come to the Cālukya kings for their shelter. Vijayamahādevī the queen of king Candrādityadeva, was a highly learned woman, who composed many works of Sanskrit poetry. Thus, this dynasty was famous for scholarship.

Author of the Book

King Someśvara (III) was the son of king Vikramāditya. He was a great scholar and a versatile Learned man. People called him सर्वज्ञभूपः 'meaning thereby the 'king who knows everything' सर्वं जानाति इति सर्वज्ञ | सर्वज्ञः भूपः इति सर्वज्ञभूपः |. He came to the throne in the year 1126 A. D. and ruled for only eleven years. But during this short period, he composed a very big and valuable book which brought to him widespread fame crossing the limit of the horizon. The title of the book is अभिलषितार्थ चिन्तामणि. This book, because of its all inclusive nature, was later honored as the first Encyclopedia in the world.

The title of the Book

The title of the book is अभिलषितार्थ चिन्तामणि. अभिलाषा means strong or mighty desire. अभिलषित means strongly desired. अर्थ means the object of desire or the aim of desire and चिन्तामणि means the gem which fulfils desire. Hence the title suggests that this book performs the function of चिन्तामणि, the wish yielding gem. In other words, we can say that information regarding almost all subjects is readily available in this book. The book has an alternative title as मानसोल्लास. मानस means mind and उल्लास means joy, delight or pleasure. So, मानसोल्लास means pleasure of mind.

As regards this title there is a verse at the beginning of the book in the table of contents. The verse is as follows:

चालुक्यवंशतिलकः श्रीसोमेश्वरभूपतिः ।
कुरुते मानसोल्लासं शास्त्रं विश्वोपकारकं ॥

The meaning is: 'King Someśvara, the ornament of Cālukya dynasty, composes a scientific book named मानसोल्लास for the favor of the world.

Authorship of the Book

It is mentioned in the above verse that king Someśvara has composed this book. There is no doubt about it. But taking in to consideration the vast scope of the book, a question arises whether he alone has composed it. There is a controversy regarding the single authorship of the book. Some scholars hold that it is a collective production of many scholars, among whom king Someśvara was the chief, hence he deserves the credit. Dr. Shivashekhara however differs from the aboveopinion. He firmly states that king Someśvara alone is the author of this book. He has produced strong evidences in support of his opinion. People called the king as सर्वज्ञभूपः and this book itself is the evidence of his सर्वज्ञत्व.

Contents of the Book

1) There are a hundred chapters in this work. They are grouped into five equal books of which the third describes the pleasures of royalty. The titles of the chapters themselves show the vast Scope of the book. Here are for example, some of the titles of the chapters- Putropabhoga, Vastropabhoga, Asthabhoga, Annabhoga, Ālekhyakarma, Nṛpageha, Rāṣṭrapālana, Pānīyabhoga, etc. These titles clearly show the subjects discussed in the respective chapters.

2) Reviewing the literature related to Art and Learning (that is vidyā) which developed and flourished in India unto 12th century A. D. Someśvara has incorporated thoughts related to theReview in this book. Hence his work is a valuable and unparalleled Sanskrit reference material in India.

3) It's another peculiarity is it is the last book introducing pure Hindu culture, because the Kings of Cālukya dynasty was completely free from the contacts of Muslims. This dynasty came to an end before the entry and spread of aggressive Muslim culture in India. Yadavas and Hoysalas put an end to the regime of Cālukyas about 12th century A. D. when Someśvara (IV) the last king of Cālukya dynasty was ruling.

4) The author of this book had given special stress on royal life and politics. Even then he has explored many fields of science and knowledge and has incorporated their essence in his book. He has explained in details subjects like astrology, economics, the science of elephants, science of cooking, architecture, veterinary science, arts like music etc.

5) Though, while explaining the established doctrines of his time, he has taken support of Smṛti, Purāṇas, ethics etc; his independent and original thinking is clearly seen in presenting the doctrines.

6. One more peculiarity of this book is that the author has given equal authenticity to Vedas and worldly procedures (लौकिक विधि).

Glimpses of a few Chapters

In the **Putropbhoga chapter**, the author has described various saṁskāras to be performed in relation to the child. During the course of this explanation, he has thrown light on music, musical instruments, dance and also social domestic customs and traditions.

In **Vastropbhoga chapter**, he gives vast information about clothes. According to him, Aśvinī Constellation gives us clothes. Regarding wearing new clothes it is assumed that if we wear new Clothes (for the first time) on Friday, then longevity increases. If we wear new clothes (for the first time) on Wednesday, then we get wealth; if on Thursday, our intelligence increases. The author has mentioned as to when the people should wear new clothes. He observes that at the time of any function at home, such as marriage ceremony, meeting other king, entertainment programs like dance, music etc, at the time of giving donations or at the time of sacrifice people should wear new Clothes. After this, he says, that the king should order his minister to bring all types of clothes from various Places famous for special varieties. This is followed by various designs on the cloth using dots, Circles; lines- thick and thin, square etc. Then we come across various colors which need to be fast colors and which look better after every washing. He has also made a mention of turbans and Jackets of different shapes, sizes and designs. The author suggests seasonal attire and its colors for a king.

It is interesting to know how minutely the author has discussed the details of food and water in the **Annabhoga and Paniyabhoga Chapters**. The discussion about food is mainly divided in to two parts i.e. vegetarian food and non-vegetarian food. Under the first head, he has described various varieties of rice, pulses, cereals etc and also the methods of cleaning rice, washing the grains and cooking it. While explaining the procedure of cooking rice, he says, the proportion of rice and water should be 1: 3. The water should be first heated till bubbles appear, then washed rice should be put in to it, when water is almost exhausted, the heat hold be reduced and lid should be put on the pot and soon. Sufficient attention is paid to the cooking utensils, cleanliness, types of instruments of grinding, crushing, pounding, roasting etc.

A list of things which make the food tasty is given. It contains salt, Turmeric, tamarind, mustard, pepper etc.

His list of vegetable contains leafy vegetables, legumes, floral vegetables, tuber vegetables etc. Some of them are traceable at present, while some are not. In the part of non-vegetarian food, he has described in details the methods of killing animals, Cleaning them, removing hair on their body, cooking them, roasting them and making the Preparation tasty. He has also described the procedure of dressing and cooking birds and fishes etc.

The author has also described the milk products like, pāyasa, paneer, curds, buttermilk, ghee etc. Mathita, takra, majjika, are different forms of buttermilk, for example, mathita is curd just churned without adding any water. Takra contains 3/4 quantity of curds and 1/4 quantity of water.

In the **Paniyabhoga Chapter**, he has explained at the outset the importance of water for all the living beings. Their lives depend on water. An unconscious man comes to consciousness if water is sprinkled on his face. Water increases the taste of meal and it helps

digestion of food. So, water should be taken intermittently while taking food. So also ample water should be drunk during the day whenever one feels thirsty. He has mentioned nine varieties of water.

They are as follows:

1. *Divine water*- The fresh water falling from the clouds, at the time of Svātī constellation is called divine water.
2. *Atmospheric water*- The crystal clear water falling from the clouds during the rainy season is called atmospheric water.
3. *River water*- The River which originates from the top of mountains and flows down has clean water. It has a blue tinge like sapphire. It is called river water.
4. Water from a well- *Bhauma-jala* is the water from a well. It is from the deep interior of the earth.
5. Water stored in a rock- *Chunda-jala* it is water stored by nature in a big rock. It is hygienic. Chunda is a natural reservoir.
6. *Spring water*- The water originating from a spring coming down from a mountain or coming out of earth is called spring water.
7. Water in the sand pit- If we dig a pit in the sand water comes up. It is clean and static. It is called *Nishyandaja-jala*.
8. Lake water- The water of a lake or pond which is full of white and red lotuses is called *Saras-jala*.
9. Dam water- *Tadāk-jala* is the water that is stored by constructing a dam.
10. Some people mention one more variety as *Vṛkṣa jala*, which we get from *Vṛkṣa (tree)*, i.e. Coconut water.

The author has cautioned against polluted water which is full of moss, has bad smell and color, which contains dried and decaying leaves etc. Such water should not be used for drinking.

After this, he has explained the procedure of storing and purifying water and making it fragrant. In his opinion, *Saras jala* is good for spring season, Spring water is good in hot season. Water from a well is good in rainy season, considering the special qualities of each variety. The above discussion gives only a glimpse of vast coverage of subjects dealt within this work.

Conclusion

To conclude, we can say that the author has given deep thinking to many subjects and hence the Book is rightly honored as 'the first encyclopaedia' in the world. This paper highlights the following important points about अभिलषितार्थ चिन्तामणि:

1. This book is composed in the 12th century A.D.
2. It is composed by king Someśvara (III) of Cālukya Dynasty.
3. The Cālukya Dynasty was famous for scholarship.
4. The title of the book suggests that it performs the function of a wish yielding gem चिन्तामणि.
5. According to Dr. Shivashekhara, Someśvara (III) alone is the author of this book.
6. This is the last book introducing pure Hindu culture before the aggression of Muslims.
7. Vast number of subjects are discussed in it in details

8. Hence, the book has taken the form of the storehouse of knowledge. The purpose of this paper will be served if somebody is motivated to undertake further research in this field.

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