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Review on *Dhanwantari nighantu*, *bhavaprakasha nighantu* and *Raja nighantu*

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Abstract

The word *Nighantu* is one of the important aspect in the study of *Dravyaguna Vijnana* (Materia medica). The importance of *Nighantu* was highlighted for the first time by Acharya Narahari Pandit in his work called *Raja Nighantu* during 14th century A.D. He states that a physician without the knowledge of *Nighantu*, a scholar without the knowledge of *Vyakaranam* (Grammar) and a soldier without the knowledge of *Ayudha* (Weapons) are laughing stalk in the world. The *Nighantu* literature is one of the important aspect in the study of *Ayurveda* and specially in the subject of *Dravyaguna Vijnana*. The ancient *Nighantus* were actually like *Kosa* (Compendium), containing the synonyms, properties, actions and their uses of *Dravya* (Drugs). In true sense the *Nighantu* means collection of words, synonyms and the names of the medicinal drugs. The *Nighantu* may be defined as a glossary containing synonymous groups, the names of the drugs, plants, animals, minerals or anything that is administered either as food or medicine to the human body. The importance of *Nighantu* has been explained for the first time by *Narahari Pandita*, son of *Isvarasuri* in his work *Raja Nighantu* during 14th century A. D. The science and activities related to detection, evaluation, understanding and prevention of adverse drug reactions or any other drug related problems. Ancient texts clearly mention that if a drug is used without the knowledge of its proper action, it would certainly act as a poison. This statement clearly states that the knowledge of *Nighantu* is indispensable for a *Vaidya*. In *Ayurveda*, the *Tridosha* are the essential triad influencing the health and disease conditions. Thus, the knowledge of side effects of drugs that affect their normal functions becomes necessary. The present work is systematically dealt with the introductory part of these *Nighantus*.

Keywords: *Dhanwantari Nighantu*, *Raja Nighantu*, *Bhavaprakasha Nighantu*, *Pandit Narahari*, *Acharya Bhavamishra* etc.

Introduction

Dhanvantari Nighantu is one of the oldest Ayurvedic materia medica placed between 8th -10th AD. The original name of this lexicon is *Dravyavali samucchaya*. This book contains seven *Vargas* namely; *Guduchyadi varga*, *Shatapushpadi Varga*, *Chandanadi Varga*, *Karaviradi Varga*, *Amradi Varga*, *Suvarnadi Varga*, and *Mishrakadi Varga*, and the total numbers of drugs are 527. The drugs are classified in this book are on the basis of *Rasa*, *Guna*, *Virya*, *Vipaka* etc. The *Nighantu* starts with salutation to *Lord Dhanvantari*. The peculiar of this *Nighantu* is the *Varga* starts with the name of the first drug e.g, *Guduchi* as *Guduchyadi varga*. And the *Vargas* of the medicinal plants are explained systematically first with synonyms and then the properties. The *Dadima* and *Kadali* mentioned in *Shatapushpadi Varga* and *Karaveeradi Varga* respectively. *Acharya Hemadri* the commentator of *Astangahridaya* mentioned this *Nighantu* in the name of *Dravyavali* ^[1]. The *Dravyavali* contains only the synonyms of the drugs; later on the properties of the drugs were added. Therefore the *Dhanvantari Nighantu* is the compiled book. The author of this book is still under mystery, but it is claimed that *Mahendra Bhogika*, son of *Krishna Bhogika* of *Sthaneshwara* now a days is called as *Thane of Maharashtra* had claimed the author of this book ^[2]. He told that without the knowledge ^[3] of the *Nighantu* the *Vaidya* is unable to treat the patient. *Ksheeraswami* the commentator of the *Amarakosha* has quoted the *Dhanwantari Nighantu*. The date of *Ksheeraswami* is 11th century AD ^[4]. Hence the *Dhanwantari Nighantu* can be placed in 10th century AD.

Dhanwantari nighantu Discussion

Acharya of this *Nighantu* ^[5] quotes same drug having different names can be evaluated carefully with the help of *Gopala*, *Tapaswi*, *Shikari*, and *Adivasi* people.

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The physician should carefully analyse the drugs with the help of *Rasa*, *Virya*, *Vipaka*, *Prabhava* and then applied for treatment. While explaining about the collection of the drugs the author has tried to rule out the controversies. While collecting the drug a physician come across the similar name to the other drug, and the controversy arises, so qualified *Vaidya* should carefully analyse the properties and then applied his *Yukti* to overcome the controversies. While explaining the importance of the *Nighantu* author enumerated a quotation which is admirable. To examine the patient *Dosha*, *Aushadha*, *Desha*, *Kala*, *Sharira*, *Ayu*, *Satmya*, *Bala*, *Agni*, *Samprapti*, *Karana*, *Lakshana*, *Sadhyasadhyata* are taking in to consideration for the examination and treatment of the patient. The book starts with following Vargas; *Guduchyadi Varga*- 128 Drugs- Drugs of bitter taste, *Shatapushpadi Varga*- 54 drugs- Containing spices, *Chandanadi Varga*- 79 drugs- Containing aromatic drugs, *Karaveeradi Varga*- 75 drugs- Containing small plants and herbs, *Amradi Varga*- 74 drugs- Containing fruits, *Suvarnadi Varga*-16 mineral origin- Containing minerals and food substances, 2 animal, 27 *Dhanya Varga*, 78 *Dravya Varga*, 44 *Mamsa Varga*, 9 *Mutra Varga*, *Mishrakadi Varga*- 59 group of drugs. The *Gajapippali* is the said to be the fruit of *Chavya* by this *Nighantu*. The types of *Karanja* is 2 in ancient texts, 5 in *Amarakosha* where as 6 in *Dhanwantari Nighantu*. *Murva* is *Tiktavalli* the author took it as *Morata* (*Maerua arenaria* Hook & Th). The *Yasa* and *Dhanvayasa* are quite different plants. But in this *Nighantu* it is claimed that the *Yasa* is type of *Dhanvayasa*. *Gandhapalashi* is stated as a type of *Shati*. The *Shwasari* is described as a type of *Patha*. In ancient classical texts the *Patha* is of two varieties, *Patha* and *Rajapatha*. The *Ajashringi* is mentioned as a synonyms of *Meshashringi*. The *Kasaghni* and *Vrintaki* are described as type of *Brihati*. The *Aralu* and *Shyonaka* are entirely different plants but the *Dhanwanatri Nighantu* explains the synonyms. In the group of *Asthavarga* the *Vijaya* (*Cannabis sativa* Linn) is described as type of *Meda* under the *Asthavarga*. The *Dadhipushpi* and *Kakandi* is described as type of *Kapikacchu*. The *Prachinamalaka* is entirely different plant, in this *Nighantu* it is type of *Amalaki*. The *Karnikara* is mentioned as synonyms of *Aragwadha*. The *Arani* and *Jayapala* are mentioned as types of *Danti*. The *Kanchanakshirini* and *Swarnakshiri* are the types of *Kshirini* plant. The *Balapanchaka* (*Bala*, *Atibala*, *Nagabala*, *Mahabala*, *Rajabala*) are mentioned by this *Nighantu*. The flours of barley, wheat, and rice are used as substitute for *Vamshalochana*. The *Tavakshiri* or *Tugakshiri* is a type of *Vamshalochana*. The starch obtained by this plant is used as substitute for *Vamshalochana*. The *Krishnajiraka* is termed as *Kashirajiraka* which indicates that the habitat of the plant. The seeds of *Shigru Beeja* is used as *Shweta Maricha*. The types of *Yavani* are *Chauhara*, *Yavani*, *Parasika Yavani*. The types of *Chandana* are *Rakta Chandana*, *Pattanga*, *Kaliyaka*, *Barbarika*. The *Gandhamamsi* or *Bhutakeshi* are described as types of *Mamsi*. *Rasanjana* has been described as a type of *Chakshushya* where as *Shilajitu* and *Gairika* have been described as type of *Pushpanjana*. The *Tilvaka* and *Tilaka* are the synonyms of *Lodhra* while the *Kramuka* is used as synonyms of *Pattika Lodhra*. The *Kakajangha*, *Kakanasa*, *Kakadani*, *Chudamani* and *Shwetakambhoi* are described as type of *Kakamachi*. The *Gunja* has *Uchata* synonym. The *Chaanakya*, *Moolaka* and *Grinjana* are described as types of *Moolaka*. The *Mandukaparni* is described as *Suvarchala* and *Bramhi* as *Bramhasuvarchala*. *Nakuli* is synonyms of *Sarpagandha* and *Gandhanakuli* is *Sarpakshi*. *Vishnukranta*

is describes as synonym of *Shankhapushpi*. *Darbha* is of two types viz; *Mridu Darbha* and *Khara Darbha*. The *Mridu Darbha* is *Kusha* where as *Khara Darbha* is *Darbha*. *Koshamra* is smaller variety of *Amra*. The *Madhu Karkati* is described as type of *Beejapura*. Because of similarity in taste, the *Changeri* is described as smaller type of *Amlika* (*Kshudramalaki*). Apart from *Naktamala*, *Prakirya*, *Udakirya*, and *Angaravallika* have been described as types of *Karanja*. *Asana* is described as type of *Sarja*. *Joorna* is included in cereals, the *Karata* is described as type of *Triputa*. The *Vanamethika* or *Hispittha* is type of *Methika*. This is *Ashwabala* of the ancients. The *Khastila* is described as type of grains. The *Aphuka* has also been described as exudation of the plant. *Ahiphena* is also included in *Upavisha*. Several groups of drugs have been defined such as *Swadu Triphala*, *Sugandhu Triphala*, *Chaturbhadra*, *Pancha Bhringa*, *Sarvaushadhika*, *Sugandhamalaka*, *Sugandha Panchaka*, *Panchasarpak*, *Panchasurana*, *Panchasiddhaushadhika* etc. *Yashada* is first described in this *Nighantu*. *Gauripashana* (Arsenic) and *Agnijara* (Amber gris) are described in *Sadharana Rasas*.

The *Ahiphena*, *Jayapala*, and *Agnijara*, Zinc are important addition in the Indian Materia Medica during the medieval period during 12th century AD.

Raja nighantu introduction

Rajanighantu is a *Ayurvedic* medical lexicon written by *Acharya Pandit Narahari*. The work is also called *Abhidhanachudamani* [6] or *Nighantu Raja*. This lexicon is placed in between 14-15th century AD. The names of different varieties of plants are enumerated in this lexicon along with their medicinal properties. The work is divided into 24 sections. This *Nighantu* contains total 23 *Varga*. Viz; *Anupadi Varga*, *Dharnyadi Varga*, *Guduchyadi Varga*, *Shatavhadi Varga*, *Parpatadi Varga*, *Pippalyadi Varga*, *Moolakadi Varga*, *Shalamdyadi Varga*, *Prabhadradi Varga*, *Karaveeradi Varga*, *Amradi Varga*, *Chandanadi Varga*, *Suvarnadi Varga*, *Paaniya Varga*, *Ksheeradi Varga*, *Shaalyadi Varga*, *Mamsadi Varga*, *Manushyadi Varga*, *Simhadi Varga*, *Rogadi Varga*, *Satvadi Varga*, *Mishrakadi Varga*, *Ekarthadi Varga*. The book is compiled version of *Madanapala Nighantu*, *Halayudha*, *Vishwaprakashi*, *Amarakosha*, *Shesharaji Nighantu* [7].

Raja nighantu Discussion

This is the only lexicon which is considered the *Dravyaguna Vinjana* is one of the eight branches of *Ayurveda*. It is said that the physician without knowledge of *Nighantu*, a scholar without the grammar and archer without practice are ridicule by the society [8]. The first two Vargas the *Anupadi Varga* and *Dharanyadi Varga* were taken from the *Amarakosha*. The *Mahabhari Vacha* and *Dwipantara Vacha* of *Bhavaprakasha Nighantu* is enumerated in this *Nighantu*. *Karpura Taila*, *Taila Pippilika*, *Krishna Beeja*, *Kama Vriddhi* & *Sarvakshara* which have not been described by *Bhavamishra*, have been described in *Raja Nighantu*. The author also quotes a third variety of *Karavira*: *Peetha Karavira* along with *Shwetha* & *Raktha*. A description of *Kulinjana* found, while *Bhavaprakasha* describes the same as *Mahabhari Vacha*. The *Himavali* described by *Raja Nighantu* probably is the *Dwipantara Vacha*. Description of *Zandu* was introduced in India in 16th century found. The text gives primary importance to nomenclature of drugs. *Raja Nighantu* has named drugs based on the 7 factors viz; *Rudhi*, *Prabhava*, *Deshokti*, *Akruti*, *Upama*, *Veerya*, *Utpattisthana*. The *Nighantu* classifies land

based on various castes & also on the basis of *Panchamahabhuta*; *Parthiva*, *Aapya*, *Taijasa*, *Vayavya* & *Antariksha*. The *Sthavara Dravyas* are of 5 types: *Vanaspathi*, *Vaanaspithya*, *Kshupa*, *Valli* & *Oshadi*, each again being of 3 kinds: *Pullinga*, *Sthreeinga* & *Napumsakalinga*. The description of *Chetana* (Conscious) & *Panchbhoutikatva* of plant drugs described. The description of the drugs like *Lingini*, *Somavalli*, *Kaivatthika*, *Katvi*, *Amruthasrava*, *Dhumrapatra*, *Rudanhi*, *Hashtishundi*, *Dugdapheni*, *Zandu*, *Kulanjan*, *Mayaphal*, *Karaskar* is found. The *Anupadi Varga* concerned with characteristics and various types of *Desha*, *tress*, and types of trees.

The *Dharanyadi Varga* deals with synonyms for earth, mountain, forest, *Nakshatra* *Vriksha*. The third to thirteen chapters deal with following group of drugs viz; *Guduchyadi Varga*, *Shatavhadhi Varga*, *Parpatadi Varga*, *Pippalyadi Varga*, *Moolakadi Varga*, *Shalmalyadi Varga*, *Paribhadradi Varga*, *Karaviradi Varga*, *Amradi Varga*, *Chandanadi Varga*, *Suvarnadi Varga*. The fourteenth to seventeenth chapters deal with *Paniya Varga*, *Ksheeradi Varga*, *Shalyadi Varga*, *Mamsadi Varga*. The eighteenth chapter deals with *Manushyadi Varga*. It is about the names of human beings, anatomical terms. The nineteenth chapter is about *Simhadi Varga*, the names and symptoms of 48 animals. The Twenty *Rogadi Varga* is about name of diseases, medicinal preparations, their combinations, *Astanga* of *Ayurveda*. The twenty one chapter *Satwadi Varga* is about three *Gunas*, and the three *Doshas*, *Mana*, *Kala* etc.

The twenty two chapter deals about the *Mishraka Varga* ie group of medicinal substances. The work ends with *Ekarthas* and *Anekarthas*. The *Raja Nighantu* explains more medicinal substances from that of *Dhanwantari Nighantu*.

Bhavaprakasha nighantu introduction

The author of this compendium was *Acharya Bhavamishra*. This is recent lexicon placed in the 16th century AD. The *Bhavaprakasha Nighantu* has 3 parts known as *Purva Khanda*, *Madhyama Khanda* & *Uttara Khanda*. *Bhavaprakasha Nighantu* is the most recent of the classical treatises in *Laghutrayee* (The lesser triad of *Ayurveda*). This treatise contains knz owledge of almost all the branches of *Ayurveda* however, the main focus is on the *Kayachikitsa* (Medicine in *Ayurveda*). Every compendium in *Laghutrayee* has some unique characteristic feature of *Ayurveda*. This treatise is widely popular in *Ayurveda* for its unique contribution in understanding the properties and application of various herbs used in *Ayurveda*. This compendium for the first time, offered knowledge on all parts of *Ayurveda* along with the detail descriptions of medicinal plants used in clinical practice. This classical text has been written in *Sanskrit* language. Although it provides details on all the aspects of *Ayurveda*, it is also known as *Karmousadhi Pradhan Nighantu* which means the index of *Ayurvedic* clinical pharmacology. *Bhavaprakasha Nighantu* is a well-organized and compact re-presentation of the earlier classics like *Brahattrayee* (The grater triad of *Ayurveda*).

Bhavaprakasha Nighantu Discussion

The *Bhavaprakasha Nighantu* is also called as *Bhavaprakasha Samhita*. It clarifies many controversies on medicinal plants and exemplified many exotic plant species, making it an esteemed treatise for academicians of *Ayurveda* and botany. This *Nighantu* is providing *Pratinidhik Dravya*^[9] (Substitutes for several medicinal substances) in case of their unavailability while making some medicinal formulation.

These shrubs or substances can be used as alternatives when the originally recommended herbs are not available easily. One can find detail description of *Sootikagara* in this treatise. *Sootikagara* is a part of a house appropriated for a woman who has recently delivered a baby. One can find description on various newer diseases (not available in *Brahattrayee* or other classical treatises) like *Somaroga* (Excessive vaginal discharge in females), *Shayyamootrata* (Bed wetting) described for the first time in this compendium. This book contains 23 *Vargas*, one *Dravya Pariksha* chapter, and *Parishishtha* chapter. Each name of the *Varga* starts with the name of first drug. Viz; *Haritakyadi Varga*, *Karpuradi Varga*, *Guduchyadi Varga*, *Pushpa Varga*, *Vatadi Varg*, *Amradi Varga*, *Dhatu Varga*, *Dhanya Varga*, *Shaka Varga*, *Mamsa Varga*, *Kritanna Varga*, *Vari Varga*, *Dugdha Varga*, *Dadhi Varga*, *Takra Varga*, *Navaneeta Vrga*, *Ghrita Varga*, *Mutra Varga*, *Taila Varga*, *Sandhana Varga*, *Madhu Varga*, *Ikshu Varga*, *Anekartha Varga*. The *Nighantu* explains *Dwipantara Vacha*(*Chopachini*), *Parasika Vacha*, *Darusita*, *Pudina*, *Akarakarabha*. *Kustha* is mentioned the variety of *Pushkaramoola*. The *Karpura* is two types viz; *Pakwa Karpura* and *Apakwa Karpura*^[10]. Use of Camphor and Opium in *Ayurvedic* medicine can be found in this treatise for the first time. The types of *Karanja* are *Naktamala*, *Pooti Karanja*, *Karanji* have been enumerated. The *Swarnakshiri Moola* is named as *Choka*. The *Tagara* and *Pinda Tagara* is the varieties of *Tagara*. In *Dhatu Varga* the *Yashada*, the *Chaturbeeja*, *Dhanya Panchaka* are mentioned first time in this *Samhita*. Interestingly, a new disease named '*Firanga*'^[11] which can be compared with 'Gonorrhoea of the modern day is also described in this classical *Nighantu*. The author mentioned the types of *Swarna* is 5 and the types of *Rajata* is 3 types.

Conclusion

By the above discussion it reveals that these *Nighantu* covers the entire *Dravyguna Vijnana* with clinical applications of the drugs. In the *Suvarnadi* 6th *Varga* of *Dhanwantari Nighantu* the animals origin drugs like *Kesha*, *Roma*, *Meda* etc., the *Dhoopana* of these drugs alleviate *Bhoota* and *Griha Doshas*, *Unmada*, *Apasmarahara* like property such drugs have to be studied with animal as well as clinical experiments. There are also some *Visha hara dravyas* which possess the anti allergic activity, such drugs can be taken for the study to rule out the immune modulatory activity. The authors have highlighted *Viruddha Ahara* concept in the form of do's and dont's of the food articles. The *Nighantus* have to be explore for the more information like identification, phyto-chemical analysis, physico-chemical analysis knowledge about mentioned drugs.

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