MADANPAL NIGHANTU (LEXICON): A REVIEW ON ITS PERIOD AND AUTHOR

Dr. Deepak Verma*, Dr. Ashwini Kumar Sharma, Dr. Rajesh Chandra Mishra, Dr. Megha Shukla

1PG Scholar, PG Department of Dravyaguna Vijnana, MMM Govt. Ayurvedic College, Udaipur.
2,3 Asso. Prof. PG Department of Dravyaguna Vijnana, MMM Govt. Ayurvedic College, Udaipur.
4PG Scholar, Department of Kriya Sharir, University College of Ayurved Rajasthan, University Campus, Jodhpur.

ABSTRACT

Ayurveda, the ancient traditional science is the treasure of India. The great sages like Caraka and Sushruta have elaborated various available herbs in their respective periods in their texts. The categorization of available herbs into Ganas or Mahakashaya depending on their chief action/drug has immensely contributed in clinical field. The texts have served the foundational reference to many lexicon. These lexicons i.e. Ashtang nighantu, Dhanwantari nighantu, Raj nighantu, Bhavpraksh nighantu are simplified texts exclusively for the study of plants and its medicinal properties and the codify plant names by grouping synonyms of one plant together. This article emphasizes mainly on discussion of the period of this lexicon, the writer and distinctive feature of Madanapal Nighantu.

KEYWORD: Madanapala Nighantu, Madana - Vinod, Sushruta, lexicon.

INTRODUCTION

Madanapala Nighantu is also known as Madana Vinod. Going through the inclusion materials of the text is to be composed in a very precise form (neither too large nor small) consisting whole of the materials related with plant materia medica. On this background the
text has been written in 1374 A.D.(1431 Vikram samvat) in the month of /magha the sixth day- monday.[1]

The text is divided into the following 13 sections[2]:

- Abhayadi
- Shunyadi
- Karpuradi
- Suvarnadi
- Vatadi
- Phaladi/Drakshadi
- Shaaka
- Paaniyadi
- Ikshukadi
- Dhanya Varga
- Dhanyakratannadi Varga
- Mamsa Varga
- Mishraka Varga

Among plant drugs Ahiphena(Opium) has been described (because China is cultivating at that time), but not Yashada=Zinc(because zinc is producing at that time in rajasthan’s zawar mines area). In Mishraka Varga no drug has been described, where indications regarding Anupan and Seasonal conduct have been mentioned for healthy life.

The following drugs are specially mentioned in Madanpal Nighantu are:[3]

- Bhang
- Kankushta
- Jayapaala
- Parasika Yavani
- Chauhara
- Maarjaari
- Sinduri
- Silomaani Kharjura
- Kharbuza
- Amruthaphala
- Baadaam
Anjeera
Madhukarkati
Grunjanakha
Yavanala
Kundalika.

POSSIBLE WRITER/AUTHOR OF LEXICON

1. Gunakar Kavishwar
The present work is believed to have been completed with the aid of Gunakar Kavishwar, son of Vachaspathi (commentator of Madhava nidana). He is considered to have written the current text for Madanapal and named it after the king.\footnote{1} Eminent scholar Vachaspati Mishra (from Village Thardhi in Madhubani district) was from this period. Who wrote the “Atank Darpan” commentary on Madhav nidan. Vachaspati Mishra was a 9th- or 10th-century CE Indian philosopher.\footnote{2} He wrote so broadly that he was known as "one for whom all systems are his own", or in Sanskrit, a sarva-tantra-sva-tantra.\footnote{3}

Possibility; This is not merely possible because, Vachaspati belongs from 9\textsuperscript{th} cent. Besides Madanapal ruled in 1143-1162 AD.

2. King Of Pal Dynasty(King Madanpal)
Pala Empire was the first independent Buddhist dynasty of Bengal. The name Pala means protector and was used as an ending to the names of all Pala monarchs. The Palas were followers of the Mahayana and Tantric schools of Buddhism. Gopala was the first ruler from the dynasty. He came to power in 750 in Gaur by a democratic election. The Buddhist dynasty lasted for four centuries (750–1120 AD) and ushered in a period of stability and prosperity in Bengal. The Pala Empire eventually disintegrated in the 12th century under the attack of the Sena dynasty. The last king of Pal Dynasty was Madanapala (1144-1162).\footnote{4}

Possibility; It may be possible that in the last days of his life, king Madanpal himself wrote or edited this lexicon.

2. Chakrapani Datta
Chakrapani Datta (11\textsuperscript{th} century), an ayurvedic physician and scholar in Sanskrit, was born in the village of mayureshwar in the varendra region (Presently Birbhum district of west bangal). He was the son of Narayanapala's officer Narayana Datta, authored a few medical
treatises - Chikitsa Sanggraha, Ayurvedadipika, Bhanumati, Shabda pradipa and Dravyaguna samgraha. “Sabda-Chandrika” a vocabulary of vegetables, mineral substances and compounds and “Dravyaguna samgraha”, a work on dietics, also goes to chakrapanidatta, whose appearance during the pala dynasty is indeed a striking event.\textsuperscript{[8]}

Possibility; The lexicon under discussion can be the work of Chakrapanidatta; which was finished by someone else and later on dedicated to the last King Pal Dynasty.

3. Sureshvara or Surpala
The 12th century medical treatise “Shabda Pradipa” was written by the royal physician Sureshvara, whose father, Bhadreshvara, was Ramapala’s physician. Sureshvara’s other works include Vrksayurveda and Lohapaddhati. “Sabda pradipa” a glossary of medical botany, written by him.\textsuperscript{[9]}

Possibility; Sureshvara can be the author of this lexicon.

4. Vangasena
Vangasena, the author of Chikitsasara Sanggraha and Gadadharavaidya, who wrote the commentary on Sushrata shastra, are considered to have flourished in the Pala period.\textsuperscript{[10]}

Possibility; Vangasena summarized this lexicon later.

DISCUSSION
Kamarupa (/ˈkɑːməˌruːpə/; also called Pragjyotisha or Pragjyotisha-Kamarupa), was a power during the Classical period on the Indian subcontinent; and along with Davaka, the first historical kingdom of Assam. Though Kamarupa existed from 350 CE to 1140 CE, Davaka was absorbed by Kamarupa in the 5th century CE. Ruled by three dynasties from their capitals in present-day Guwahati, North Guwahati and Tezpur, Kamarupa at its height covered the entire Brahmaputra Valley, North Bengal, Bhutan and northern part of Bangladesh, and at times portions of what is now West Bengal and Bihar.\textsuperscript{[11]} Ratna Pala (920-960) was the son of Brahma Pala in Pala Dynasty (900–1100) of Kamarupa Kingdom. Copper plate seals of kamrupa kings shows lord Ganesha on it.\textsuperscript{[12]}

The Pala dynasty of Kamarupa kingdom ruled from 900 CE. Like the Pala dynasty of Bengal, the first ruler in this dynasty was elected, which probably explains the name of this dynasty "Pala". But unlike the Palas of Bengal, who were Buddhists, the Palas of Kamarupa were Hindus. Brahma Pala (900-920) was founder of Pala Dynasty (900–1100) of Kamarupa Kingdom. He married Kula Devi by whom he had successor to his throne
named Ratna Pala. Work of the pala dynasty of kamarupa is reflected in the Madan Kamdev sculpture.\textsuperscript{[13]} The ancient epics Ramayana and Mahabharata refer to this region as Pragjyotish, not as Kamrup. The Puranas, written after the Mahabharata, mention the same Pragjyotish region as Kamrup. The Vishnu Purana describes Kamrup to spread 450 miles in all directions from the Kamakhya Temple (today in Gauhati). The Kalika Purana calls Kamakhya Temple the center or heart of Kamrup.\textsuperscript{[14]}

CONCLUSION

It is strongly possible that Madanpal nighantu is a work of Sureshvara, later on dedicated to Last king of Pal Dynasty. During the region of Kamrupa Pala Kingdom, impressions of Lord Ganesha were found on Copper plate seals. The opening verses of Madanpal nighantu are an ode to Lord Ganesha. Sureshvara hailed in 12\textsuperscript{th} century A.D. and King Madanpal belongs to same time period. “Shabda-Chandrika” a text on vegetables, mineral substances and compounds and “Dravyaguna samgraha”, a work on dietetics are the works of Chakrapani data who belonged to 11\textsuperscript{th} century A.D. “Shabda pradipa” a glossary of medical botany is written by Sureshwara. The genre of Madanpal nighantu is a reflection of the work of above three books. The absence of mention of Anupan(vehicle) and seasonal conduct from Mishraka varga of Madanpal Nighantu supports the above theory. The relative association of the period of books and the era of author is direct indication of Madanpal nighantu being the work of Sureshwara of 12\textsuperscript{th} century A.D.

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