

REVIEW ARTICLE

A CRITICAL REVIEW OF ARJUNA FROM KOSHA AND NIGHANTUS

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ABSTRACT

Ayurveda, the ancient Indian science of life which has definite object as narrated in Caraka Samhita and Sushrut Samhita. The whole purpose is to achieve healthy and disease free life "Prayojanam Casya Svasthasya Svasthayarkshnanam Aturasya Vikaraprashamanam Ca". Man, the superior most of all species has always been remaining in a search of One Prime Goal: "The perfect health". From Vedic to modern era, all the researches have been directed by the eminent scholars to achieve the same. With the purpose of study, historians have grossly divided the period into-Ancient period (4000 B.C. to 6th Cent. A.D.), Medieval period (7th Cent. A. D. to 15th Cent. A. D.) and Modern period (16th Cent. A. D. Onwards). The nighantus, Ayurvedic form of Materia Medica could help significantly in this direction. Numerous nighantus have been written from the very beginning of Ayurvedic period (medieval) to solve the hidden meanings of cryptic names of medicinal plants. In this work kosha, nighantus and some samhitas are discussed. The present work aims to discuss Arjuna in various aspects in a chronological order.

Keyword: Ayurveda , Arjuna, Nighantu, Kosha, Samhita.

INTRODUCTION

The term Nighantu is based on the term Nigama. The etymology of nigama is, which brings out the extremely concealed or secret meaning of words in systemic way. This tradition was also adopted by the Ayurvedic scholars to simplify the technical words especially in the field of dravyaguna. Earlier nighantus were limited to explain the synonyms only. After some time the description of properties, action and indications are also included in the nighantu along with synonyms. The Nighantu literature is one of the important aspects in the study of Ayurveda and especially in the subject of Dravyaguna Vijnana. The Nighantu literature is also as ancient as Ayurveda. Much importance has not been given to the study of Nighantu. The ancient Nighantus were actually like Kosa, containing the synonyms of dravya. Later on, the drugs were given the description of properties, actions and their uses. In true scene the Nighantu means collection of words, synonyms and the names of the medicinal substances. 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. 'Arjuna' is explained in almost all the important nighantus and kosha.

MATERIAL & METHOD

Amarakosha: (5th Cent. A.D.)

This book is the compilation done by Amar Singh. In this book total subject was divided into 3 parts. First and second parts include 10 chapters each and third part comprises of 5 chapters. The total subject was narrated with synonyms. In *Vanaushadhivarga of Amarakosha* the writer has given three new synonyms of *arjuna* viz. *nadisarja*, *virataru* and *indrada* along with *kakubha*¹

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Sausruta nighantu: (6-7th Cent. A.D.)

Arjuna has been described in Salsaradi gana. Three new synonyms mentioned ie. *kirita*, *madhugandhikapushpa* and *phaalguna*.²

Siddha Sara nighantu: (6th Cent. A.D.)

Arjuna has been described in Saladi gana and Nyagrodhadi gana. Where the synonym *partha* has been mentioned.³

Ashtanga nighantu: (8th Cent. A.D.)

In this nighantu, Acharya Vahata has described maximum group of drugs on the basis of classification of Ashtanga Sangraha and Astanga Hridaya. In addition, some drugs are also mentioned in viprakirna varga. Arjuna has been described in *Asanadigana*. Following synonyms are mentioned i.e, *Partha*, *svetavaha*, *kakubha* and *phaalguna*.⁴

Paryaya Ratna Mala nighantu: (9th Cent. A.D.)

Madhavakara mentioned two new synonyms of *arjuna* as *dhanvi* and *nadija* in his text. Along with *kakubha*, *pandava* and *sukla* for the treatment of *netraroga*.⁵

Dhanvantari nighantu: (10th – 12th Cent. A.D.)

In the beginning of nighantu, author pay homage to lord Dhanawantari and again he mentions its name as Dravyavali. At the end of Dravyavali author desires to describe the drugs of Dravyavali with their synonyms and after that he has described their properties and actions along with synonyms. Here three new synonyms of *arjuna* are described ie. *citrayodhi*, *svitra* and *virantaka*.⁶

Abhidhana Ratnamala: (Sadrasa Nighantu) (12th Cent. A.D.)

In Abhidhanratnamala synonyms of Arjuna are described in Kasayaskandha as *madhuganthikapushpaka*, *jaghanacchadana* and *pandava*. It is indicated in *bhagna*, *kshata*, *kshaya*, *visha*, *asrajita*, *medo*, *meha* and *vrana*.⁷

Sodhala nighantu: (12th Cent. A.D.)

This nighantu was composed by Sodhala in two parts named as “Namasangraha” dealing with synonyms and “Gunasangraha” dealing with properties and actions. In Namasangraha: Arjuna is mentioned along with *kadamba*, *sirisa*, *vetasa* etc. Sodhala has mentioned *arjuna* in *amradivarga* where a new synonym *citrayodhi* is mentioned. In Gunasangraha it is described by synonyms *partha*. It is indicated in *kshata*, *vataroga*, *bhagna*, *raktastambhana* and *as balya*.⁸

Siddha Mantra Prakash: (13th Cent. A.D.)

Arjuna has been enumerated along with *karanja*, *kampillaka*, *bala* etc. Where it is mentioned *kakubha* as a synonym.⁹

Hridayadipaka nighantu: (13th Cent. A.D.)

The author of this nighantu is Bopadeva; son of Keshava. The subject matter of this work is well divided into eight vargas. It follows metric style of Paryaya ratnamala of Madhava. Indrataru has been mentioned as a new synonym of *arjuna* along with earlier told synonyms.¹⁰

Madhava Dravyaguna: (13th Cent. A.D.)

Under *Vividhaushadhivarga*, *partha* has been said to be *pathya* in *kshata*, *bhagna* and *hridroga*. It is told beneficial for *asthisamhara* in case of *asthibhagna*. In addition it is described as *balya* and *anilapaha*. *Kakubha* is mentioned as one of the plants to be used as *dantadhavana* in morning.¹¹

Madanpala nighantu: (14th Cent. A.D.)

Arjuna has been mentioned in “Vatadi varga”. Madanapala has included following synonyms of *Arjuna*:- *syannada*, *manju* and *rathadruma*. Regarding its properties it has been said as *shita* in *virya*. It is indicated in *bhagna*, *kshata*, *kshaya*, *visha* and *rakta vikara*.¹²

Haritakyadi Nighantu: (14th Cent. A.D.)

Arjuna has been mentioned in “Vatadi varga”. The writer has included following three new synonyms of *Arjuna*:- *viravriksha*, *vira* and *dhavala*. Regarding its properties it has been said as *kashaya* in *rasa*, *shita* in *virya*, *kaphapittahrta* in *doshakarma*. It is indicated in *hridaroga*, *meda*, *meha*, *vrana*, *vikara* etc.¹³

Medini Kosha: (14th Cent. A.D.)

The writer has included following three new synonyms of *Arjuna*:- *Kantavirya*, *mayuraya* and *maturekasuta*.¹⁴

Kaiyadev nighantu: (Pathyapathya Vibodhaka) (15th Cent. A.D.)

In this Nighantu ‘Arjuna’ is described in “Aushadhi Varga” with following synonyms i.e. *phaalguna*, *partha*, *kakubha*, *shwetavaha*, *nadisarja* along with two new synonyms ie. *dhurtabhuruha* and *madhugandhiprasunaka*. Regarding its

properties it has been said as kashaya in rasa, shita in virya . Here 'Arjuna' has been mentioned for various disorders such as pittakapha, vrana, medo, meha, hridaroga, bhagna and kshatakshaya roga.¹⁵

Bhavaprakasa nighantu: (16th Cent. A.D.)

This book is written by Bhavamishra who is an important landmark in the history of Indian Medicine. He stands at the junction of the medieval and modern periods which is the turning point for its future course and also because of the fact that he revived the style of saPhitas and contributed a good deal too various aspects of Ayurveda by adding new ideas and drugs.

Arjuna has been mentioned in Vatadi varga and following synonyms are found in this Nighantu- *kakubha, nadisarja, indradru, veervriksha, dhaval*. It possesses kashaya rasa, shita virya and hridya . It is indicated in kshata, kshaya vish, asra, medo, meha vrana and kaphapitta vikara.¹⁶

Rajanighantu: (Nighantu Raja, Abhidhana chudamani) (17th Cent. A.D.)

This book is written by Narhari Pandit, who has given first place to Dravyaguna in Astanga Ayurveda. This book is particularly based on the Dhanwantari nighantu. The subject matter has been divided into 23 chapters.

Arjuna is included in "Prabhadradi varga". It has the properties of kashaya rasa, usna virya, *kaphanashaka, vrananashaka, pitta, trishanasaka* and *Marutamayakopana*.¹⁷

Shaligrama Nighantu: (19th Cent A.D.)

Pandva is the synonym given to *arjuna* under *Vatadivarga*.¹⁸

Nighantu Ratnakara: (20th Cent. A.D.)

Arjuna has been told as *kashaya, madhura rasa, ushna virya, kantidabalakrchha, dhavala, vrana vishodhaka, asthibhaÉas*. It is said to alleviate – *hridroga, pandu, vishabadha, kshata and kshaya*, It also corrects – *medovridhi, raktadosha, shvasa, kshata*.¹⁹

Nighantu Adarsha: (20th Cent. A.D.)

Tvaka and *patra* of *arjuna* are described as the useful parts. *Arjuna kshira* is said to be *kashaya rasa*. A new synonym– *mahiruha* is also mention.²⁰

Priya Nighantu: (20th Cent. A.D.)

Arjuna is described in *Haritakyadivarga* of this nighantu. *Arjuna kanda-tvaka* is *kashaya* in *rasa, shita* in *virya* and superior as *hridrogahari*. Arjuna as whole is said to cure *urakhshata, hridayamaya*.²¹

DISCUSSION

The drug Arjuna has been widely and frequently described in Kosha and Nighantus. Mainly the properties and synonyms of Arjuna have been described. Most of the nighantus mentioned the synonyms of Arjuna as Kakubha, Dhananjaya, Partha, Nadisarja, Virtaru, Indradru, Svetsvaha, Madhugandhipushpa, Phaalguni, Dhanvi, Nadaj, Chitrayodi, Virantaka, Pandav, Rathadruma, Indrataru, Maturekasuta, Gandiv, Krishnasarthi etc. and properties as *Ruksha, Laghu Guna, Kashya Rasa, Katu Vipaka, Shita virya, Kapha Pitta shamana* and *used of Arjuna* in different diseases viz. Hridaya roga, Kshata kshaya, Vrana sodhana, Bhagna, Medo roga, Meha roga etc. has been mentioned. The botanical source of the *arjuna* was identified by Wight and Arnott in 1843, and Species name was given on the basis of classical name-*arjuna*, thus the name *Terminalia arjuna* (Roxb.) W. and A. came into existence.

CONCLUSION

History of drug can be studied under Vedic, Upanishad, Purana, Samhita, Nighantu and Adhunik kala. This review on Arjuna in different nighantus and kosha can be useful to know about the different synonyms and properties and useful parts of Arjuna. While the usefull part of Arjuna is tvaka mainly used. Most of the Nighantus have mentioned its use in Hridaya roga, Kshatakshaya, Vrana, Bhagna, Medo and Meharoga.

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