



ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER

Ayurveda

A REVIEW ON DHANVANTARI NIGHANTU

KEY WORDS:

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ABSTRACT

Nighantus in ayurveda refers to glossary or traditional literature that plays a vital role in the study of the subject matter in dravya guna vijñana. There have been numerous nighantus since the beginning of ayurvedic origin in order to enumerate the typical words, including synonyms and descriptions of the plants. They play a vital role in systematic and scientific documentation of the knowledge of plants which plays an important role in their identification. Dhanvantari nighantu is one of the oldest nighantu placed between 8th and 10th AD. Here is a brief description of the contents of Dhanvantari nighantu.

INTRODUCTION

Dhanvantari nighantu is an important work on dravyaguna. Nighantus in Ayurveda are mainly compiled with an object to compile terms and to furnish important information about terms used in the classical text or even their definitions. Dhanvantari nighantu is an important treatise on ayurvedic herbs and mentions names of drugs from various sources, like vegetable, mineral, animal, and their synonyms, actions and uses. Dhanvantari nighantu still remains a standard text to study the source material of drugs. Dhanvantari nighantu because of its association with the divine name Dhanvantari has been regarded as the oldest among the nighantus.

Authorship

Dhanvantari Nighantu is considered the most ancient of the nighantus, and its authorship remains controversial. Though the text starts with salutation to Dhanvantari, there is no mentioning of his authorship. Only at the end of the suvarnadi varga in ganadravyavali, there is a mentioning of being spread from Dhanvantari's mouth. Also in the beginning verses, it starts with praising Lord Dhanvantari which leads to the conclusion that the authorship is not directly related to him. In several manuscripts, Mahendra Bhoji, son of Krishnabhogika and resident of Thanesar have been said as author of this nighantu. Some other refers Dhanvantari, the court physician of Vikramaditya as the author of dhanvantari nighantu.

Title

From the introduction, it is clear that actual title of the work was dravyavali which consisted of synonyms only, later the description of drugs, properties and their uses were added. Thus the existing Dhanvantari nighantu is dravyavali added with further descriptions.

Time period

The time period may be placed conveniently between 10th and early or later part of 11th cent AD. This nighantu belongs to the golden period of nighantus i.e. the medieval period (8-15 cen).

Edition

The first edition was undertaken by Anandhasrama mudralya. Based on various manuscripts obtained from several sources, publication was made.

Presentation of the work:

The plants are divided into seven groups, called as vargas, named after the star herb in that group. Eg first group, the Guduchyadivarga, is named for the herb guduchi, and Shatapushpadivarga named after the herb shatapushpa, each varga has a distinct set of medicinal properties and are shortly

mentioned in not more than a paragraph. The description is seen in two sections, ganadravyavali and paryayanama dravyavali. The ganadravyavali describes the synonyms while paryayanama dravyavali describes the drugs as in the same order as they appear in ganadravyavali but gives description of its properties, actions and uses.

Dhanvantari Nighantu is one of the oldest and most referenced texts give a distinctive categorization of 373 drugs. This Nighantu deals with the unique properties, synonyms, actions, incompatibilities and safety of individual drugs unlike other texts. The numbers of synonyms in prior texts versus in Dhanvantari Nighantu also differ. Dhanvantari Nighantu was among the first texts to list drugs of non-plant origin. 88 drugs of plant origin, 2 kshara (alkali preparation) 2 lavana (salts), 11 mineral origin, 24 animal origin, 9 alcoholic preparations and 4 jala varga. This nighantu serves as an ideal pattern by later authors.

Vargas in dhanvantari nighantu

- guluchyadi pradhama varga – bitter, evacuative drugs
- Satapushpadi dvitiya varga - spices
- Candanadi tritiya varga – fragrant or aromatic drugs
- Karaviradi caturthah varga – small plants/ herb
- Anradi panchama varga – big fruited trees
- Suvarnadi sashta varga – minerals, dietary plants
- Misrakadi saptama varga- categories of poison

Since jwara is the foremost and most common disease occurring in man and Guluchi being the most effective samana drug in jwara, guluchyadi varga is mentioned as the first varga.

Guduchyadi Varga:

The adverse effects of 20 drugs have been specified. Parts used: for 17 plants are specified. 5 are roots, 2 seeds, 2 rhizomes and 8 fruits.

Shatapushpadi Varga:

The adverse effects of a total of 8 drugs have been specified. lavana and kshara category are mentioned. eg Aurbhida lavana, Yavakshara

Chandanadi Varga:

The adverse effects of 12 drugs have been specified in this varga.

Aromatic drugs like Karpura, Puga etc and drugs of mineral origin

Karaviradi Varga:

The adverse effects of 13 individual drugs have been

described in this varga.

The botanical sources of some are controversial.

Two poisonous drugs of herbal origin, Karveera and Dhattura are mentioned.

Aamradi Varga:

The adverse effects of 19 individual drugs have been specified in this varga and all of them are fruits.

Suvarnadi Varga:

The adverse effects of total of 70 drugs along with food items have been mentioned. The toxicity due to asuddha sevana of bhasma or metals is also quoted.

Mishraka Varga:

Author describes various categories of poisons along with their properties.

The dosha karmas, dhathu karmas and mala karmas of the individual drugs are also specified.

CONCLUSION

Ayurveda have being facing issues in accuses of toxicity; it seems to be essential to prove our safety and efficacy. The works like dhanvantari nighantu sets gold standard even now. It remains as the oldest and most referenced text. They are the proof of our well-developed traditional system of medicine. This work discuss about the identity, properties, toxicity, incompatibilities etc which suggest that pharmaco vigilance was very well flourished even centuries back.