

History of Jivaka in Ayurvedic Nighantus (6th Century to 20th Century)

Ramita Maharjan¹, Mahesh Kumar Mainali², Prema N Mysore³

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Abstract

Nighantus are important texts of Ayurveda that classifies and arranges various medicinal plants based on their morphology, usage, properties, effect etc. along with classification in various ganas/groups. These nighantus are of two types. One type of nighantu mentions the synonyms only for e.g. Saushruta nighantu, Astanganighantu and Paryayaratnamala whereas other type mentions synonyms as well as gunas, karmas as well that includes Dhanvantarinighantu, Bhavaprakash Nighantu, Raja Nighantu etc. Both of these type of Nighantus have included various plants among which jivaka is one of them. Its description can be found from Astanga nighantu (6th century) to Shaligram nighantu (20th century). This shows that Jivaka had been very important medicinal plant back then which has been extensively described in most of the nighantus. A total of 25 important nighantus were taken into consideration from 6th to 20th century for the current research.

Keywords: Nighantu; Jivaka; Ayurveda.

INTRODUCTION

Ancient Ayurveda erudite scholars/acharyas were very keen observers. They observed plants and coined synonyms based on rudhi/traditional usage, prabhava/effect, desyokti/habitat, lanchana / morphological characters, upama / simile, virya/potency, itarahvaya / names present in other regions, rasa / taste, gunas/properties etc.² These plants have been systematically classified

and arranged in texts known as Nighantu.³ They classify and explain about the various synonyms along with their uses. These synonyms gives information on their morphological characteristics, usage, properties, taste, actions in body etc. which makes an Ayurveda physician to identify and use the plants appropriately. In these Nighantus, the plant Jivaka has been extensively described to showcase its morphological characteristics, usage, properties, actions etc.⁴

1. Saushruta nighantu⁵ (6th century A.D.)

Jivaka is explained under vidaryadi gana and kakolyadi gana. The synonyms of Jivaka are priyanama, dirghayu, kurcashirshaka and mangalyanamadheya.

2. Siddhasara nighantu⁶ (7th century A.D.)

Siddhasara nighantu was authored by Acharya Ravigupta and this text dates to 7th century. The description of the plant is in samhita portion is available and not in nighantu portion.

Author Affiliation: ¹Director, Rishipath International Foundation, Banglore 560078, Karnataka, India, ^{2,3}Director, Rishipath Healthcare Research and Publication International Pvt. Ltd., Banglore 560062, Karnataka, India.

Corresponding Author: Mahesh Kumar Mainali, Director, Rishipath Healthcare Research and Publication International Pvt. Ltd., Banglore 560062, Karnataka, India.

E-mail: ramitama@gmail.com

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3. *Ashtanga-nighantu*⁷ (8th century A.D.)

Ashtanga nighantu authored by Acharya Vahata dates to 8th century. The synonyms mentioned are kurcanibha, vrishhani, vrisha and vrishabha.

4. *Harmekhala nighantu*⁸ (8th century A.D.)

The author of this nighantu was Madhuka and it dates to 8th century. No description regarding Jivaka was found.

5. *Paryaya ratnamala*⁹ (9th century A.D.)

Paryayaratnamala dates to 9th century authored by Indrakarsunu Madhava. The synonym of Jivaka is mentioned as kurcashirsha¹⁰ and mentioned under ashtavarga and madhura gana.¹¹ The karma of Jivaka is mentioned to be jivaniya.

6. *Madanadi nighantu*¹² (10th century A.D.)

The author of this Madanadi nighantu is Ayurvedajna Chandranandan. This nighantu dates to 10th century. The synonyms of Jivaka mentioned in this nighantu are kurcashirsha, dirghayu, jivya, mangalyanamadheya, hrasvanga and priyasaptaka. It is sita in virya and does garbhas and hanakara, raktapittahara, brimhana and shukravardhana.

7. *Dravyaguna samgraha*¹³ (11th century A.D.)

The author of this Dravyaguna samgraha is Chakrapani dutta and this grantha dates to 11th century. No description regarding Jivaka was found.

8. *Sodhala nighantu*¹⁴ (12th century A.D.)

The author of this nighantu is Acharya Sodhala and it dates to 12th century. Synonyms of Jivaka mentioned are shringaka, kshveda, dirghayu, kurcashirshaka, hrasvanga, vardhana, shita, brimhana, chirajivi, mangalya, pranada, svadu and pittajvara vinashana. It is madhura in rasa and vipaka and sita in virya. It is jivaniya, alakshmihara, brimhana and shukravardhkrit.

9. *Dhanvantari nighantu*¹⁵ (10-13th century A.D.)

The author of this nighantu is supposed to be Mahendra bhaugika and it dates to 10-13th century. The synonyms of Jivaka are shringaka, kshveda, dirghayu, kurcashirshaka, hrasvanga, madhura, svadu, pranada and chirajivi. It is madhura in rasa and sita in virya. It is vatahara, pittahara and kaphavardhaka. It is indicated in rakta dosha, daha, jvara, kshaya and is shukravivardhana.

10. *Abhidhanaratnamala (Sadrasa nighantu)*¹⁶ (12-13th century A.D.)

The author of this nighantu is unknown and this dates in between 12-13th century.

Jivaka has been mentioned in prathama skandha (madhura skandha).¹⁷ The synonyms jivaka,

kurchashirsha, hrasvanga and cirjivi has been mentioned.

11. *Madanpala nighantu*¹⁸ (14th century A.D.)

The author of this nighantu is Madanpala and it dates to 1374 A.D. The synonyms of Jivaka are madhura, shrngi, hrasvanga and kurcashirshaka. It is sita in virya. It is vatahara, pittahara and kaphavardhaka. It is indicated in rakta dosha, daha, jvara, kshaya and is shukraprada.

12. *Madhava dravyaguna*¹⁹ (13th century A.D.)¹⁷

The author of this nighantu is Madhava and the date of this nighantu is 13th century. Jivaka has been mentioned in vividhaushadha varga. The karmas mentioned are balya, shukraprada and kaphaprada. It is useful in daha, asra roga, shosha, karshya, kshaya. It is vata and pittahara.

13. *Siddhamantra*²⁰ (13th century A.D.)

The author of this grantha is Vopadeva and the grantha dates to 13th century. The plant has been mentioned under vatapittaghna varga.

14. *Hridayadipaka nighantu*²¹ (14th century A.D.)

The author of this nighantu is Shri Bopadeva and this nighantu dates to 14th century. Jivaka has been mentioned in this nighantu in ekanamavarga.

15. *Kaiyadeva nighantu*²² (15th century A.D.)

The author of this nighantu is Kaiyadeva Pandita and it dates to 15th century. The synonyms of Jivaka are hrasvanga, kurcashirshaka, kurcaka, jivada, kshodi, mangalya, madhura, priya, jivana, shringaka, shreya, dirghayu and chirjivi. It is madhura in rasa and sita in virya. It is vatahara, pittahara and kaphavardhaka. It is indicated in rakta dosha, daha, kshaya and is shukrala.

16. *Gunaratnamala*²³ (16th century A.D.)²¹

This grantha has been written by Acharya Bhavamishra and it dates to 16th century. The plant Jivaka has been mentioned in ashtavarga and jivaniya gana. As per Acharya Bhavamishra, the kanda/pseudobulb of this plant resembles like that of rasona kanda/garlic bulb and is nisara/without much inner content and has sukshma patra/small leaf. It is madhura, sita, balya, shukra and kaphaprada. It is pitta, daha, asra, karshya, vata and kshayahara. The substitute of Jivaka is mentioned as vidari.²⁴

17. *Bhavaprakash nighantu*²⁵ (16th century A.D.)

The author of this nighantu is Acharya Bhavamishra and it dates to 16th century. As per Acharya Bhavamishra, the origin of this plant is in the Himalayas. The kanda of this plant resembles like that of rasona kanda and is nisara. It has sukshma patra and its inflorescence is kurcakakara.

The synonyms of Jivaka are madhura, shringa, hrasvanga and kurcasherhaka. It is madhura in rasa, balya, shukra and kaphaprada. It is pittahara, vatahara and kaphaprada. It is indicated in daha, asra roga, karshya, and kshaya. The substitute of Jivaka is said to be vidari.

18. *Raja nighantu*²⁶ (17th century A.D.)

The author of this nighantu is Narahari Pandita and it dates to 17th century. The synonyms of Jivaka are jivana, jivya, shringahva, pranada, priya, cirjivi, madhura, mangalya, kurcasherhaka, hrasvanga. vriddhida, ayushman, jivada, dirghayu and balada. It is madhura in rasa and sita in virya. It is vatahara, pittahara and kaphavardhaka. It is indicated in rakta dosha, kshaya, daha, jvara and is shukravivardhana.

19. *Camatkara nighantu*²⁷ (17-18th century A.D.)

The author of this nighantu is Raghavacharya and it dates to 17-18th century. This nighantu does not describe Jivaka.

20. *Siva kosha*²⁸ (17th century A.D.)

The author of this kosha is Sivadutta Mishra and it dates to 1677 A.D. This nighantu does not describe Jivaka.

21. *Rajaballabha nighantu*²⁹ (18th century A.D.)

The author of this grantha is Vaidya Rajavallabha and the grantha dates to 18th century. In aushadhashraya pariccheda, the gunas of ashtavarga has been mentioned. Ashtavarga is vatapittahara and useful in vrana and rakta vikara.

22. *Laghu nighantu*³⁰ (19th century A.D.)

The author of this nighantu is Vyasa keshavarama and the date of this nighantu is 1872 A.D. This nighantu does not describe Jivaka.

23. *Shaligrama nighantu*³¹ (20th century A.D.)

The author of this nighantu is Vaidya Shaligrama and it dates to 1953 A.D. Jivaka has been mentioned under ashtavarga. The synonyms mentioned are kshveda, hrasvanga, dirghayu, shringaka and priya. The gunas mentioned are as follows. It is madhura in rasa and shita in virya. It is pittavatahara, kaphavardhaka and shukravivardhaka. It is indicated in daha, jvara, rakta vikara, raktapitta and kshaya.

24. *Priya nighantu*³² (20th century A.D.)

The author of this nighantu is Acharya Priyavrata Sharma and the date of this nighantu is 1983 A.D. This nighantu does not describe Jivaka.

25. *Saraswati nighantu*³³

The author and date of this nighantu is unknown. The nighantu does not describe Jivaka.

RESULTS AND CONCLUSION

The nighantus describing only the synonyms of Jivaka are Saushruta nighantu, Astanga Nighantu, Paryayaratnamala, Abhidhanaratnamala, Siddhamantra and Hridayadeepak nighantu. The nighantus describing synonyms, properties and or actions are Madanadi nighantu, Dhanvantari nighantu, Madanpal nighantu, Madhav dravyaguna, Kaiyadeva nighantu, Gunaratnamala, Bhavaprakasha nighantu, Rajanighantu and Shaligrama nighantu.

Gunaratnamala and Bhavaprakash nighantu. The nighantu which does not mention Jivaka are Siddhasara nighantu, Haremekhala, Dravyaguna samgraha, Chamatkar nighantu, Rajavalla bhanighantu, Laghunighantu, Saraswatinighantu, priyanighantu and Shivakosha.

Hence from above we can derive the conclusion that nighantus are the texts of great importance of Ayurveda written since ancient times that describes morphological and pharmacological characteristics of plants. They are great source of information for researches and researchers that can help identify the plants. These nighantus extensively describe Jivaka as well which can help us in identifying the plant through its characteristic synonyms and know about the properties as well.

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