

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

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Article Received on  
13 March 2019,

Revised on 03 April 2019,  
Accepted on 24 April 2019,

DOI: 10.20959/wjpr20196-14916

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### 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*, *Bhavprakash 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 *Madanpal 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.<sup>[1]</sup>

The text is divided into the following 13 sections<sup>[2]</sup>:

- *Abhayadi*
- *Shuntyadi*
- *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 zavar 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:<sup>[3]</sup>

- *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 *Madanpal* and named it after the king.<sup>[4]</sup> 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.<sup>[5]</sup> 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*.<sup>[6]</sup>

Possibility; This is not merely possible because, *Vachaspati* belongs from 9<sup>th</sup> cent. Besides *Madanpal* 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).<sup>[7]</sup>

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<sup>th</sup> 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.<sup>[8]</sup>

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.<sup>[9]</sup>

Possibility; *Sureshvara* can be the author of this lexicon.

### 4. Vangasena

*Vangasena*, the author of *Chikitsasara Sanggraha* and *Gadadharavaidya*, who wrote the commentary on Sushruta shastra, are considered to have flourished in the Pala period.<sup>[10]</sup>

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.<sup>[11]</sup> 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.<sup>[12]</sup> 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.<sup>[13]</sup> 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.<sup>[14]</sup>

## 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 Ganesh* were found on Copper plate seals. The opening verses of *Madanpal nighantu* are an ode to *Lord Ganesh*. *Sureshvara* hailed in 12<sup>th</sup> 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<sup>th</sup> 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<sup>th</sup> century A.D.

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