

## PRINCIPLES OF DRAVYAGUNA – THE NIGHANTU – A REVIEW

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## ABSTRACT

The study of Nighantu literature is the most important part of the study of Ayurveda, especially the contents of Dravyaguna *Vijnana*. Nighantu literature is as old as Ayurveda. It is believed that Nighantu was created during Samhita kala. Sushruta's Nighantu was called Sushruta Nighantu and another Astanga Nighantu named by Vagbhata was also called Ashtanga Nighantu. However, the study of Nighantu has not received enough attention. Ancient Nighantus is similar to Kosha which has Paryaya (meaning) of Dravya. After that Aushadha (medicine), Guna (attributes), Karma (action) and their uses are explain. In fact Nighantu means a collection of single words consisting of Paryaya (synonyms) and the name of medicinal dravyas. Nighantus forms an important part of Dravyaguna Vigyan and detailed study of Nighantus are very important for the study of medicinal herbs.

**CONTENTS:** Nighantu, Dravyaguna, Ayurvedic Herbs.

## INTRODUCTION

Yāska (यास्क) in Sanskrit refers to an ancient Indian grammarian and linguist, traditionally considered the author of the Nirukta, a foundational work on etymology and the Nighantu, an early proto - thesaurus. Yaska's Nighantu is called Nigama and Nirukta and is used as a language. While the Nirukthas explained the hidden meaning of the Vedas, the Nighantus explained the terms used to describe the various Aushadhas (medicines) in Samhitas, about their Paryayas (Synonyms, Homonyms) and Gunakarmas (Pharmacological Profile). After this Nighantu was defined by two factors. One gives the Paryaya (synonyms of the word) and the other gives the meaning of the word along with Karma (action) and Amayika Prayoga (medicinal aspect). In the introduction to Kalpadru Kosha of Ramavatar Sharma Kesava, Nighantu is used to indicate the details of the subject related to Ayurveda. For the proper understanding of its purpose, this subject has been called "Ayurvedic

Nighantu". Nighantu can be defined as the Kosha (language) containing Paryaya (a particular group of people), medicine, plant, animal, mineral or Nama of any kind. Roopa (noun) as Aahara (food) or Aushadha (medicine) is given to Aatura (patient).<sup>[3]</sup> Nighantus is describes it in Vachaspathyam as a collection of Paryayas (synonyms). According to Raj Nighantu, even the most educated Chikitsaka (doctor) cannot cure Vyadhi (disease) without knowledge of Aushadha (medicine). This is possible only through a detailed study of Nighantu, because Aushadha Dravya (medicine) is very diverse, there are different Rasa, Guna, Veerya, Vipaka etc. Therefore the study of Nighantus is very important for Chikitsaka (doctors).

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

The materials collected from all the Nighantu are described as different Kaala, text and detailed information for each Nighantu.

Table No. 1: Description of Nighantus with Author names and Time period.

NIGHANTU	AUTHOR	TIME PERIOD in Century
Sushruta Nighantu	Sushruta	5 <sup>th</sup>
Rasa Vaisheshika	Nagarjuna	5 <sup>th</sup>
Ashtanga Nighantu	Vahattacharya	8 <sup>th</sup>
Prayayanta Mala	Indrakarasunu Madhav	9 <sup>th</sup>
Siddhsara Nighantu	Ravidutta Gupta	9 <sup>th</sup>
Harmekhla Nighantu	Madhuka	10 <sup>th</sup>
Dhanwantari Nighantu	Mahendra Bhaugika	10 <sup>th</sup> – 13 <sup>th</sup>

Aruna Dutta Nighantu	Aruna Dutta	11 <sup>th</sup> -12 <sup>th</sup>
Dravyagun Sangrah	Chakrapani	11 <sup>th</sup>
Vashpa Chandra Nighantu	Vashpa Chandra	12 <sup>th</sup>
Nighantu Shesha	Hem Chandra	12 <sup>th</sup>
Madhav Dravyaguna	Madhav	13 <sup>th</sup>
Sidha Mantra	Keshav	13 <sup>th</sup>
Hridya Deepak Nighantu	Bopdeva	13 <sup>th</sup>
Moha Dadhi	Sushena Deva	14 <sup>th</sup>
Madan Vinod	Madanpala	14 <sup>th</sup>
Kaiydev Nighantu	Kaiydeva	15 <sup>th</sup>
Bhavprkasha Nighantu	Bhava Mishra	16 <sup>th</sup>
Shiva kosha	Shiv Dutta	16 <sup>th</sup>

### RASA VAISHESHIKA

Author- Bhadanta Nagarjuna (5<sup>th</sup> century AD) Rasa Vaisheshika is the only treatise written in the 5<sup>th</sup> century AD Creation of seeds of Pancha Mahabhoota, Color of Pancha Mahabhoota, Karma Veerya Vada, Cause of change in Rasa, Cause of change in Vipaka, 10 Karmanya Gunas and other concepts are given as Dravya Rasa Panchaka teevrata or mandata, because Padartha is mentioned in this Nighantu.

### ASH TONGA NIGHANTU<sup>[7]</sup>

Author — Vahattacharya (8<sup>th</sup> century AD). It is considered as the oldest Nighantu. Acharya Vagbhata, the author of Ashtanga Hridaya, explains different Dravyas (medicines) like Paryaya (Synonyms) mentioned in various Ganas. Therefore, Vagbhattacharya is considered different from Acharya Vagbhata, because several Dravyas are mentioned in Ashtanga Hridaya Nighantu, but not in Ashtanga Hridaya and Ashtanga Samgreh.

### PARYAYA RATNA MALA<sup>[8]</sup>

Author – Madhava (9<sup>th</sup> Century AD.) This Nighantu is in concise form and mainly focused on Paryaya (Synonyms) of the Aushadha (Drug). There is no division of Vargas. The Shlokas are mentioned as follows in Nighantu this word Vijaya is used for Haritaki and not Jayanti, Bhanga. The concepts of Mana and Paribhasha are also explained.

### SIDHA SARA NIGHANTU<sup>[9]</sup>

Written by: author Ravigupta (9<sup>th</sup> century AD), also known as Sarottar Nighantu. This Nighantu has 193 verses from the shloka, finally Dravyavali is given.

These few verses were borrowed from Vrinda in Siddha Yoga and were frequently quoted by the Chandras.

### DHANVANTRI NIGHANTU<sup>[10]</sup>

Author – Mahendra bhaugik (10<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> century AD). The original name of this Nighantu (dictionary) is Dravyavali Samucchaya. This Nighantu (Dictionary) is also known as Dravyabali, Gunavali or Guduchyadi Nighantu. There are seven Vargas in Nighantu namely Guduchadi Varga, Shatapushpadi Varga, Chandanadi Varga, Karavirradi Varga, Amradi Varga, Suvarnadi Varga and Mishrakadi Varga, Vipaka et al. Nighantu first worshipped Lord Dhanvantari, followed by Karma (character) of Paryaya (synonyms) and Aushadha (medicine) <sup>11</sup>. Both Charaka and Susruta mention one Aushadha Dravya (medicine) in many Gana/Varga. However, in this article only one Aushadha Dravya (medicine) is described in Gana. Aushadha Dravya (medicine) is named after the first Aushadha Dravya(medicine) mentioned in this varga. Each varga is further divided into different Ganas according to Karma(pharmacological properties). The author also describes some additional Aushadha Dravyas (medicines) at the end of each Varga. In fact, these were not mentioned in Vargas' first novel. The author, despite drawing inspiration from Charaka and Susruta, pursued his own specialization. For example, Dadima is mentioned in Phala varga in the treatise. But in this article, Dadima is mentioned in Satapushpadi varga. Similarly, banana is mentioned in Karaveeradi varga. Ahiphena is mentioned for the first time in this Nighantu by the name of Afuka. Also there is only one type of karpura like Bhimaseni karpura. The word Bahula is used from tamboola. Amber was first described under the name Agnijara.

**Table No. 2: Description of Nighantus with A names and Time period.**

NIGHANTU	AUTHOR	TIME PERIOD in Century
Raj Nighantu	Pt. Narhari Pandit	17 <sup>th</sup>
Vaidya Vatansa	Lolimbiraj	17 <sup>th</sup>
Dravygun Shataka	Trimalla Bhatta	17 <sup>th</sup>
Raj vallabh Nighantu	Raj vallabha	18 <sup>th</sup>
Hiqmat Prakash	Mahadeva	18 <sup>th</sup>
Nighantu Ratnakar	Vishnu Vasudeva Godhbole	18 <sup>th</sup>
Nighantu Sangreha	Raghunath ji	19 <sup>th</sup>
Shaligram Nighantu	Shaligram	19 <sup>th</sup>
Nighantu Adarsh	Pt. Bapalal Shah	20 <sup>th</sup>
Priya Nighantu	PV Sharma	20 <sup>th</sup> (1983)

Dravygun Kosha	PV Sharma	1997
Vedi Vanaspat Kosha	Rameshvedi	1997

**ARUN DUTTA NIGHANTU<sup>[12]</sup>**

Author – Arun Dutt (11-12<sup>th</sup> Century AD.) Vardha-Mana in his Ganaratna – Mahodadhi has quoted a verse From Arun Dutt regarding properties of Rasona (Garlic ). From this, it is evident that there was some Nighantu composed by Arun Dutt.

**DRAVYAGUNA SAMGREH<sup>[13]</sup>**

Author – Chakrapani (11<sup>th</sup> century AD) In this Nighantu the author explains Dravyaguna vigyana in his Shlokas. Dravyaguna Vigyan used the treatises of Charaka and Sushruta as the basis of his translation. It contains 15 Vargas like Mamsa varga, Shaka varga, Dhanya varga etc. Before explaining Dhanya Varga, the author introduces the Lakshana of Rasa, Guna, Virya and Vipaka.

**VASHPA CHANDRA NIGHANTU**

Author Vashpa Chandra (12<sup>th</sup> century AD)

**NIGHANTU SHEHSHA<sup>[14]</sup>**

Author have mentioned 6 Kaand i.e

*Vriksha kand, Gulma kaand, Lata kaand, Shaka Kaand, Trina kaand, Dhanya kaand.* Among Hem Chandra's other works Abhidhana Chintamani, Anekārtha Samgraha and Desi namamala are noteworthy.

**SHODHALA NIGHANTU<sup>[15]</sup>**

Author – Shodhala 12 century also known as *Guna samgraha* or *Nama Sangraha*. Describes the properties of Aushadha (medicine) with Rasa, Vasya, Vipaka, etc. This article is about Dhanwantari Nighantu. Vargas are 27. The first 7 mostly include Dhanwantari Nighantu. The difference is that the 7<sup>th</sup> group is Misraka Varga in Dhanwantari Nighantu whereas in this article it is called Lakshma Nadi Varga. Karpura tritya, Patha dvaya, Khadira dvaya etc. Are explained in this Nighantu.

**MADHAV DRAVYAGUNA<sup>[16]</sup>**

Author – Madhava (13<sup>th</sup> Century AD.) This Nighantu Is classified into 29 Varga in which the first varga is Named *Vividhaushadi* varga and the last one is called *Prakirna varga* and includes a total of 900 shlokas. Based on Sushruta Samhita the subject matter is arranged under two broad heads. Drava dravya (Liquids) and Anna Pana Vidhi (Diet). Though Madhava did not use these words directly, he opted for the same arrangement.

**SIDHA MANTRA<sup>[17]</sup>**

Author – Keshava (13<sup>th</sup> Century AD.) It contains 8 Varga's based on Kosha i.e *Vataghna, Pittaghan, Kaphaghan, Vatapittaghan, Pittakaphaghan, VaTakaphaghana, Doshaghan, Doshala*. Acc. To Anshansha kalpana of dosha there are 57 Varga. In the first 9 Shlokas description of Maulik Siddhant is given.

**HRIDAYA DEEPAKA NIGHANTU<sup>[18]</sup>**

Author – Bopadeva. (13<sup>th</sup> century AD) Acharya Bopadeva wrote 26 books. There are ten books on Sanskrit grammar, nine on Ayurveda, one on Jyotisha, three books and three on Bhagavad Gita. The subject of this article is devoted to eight Vargas. Chatuspada Varga for Swamam Yashtimadhu, Tripada Varga for Kamalam Aragwadha, Dwipada Varga Madana phala for Vetasa, Eka pada Varga Swarna Ksheer for Rishabhaka, Dwi Nama Varga Tinisa for Nama V Surana, Eka Nama Varga, Sankhini to Hilamochika, Nanartha Varga Koshataki to Haritaki, Mishraka Varga, items mixed foods and more.

**AYURVEDA MOH DADHI<sup>[19]</sup>**

Author-Sushena Dev (14<sup>th</sup> century AD) Dravyaguna text which mainly contains the description of foods. Hence it is also known as Annapanav-idhi. It contains the descriptions of Kharjura and Suvarnakadali. As mentioned in Bhav Prakash Nighantu Ritu Haritaki. Here the Vidhana of Matulunga is given.

**MADAN VINOD<sup>[20]</sup>**

Author - Madanpal (14<sup>th</sup> century AD) Madanapala Nighantu is also known as Madana Vinod. The text is divided into 13 sections: *Abhayadi, Shuntiyadi, Karpuridi, Suvarnadi, Vatadi, Phaladi/Drakshadi, Shaaka, Paaniyadi* and *Ikshukadi*. Karveer gives dvaya as Shveta and Rakta as one. Of all the Nighantu, *Yashada* Dhatu is the first to be identified in Nighantu.

**KAYDEV NIGHANTU<sup>[21]</sup>**

Author – Kaydev Pandit (15<sup>th</sup> century AD), also known as Pathya-Apathya Vibhodaka. It has nine Vargas. Among them Vihar and Nanartha varga are given by this Nighantu. The three types of Haritaki are called Neerja, Vanaja, Girija. Among them Girija is considered the best.

**BHAV PRAKASH NIGHANTU<sup>[22]</sup>**

Author – Bhava Mishra (16<sup>th</sup> century AD) The most popular Nighantu of modern times. It has 23 varga. It starts from Haritaki and ends with Anekārth Varga. Since the first Varga was called *Haritakiadi*, Nighantu is still called *Haritakiadi* Nighantu. The following Madanpal nighantu and samhita section is taken from Sharangdhar Samhita. *Anekārtha* varga is mentioned only in Bhav Prakash nighantu. *Bala chatushtaya, deepantara vacha* (chopchini), *Firanga Roga, chutura beeja, chandrashura*. All the Dravyas have already been described in this nighantu. The name of Mahabhoota is pronounced as *Veeyat, Vayu, Vrihin, Vari* and *Vasundhara* with the letters âVâ. It also describes other purgatives like *Trivrit, Katuki* and *Trayamana*. Grahi (astringent) drugs like *Kutaja, In-drayava, Musta, Bilva* etc. Are described later. Perfumes are divided into *Pittaghna, Vataghna* and *Kaphagna* on the basis of *Chandana, Kumkuma* and *Karpura* respectively. Finally, effective treatments for upper respiratory tract infections and fever are

described. Botanical mineral properties are described. The author has also dealt with A. S and A. As well as Sushruta Samhita.

#### RAJ NIGHANTU<sup>[23]</sup>

Pt. Nara Hari (17<sup>th</sup> century AD) Also known as Nighantu Raj, Avidhana Chudamani and Churan Samgreh. Mostly follow Dhanvantari and Nighantu. Only Nighantu can interpret Ashtanga Vibhajana and place Dravya guna in the uppermost (first) position. Classification of Ayurvedic plants or herbs. Peeta Karvira, Jhandu, Raj Nighantu's first gift. Stavara dravya is divided into 5 groups: Vanaspati, Vanspatya, Kshup, Valli and Aushadi. The total number of Vargas mentioned is 23. There are seven Vargas and complete Nighantu in 57 shlokas. Aahar Varga is a type of Laghu nighantu mentioned in the compilation.

#### DRAVYA GUNA SHATAKA<sup>[25]</sup>

Written by Trimalla Bhatt (17<sup>th</sup> century AD), also known as Dravya Guna Shata Shloka. It has 15 Vargas and 101 padas. The author has used Garjar instead of Granjan for the word Gajar.

#### SHIVA KOSHA<sup>[26]</sup>

Author-Shiva Dutta (17<sup>th</sup> century AD) It is known as NaNarth Aushadh Kosha. It has 540 songs. This Nighantu mainly focuses on the Paryaya (synonyms) of the Dravyas and lists the names of the Dravyas according to Ritu, Varna and religion. The author Raj Vallabha (18<sup>th</sup> century AD) has 6 Parichedas, namely Prabhatika, Poorvahika, Madh-yanika, Aprahika, Nishabhav and Aushadhiya. It mainly talks about the Guna (matter) and karma (function) of herbs used for dincharya.

#### HIQMAT PRAKASH

By Mahadev (18<sup>th</sup> century AD) here only 3 khandas are described.

#### RAJ – VALLABHA NIGHANTU<sup>[27]</sup>

Author – Raj vallabha (18<sup>th</sup> Century AD.) Contains 6 Paricheda that is – *Prabhatika*, *Poorvahika*, *Madhyani*, *Aprahika*, *Nishabhav*, and *Aushadhiya*. It Gives importance to the Guna (Properties) and karma (Actions) of herbs mainly used in dincharya.

#### NIGHANTU RATNAKAR<sup>[28]</sup>

Written by: Vishnu Vasudev Godhbole (19<sup>th</sup> century AD) There are 2 Khandas in this Nighantu. The first one describes Dravyaguna in the first Gunadosha Prakarna. Sharira Prakarna is explained by Sharira Sathana of Sushruta Samhita. Also Ashtasthana Pariksha and Mana Paribhasha etc. A total 607 are medicines and 578 are herbs. Many new medicines were included in the text.

#### NIGHANTU SAMGREH<sup>[29]</sup>

Author –Raghnath ji (19<sup>th</sup> Century AD.) It contains A description of 607 drugs among which 578 are Plants. Several new drugs have been incorporated into The text.<sup>29</sup>

#### SHALI GRAM NIGHANTU<sup>[30]</sup>

Author – Shaligram Vaishya (19<sup>th</sup> Century AD.) It is based on Brihat Nighantu Ratnakar written by Pt. Dutta Ram Chaube. It is divided into two groups; one is Poorvaardha having 23 Vargas and the other is Uttarardha having 2 Vargas. Here the author describes the Matra (dose), Anupana and Sevana vidhi (diet) of Aushadha (medicine).

#### NIGHANTU AADARSH<sup>[31]</sup>

Author – Pt. Bapa lal shah (20<sup>th</sup> Century AD.) Various Controversial dravyas such as Gandeera, Rasna, Nakuli, Amlika, Ashtavarga, etc are given here in a descriptive manner. It Contains 73 Vargas.

#### VANA AUSHADHI CHANDRAODEY<sup>[32]</sup>

Author – Chandra Raj Bhandari (1938) A masterpiece in 10 volumes containing descriptions of herbs still in manuscript form.

#### PRIYA NIGHANTU<sup>[33]</sup>

Author - P V Sharma (20<sup>th</sup> century AD) This Nighantu only describes the use of medicinal herbs. Nighantu is divided into 13 parts or Vargas: *Haritakyadi*, *Pippalyadi Varga*, *Shatapushpadi Varga*, *Sharadi Varga*, *Kasturyadi Varga*, *Suvarnadi Varga*, *Shaka Varga*, *Phala Varga*, *Mamsa Varga*, *Dhanya Varga*, *Kritanna Varga*, *Drava Varga*, *Dravyadi Varga*. This article attempts to explain each medicine and its medicinal uses in various conditions<sup>33</sup>. In the second revision published in 1995, the Anekatha paryayas were removed and only the Ekartha vachanam remained.<sup>[34]</sup>

#### DISCUSSION

Nighantus forms the basis of Dravyaguna study and Aushadha shows the identification, history and treatment of Dravya (plant). Nighantu has different elements which illuminate different parts of the space and reveal its hidden meaning. Today the world is looking for healing medicine, so traditional medicine is in the foreground. The contribution of these Nighantus in the field of ethnobotany and pharmacotherapeutics has been successful. Health has always been a human desire. Dravyas in Ayurveda play an important role in Chikitsa (healing). Chikitsa can only be done with proper identification of the Dravyas. While the purpose of our comparison table is to aid identification, equivalence of names based on different local medicinal uses can be problematic. Nighantu explains the conflict. Therefore, it is important to understand the Nighantu difference.

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