

PROJECT REPORT

***Rāj Nighanṭu of Narhari Pandit* : Critical Edition with English translation, Commentary and Notes by S.C. Sankhyadhar and Deepika Sankhyadhar.**

The above project was sponsored by INSA during the financial year 1994-97. The Principal Investigator expired at the final stage of the work when it was taken over by his daughter Deepika, an established scholar in Ayurveda. The work was finally accomplished and submitted to the Academy. The *Rāj Nighanṭu* of Narhari Pandit is one of the most famous *Nighanṭus* (glossaries) of important plants and animal origin substances based on 10-16th century works along with new plants known in his time. The *Nighanṭus* are mostly written in Sanskrit. An English translation of *Rāj Nighanṭu* was considered very important since all the plant names with their synonyms and properties need critical assessment from modern researchers. It is with this understanding, the investigator planned this work in two volumes as follows :

I. English translation of *Rāj Nighanṭu* with commentary and notes (in 3 parts,) and

II. Critical edition of *Rāj Nighanṭu* (in 3 parts).

In preparing the critical edition the investigator has used the edition of *Rāj Nighanṭu* by Ashubodh and Nitya Bodh Bhattacharya besides eight other manuscripts.

The exact date of *Rāj Nighanṭu* is not known. It appears that it was written in the 16th Cent. A.D. and was based on *Nighanṭus* and *Koṣas* like *Dhanwantari Nighanṭu*, *Mandapāl Nighanṭu*, *Halāyudha Nighanṭu*, *Viśvapṛā kāśa Nighanṭu*, *Amar Kośa*, *Bhojarāja Kośa* etc.

The author of the *Rāj Nighanṭu* is Narhari Pandit, a scion of Kashmir dynasty. He was a king of Kashmir, a great devotee of Lord Śiva, great scholar, writer, physician, administrator, poet warrior and had command

over eighteen languages. Some scholars opine that the author belongs to South (Andhra Pradesh) on the basis that the local names of the plants described in the book, *Rāj Nighanṭu* are in the languages mainly from Karnataka, Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh, where as at few places in footnotes, the names of the plants have been mentioned in eighteen languages, which clearly shows that the author had wide knowledge of different culture and languages. In this context it is important to note that no where the names of the plants have been mentioned in Dogri or Kashmiri and further in the 14th Chapter (*Pāntyādi Varga*), where he has described the properties of the waters of different rivers of whole of the country, there is no mention of any river or lake of Jammu & Kashmir, though he frequently has mentioned in the treatise that he was a resident of Jammu & Kashmir. This is a matter for further discussion and study according to the translator and commentator.

One of the special features of *Rāj Nighanṭu* is that its author Narhari Pandit is the first writer of *Nighanṭu*, who had the courage to declare the subject of *dravyagūṇa* as one of the main eight branches (*aṣṭāṅga*) of Ayurveda. He had used *dravyagūṇa* i.e., the drugs/minerals or animal origin substances as medicine with details of their properties and action. He had assimilated almost all the drugs of classical literature, as well as some of those from the *Materia Medica* of Greek, Arabian and Chinese, which were in use during his period. Further, his synonyms include the names prevalent in different languages like-Sanskrit, Kannada, Marathi, Telugu, Prakrit, Apabhraṅśa, and other local tribal dialects. This practice was not known in the previous *Nighanṭus*. The period of his existence too has placed him in a beneficial quadrant. He included the yellow flowered variety of *Kaner* and *Jhāndu* or *Genda* which were not known to the medical professionals in India till the times of *Ain-i-Akbarī*, and were included in Indian *Materia Medica*. After that Jehangir has mentioned both these plants, which were probably brought here by Hakims from Arabia. Narhari Pandit had an opportunity to include all the important plants and animal origin substances from *Dhanwantarī* (10th Cent. AD) to *Bhāva Prakāśa* (16th Cent. AD) alongwith other plants brought to India by Unani Hakims during medieval period.

The most striking statement of the project investigator is that the Narhari Pandit was probably the first to postulate the existence of life in plant kingdom—a fact which was scientifically proved by Sir J.C. Bose, after about three centuries. It was also proposed by him that the division of land was made on the basis of four *varṇas* (castes) as the plants grown on such lands are beneficial, which according to the investigator requires a thorough assessment. This appears to be useful for further researches in the field.

To make the work interesting, the Investigators besides having made a translation of the original text with synonyms quoted by Narhari in Dev Nagari/English script, have supplied the Latin and other Vernacular synonyms in Hindi/English, properties and actions as per original text, alongwith his own commentary, *Raj Dīpikā*. The commentary has included special features like : identification of the plants, their brief description, properties, parts used, constituents wherever essential, uses, and, alternative opinion from various other *Nighantūs*, comparative charts wherever needed and glossary of the words featuring the Dogri synonyms, including a critical evaluation of the work of Narhari and his anecdotes etc.

The major chapter headings, besides benediction, a number of indexes and bibliography, run as follows :

1. *Anupādi Varga* (dealing with types of lands, soils and vegetation)
2. *Dharanyādi Varga* (types of earth, fertility, crops, mountaneous regions, forests, trees and flowers)
3. *Guducyādi Varga* (51 creepers and climbers with synonyms, drugs with properties and cures for ailments)
4. *Śatāhvādi Varga* (58 larger shrubs alongwith properties and cures for diseases).
5. *Parpatādi Varga* (49 drugs with synonyms and properties under smaller shrubs)
6. *Pippalyādi Varga* (77 Drugs and substances with properties to control diseases and infections)
7. *Mūlakādi Varga* (78 items-roots, tubers, fruits, leaves alongwith properties and synonyms)
8. *Śālmalyādi Varga* (59 different types of thorni trees, shrubs, vegetation, grasses, reeds and fodder capable of curing diseases with properties)

9. *Prabhadrādi Varga* (47 forest trees with details of names, properties, actions and various uses)
10. *Karvīrādi Varga* (65 types of leaves, flowers and lotuses with synonyms, habitats and actions etc.)
11. *Āmrādi Varga* (51 types of fruits and creepers with medicinal properties and qualities)
12. *Candanādi Varga* (40 types of fragrant substances)
13. *Suvarṇādi Varga* (66 types of metals, mercury, gems described with their uses for rejuvenation)
14. *Pānīyādi Varga* (65 types of drinks including properties of waters of different rivers, honey, wines with types)
15. *Ksirādi Varga* (55 types of products-cows' milk, oils with their uses)
16. *Śalyādi Varga* (types of food grains, meat, cows' and goats' milk with properties and qualities)
17. *Mānsādi Varga* (73 types of meats of variteis of animals for consumption to avoid diseases and restore health)
18. *Manuṣyādi Varga* (154 types of human beings, their age, *dhātus* including of *doṣas* & *guṇas* to diagnose)
19. *Siṃhādi Varga* (120 types of animals and creatures for meat preparation for treatment)
20. *Rogādi Varga* (73 types of patients and diseases described with *doṣas*, diets and *pathyas*)
21. *Satvādi Varga* (31 types elaborating *guṇas*, *doṣas* and appropriate time for measures)
22. *Miśrakādi Varga* (75 types of recipes with various ingredients)
23. *Anekārthādi Varga* (1 or more synonyms to help physician to make proper selection)

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