NARASIMHAPANDITA

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ABSTRACT

From the ancient times there were many medical scholars in Andhradesa, who achieved an outstanding fame. Some of them composed medical works which were admired and studied by the scholars and students all over India. But unfortunately, we do not get proper and sufficient information about these scientists since they did not give much information of their personal life. Narasimhapandita is one among such scholars whose whereabouts remained in confusion and misunderstanding. The present study is aimed at making an effort in establishing the place and date of the scholar.

From the ancient times, there were many medical scholars in Andhradesa who achieved an outstanding fame. Some of them composed medical works which were admired and studied by the scholars and students all over India. But unfortunately, we do not get proper and sufficient information of these scientists since they did not give much information of their personal life. Some of them mentioned either the name of their father or preceptor and sometimes did not give even such information. It indicates the fact that they were interested only in the development of the science and least bothered about their fame. Their longing for the human welfare is very much appreciable but their reluctance to fame became an obstacle in our attempts to reconstruct the history of medicine. Narasimhapandita is one among such scholars whose whereabouts remained in confusion and misunderstanding. The present study is aimed at making an effort in establishing the place and date of the scholar.

Narasimhapandita is the author of a famous medical lexicon entitled

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Rājanighanta also called Nighanturaja and Abhidhana Cudamani. Nṛsimha is also called as Narahari, Nṛhari and Nṛsimhapandita. He is the son of Īśwara Sūri or Ćandīśwara, who belonged to Kāśmīrādyavamsacārya parampara, and a resident of Simhapuri. Hitherto all the scholars believed that Nṛsimhapandita was the resident of Kashmir. But it is a hasty conclusion. If they have studied the colophon carefully, they would have realised the fact that he belonged to Āndhradeśa, a student of Śrikantha and a resident of Vikramasimhapuri.

Simhapuri is another name to Nellore. The name Simhapuri came to this place on account of a Jain monk Acārya Simhahāndī. It is because Simhahāndi consecrated the idol of Jain, whose bearer is a lion, it is said, the town came to be known as Simhapuri. Śrī Kavuturi Rāmacandra Rao opined that, the place came to be known as Simhapuri after the name of its founder, Simhaviṃśu, the Brhatpallava king (575-600 A.D.). Anyway, it is a well known fact that the town is called as Simhapuri and Vikramasimhapuri. In this town, there is a temple of Lord Nṛsimha in Dānđuvāri street. The local deity of Nellore is Ćandīśwari (also called Irukālamma). Thus we can see that the names of Nṛsimha and his father Ćandīśwara or Īśwara Sūri are related to this place. They were the popular names there. Nṛsimhapandita mentioned that his patron was Nṛsimha. The scholars like Garbe, Keith and Dutt Sharma searched for the king who patronised this scholar. But they did not find out the King with the name Nṛsimha ruling at the time the other scholars assumed i.e. after 1400 A.D. Hence they thought that Simhadeva ruled Kashmir from 1235 A.D. to 1250 A.D. But it cannot be accepted since the date of its writing did not tally with it. Nṛsimhapandita mentioned that he had consulted many works such as Dhanwantariya Nighantu, Madanapālā Nighantu, Halāyudha and others, but states that he mainly followed the opinions of the Dhanwantariya Nighantu. Then it is clear that the work is later than the Madanapālā Nighantu dated 1374 A.D. This fact rules out the opinion of Garbe, Keith and Dutt Sharma that his patron was Simhadeva of Kashmir.

Then the problem arises that who was Nṛsimha that patronised Nṛsimhapandita. Simhapuri or Vikramasimhapuri remained for sometime under the rulers of Kalinga. In the fourteenth century, two persons having the name Nṛsimhaeva ruled Orissa. The kings of this dynasty were famous for their munificent activities. They received scholars from various places and patronised them in their kingdom. They granted lands to the Brahmin scholars. That’s why, scholars from various parts of the country came to their kingdom and settled there. Especially after
the establishment of the Mohammedan rule in the North, many scholars started coming to the South for patronage and for the protection and propagation of their faith in the South. Among them the Kashmir Brahmin sect was one. These Brahmins propagated Kashmiri Saivism in Andhradesa. Temples were built for Kashmiri Rudreshwara in the fourteenth century. Drupalli inscription dated 1306 A.D. registers a grant made by Bollamaraju and Ranga Rudravara to God Kashmiri Rudreshwara. Nrsimhapandita's forefathers might have belonged to Kashmiri Saiva school of philosophy as he is mentioned in the colophon as belonging to Kāśmirādyavamśācārya-paṃparānāvaya. Among the five schools of Saivism in Andhradesa, it was one. Nṛṣimha or Nṛhari mentions that his guru is Śrikantha. Let us observe the colophon at the end of the first chapter which forms a source of information supporting the above opinion:

Isti Śrīvaidyapati mūrdhanya ratnābharaṇa śrīmadiśvara sūrisūnu Śrikantha caraṇāravinda sevāsevaka-rājahamsa Śrī Kāśmirādyavamśācārya paṃparānāvaya Śrīnṛṣimhapandita viracita nighanturājāpara nāmadyeya paryayaṭi abhidāna cūḍāmaṇi anupadi vargah prathamah.

This colophon informs us that Nṛṣimhapandita had the title Vaidyapatimūrdhanya ratnābharaṇālankāra, which means a crest jewel among the scholar-physicians. It further means:

Śrīmadiśwarasūri sūnu - the son of Īśwarasūri. Śrikantha caraṇāravinda sevāsevaka rājahamsa - the best among the people who served the faith of Śrikantha. Śrīkāśmirādyavamśācārya-paṃparānāvaya - one who, is a descendant of a family which follows Kāśmirādyā Saivism as its family faith. Nṛṣimhapanditaviracita - Written by Nṛṣimhapandita. Nighanturājāparāmadheya - having another name as nighanturāja. Paryayaṭi-containing synonyms (to the medical substances). Abhidāna-cūḍāmaṇi - in Abhidāna-cūḍāmaṇi. Anupadi vargah prathamah - the first chapter is anupadi varga.

Thus this colophon makes it clear that Nṛṣimhapandita, the son of Īśwarasūri and the disciple of Śrikantha, wrote the work Abhidāna-cūḍāmaṇi also called Nighanturāja. It also informs us that he belonged to a family which followed Kāśmirādyā Saivism and he had the title Vaidyapatimūrdhanya ratnābharaṇālankāra.

Another colophon which appears at the end of the sixteenth chapter runs thus:

Isti Śrīvaidyarāja rājahamsa śrīmadiśvara sūri sūnu śrīmadamṛtakara gadāśūlāmākāra caraṇa kamalā niṣyandana prasāda makarandāśvādaniya sundarendirā vedacittā sūtkāra śrī
Kāśmirādyavamsācāra paramparān-vaya Śri Nṛsimhapandita viracita nighanturājāparamāma paryāyavaṭi bhohyavargāpara nāmo dhānyavargah.

Nṛsimha is mentioned here as one who is blessed by the grace of Lord Dhanwantari (Amṛtakara) and Harihanātha, (Gadāśūlālāmkāra). Thus this colophon informs us that Nṛsimhapandita had an Amṛtahasta and he was blessed by the grace of Dhanwantari and Harihanātha. Harihanātha cult originated in Andhra-desa from Vikramasimhapuri (Nellore) in the eleventh century. There is a temple of Lord Harihananatha in Vikramasimhapuri. He is engraved as bearing gada (mace, the weapon of Viṣṇu) in one hand and śīla (trident, the weapon of Lord Śiva) in another hand.

Thus we can say that Nṛsimhapandita, the author of Rājanighantu, or Abhidhānacūḍāmaṇi, was the resident of Simhapuri or Vikramasimhapuri and hailed from a Brahmin family which followed traditionally the Kāśmirādyya Śaivism. He was the disciple of Śrīkaṇṭha who was also a great scholar in Ayurveda. Śrīkaṇṭha followed Suddha Śaivism. Though Nṛsimha is said to have belonged to Kāśmirādyavamsācārya-paramparā, he followed his own path in religious views. He paid his obeisance to Lord Harihananatha (an embodiment of Viṣṇu) and Śiva and Dhanwantari (an avatar of Viṣṇu).

According to Fillozat, Rājanighantu dates from the fourteenth century. Gode opines that it is written at about 1450 A.D. T. Chowdhury assumes that the work was written about 1400 A.D. It is supported by Meulenbeld. The textual evidence proves that it was written only after Madanapālanighantu which was written in 1374 A.D. Nṛsimha’s guru Śrīkaṇṭha also belonged to this period. He was the author of medical works such as Vaidyākasārasangraha also called Hitopadesa and Yogaratnavali. The famous scholar-brothers Vidyāraṇya, Sāyana (author of Ayurveda Sudhānidhi) and Bhoganātha were his students. If these were Nṛsimha’s seniors, his date of taking instruction at the feet of Śrīkaṇṭha could be placed in the first half of the fourteenth century. The Bitragunta inscription informs us that Śrīkaṇṭha was alive in 1356 A.D.

Nṛsimha’s patron must be Nṛsimha IV, who ruled Kalinga between 1378-1409 A.D. Nṛsimha III ruled the kingdom of Kalinga between 1327-1353 A.D. But he must not be the king who patronised Nṛsimhapandita, since we found that the author followed Madanapālanighantu which was written in 1374 A.D. Hence it is clear that he was patronised by Nṛsimha IV. During his reign, the Velama King of Rācakonda and the Reḍḍi kings of Kondavidu led expeditions on the Kalinga kingdom and occupied some parts of Andhra.
region which were previously captured by the Kalinga Kings. It seems that in 1386 A.D. Nellore was captured by the Reddi kings. At the end of his reign, Nṛśimha IV lost many parts of his empire. Hence it is possible to think that Nṛśimhapandita might have written his work Rājanighantu before 1386 A.D. There seems not much gap between the writing of Madanapālanighantu and Rājanighantu. It makes us think that Madanapālanighantu became famous soon after its inception especially in Andhradesa, the place of its origin and Nṛśimhapandita might be also in touch with its author. He might have written Rājanighantu approximately between 1380-1386 A.D., when Nṛsimha IV was ruling the Kingdom.

Nṛśimhapandita wrote two other medical works i.e. Guṇasārasamuccaya and Vāgbhataśārandanam. His three medical (Sanskrit) works gained popularity within a short period. Especially Rājanighantu was very much favoured by the physicians all over the country. The palmleaf manuscript copies of this work can be found available throughout India. This work contains new medical substances which were not mentioned in the previous works such as Dhanvantaṛinighantu and Madanapālanighantu. Guṇasārasamuccaya is also a work on materia medica. Vāgbhataśārandanam is a commentary on Aṣṭāṅgahṛdaya of Vāgbhata. The copies of these works are found available in Telugu and Sanskrit scripts. The copies of Rājanighantu or Abhidhanacudarnani are available in Telugu, Kannada and Nandināgarī scripts. It indicates the wide popularity of the works of Nṛśimhapandita.
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नरसिंहपण्डित

प्राचीन काल से आर्थिक प्रदेश में चिकित्साशास्त्र के बहुत से विद्वान हुए हैं, जिन्होंने बहुत शुभ ब्रह्मण का और शुभ वर्ष से विद्वान हुए हैं, जिन्होंने बहुत बहुत न्यायिक क्षेत्र की, इन में से कुछ विद्वानों की चिकित्सकीय अभ्यास का सारे भारत में अभ्यास व अभिव्यक्ति का उपलब्ध हुआ है। किंतु दुर्भाग्य से ऐसे वैज्ञानिकों के विषय में उचित एवं पर्याप्त ज्ञानकारी उपलब्ध नहीं है। क्योंकि उन्होंने अपने व्यक्तिगत जीवन के सम्बन्ध में अधिक ज्ञानकारी नहीं दिया। नरसिंहपण्डित भी ऐसे ही विद्वानों में से एक हैं जिनके अवलोकन के विषय में सही जानकारी नहीं मिलती। अतः प्रस्तुत अभ्यास का उद्देश्य उनके स्थान व समय के निर्धारण की ओर एक प्रयास है।