

NARASIMHAPANDITA

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ABSTRACT

From the ancient times, there were many medical scholars in Andhradesha, who achieved an out-standing 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 Āndhradeśa 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. Nṛsimhapāṇḍita 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.

Nṛsimhapāṇḍita is the author of a famous medical lexicon entitled

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Rājanighaṅṭu also called Nighaṅṭurāja and Abhidhāna Cūdamāṇi. Nṛsimha is also called as Narahari, Nṛhari and Nṛsimhapāṇḍita. He is the son of Īśwara Sūri or Caṇḍīśwara, who belonged to Kāśmīrādyavamśacārya paramparā, and a resident of Simhapuri. Hitherto all the scholars believed that Nṛsimhapāṇḍita 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 Śrikanṭha and a resident of Vikramasimhapuri.

Simhapuri is another name to Nellore. The name Simhapuri came to this place on account of a Jain monk Ācārya Simhanaṅḍi. It is because Simhanaṅḍi consecrated the idol of Jain, whose bearer is a lion, it is said, the town came to be known as Simhapuri¹. Śrī Kavuturi Rāmacandra Rao opined that, the place came to be known as Simhapuri after the name of its founder, Simhaviṣṇu, the Brhatpallava king (575-600 A.D.)². 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 Daṇḍuvāri street. The local deity of Nellore is Caṇḍīśwari (also called Irukāmma). Thus we can see that the names of Nṛsimha and his father Caṇḍīśwara or Īśwara Sūri are related to this place. They were the popular names there. Nṛsimhapāṇḍita mentioned that his

patron was Nṛsimha³. 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.⁴ But it cannot be accepted since the date of its writing did not tally with it. Nṛsimhapāṇḍita mentioned that he had consulted many works such as Dhanwantariya Nighaṅṭu, Madanapāla Nighaṅṭu, Halāyudha and others, but states that he mainly followed the opinions of the Dhanwantariya Nighaṅṭu.⁵ Then it is clear that the work is later than the Madanapāla Nighaṅṭu 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 Nṛsimhapāṇḍita. Simhapuri or Vikramasimhapuri remained for sometime under the rulers of Kalinga. In the fourteenth century, two persons having the name Nṛsimhadeva 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 Śaivism in Āndhradeśa. Temples were built for Kashmiri Rudreśvara in the fourteenth century. Druppalli inscription⁶ dated 1306 A.D., registers a grant made by Bollamarāju and Rangappa Rudradeva to God Kashmiri Rudreśvara. Nṛsimhapandita's forefathers might have belonged to Kashmiri Śaiva school of philosophy as he is mentioned in the colophon as belonging to Kāśmīrādyavamsācārya-aparamparānvaya. Among the five schools of Śaivism in Āndhradeśa, it was one. Nṛsimha or Nṛhari mentions that his guru is Śrikanṭha. Let us observe the colophon at the end of the first chapter which forms a source of information supporting the above opinion: ⁷

Iti Śrīvaidyapati mūrdhanya ratnābharaṇa śrīmadīśvara sūrisūnu Śrikanṭha caraṇārāvinda sevāsevaka-rājahamsa Śrī Kāśmīrādyavamsācārya paramparānvaya Śrīnṛsimhapandita viracita nighaṇṭurājāpara nāmadheya paryayaṇṭi abhidāna cūḍāmaṇi anupadivargaḥ prathamah.

This colophon informs us that Nṛsimhapandita had the title Vaidyapatimūrdhanya ratnābharaṇāṅkārā,

which means a crest jewel among the scholar-physicians. It further means :

Śrīmadīśvarasūri sūnu - the son of Īśvarasūri. Śrikanṭhacaraṇārāvinda sevāsevaka-rājahamsa - the best among the people who served the feet of Śrikanṭha. Śrīkāśmīrādyavamsācārya-paramparānvaya - one who, is a descendent of a family which follows Kāśmīrādyā Śaivism as its family faith. Nṛsimhapanditaviracita - Written by Nṛsimhapandita. Nighaṇṭurājāpara. nāmadheya - having another name as nighaṇṭurāja. Paryayaṇṭi - containing synonyms (to the medical substances). Abhidhānacūḍāmaṇi - in Abhidhānacūḍāmaṇi. Anupadivargaḥ prathamah - the first chapter is anupadivarga.

Thus this colophon makes it clear that Nṛsimhapandita, the son of Īśvarasūri and the disciple of Śrikanṭha, wrote the work Abhidhānacūḍāmaṇi also called Nighaṇṭurāja. It also informs us that he belonged to a family which followed Kāśmīrādyāśaivism and he had the title Vaidyapatimūrdhanyaratnābharaṇā - lankara.

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

Iti Śrīvaidyarāja rājahamsa śrīmadīśvara sūri sūnu śrīmadamṭtakara gadāsūlāmkāra caraṇa kamala niṣyandana prasāda makarandāswādaniya sundarendirā vedacitta sūtkāra śrī

Kāsmīrādyavamsācāra paramparān-
vaya Śrī Nṛsimhapāṇḍita viracita
nighaṇṭurājāparanāmā paryāyavaṭi
bhojyavargāpara nāmo dhānyavargah.

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

Thus we can say that Nṛsimhapāṇḍita, the author of Rājanighaṇṭu, or Abhidhānacūdāmaṇi, was the resident of Simhapuri or Vikramasimhapuri and hailed from a Brahmin family which followed traditionally the Kāsmīrādyā Śaivism. He was the desciple of Śrīkaṇṭha who was also a great scholar in Ayurveda. Śrīkaṇṭha followed Śuddha Śaivism. Though Nṛsimha is said to have belonged to Kāsmīrādyavamsācārya-paramparā, he followed his own path in religious views. He paid his obeisance to Lord Hariharanātha (an embodiment of Viṣṇu) and Śiva and Dhanwantari (an avatāra of Viṣṇu).

According to Fillozat, Rājanighaṇṭu 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 Meulenbeld⁸. The textual evidence proves that it was written only after Madanapālanighaṇṭu 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 Vaidyakaśārasangraha also called Hitopadeśa and Yogaratnāvalī. The famous scholar - brothers Vidyāranya, 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 inscription⁹ 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 Nṛsimhapāṇḍita, since we found that the author followed Madanapālanighaṇṭu 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 Redḍi kings of Konḍaviḍu led expeditions on the Kalinga kingdom and occupied some parts of Āndhra

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, Nṛsimha IV lost many parts of his empire. Hence it is possible to think that Nṛsimhapandita might have written his work Rājanighaṇṭu before 1386 A.D. There seems not much gap between the writing of Madanapālanighaṇṭu and Rājanighaṇṭu. It makes us think that Madanapālanighaṇṭu became famous soon after its inception especially in Āndhradeśa, the place of its origin and Nṛsimhapandita might be also in touch with its author. He might have written Rājanighaṇṭu approximately between 1380-1386 A.D., when Nṛsimhadeva IV was ruling the Kingdom.

Nṛsimhapandita wrote two other medical works i.e. Guṇasārasamuc-

caya¹⁰ and Vāgbhaṭamaṇḍanam¹¹. His three medical (Sanskrit) works gained popularity within a short period. Especially Rājanighaṇṭu 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 Dhanwantariya nighaṇṭu and Madanapālanighaṇṭu. Guṇasārasamuccaya is also a work on materia medica. Vāgbhaṭamaṇḍanam is a commentary on Aṣṭāṅgahṛdaya of Vāgbhaṭa. The copies of these works are found available in Telugu and Sanskrit scripts. The copies of Rājanighaṇṭu or Abhidhanacūḍāmaṇi are available in Telugu, Kannaḍa and Nandināgarī scripts. It indicates the wide popularity of the works of Nṛsimhapandita.

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सारांश

नरसिंहपण्डित

—पी. हैमवती

प्राचीन काल से आन्ध्रप्रदेश में चिकित्साशास्त्र के बहुत से विद्वान हुए हैं, जिन्होंने बहुत ख्याति प्राप्त की। इन में से कुछ विद्वानों की चिकित्सकीय कृतियों का सारे भारत में अध्ययन व अभिवादन हुआ। किन्तु दुर्भाग्य से ऐसे वैज्ञानिकों के विषय में उचित एवं पर्याप्त जानकारी उपलब्ध नहीं है। क्योंकि उन्होंने ने अपने व्यक्तिगत जीवन के सम्बन्ध में अधिक जानकारी नहीं दी। नरसिंहपण्डित भी ऐसे ही विद्वानों में से एक हैं जिनके अते-पते के विषय में सही जानकारी नहीं मिलती। अतः प्रस्तुत अध्ययन का उद्देश्य उनके स्थान व समय के निर्धारण की ओर एक प्रयास है।

