THE DRUG <u>TERMINALIA</u> <u>CHEBULA</u> IN AYURVEDA AND TIBETAN MEDICAL LITERATURE Vd. Bhagwan Dash

The medicinal plant <u>Terminalia</u> chebula is held in high esteem both in Ayurveda & Tibetan medicine for its property to prevent and cure diseases. In Ayurveda it is known as <u>Harītakī</u> and in Tibetan medicine it is called <u>A-ru-ra</u>. While in Tibetan medicine it is called <u>Sman-mchog rgyal-po</u>, I that is the king of the best of medicines, in Ayurveda it is described to be useful to human beings like a mother, "At times even a mother becomes angry but <u>Harītakī</u> never causes any harm to a person who takes it".²

Data on this medicinal plant is available in all classics ³ as well as <u>Nighantus</u> ⁴ or works on materia medica of Ayurveda. In Tibetan literature an exhaustive collection of data is available in the books "An illustrated Tibeto-Mongolia materia Medica of Ayurveda" ⁵ and "Principles of Lamaist Pharmacognosy". ⁶

<u>Madanapāla Nighantu</u> ⁷ gives the derivation of this term "harītakī" as follows:

- 1) Because it grows in the place of residence of Hara, that is the Himalayas so it is called HarItakI.
- 2) Because it is by nature <u>harita</u> (greenish yellow) in colour, so it is called <u>Harītakī</u>, and
- 3) Because it takes away (Hr = to take away) diseases, therefore it is called Harītakī.

In Tibetan language, Haritaki is known as A-ru-ra. In Shel phreng one of the commentaries is quoted to explain the signif-

icance of these syllables. According to this, 'A' indicates that it is the best of medicines and it cures all diseases caused by $v\bar{a}yu$, pitta and kapha., 'Ru' indicates that it has flesh, bone and skin which clear diseases of all the three doasa., and 'Ra' indicates that its body is like that of the Rhinoceros and it clears the diseases of all seven dhatus.

MYTHOLOGICAL STORIES

Many mythological stories about the origin of this drug are found in both Ayurvedic and Tibetan medical literature. They are as follows:

- (1) Seven drops of nectar fell down upn the earth from the mouth of Viṣṇu (also according to some from the mouth of Brahmā) giving origin to seven types of Harītakī.⁸
- (2) Drops of nectar fell down upon the earth from the mouth of Indra giving rise to Harītakī.
- (3) In the Tibetan literature the above mentioned stories are described in detail. In addition, it has been stated, "For the benefit of sentient creatures, the heavenly nun Matisańkari gathered together a bunch of bluish Vijayā, which were like the head of the horse. She offered that to Manohārī Devī who was Siddha Devī and nirmāṇakāya of Amṛtā, the goddess of medicine. While doing so she said, "Manohārī Devī, kindly hear me. This is the bunch of Vijayā the best of medicines, complete with guṇas and beautiful as well as good in shape. I offer it to you Siddha Devi because of your love for me. Please accept it for the benefit of the later generations of sentient creatures. Please plant this seed of prayer. Its ripe fruit will undoubtedly be good."

In accordance with that saying Manohari Devi took that Haritaki and went to Vajrasana in Bharata and offered avahana, stuti and puja to the Jina prasara of the ten directions. She also requested the guru and Tri-ratnas to have compassion and said, "I am motivated by the force of purity which is free from the deception of hetu and phala. Let there be Siddhi in accordance with the prayer by the strength of truth. Thus Haritaki came into being". 10

(4) According to Zur-mkhar dharma-svami quoted in Shel phreng 11

"In the mountain of Gandhamardana situated towards the east of Varaṇasi, the god of earth Lag-pa-chen-po and the goddess of water Gtsang-chen (Brahmaputra) both had sexual enjoyment by embracing each other and out of that the virya and artava got mixed up on the earth. Thus the forest of Haritaki came into being.

SYNONYMS

In Sanskrit literature the following synonyms of this drug have been described:

- (1) Abhaya, (2) Amogha, (3) Amṛta, (4) Avyatha, (5) Kayastha,
- (6) Girija, (7) Cetaki, (8) Cetanika, (9) Jaya, (10) Jivanti,
- (11) Jivantika, (12) Jivapriya, (13) Jivya, (14) Divya, (15) Devi,
- (16) Nandani, (17) Pathya, (18) Pacani, (19) Putana, (20) Pramathya,
- (21) Prapathya, (22) Pranada, (23) Balya, (24) Bhisag priya,
- (25) Bhisag vara, (26) Rasayana phala, (27) Rudra priya, (28)
 Rohini, (29) Vayastha, (30) Vanatikta, (31) Vijaya, (32) Vrtatha,
- (33) <u>Saka</u>, (34) <u>Śiva</u>, (35) <u>Śukra śrsta</u>, (36) <u>Śreyasī</u>, (37) <u>Śudhā</u>,
- (38) <u>Śudhobhavā</u>, (39) <u>Harītakī</u>, (40) <u>Himajā</u>, (41) <u>Haimajā</u>, (42) Hemavatī.

In Shel phreng 12 the following synonyms are given:

(1) Abhaya ('Jigs med), (2) Amogha (Don Yod), (3) Amrta ('Chi Med or Bhud rtsi), (4) Aroha dīrgha (Mchu snyung), (5) Avyathā (Nad sel), (6) Cetaki (Sems byed), (7) Dhanya (Dpal yon can) (8) Dirghamarghatha (Mchu rings), (9) Divya (Lha rdzas), (10) Haritaki (Tshad pa'ai mdangs 'phrog), (11) Hvava (Bde byed), (12) Jivanti (Tsho byed), (13) Kasayaka (Bska shas Idan), (14) Kayastha (Lus gnas byed), (15) Kumbha kantha (Bum mgrin), (16) Kṛṣa (Skem po), (17) Krżsālāka (Skem po), (18) Mahā balama (Sa chen), (19) Mahāvita (Gser Idan), (20) Mula Dirgha (Rtsa rings), (21) Mularara (Rtsa snyung), (]2) Pavani (Dag byed), (23) Prmatha (Nad rab 'homs), (24) Phala ('aBras bu can), (25) Prni (Nad 'dor), (26) Raja hutira (Rgyal bo skem po zer la), (27) Rasa kalkala (Ro bska), (28) Rasavati (Roldan), (29) Rasayana (Bcud len), (30) Samarphka (Nus ldan), (31) Śakravrsta (Brgya byin spros), (32) Sona barna (Gser \underline{mdog}), (33) \underline{Siva} (\underline{Zi} \underline{ba}), (34) $\underline{\acute{s}reyasi}$ (\underline{Dge} \underline{legs} \underline{can}), (35) Sudana (Tshi can), (36) Vardhakara ('Phel byed), (37) Vayastha (Na tshod gnas), (38) Vijaya (Rnam par rgyal ba).

From the above, it will be seen that seventeen of the synonyms described in Tibetan Medical Literature are identical with those described in Ayurveda and the remaining Twenty one bear some difference.

VARIETIES

In Ayurvedic literature the classification of Haritaki varies considerably. A statement providing information regarding Haritaki in different Ayurvedic texts and nighantus is given following:

Name of the Variety	H.S., R.N. S.G.N., B.P		A.S.	D.N.	N.R.
Vi jayā	(x)	(x)	(-)	(-)	(x)
Rohinī	(x)	(x)	(-)	(-)	(x)
Pūtanā	(x)	(x)	(x)	(x)	(x)
Amrtā	(x)	(x)	(-)	(x)	(x)
Cetakī	(x)	(-)	(x)	(x)	(-)
Abhayā	(x)	(x)	(x)	(x)	(x)
Jīvantī	(x)	(x)	(x)	(-)	(x)
Kālikā	(-)	(x)	(-)	(-)	(-)
Pathyā	(-)	(-)	(-)	(x)	(-)
Jayā	(-)	(-)	(-)	(x)	(-)
Haimavatī	· (-)	(-)	(-)	(x)	(-)

Legends: H.S. = Harīta samhita, R.N. = Raja Nighantu,

S.G.N. = Saligrama nighantu, B.P. = Bhava-prakaśa,

R.B.N. = Rajavallabha nighantu,

A.S. = \overline{A} treya samhit \overline{a} ,

D.N. = Dhanvantari nighantu,

N.R. = Nighantu ratnakara,

(x) = description available,

(-) = description not available)

In the book Lamaist Pharmacognosy, Views of various authors, both Indian and Tibetan, are quoted in connection with the classification of this drug. According to Bdud-rtsi-snying-po it is of seven types. They are (1) Rnam par rgyal ba (Vijaya), (2) Bum gyimgrin (Kalasa kantha), (3) Gso byed (Ayuh-vardhaka), (4) Bdud rtsi (Amrta), (5) 'Jigs med (Abhaya), (6) 'phel byed (Vrddhikari) and (7) Skam po (Śuska).

According to Tibetan medical Literature, Vijayā is the most important type and it is exceedingly useful in the treatment of diseases. Other varieties are considered to be only secondary or subsidiary to Vijayā in therapeutic attributes. In Ayurvedic literature only Rāja nighntu 4 has laid emphasis on the superiority of Vijayā over others.

IDENTIFICATION OF VARIOUS TYPES

Physical characteristics as well as therapeutic attributes of various types of <u>Harītakī</u> are described both in Ayurveda and Tibetan medical Literature with a view to help in their identification.

According to Bhāva prakāsa nighantu, 15 Vijayā has the shape of a gourd, Rohini is round in shape, Pūtanā contains proportionately a bigger stone, Amrtā is fleshy, Abhayā contains five ridges, Jivantī is golden in colour and Cetaki has three ridges. In this regard, there are different types of description in other Ayurvedic works.

According to Brang-ti-pa, as quoted in Shel Phreng 16 the variety Rnam par rgyal ba (Vijayā) is characterised by closed lips, and fine neck, Gser mdog (Kanaka varnā) is of golden colour and like a round bulb and it possesses either five or eight ridges (wrinkles),. Sa chen (Māmsalā) is fleshy,. "Bigs byed (Vindkyā) is black and it has no stone in the centre and Snung (Sūksmā) has many wrinkles.

According to <u>Shel phreng</u>, Vijayā which is the best of all varieties, grows in the celestial palace of the Yaksa Vaisrāvaṇa and from there it was taken to the mountain Gandhamārdana (<u>Sposngad-ldan</u>). It is emphasized by various Tibetan authors that the <u>Vijayā</u> type of <u>Harītakī</u>, which is the best of all, is available only on this mountain.

It is stated in <u>Gso-dpyad phrang bu¹⁹</u>that it was difficult for non-Aryans to procure this drug from the magical mountain of Gandhamārdana. Therefore, the seeds of this were planted in other places of the earth. According to Zur-mkhar Dharmaswami, all the varieties of <u>Harītakī</u> that grow in Bhārata are collectively called Tra-la-ha and that of Tibet is <u>Klu-sin '0-'bu</u>.

According to <u>Zur-rdol</u>,²¹ all the five types of <u>Harītakī</u> grow in the same tree in the centre is <u>Vijayā</u>, in the eastern side is <u>Abhavā</u>, in the Southern side is <u>Māmsalā</u>, in the western side is <u>Rohinī</u>, in the northern side is <u>Śuskā</u>. In <u>Brang-ti-pa</u> similar type of description is also available but only the names of the varieties differ.

In this connection the description available in Ayurvedic literature is different. Even though all Ayurvedic works are not unanimous in their view, still in the majority of them it is stated that Vijayā grows in Vindhya mountain (Gandhamardana according to Tibetan literature), Cetaki and Putana grow in the Himalayas, Rohini grows in Sindh, Amrta and Abhayā in Campa(?) and Jivanti grows in Saurastra.

Thus, unlike Tibetan literature, in Ayurveda not much signif-

icance is attached to Gandhamardana regarding the habitat of this drug.

BOTANICAL CHARACTERISTICS

According to Khrungs-dpe,²² this tree possesses a great trunk, its leaves are thick, the flower is yellow and fruit is blackish-yellow. In various other texts the characteristic features of this fruit are described. Such type of descriptions are not available in the extant Ayurvedic texts.

SIMILIES

In literature on Tibetan medicine similies for different parts of this drug are available. According to Gso-dpyad Phrang-bu 23 leaves of this drug are like Pa-nca-li-ka (?) and flowers like those of U-dam-bar (fig tree). According to 'Dra-yig²⁴ (Upamana tantra), Harītakī is like a small dried piece of tumeric.

According to 'Dra-dpe,25 another work on similies, Vijayā is like the tail of a gourd (Alābu). Its flowers are golden yellow, like a golden egg. They are like a swollen frog. Abhayā is like the egg of tadpole. It is like a rounded pot. This type of upamā are rare in extant Ayurvedic works.

RASA, VIRYA, VIPAKA AND GUNA

According to Ayurvedic literature, <u>Harītakī</u> has five different tastes viz., <u>madhura</u> (sweet), <u>amla</u> (sour), <u>katu</u> (pungent), <u>tikta</u> (bitter) and <u>kasāya</u> (astringent). It has been repeatedly emphasized that this drug is free from <u>lavana</u> (saline) taste. In <u>Tibetan medical literature</u> this point has been discussed in detail and various

Indian authors have been quoted in this connection. But some Tibetan scholars do not agree with the observation of Indian authors. The author of Shel phreng 26 seems to have contacted various yogis from India but he was not convinced by the arguments advanced by them. Therefore, he holds that Haritaki has all the six types of tastes viz., mnar-ba (sweet), skyur ba (sour) lantshwa ba (saline), tsha ba (pungent), kha ba (bitter) and bska ba (astringent).

According to Ayurvedic literature, this drug is <u>usna</u> or hot in <u>virya</u> (potency). In Tibetan medical literature²⁷ it is considered to possess eight <u>nus pas</u> (<u>virya</u> or potency), viz. (1) <u>lci va</u> (<u>guru</u> or heavy), (2) <u>snum pa</u> (<u>snigdha</u> or unctuous), (3) <u>bsil ba</u> (<u>atisita</u> or excessively cold), (4) <u>rtul-ba</u> (<u>manda</u> or dull), (5) <u>yang ba</u> (<u>laghu</u> or light), (6) <u>rtsub pa</u> (<u>ruksa</u> or dryness), (7) <u>tsha ba usna</u> or hot) and (8) <u>rno ba</u> (<u>tiksna</u> or sharp).²⁸

Vipaka²⁹ of this drug according to Ayurveda is <u>madhura</u> (sweet). But according to Tibetan medical literature the <u>Zhu rjes</u> (<u>vipaka</u>) of this drug is <u>mnar ba</u> (<u>madhura</u> or sweet), <u>skyur ba</u> (<u>amla</u> or sour) and <u>kha ba</u> (<u>katu or pungent</u>).³⁰

Laghu (lightness) and ruksa (dryness) - these two are considered in Ayurvedic literature to be the gunas (attributes) of Haritaki. According to the Tibetan medical literature however this drug has seventeen you tan (guna or attribute), viz., (1) 'aJam pa (mrdu or soft), (2) lci ba (guru or heavy), (3) dro ba (usna or hot), (4) snum pa (snigdha or unctuous), (5) brtan pa (sthira or stable, (6) grang ba (sita or cold), (7) rtul ba (manda or dull),

(8) bshil ba (ati sita or excessively cold), (9) mnyen ba (slaksna or smooth), (10) sla ba (drava or liquid), (11) skam pa (suska or dry), (12) skya ba (sandra or density), (13) tsha ba (usna or hot) (14) yang ba (laghu or light), (15) rno ba (tiksna or sharp), (16) rtsub pa (kathina or hard) & (17) gyo ba (sara or fluid). The manner in which these attributes help in correcting the vitiated dosas and dhatus is described in detail in the Tibetan medical literature. Ayurvedic literature is very specific about the five rasas of this drug.

THERAPEUTIC ATTRIBUTES

According to some authors of Tibetan medicine, other varieties of HarItakI have therapeutic properties almost similar to Vijayā. This view has been strongly repudiated by other scholars of Tibetan medicine according to whom "the wise laugh at such description by the stupid". In Ayurvedic literature, as stated before, Vijayā variety is not given that much of importance even though by some it is considered to be a cure for all types of diseases. Other varieties of HarItakI have different specific therapeutic properties. According to Rāja-Vallabha Nighantu, JivantI is useful as a medicine for oleation therapy, RohinI is useful in the treatment of Ksayaroga (Consumption), Vijayā is useful in all types of therapies, Pūtanā is useful in medicines for external application, Amrta is useful as a purgative, Abhayā is useful in eye diseases and Kalika is useful in the removal of foul smell of ulcers.

In Tibetan Medical Literature different parts of the plant are stated to have different therapeutic properties. According to

Zur mkhar Dharma Svami, 34 its root clears the diseases of the bone, the stem clears the diseases of the muscles the bark clears skin diseases, the branches clear the diseases of the vessels, the leaves clear diseases of asayas (viscera) and the fruits clear diseases of the vital organs and heart. In Ayurvedic literature such a type of description is not available.

SUMMARY

Medical literatures of India and Tibet are closely interrelated. Inspite of it, there are conspicuous and significant differences between these two types of literature while describing various aspects of medicine. The drug Terminalia chebula is very popular and commonly used by the practitioners of the traditional systems of medicine of both these countries. In this paper an attempt has been made to briefly survey the literature of both these systems.

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¹Principles of Lamaist Pharmacognosy: Folio-172.

²Harītakī manusyānām mateva hitakarinī //

Kadacit kupyate mata nodarastha harītakī //

- ³The following are the most important Ayurvedic classics:
 - (I) <u>Caraka samhitā</u> originally composed by Agnivesa and subsequently redacted by Caraka. It was composed prior to 700 B.C.

(II) <u>Susruta samhitā</u> originally composed by Susruta and subsequently redacted by Nāgārjuna. It was composed prior to 700 B.C.

(III) <u>Astānga hrdaya</u> by Vāgbhata (300 A.D.).

The above mentioned three books are jointly known as <u>Vrddha</u> trayi (Edler-trio) or <u>Brhat</u> trayi (Great-trio). Other Ayurvedic classics are <u>Kasyapa</u> samhita originally composed by <u>Kasyapa</u> and subsequently redacted by <u>Vrddha</u> Jivaka, <u>Bhela</u> samhita by Bhela, <u>Astanga</u> samgraha by <u>Vagbhata</u> and <u>Harita</u> samhita by Harita.

- *Nighantus are compilations on synonyms, general description and therapeutics of drugs which include vegetables, minerals, and animal products. The important ones are Dhanvantari nighantu (1100 A.D.) Raja nighantu (1200 A.D.), Madanapala nighantu (1400 A.D.), Sodhala nighantu (1400 A.D.), Kayadeva nighantu (1500 A.D.), and Bhavaprakasa nighantu (1600 A.D.). These works were compiled during the medieval period from some classical works many of which are no more extant.
- Dr. Lokesh Chandra, International Academy of Indian Culture, New Delhi, (1971). Drawings and Paintings of drugs of vegetable, mineral and animal origin are rare in Ayurvedic literature whereas such works are available in considerable number in Tibetan medical literature.
- This work contains three texts, i.e. <u>Dri med shel gong</u>, <u>Dri med shel gong</u>, <u>Dri med shel phreng</u> and the <u>Lag len gces bsdus</u> of Dil-dmar dge-bshes

 Bstan-'dzin-phun-tshogs. In the <u>Shel gong</u> descriptions of many drugs are available, and the <u>Shel phreng</u> is an auto-commentary in

prose on the former. This was composed in the 18th century in Eastern Tibet (Khams) by the exceptionally learned Kargyupa (Dkarbryud-pa) scholar. He was a contemporary of the great Si-tu Pan-chen Chos-kyi-'byung-gnas (1699/1700-1774). The Shel gong and Shel phreng are based largely on Ayurvedic sources (both Indic and Tibetan) but the author also seems to have studied Chinese medicine. There are extant separate works by him on Acupuncture and Moxa.

He has arranged all medicinal substances and treatments into thirteen categories, viz. (1) Rin po che'i sman (Gems and metals), (2) Rdo sman (Medicinal substances derived from rocks and minerals), (3) Sa sman (Medicinal earths), (4) Rtsi sman (Exudates and secretions), (5) Shing sman (Medicinal substances obtained from trees), (6) Thang sman (Medicines prepared from the boiled extracts of various parts of plants), (7) Sngo sman (Medicinal plants herbs and grasses), (8) Lan tshwa'i sde tshan (Medicinal salts), (9) Srog chags las byung ba'i sman (Medicines obtained from sentient creatures), (10) Zhing gi lo tog (Cultivated plants), (11) Chu'i sman (Medicinal waters), (12) Me'i sman (Medicinal fires), (13) Gdugs pa'i sman (Use of fire and water in medicinal preparations). the Shel phreng, while describing various aspects of the drug Terminalia chebula, the following important sources or authors, among others have been quoted: (1) Gso dpyad phran bu (a small bundle of medical works), (2) Gyu-thog-rnying-ma (the eldest of a family of famous doctors), (3) 'Tsho-mdzad Gzhon-nu (Kumara Jivaka), (4) Zur rdol (a book of the famous Zur school of medicine),

(5) Zur-mkhar Dharma-Swāmi, (6) Brang-ti-pa (a family of famous

physicians), (7) Rtsa rgyud (Mula tantra), (8) Bshad rgyud (Akjyata tantra), (9) Yan lag nag po'i rgyud (Krsnanga tantra), (10) Bdud rtsi bum pa (Amrta kalasa), (11) Gser-'od (Suvarna prabhasa), (12) Drang-srong Tsa-ra-ka (Caraka muni), (13) A-tsa-ra'i rdo skor (name of a work on magic), (14) Yan lag brgyad pa (Astanga) (15) 'Dra dpe (a work on similes), (16) 'Dra yig (a work on similes), (17) Klu-sgrub (Nagarjuna), (18) Bdud-rtsi-snying-po (Amrta hrdaya), (19) Tsa-ra-ka'ai Bdud rtsi (Amrta of Caraka), (20) Rin-po-che Tsa-pa-shila-ha (Lama Campasilaha), (21) Rgyu mtshan rgyud (Pramana tantra), (22) Klu-rgyud (Naga tantra) (23) Phyi-ma rgyud (Uttara tantra), (24) Tsa-ra-ka'i 'grel pa (Commentary of/on Caraka), (25) 'Khrungs dpe (name of a compilation work).

⁷ <u>Harasya bhavane jātā haritāsca svabhāvatah</u>.

<u>Hārayet sarvarogānsca tena proktā harītakī Madanapāla Nighantu</u>: 1:8.

⁸ Bhavabrakaśa:

⁹Bhavaprakasa Nighantu: 1:5.

¹⁰ Lamaist Pharmacognosy: Folio 173.

¹¹ Ibid: Folio - 175.

¹² Lamaist Pharmacognosy: Folios - 186 & 187.

¹³ Lamaist Pharmacognosy: Folio - 181.

¹⁴ Rajanighantu: 11:318.

¹⁵ Bhava prakasa Nighantu: 1:8-9.

¹⁶Lamaist Pharmacognosy: Folio - 176.

¹⁷Lamaist Pharmacognosy - Folio - 173.

¹⁸ There are two mountains in Orissa at present - one in Bolangir
District and the other in Mayurbhanj District-which are known as
Gandhamārdana. They belong to the range of the Eastern Ghats and

these two mountains are full of <u>Harītakī</u> trees. In fact this plant, which is also used in tanning, in addition to its medicinal properties, is one of the important minor forest products of the State.

19 Lamaist Pharmacognosy - Folio - 174.

²⁰Ibid: Folio - 175.

²¹ Ibid: Folio - 176.

²²Ibid: Folio - 187.

²³Ibid: Folio - 173.

²⁴Ibid: Folio - 188.

²⁵Ibid: Folio - 188.

²⁶Lamaist Pharmacognosy: Folio - 180.

²⁷Ibid: Folio - 178.

²⁸Lamaist Pharmacognosy: Folio - 178.

29 The taste developed after digestion of a drug or food ingredient is known as vipāka.

30 Lamaist Pharmacognosy: Folio - 178.

31 Lamaist Pharmacognosy: Folio - 178.

These gunas or attributes are named with a symbolic meaning. It is not that this drug is both heavy and light or hot and cold and the like. These gunas or attributes actually indicate the effect this drug produces on the body. Depending upon the various circumstances prevailing in the body this drug produces different effects—even opposite ones—on the body. For details about these attributes a reference may be made to the book "Concept of Agni in Ayurveda: published by Chawkhamba Sanskrit Series Office, Varanasi, India.

32 Lamaist Pharmacognosy: Folio - 175.

34 Lamaist Pharmacognosy: Folio - 175.

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