

A COMPREHENSIVE STUDY OF SWETA MUSALI (ASPARAGUS ADSCENDENS WILLD.) IN BRIHATTRAYI AND NIGHANTU: A REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

Brihatrayi (Greater triad) is one of the widely used and highly believed referral sources for *Ayurvedic* knowledge which includes three important treatises of *Ayurveda* which are *Charaka Samhita*, *Sushruta Samhita*, and *Ashtanga Hridaya*. In *Charaka Samhita* and *Sushruta Samhita* there is no clear cut description of *Sweta musali*. The Term *Musali* has been used for the first time in *Ashtanga Hridaya*, which has been indicated for local application in *Neelika* (Blue moles) and *Vyanga* (Facial melanosis) as Complexion promoting. In *Nighantu* period the references for *Sweta musali* has been found at many places. This article reviews the description of *Musali*, various formulations, therapeutic indications, and the diverse mention of *Sweta musali* in *Brihatrayi* and *Nighantu*.

Keywords: *Brihatrayi*, *Sweta musali*, *Nighantu*, *Formulation*, *Ayurveda*, *Asparagus adscendens*.

INTRODUCTION

Asparagus adscendens Willd is the source for the *Sweta musali*, belongs to the Liliaceae Family is also known as *Shatavar bhed* which is used to treat female disorders, seminal weakness, impotency and as a nutritive tonic.^[1] It is distributed between W. Himalayas and Punjab to Kumaon upto 5300 ft.^[2] It is a sub-erect prickly shrub with white tuberous roots. Stems are tall, stout, smooth, white; Spines are stout, straight, 1.3-2 cm long; Cladode Dense tufts of 6-20. 1.3-5 cm long, slender, filiform, terete Shift, sub-erect or curved; Flower in many-flowered racemes, whitish; Fruit 6-8 mm diameter, one-seeded.^[3] There are two varieties of *Musali*. (i) *Kali Musali- curculigo orchoides*. (ii) *Sweta Musali- Asparagus adscendens*- belongs to the Genus of *Shatavari*. Nowadays *Chlorophytum borivilanum* is cultivated and sold in the market as *Sweta Musali*.^[4] The root was found to contain fat, protein, Saponin, carbohydrate (including uronic acid and free

sugar), inorganic matter, and ash. The carbohydrate fraction was made up of free sugar, mucilage, hemicelluloses, and insoluble polysaccharides. The mucilage contained mannose, glucose, xylose and uronic acid.^[5]

Sweta musali (Asparagus adscendens Willd.) In Brihatrayi

Charaka Samhita:- (1000 B.C. TO 4TH Century A.D.)³

In this classical text, a large number of drugs have been used for therapeutic purpose but no reference has been found related to *Musali / Sweta musali*. *Taalmuuli* considered as *Krishna musali* has been indicated for smoking along with *Manahshila* and some other drugs in the management of *Swasa kasa*. (C.S.Chi.18/75)^[6]

Sushruta Samhita:- (1000 B.C. TO 5TH Century A.D.)⁴

Acharya Sushruta has indicated *Taalpatri* and *Taalmuuli* in various preparations and formulations, but has not given any explanation about *Sweta musali*.^[7]

Table 1:

S.No.	Name	Partused/Preparation/ Formulation	Indication	References
1.	<i>Taalpatri</i>	<i>Churna / kshar kalpana</i>	—	<i>S.S.Su.11/15</i>
2.	<i>Taalpatri</i>	<i>Utsadana</i>	<i>Vrana</i>	<i>S.S.Su.36/31</i>
3.	<i>Taalmuuli</i>	—	<i>Sarkara</i>	<i>S.S.Chi.7/18</i>
4.	<i>Taalpatri</i>	<i>Pralepa</i>	<i>Vaataj granthi</i>	<i>S.S.Chi.18/5</i>
5.	<i>Taalmuuli</i>	<i>Kalka</i>	<i>Unmanth,paali rog</i>	<i>S.S.Chi.25/18</i>
6.	<i>Taalmuuli</i>	<i>Dhumpan yoga</i>	<i>Kasa</i>	<i>S.S.Chi.18/74</i>
7.	<i>Taalmuuli</i>	<i>Kolmajjadh Streeyo yoga</i>	<i>Swasa</i>	<i>S.S.U.51/38</i>

Ashtang Hridaya: (700AD)⁵

The term *Musali* has been used for the first time in *Ash-tang Hridaya* and *Musali* has been indicated for local ap-

plication in *Neelika* and *Vyangaa* as Complexion promoting. In this text, three preparations by the name of *Taalpatri* and one by the name of *Taalparni* have been mentioned.^[8]

Table 2:

S.No.	Name	Partused/Preparation/ Formulation	Indication	References
1.	<i>Taalpatri</i>	<i>Tiksna Kshar</i>	<i>Medjanya arbud</i>	<i>A.H.Su.30/21</i>
2.	<i>Taalpatri</i>	<i>Taila</i>	<i>Unmanth</i>	<i>A.H.U.18/45</i>
3.	<i>Musali</i>	<i>Vyangaaadinasak ubtan</i>	<i>Vyangaa</i>	<i>A.H.U.31/21</i>
4.	<i>Taalpatrika</i>	<i>Churna</i>	<i>Sarakara</i>	<i>A.H.Chi.11/28</i>
5.	<i>Taalparni</i>	<i>Lepa</i>	<i>Ekan shoph</i>	<i>A.H.Chi.17/26</i>

Table 3: Classification Of *Sweta musali (Asparagus adscendens Willd.)* In Various *Nighantu*

S.No.	<i>Nighantu</i>	<i>Varga</i>
1.	<i>Dhanvantari Nighantu</i>	—
2.	<i>Shodhala Nighantu</i>	<i>Laxmanadi varga</i>
3.	<i>Madanpaal Nighantu</i>	<i>Shaka Varga</i>
4.	<i>Kaiyadeva Nighantu</i>	<i>Kanda Varga</i>
5.	<i>Bhavaprakasha Nighantu</i>	<i>Guduchiyadi Varga</i>
6.	<i>Raj Nighantu</i>	<i>Mulakadi Varga</i>
7.	<i>Priya Nighantu</i>	<i>Sharadi Varga</i>
8.	<i>Nighantu Adarsh</i>	<i>Lashunadi Varga</i>

Nighantu Period

a) Dhanvantri Nighantu:- (10th -13th Century A.D.)

In *Dhanvantri nighantu*, drugs are classified into seven *Vargas* but there is no description of *Sweta musali* or *Krishna musali*.

b) Shodhala Nighantu:- (12th Century A.D.)

In *Shodhala nighantu Musali* has been described in *Lakshmanadi Varga and Karviradi Varga*. In *Lakshmanadi Varga* synonyms of *Sweta musali* are *Muslya, Musali, Sukanda, Taalmuuli, Kharjuri, and Atisarnashani*. *Acharya Shodhala* has described the properties of *Musali* in *Karviradi Varga*. According to him, it has *Madhura rasa, Madhura vipaka, Sheeta virya* and it is useful in *Vaata-pitta* disorders. It is *Vrishya*, stimulates digestive power, and provide *Sthairya* and *Mardava*. These properties in *Guna Snagrah* indicate that this is the description for *Sweta musali* by *Acharya Shodhala*.^[9]

c) Madanapaal Nighantu:- (14th Century A.D.)

In *Madanapaal nighantu Musali* has been described in *Shaka Varga* with synonyms like *Musali, Taalmuulika, Kharjuri, Kanchanpushpika, Taalpatri, Vrishyakanda*. According to this *Nighantu*, it has *Tikta rasa, Guru guna, Ushna virya* and it is useful in *Vaata roga, Arsha roga*. It seems that these are the Properties of *Krishn musali*. There is no description of *Sweta Musali* is given.^[10]

d) Kaiyadeva Nighantu:- (15th Century A.D.)

According to *Kaiyadeva nighantu Sweta musali* has been described in *Aushadhi Varga* as *Asparagus adscendence* with synonyms like *Musali, Kharjuri, Taalmuulika, Mahavrisha, Vrishyakanda, Hiran-yapuspi*. According to him, it has *Ushna virya*.^[11]

e) Bhavaprakasha Nighantu:- (16th Century A.D.)

Acharya Bhava Mishra described *Sweta musali* in *Guduchiyadi Varga*. According to *Bhavaprakasha Nighantu Musali* and *Taalmuuli* both are *Krishna musali* and gives two types of *Musali* with its botanical source, properties, Chemical composition, synonyms, and prescribed dose. *Krishna musali* has been identified as *Curculigo orchioides* While *Sweta musali* identified as *Asparagus adscendens* and *Chlorophytum borivilianum*.^[4]

f) Raj Nighantu:- (17th Century A. D.)

There are two types of *Musali* mentioned in *Raj Nighantu*, One is *Krishna musali* and the other is *Sweta musali*. Both the *Musali* has been described in *Mulakadi varga*. Synonyms for *Musali* are *Musali, Taalmuuli, Taalmuulika, Godhadi, Hemapushpi, Bhuttali, Dirgha, kandika*. The *Krishna Musali* has been identified as *Curculigo orchoides* and *Sweta Musali* as *Hypoxis orchoides* by the commentator of the book.^[12]

g) Priya Nighantu:- (20th Century A. D.)

In this *Sweta musali* has been described in *Sharadi Varga* and identified as *Asparagus adscendens*. According to this *Nighantu*, it has *Tikta rasa*. It is therapeutically used in *pitta* disorder and it is *Vrishya* and *Rasayana*.^[13]

h) Nighantu Adarsh:- (20th Century A. D.)

In this *Sweta musali* has been described in *Lashunadi Varga* with synonyms like *Musali, Mahavrisha, Vrishyakanda, Duramari*. According to this *Nighantu*, it has *Madhura Rasa, Sheeta Virya, Madhura Vipaka*. It is *Vrishya* and therapeutically used in *pitta* disorder. It seems that this description is for *Sweta musali* and identified as *Asparagus adscendens*.^[14]

DISCUSSION

Asparagus adscendens willd is the source for *Sweta musali*. It is a well-known drug that is commercially used in the market and mentioned in the classical textbooks and used in many diseases and formulations such as *Musalyadi churna*, *Madhu mandur* etc.^[15] In *Charak Samhita* there is no reference has been found related to *Musali/ Sweta musali*. *Taalmuuli* is considered as *Krishna musali*. *Acharya Sushruta* has indicated *Taalpatri* and *Taalmuuli* in various preparations and formulations. But has not given any explanation about *Sweta musali*. The term *Musali* has been used for the first time in *Ashtang Hridaya*, indicated for local application in *Neelika* and *Vyangaa* as complexion promoting. Some identify *A. adscendens* as *Maha Shatavari*. But this plant is originally considered as *Sweta musali*.^[16] In *Nighantu* references for *Sweta musali* is available in many *Nighnatu*s and it is known for *Rasayana* and *Vajikarana* as it is useful in increasing sperm count. In *Bhavaprakash nighantu*, the *Sweta musali* is describes in *Guduchyadi Varga* along with there synonyms, botanical name, family, morphology, chemical constituent, properties, therapeutic uses, and doses. In this it is indicated especially for *Napunsakta* (Impotency).

According to my view, *Musali* is of two types, one is *Sweta musali - Asparagus adscendens* and the other is *Krishna musali-curculigo orchoides*. Again *Sweta musali* is classified into *Chlorophytum arundinaceum* and *Chlorophytum borivillianum*.^[17] *Taalmuuli* is a synonym for *Krisna musali*. Both the *Musali* belong to different families and have different properties i.e *Sweta musali* is *Sheeta virya* while *Krishna musali* is *Usna virya* but both are showing the rejuvenation (*Rasayana*) and aphrodisiac (*Vrishya*) actions.

CONCLUSION

The main objective of the present study was to give a review for *Sweta musali* in *Brihatrayi* and *Nighantu* is important to fulfill knowledge of the herb about its preparations and formulations available in *Ayurvedic* texts so it can be used according to their properties. In *Brihatrayi* only *Ashtang Hridaya* which the third important treatises of *Ayurveda* have references related to

Musali and references also available in different *nighantu*. By this, we can know the proper uses and indications of *Sweta musali* in many diseases. In *Ash-tanga hridiya*, it is indicated for the diseases-related to the skin and also mentioned it to promote skin complexion. In many *Nighantus*, it's aphrodisiac (*Vrishya*) properties have been described and it shows its importance in male infertility. So it can be used as a general male tonic because of its *Vrishya guna*. Other than this it also improves digestion, gives strength to the body and muscles. Beside this further studies also required related to the *Sweta musali* as it can be used as a general tonic by anyone. As we know *Ayurveda* is a science of life and there is no side effect of an ayurvedic drug if taken properly.

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