

Review on *Kadamba* - An Auspicious Medicinal Tree Mentioned in Ayurveda

Author: Sandra Pradeep¹

Co Authors: PB Vijayalaxmi² and Mallya Suma

^{1,2} SDM College of Ayurveda, Hospital and research center, Kuthpady, Udupi, KA, India

ABSTRACT

Ayurveda is a science that harmoniously entangles the human body with the laws of nature scientifically, spiritually, and philosophically. The axioms of Ayurveda have an indubitable co-existence with Vedas and Puranas. So, a decadal vision of the drug is a necessity to have fair knowledge. Scientific handling of such subjects coping with Vedic redaction without having a proper historical background will be difficult. *Kadamba* is considered as an auspicious tree in ayurveda that holds significant cultural, historical, traditional, phenological and innumerable pharmacological importance. Term *Kadamba* has semantic branching and its historical importance is its uniqueness which provides relevant clues about its natural habitat. The review aims to explore the contextual and distinct concepts of *Kadamba* in Ayurveda classics and literature as a contribution to existing knowledge.

Key Words *Kadamba, Ayurveda, Puranas, Contextual*

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INTRODUCTION

Kadamba is an auspicious drug that holds significant cultural, historical, traditional, phenological, and innumerable pharmacological importance¹. *Kadamba* is a polysemantic, ubiquitous terminology used mainly to represent a “tree of service or a Kula”. Ubiquitously it occurs from & near Virat Purusha Varnan, present occurrence seen as a tree in Madhura - Vrindavan, Madhurai-Meenakshi temple, usage as a name adopted for Indian naval base INS *Kadamba* -Project and many more². According to Ayurveda *Kadamba* polysemantically includes more than 110 terminologies, having four to 5

varieties, incorporated under 22 groupings, with usage as a medicament for curing more than 50 ailments using its different parts³. Ayurveda classics find meticulous utilization of the entire botanical elements encompassing *pushpa*, *beeja*, *phala*, *patra*, *twak*, *valkala*, *niryasa* and *moola*⁴. The tree is especially connected to Karnataka with geographical and cultural references⁵. A diachronic analysis through names of the species along with suggested binomial nomenclature helps in the accurate perception, identification based on pharmacological properties thereby facilitating novel scientific exploration, to find

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lacunae thus supports evidence-based therapeutics.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The literature survey on Kadamba was conducted across various text books of Ayurveda, manuscripts, numerous Databases including Researchgate, Google scholar, Pubmed. Additional information were collected from various authentic websites like CCRAS.

RESULTS

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND The sacred *Kadamba* tree act as a bioindicator providing clues on its natural habitat through inscription of various eras. The trees are indelibly linked to many historical and legendary stories of *Kadamba* Dynasty while attempting to legitimize their heritage. The tree is wrapped in legendary births stories of notable historical figures *viz.* *Kadambas* of Santivaromma's Talagunda inscription, Trilochana kadamba/ Jayantas⁶. Halsi inscription (A.D1169-72) states *Kadamba* tree itself grew up from the drop of amrita that fell on the ground at the time of churning of sea, endorse the linkage. George Mores as in an attempt to prove the descent of *Kadamba* kulas indigenous origin amidst the north summits of *Himavat* Mountain, draws support of *Kadamba* tree substantiating that the tree were common only in Dekkan⁷. The historical presence of the tree demonstrates continuity in terminology across various eras and diverse habitat. The symbiotic

relationship between the inscription and puranic accounts necessitate more exploration into puranas which are often encapsulated with serendipitous knowledge.

According to *Brahmanda Purana* (4th -6th cent.CE) the 60th name in *Lalitha Sahasranamam* is mentioned as *Kadambavanavasini*. A dichotomic representation of *Kadamba* tree can be observed, in the commentary describing *Chintamani griha* seat of mother earth, featuring a grove of *Nipa* trees and the *Kadamba* Forest in between gold and silver wall amidst a total of 25 wall⁸.

According to legends Madurai was originally the forest known as *Kadambavanam*. Thiriparankundaram hills a suburb of Madurai were also sited to be location of *Kadamba* by legends⁹. Currently *Madhurai Meenakshi* temple considers *Kadamba* as Sthala Vriksha represented by *Mitragyna parvifolia*. Shrimad – Bhagavatam (5th cent. CE-10th cent.CE) describes the flora of *Rtumat* garden near the lake in *Trikuta* Mountains, features *Kadamba* and *Nipah* as two distinct species¹⁰. In *Kavi Rahasya* (10thcent.CE) the blooming of *Kadamba* is a major identification feature for an equinox/solstice (Grishma, Pravrt, and Varsha). Moreover, here, *Dharakadamba* and *Dhoolikadamba* are of the same species and the nomenclature depends on seasonal timings of floral blooms¹¹.

SAMHITHA PERIOD According to *Charaka Samhitha*, *Kadamba* is a drug that represents *Anoopa Desha* and is included in *shaka varga*¹².

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Nipa, Neepa, Neepam, Kaadamba, Kadamba Kadampapushpa are the different terminologies and *patra, niryasa, twak* are the main segments. The drug offers broad spectrum remedy in treating diseases like *Vrana, Kahpaja prameha, parikarthika, Daha, jwaram* etc.¹³ and is infused under *vamanopaga, sukrasodhana, vedhanastapana mahakashayas*¹⁴. It is a key ingredient in formulations like *Chandanaditailam, sukumaratailam*¹⁵.

Susrutha Samhitha (1000 BCE-5th c. BCE) employs *Kadamba* with multiple varieties reflecting diverse application. It is used in various conditions like *sarkara, alavisha, utpatha*, etc. *Kadamba beeja, Kadamba twak*,

Nipa-phalam, and *Pallavam* are different parts used apart from *moola*¹⁶. In various contexts within the *Sushruta Samhita*, the terms ***Kadamba*** and ***Neepa*** appear with differing designations—such as in *Pravrut Ritu*, both are listed together. In the *Rodradhi Gana*, *Kadamba* is identified as ***Vruksha Kadamba*** and it is referred to as *Prasidha Kadamba* in *Nyagrodhadhi gana*. *Neepa* is mentioned while the commentaria refers to ***Kadamba Phalam*** in *annapanavidhi*¹⁷. ***Kadambaka twak*** appears with the commentary identifying it simply as ***Kadambaka***; and in *kasarogaadhikara*. The terminology distinguishes ***Kadamba Beeja*** from ***Neechakadamba*** or ***Lagukadamba***, with ***Raktakadamba*** possibly representing a variant known as **Ripened *Kadamba***¹⁸.

Ashtanga Hridaya (7th CE) included *Kadamba* in *Kashayaskanda* and *Nyagrodadhi gana*. The text stated *Kadamba* and *Neepa* as different varieties under the description of *Mahavajraka taila*. Ingredients of *Vidharyadhi gritha* include *Kadambaihi* representing two variants and in the commentary, *Sarvanga Sundari vyakhyana* mentions it as *Kadamba* along with *Dharakadamba*. Some suggest the possibility of more than two variants. The name *Kutsitamba* is used, which is reciprocated by *Ashtanga Nighantu*. In the context of *vamankashya* preparation, *Neepa* is mentioned as a variety of *Kadamba*¹⁹.

Haritha Samhitha (6th c. CE-7th c. CE), *Vrikshakadamba* and *Kadamba* are mentioned separately that deserve attention²⁰. The specific usage of *Kadamba* as *Valkala Pralepa, Anjana, Dhoopana* were stated. The *Kadamba beeja* prayoga in *lohitha suddhi* is a unique usage. The primary parts used include *patra, valkala, twak, beeja* and formulations like *gritha* underscores the multifunctional utility of the drug²¹.

NIGHNATU PERIOD (5th cent. CE-19th cent. CE)

The information from *Samhitas* is carefully refined through *nighantus* upto modern era with addition of interdisciplinary insights and new knowledge. *Nighantus* plays a vital role in the expansion of pharmacognostical and pharmacological knowledge of *Dravya* (Table 1).

Table 1 Vision during *Nighantu* Period about *Kadamba*

Period	<i>Nighantus</i>	Variants	Special note
11 th cent ²²	<i>Dhanwantari</i>	<i>Kadamba, Nipa,</i>	Endorse <i>Nipa</i> is different from

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	<i>Nighantu -DN</i>	<i>Dharakadamba, Dhoolikadamba</i>	Dhoolikadamba.
11 th cent ²³	<i>Sabdhachandrika</i>	<i>Kadamba (Nipa, Priyaka,)</i>	Synonyms like <i>Kelikadamba</i> representing child protector.
12 th cent ²⁴	<i>Nighantu shesha</i>	<i>Kadamba, Dharakadamba, Doolikadamba, Nipa/ Mahakadamba.</i>	Individual synonyms stating characterization were <i>Mahakadamba</i> is <i>Priyaka</i> .
13 th cent ²⁴	<i>Sodala nighantu</i>	<i>Dharakadamba, Neepa.</i>	States <i>Dwikadamba; Dhoolikadamba</i> a synonym of <i>Neepa</i> .
13 th cent ^{25,26}	<i>Sadrasa Nighnatu</i>	<i>Kadamba/ Nipa, Kadambarya, Mahakadamba</i>	Reinforce <i>Mahakadamba</i> to be riparian.
13 th cent ²⁷	<i>Madanapala Nighantu</i>	<i>Kadamba, Doolikadamba</i>	<i>Doolikadamba</i> is or may be <i>Neepa/Rajakadamba</i>
14 th cent ²⁸	<i>Kaiyadeva Nighantu</i>	<i>Rajakadamba, Nipa/ Rajakadambaka.</i>	Fruit of first is termed as <i>Rajakadambam</i> and later <i>Rajakadambakam</i>
16 th cent ²⁹	<i>Bhavaprakasha Nighantu</i>	<i>a-Kadamba b. Dhara Kadamba c. Dhuli Kadamba d. Bhukadamba d. Raja kadamba</i>	Following are botanical sources as per Chunekar commentary. <i>a-Kadamba- Anthocephalus cadamba b. Dhara Kadamba- Myrtagyna parviflora c. Dhuli Kadamba- Adina cordifolia d. Bhukadamba- Sphaeranthus species</i>
16 th cent ³⁰	<i>Shiva Kosha</i>	<i>a.Kadamba b.Neepa</i>	<i>Neepa</i> an impressive tree with flowers.
17 th cent ³¹	<i>Raja Nighantu</i>	<i>a.Kadamba, b.Neepa≠Dharakadamba c.Dhulikadamba, d.Bhoomikadamba.</i>	<i>Anthocephalus cadamba</i> - source of <i>Kadamba</i>
19 th cent ³²	<i>Saligrama Nighanthu</i>	<i>a.Kadamba /Neepa b.Neepa/ Mahakadamba/ Dharakadamba c.Doolikadamba</i>	<i>Mahakadamba</i> named as <i>Dharakadamba</i> .
19 th cent ³³	<i>Shankara Nighantu</i>	<i>Kadamba</i>	Morphological description with properties
20 th cent ³⁴	<i>Priya Nighantu</i>	<i>Kadamba</i>	A sacred tree

Table 2 Synonyms and Interpretation

Determinants	Synonyms	Explanation
Habitat	<i>Nadhi, Nadhikadamba, Neerkadamba, Neepa, Nichula, Vanchula, Sindhupushpa .Girikadamba, Paravatahwaya.</i>	Riparian; <i>Sindhu</i> - A River originating from Himalayas. Growing in hillside/hillfoot -Orophyte.
Seasonal	<i>Dharakadamba, Ambhashta, Meghaba, Pravrushya, jaala Doolikadamba, Renukadamba, Vasantapushpa</i>	Pluviophilous -flowers during rainy season. Antepluvial-Just before the onset of rain. Vernal-Flowering during spring.
Historical/ ethnobotanical	<i>Balipriya Balabadra, Haldarapriya, Halipriya.</i>	Fond of offering oblations Elder brother of Sri Krishna Balarama's favourite, beverage which is extracted from <i>Kadamba</i>
Descriptive/ mimetic	<i>Nartha, Parpadachadha, Bahuphala, Chatraadichatra, Viswaroopa, Mahakadamba-Rajakadamba Jeeranapatra, Gandapushpa</i>	The blossomed <i>Kadamba</i> looks like a dancer, one that grows beyond its base, many fruited trees, Multi crowned. Old Leaf-An adaptive functional phenological marker of a leaf, which has ball like flowers.
Cognitive	<i>Gandharadya, Sugandhipushpa, Surabhi, Suvasa. Kulahala, Peethadharu, Peethakasta, Pulaki</i>	Possessing highly Aromatic flowers. Yellow bark, Causing horripilation
Ecological	<i>Bramara, Bringavallabha, Bringapriya,</i>	Mellitophily

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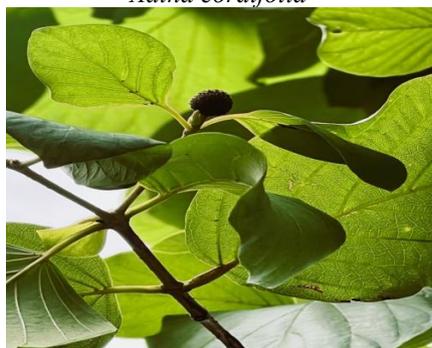
	<i>Shadpadepta, Lalanapriya</i>	<i>Paragapushpa, Women's favourite</i>
Pharmacological	<i>Deepana, Deeptha, Doortha, Madatyta</i>	Kindles <i>Agni</i> The tree has the power to alleviate <i>Visha, Deliriant.</i>



Neolamarckia cadamba



Adina cordifolia



Mitragyna parvifolia

Figure 1 Botanical sources of *Kadamba*

DISCUSSION

Kadamba is considered as an auspicious tree in Ayurveda that holds significant cultural, historical, traditional, phenological and innumerable pharmacological importance. The terminology *Kadamba* has semantic branching and its historical importance in its uniqueness which provides relevant clues about its natural habitat.

Despite their distinct identity *Kadamba* and *Nipa* were sometimes conflated during the nighantu period with *nipa* being used as a descriptive

adjective (to lead/riparian) to *Kadamba*. According to Amarasimha, *tulam, nipa, kadamba, priyaka* indicates either synonyms or trees with subtle noun based on contextualization followed by some Nighantus³⁵. Dhanwantari Nighnatu uses the term *Kadamba, Angavriksha, Dharakadamba* etc. while *Nipa* brings a semantic ambiguity. Amidst the obscurity modern scholars attempted to find three sources for *Kadamba*; among which *Anthocephalus cadamba* as *Kadamba* got widely accepted. Chunekar represent *Dhoolikadamba* as *Adinacordifolia* and *Dharkadamba* as *Mytragyna parviflora*³⁶. PV sharma classifies *Adina codrifolia* for *Dharakadamba* (Table 2) (Figure 1).

The disparate binomial nomenclature underscores the complexity in theoretical framework. Reliable clues given by acharyas can be utilized in such cases. Eg: facilitation of the floral distinctions with different and distinct terms *Gandapushpa* (Bell), *Vritthapushpa* (Round), *Kari/Adyakesara* (elephant mane) and *kramukaprasoona* (Arecanut flower) supported by different seasonal indication like *pravrshya, Dhara-Monsoon, Maeghaba-Pre Monsoon, Vasantha-Spring etc.* can be cross validated.

CONCLUSION

Kadamba is an auspicious drug that holds significant cultural, historical, traditional, phenological, and innumerable pharmacological

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importance. Descriptions of tree and its variants though found in epic, later classical texts and lexicon made more illustrative additive information on its synonyms representing its habitat, morphological character, seasonal availability, ecological character etc. Systematic study on literature revealed available species and its variants.

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