

**IDENTIFICATION OF CANDIA**

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Received: February 12, 1984

Accepted: March 2, 1984

**ABSTRACT:** *In this paper the author probes the identification of the plant canda and establishes its identity by interpreting the classical texts.*

Canda is found mentioned by Vahata in his Eladi-Gana.<sup>1</sup> Susruta also includes canda as one of the ingredients in the very same Gana<sup>2</sup>

Arunadatta in his comments equates canda with kopana.<sup>3</sup> Dalhana while commenting on the Eladi-gana of susruta, says: Canda svanamakhyata isat krsna corakabhedah<sup>4</sup>

In the Dhanvantari Nighantu, the term canda is found added as one of the synonyms for Coraka, and the relevant portion reads as follows:<sup>5</sup>

Corakah sankitas canda  
duspatrah ksemako ripuh/  
ganahasah kopanakah  
Kitavah phalacorakah//

The name Canda is considered by some authors as a synonym for Coraka, and hence there seems to be much confusion with regard to the actual plant species which should be accepted under those particular terms. It is extremely difficult to consider the terms canda and coraka as synonyms of a single plant. Their mention side by side in the same context, particularly in the Eladi – gana of Vahata as well as of Susruta, overrules the possibility of their sources to be one and the same.

It will be of interest to note that bhisagarya has given separate synonyms for Canda and

Coraka. Though he has included the term Coraka as one of the synonyms for canda, it is evidently distinct from the real Coraka. Dalhana's comment also makes it clear that canda is called by the very same name and it is a variety of Coraka with a slight blackish colour.

Bhisagarya has mentioned two varieties of canda, namely a white one and an yellow one. The synonyms for the first variety are given as follows:<sup>6</sup>

Canda tu kopika syad  
ganahasas coraka's ca kopanakah/  
duspatrah sankanikah  
Kitavah phalacorakah suklah//  
Ardrakanda granthikesi  
Kesini ca nisacari/  
taskari ksemika dhan ya  
ripur dhanavati ti ca//

The Malabar name given for this is Canna. The plant is also called CannaKuva by the local people.

The synonyms for the second variety are as follows:

Canda' para dvitiya  
pitavati pitapuspika pita/  
taskarika coravati  
Paryayaih syat silindhram iti//

The Malabar term given for this variety is kara. However, this term Kara is not found used now-a-days for any of the two varieties of Canna described here. This appears to be the Narumcanna of the physicians of Malabar.

Physicians of Kerala recognize two varieties of Canna, and they are called Narumcanna and Canna in the Malabar language. It should be mentioned here that the term cannas i a corrupted form of its Sanskrit equivalent Canda.

Canna is a very elegant plant with its leafy stem 6 to 9 ft. high, growing near the banks of rivers and other moist and shady places. It has now been identified as *costus speciosus* smith. The rootstock is tuberous and horizontal and is used in medicine under the name of canna-kizannu in the regional language.

It will be of interest to record here that Rheede has also figured and described this Canna plant under the name Tsjana –Kua (=Cannakkuva cf. name given in Mal. Script) in Vol. XI as tab 8. Of his Hortus Malabaricus.<sup>7</sup> from this, it is clear that

*costus speciosus* S. has long been accepted as the source of Canna by the physicians throughout kerala atleast for the last three hundred years.

The other variety of Canna called Narumcanna is also used in the preparation of medicines by the physicians of Kerala. This appears to be nothing else that the second variety of canda called Pita – Canda described by Bhisagarya. It is evidently the Manja-Kua (=Manna Kuva cf. Name given in Mal. Script ) figured and described by Rheede in Vol. XI of the Hortus Malabaricus under tab. 10 (p.19), which has been identified as *kaempferia pandurata* Roxb. It grows wild in moist and shady places throughout Malabar. Also said to be cultivated for its tuberous, bright yellow, ginger-like rootstock.

It is to be observed here that some of the modern writers have confounded KEBUKA, which has been found mentioned among vegetables in our ancient classical literatures, with *costus speciosus* smith. It may not be irrelevant in this connection to notice that according to the physicians of kerala, Kebuka is entirely a different plant

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