



TAKRA- THE ELIXIR OF EARTH- A REVIEW ARTICLE

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ABSTRACT

Ayurveda is the ancient medical science, which also deals with diet which cannot be ignored during treatment as well as for healthy life. It has explained elaborately regarding the various types of food articles & drinks which are beneficial to human beings one among them is TAKRA(BUTTERMILK). Takra is a dietary product and is being used by human beings from centuries. Takra is a product obtained by curd (fermented product of milk). In Ayurveda the usefulness of Takra is indicated as single drug or Anupana (vehicle) or as Pathya (wholesome) in various diseases like Arshas (Piles), Udara (Ascites), Grahani (Sprue) etc. Along with this Ayurveda also mentioned the importance of Takra in disturbed condition of Agni (Digestive Fire). Takra acts as Tridosha shamaka by means of its different properties. Takra is light for digestion hence it is preferable in patients suffering from the diseases having Mandagni (Low digestive fire). Due to these specialities Takra remains a key component while thinking about the medicine and dietary supplementations for the patients of Agni Vikruti.

KEY WORDS: Takra, Buttermilk, Agnideepaka, Tridosha shamaka.

INTRODUCTION

Ahara (Food) has been considered as root cause of life & vitality.^[1] The wholesome and unwholesome food articles are the causative factors par excellence for growth of living beings and their disease respectively.^[2] Defined in general terms, food includes all edible substance.^[3] Food can be taken in four ways viz., as Ashita (eatables), Peeta (drinks), Khadita (chewable) and Leedha (lickables /linctus). Takra (Buttermilk) being one among the drinks is a dietary product & is being used by many people around the world by centuries. Many kinds of buttermilk preparation methods are available in the world its proper preparatory methods and benefits is unknown to many.

Ayurveda states importance of Agni (Digestive Fire) through its Samhitas to keep status of the body in a healthy condition. Agni, if disturbed, can create many

kinds of disorders like Amadosha, Arshas, Grahani, Udara etc. It is interesting to see how Takra acts as primary digestive aid in the diseases associated with the Agni. The Digestive system of people is collapsing because of today's lifestyle, people use Takra without knowing its actual action. So if we know the proper method of consuming takra then it will be more useful for our health.

VEDIC REFERENCES OF TAKRA

Ayurveda has also mentioned the usefulness of Takra (Buttermilk) in its Samhitas. In Vaidyakiya Subhashita Sahityam it is mentioned that God in the Heaven got immortality due to a pious drink (Amruta) & the humans have Takra (Buttermilk) on the Earth to be immortal.^[4] It is also mentioned that Takra (Buttermilk) is hard to get for Shakra (The King of God – Indra).^[5]

PROPERTIES OF TAKRA^[6]

RASA	Madhura – Amla
ANURASA	Kashaya
GUNA	Laghu-Ruksha
VEERYA	Ushna
VIPAKA	Madhura
DOSHAGHNATA	Kapha- Vata hara
ROGAGHNATA	Grahani, Arshas, Shopha, Garavisha, Atisara, Pandu, Pliha, Gulma, Jwara,

Trishna, Chardi, Praseka, Mutrakricchra

TYPES OF TAKRA BASED ON RASA^[7]

Sl no	Type	Properties
1	Madhura	Kapha ↑, Pitta ↓
2	Amla	Pitta ↑, Vata ↓
3	Ati amla	Pitta ↑↑

TYPES OF TAKRA BASED ON METHOD OF PREPARATION^[8]

Sl no	Type	Method of preparation	Properties
1	Ghola	Curd is churned without adding water and without removal of fat.	Vata & Pitta ↓
2	Matitha	Fat is separated and curd is churned without adding water	Kapha & Pitta ↓
3	Takra	Curd is churned after adding 1/4 th quantity of water	Vata ↓
4	Udashvith	Curd is churned with 1/2 part of water	Kapha ↑
5	Chacchika	Cured is churned & fat is removed then more water is added	Pitta & Vata ↓

TYPES OF TAKRA BASED ON SNEHAMSHA {FAT CONTENT}^[9]

Sl no	Type	Method	Indication	Agni bala	Properties
1	Ruksha	Butter completely removed	Kapha	Heena	Pathya, Laghu
2	Ardha Snehayukta	Half butter is left	Pitta	Madhyama	Guru, Vrushya
3	Poorna Snehayukta	Full butter is left in buttermilk	Vata	Uttama	Sandra, Guru

CONSUMPTION OF TAKRA ACCORDING TO INCREASED DOSHA^[10]

Sl no	Dosha	Takra preparation
1	Vata	Amla Takra + Saindhava + Shunti
2	Pitta	Madhura Takra + Sharkara
3	Kapha	Madhura Takra + Trikatu + Kshara

Consumption of Takra according to different Diseases

- Jwara (Fever)**- Sushruta has stated that if there is Arochaka (uninterested in food) in Jwara due to Kapha, Takra should be used mixed with Vyosha (Trikatu).^[11]
Vagbhata has advised the use of Anamla Takra (not sour in taste) as Pathya (as food material) in Jwara (fever). Food cooked with Anamla Takra (not sour in taste) is Ruchikaraka (increases appetite).^[12]
- Atisara (Diarrhoea)** - Charaka has advised use of Takra in Atisara (diarrhoea) as Anupana (vehicle) of Laghu anna (light to digest).^[13]
Further Charaka has advised Takra as Anupana (vehicle) for different Yogas (formulations) for Kaphaja Atisara.^[14] Charaka has also advised use of Takra with Chitraka (Plumbago zyleneica) for treatment of Atisara.^[15]
Vagbhata has also advised use of Takra in the form of Tarpana yavagu (gruel with nourishing property) in Atisara.^[16]
- Chardi (Vomiting)** - Charaka has advised use of Takra as Aahara dravya (food article) in management of Kaphaja Chardi.^[17]
- Respiratory Disorders**- Charaka has advised use of Takra as Anupana (vehicle of drugs) in the management of Kaphaja Kasa.^[18] Vagbhata has mentioned a special use of Takra in Shwasa- Kasa (~

asthma and cough). According to Vagbhata apply thick paste of Pippali (Piper longum), Pippalimula (Piper longum), Pathya (Terminalia chebula), Vidanga (Embelia ribes) and Chitraka (Plumbago zyleneica) to the inner side of earthen pot of ghee/butter. When the paste gets dried fill the earthen pot with Takra and leave for a month. This Takra is said to be Agnideepaka (improves digestion) and Shwasa- Kasanashaka (~ asthma and cough reliever).^[19]

- Aanaha (Abdominal Distention)**- Vagbhata has stated that use of Takra in Aanaha for Vata-kapha patients is equivalent to elixir.^[20]

6) Udara Roga (abdominal distention due to fluid retention)-

Charaka has advised use of Takra in Udara roga as follows:^[21]

- *Nichaya Udara (Sannipatodara)*- Tryushana (Shunthi, Maricha and Pippali), Kshara and Lavana
- *Vatodara*- Pippali (Piper longum) and Lavana
- *Pittodara*- Sharkara and Madhuka (Glycyrrhiza glabra)
- *Kaphodara*- Yavani (Trachyspermum ammi), Saindhava, Ajaji (Cuminum cyminum) and Vyosha (Shunthi, Maricha and Pippali)

- *Pleehodara*- Madhu, Taila, Vacha (*Acorus calamus*), Shunthi (*Zingiber officinale*), Satahva (*Anethum sowa*), Kustha (*Saussurea lappa*) and Saindhava
 - *Jalodara*- Vyosha (Shunthi, Maricha and Pippali)
 - *Baddhodara*- Hapusha (*Juniperus communis*), Yavani (*Trachyspermum ammi*), Ajaji (*Cuminum cyminum*) and Saindhava
 - *Chidrodara*- Pippali (*Piper longum*) and Madhu
- Charaka has also indicated use of Takra in Udara Roga as an Anupana (vehicle) of Narayana Churna.^[22]
- 7) **Shotha- (Edema)** Charaka & Vagbhata has clearly indicated that if a patient of Shotha is suffering from Aamatisara then Takra mixed with Vyosha, Sauvarchala lavana, and Makshika (honey) should be used for the treatment.^[23]
Takra is a content of *Chitraka ghrita*, used for the treatment of Shotha.^[24]
Vagbhata has advised use of Takra as Anupana (vehicle) of Haritaki (*Terminalia chebula*) used with Guda (jaggery) or Aardraka (*Zingiber officinale*) with Guda (jaggery).^[25]
- 8) **Gulma**- Charaka has advised use of Takra mixed with Yavani (*Trachyspermum ammi*) churna and Vida lavana as Pathya in Gulma. This Takra is Agnideepaka (improves digestion) and Vata- Kapha- Mutra anulomaka.^[26]
Vagbhata has advised use of Takra as Anupana of various Ghrita and churna such as *Triyushanadyaghrita* etc.^[27] Further Vagbhata has advised Takra as Pathya for patients of Kaphaja Gulma.^[28]
- 9) **Arshas (Hemorrhoids)**- Charaka has used Takra in the management of Arshas on a broad level. Charaka has advised use of Haritaki (*Terminalia chebula*) and Triphala churna with Takra.^[29] Charaka has advised special formulation of Takra, namely *Takrarishta* in the management of Arshas.^[30] Charaka has clearly said that there is no better medicine than Takra for the management of Vata- Kaphaja Arshas.^[31] Charaka has further advised that, all those food materials that causes Vatanulomana (promotes downward movement of vataa) and are Agnideepaka (improves digestion) should be used for Arshas patients and Takra possesses both the qualities.^[32]
Vagbhata has advised use of Takra as Anupana for fruits of Peelu (*Salvadora persica*). Further he has advised use of Takra mixed with Hapusha (*Juniperus communis*), Hingu (*Ferula narthex*) and Chitraka (*Plumbago zyleneica*).^[33]
- 10) **Grahani Dosha**- Charaka has described the properties of Takra in the Grahani dosha chikitsa adhyaya. Charaka has stated that Takra is best for management of Grahani dosha due to Deepana, Grahi and Laghu properties of Takra.^[34] Further, Charaka has stated that all types of Takra should be used extensively for the management of Grahani dosha.^[35] Takra is component of various formulations mentioned for management of Grahani

dosha such as Takrarishta, Panchmoolyadhya ghrita and Churna.^[36]

Sushruta has also stated that in management of Grahani, Churna of Pachaniya, Sangrahi and Deepniya gana should be used with Anupana of Takra or only Takra is enough to treat the diseases.^[37]

- 11) **Anupana (vehicle for various formulations)** - Apart from these direct therapeutic indications, Takra has also been indicated as Anupana (vehicle) for various formulations in Ayurveda. Anupana is any substance with which medicine is taken orally or which is a drink after taking medicine.^[38] Anupana helps in quick assimilation and distribution of drug in body.^[39] Various formulations whose Anupana is Takra are Trivrittadi kalka, Laghugangadhara churna, Narayana churna, Navayasa loha, Mandura vataka etc.^[40]

Contraindication of Taking Takra^[41]

One should not consume takra during summer season. Person who has least body strength should not take takra in more quantity. Takra should not be taken in fainting, giddiness, burning sensation, during Pitta prakopa because of its ushna veerya property.

DISCUSSION

Buttermilk has been underestimated for many years. For a long time, modern medical science has regarded it as an unwanted product which accumulates during the production of butter. However, the high value components of this food which are found to be beneficial to human health, are slowly changing these opinions. Currently research is mostly focusing on the functions of single compounds of buttermilk like Phospholipids, MFGM (Milk Fat Globule Membrane), Caseins, Whey Proteins etc. The sour taste of buttermilk is due to lactic acid bacteria. *Streptococcus lactis* or *Lactobacillus Bulgaricus*, one of these two bacteria is responsible to create more tartness. The increased acidity level of buttermilk is due to lactic acid which is produced by lactic acid bacteria by fermenting lactose (primary sugar of the milk). The pH of milk decreases due to increased acidity level and casein (primary milk protein) precipitates causing clabbering and curdling of milk.

Nutritional Values of Buttermilk

Buttermilk is rich source of Potassium, Calcium, Phosphorus, Vitamin B12, & Riboflavin.

Importance^[42]

Vitamin B12 helps synthesize fatty & amino acids. It converts glucose of the body into the energy. B12 promotes nerve cell growth and also fights against stress and anaemia. **Potassium & calcium** are supposed beneficial for bone health and buttermilk is a rich source of these two. Buttermilk is very easy in digestion so it is suggested in the digestive problems. The **lactic acid** of buttermilk is much friendly on digestive tract than that of lactose of whole milk. **Riboflavin** plays an important

role to convert glucose into the energy as that of vitamin B12. **Potassium** helps to minimize the blood pressure. The symptoms like heartburn, aggravated acid level of stomach can be minimized with the help of buttermilk. It prevents the acid of the stomach to come up through oesophagus by coating the lining of stomach. The buttermilk is also helpful in weight loss & dieting purpose. Buttermilk is rich in potassium, vitamin B-12, calcium, phosphorous and probiotics which help strengthen the digestive system and the immunity of the body.

CONCLUSION

Takra prepared from proper method is useful for healthy person as well as patient. Different types of Takra should be used according to doshaprakopa, jatharagni & Sharirika bala of a person. After reviewing the therapeutic effects of Takra, it is clear that Takra has a very potent effect on Mahasrotas.

Takra balances all the three Doshas of the body. Acharya Charaka has mentioned Takra in Agrya aushada as persistent use of Takra is best medicine for Grahni dosha, Shopha, Arsha and Ghrita vyapad. Takra(Buttermilk) can be used as principal drug like Takrarishtam or along with various Dravyas or as a dietary product in the form of Pathya Ahara (Beneficial Diet). Nutritional Values also suggest that Takra also strengthen the immunity and helps to maintain the health by preventing disease. This review article shows the tendency and potential of Takra that it can positively influence human health and its contribution to balanced diet is without doubt. Bhavaprakasha has rightly quoted that as there is elixir for gods, Takra is the elixir for humans on earth.

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