A CRITICAL REVIEW OF LITERATURE OF ABHRAKA

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INTRODUCTION

Rasa Shastra branch of Ayurveda deals with drug manufacturing. This branch was developed during the medieval period and after its development herbomineral preparation and bhasmas became frequent for therapeutics purposes. In Rasa literatures, metals have been given much importance for therapeutics and alchemical purposes.

With the development of Rasa Shastra various pharmaceutical techniques e.g. shodhana (purification), marana (incineration), satvapatana (metal extraction) and bhawana (levigation) etc. were developed to make the drug toxic free and more potent. A variety of plant origin medias in the form of either swarasa (juice) or kwatha (decoction) are used in the above mentioned pharmaceutical techniques. These medias play vital role in the pharmaceutical processing’s of metal and minerals. All these various developed pharmaceuticals techniques gives confidence to Indian system of medicine to use metallic preparation in the therapy without any untoward effect. The other characteristics features of metallic preparations are minor dosages, tasteless, free from undesired effect and long self life. The metals and minerals which have been converted in form of bhasma have to be processed properly by adopting a different pharmaceuticals tool to get the desired results otherwise they may produce toxicity.

Basically the Rasa Shastra is the science of metals and minerals where Parada is master metals. It describes pharmaceuticals processings and use of metals and minerals along with some herbs. These substances are classified in various groups based on their utility in medicinal use as well as alchemical field. The most useful substances are classified into Maharasa group.
Abhraka is the first minerals of this group. Krishna Vajra Abhraka variety is used for medicinal purposes. Abhraka is used in the form of bhasma for therapeutic purposes. In the present circumstances, it is a ethical duty of Ayurvedic scholars to narrate the various principles and aspects of Ayurveda in newer light and re-evaluating to suit the need of mankind conveniencingly. Because there is too much difference in respect of all parameters in human being of ancient time and modern period.

AIMS AND OBJECTS
1. To compile the literature about Abhraka viz. Biotite, various medias used in pharmaceutical processing’s
2. To conduct the pharmaceutical study on Abhraka shodhana and Marana.

MATERIAL AND METHOD

REVIEW OF ABHRAKA
Ayurveda has been in practice since Vedic period as the traditional system of medicine and it favours holistic approach to the human health care i.e. a balance between the physical, mental and spiritual functions of the body. Study of ancient Ayurvedic literature indicates the use of Plant products, Animal products, Metals, Minerals and Gemstones as the traditional medicine since Vadic period. In Samhita period, they were not in much use until the pharmaceutical techniques developed in medieval period when they were profusely used for therapeutic purposes disorders both for potentiating action and reduction of toxic properties.

Rasa Shastra literally means knowledge of ‘Rasa’. In Rasa Shastra, Rasa means, Parada. Other various substances described in this branch are of metals, minerals, vegetable and marine origin. They are used for therapeutic and alchemical purposes and called as ‘Rasadravyas’.

Classification of Rasadravyas
Dravyas of Rasa Shastra are basically classified in various groups as – Maharasa, Uparasa, Sadharana rasa; Dhatu varga, Upadhatu, Sudhavarga; Ratnavarga; Uparatnavarga etc. The probable basis of such classification seems to be:
(a) Utility of the substance in the process of conversion of lower metal into the higher with the help of Parada.
(b) Utility of the substance in Parada processing for transmutation.
(c) Percentage of satva content of substances may be the other possible reason behind the classification.

(d) Medicinal efficacy of the substances.

**Maharasa Group**

This group consists of eight substances viz. Abhraka, Vaikranta, Makshika, Vimala, Adrij, Sasyaka, Chapala and Rasaka. Almost all dravyas belonging to the Maharasa group shows following characteristics:

1. Contains rasayana property.
2. Contains more satva.
3. High therapeutic value.

**NIRUKTI**

- **ABHRA**: No substance gets adhered to it or it removes the impurities from the body giving them movement or force.
- **ABHRAKA**: Its structure resembles to that of a cloud.
- **AJARA**: It keeps the old age in the bay.
- **AMBARA**: Sound is produced on fire.
- **ANANTAKA**: No change takes place when heated in fire.
- **BAHUPATRA**: Many layers are found in it

**MYTHOLOGICAL ORIGIN**

Few descriptions regarding origin of Abhraka; based on mythological concepts are found in texts of Rasa Shastra viz.

1. According to the description of ‘Rasarnava’. Abhraka is supposed to be the virya of ‘Girija’ (Parvati) which she used to discharge when excited.
2. According to the description of ‘Ayurveda Prakash’ Abhraka is supposed to have originated from the fire produced from Vajra (a weapon of Indra) while it was in operation during battle. It is said further that Abhraka was supposed to be distributed in the hilly areas which came into contact with the fire.
DISTRIBUTION AND COLLECTION

It should be collected from the mines at the depth of ‘Rajahasta’ (22 ½" inches). The Abhraka collected from this depth is supposed to possess the Satva (metallic Content) and the above mentioned properties hence considered to be of superior quality.

Types of Abhraka

Various parameters are described in different texts of Rasa Shastra for border classification of Abhraka Viz.

1. According to color
2. According to reaction on fire
3. According to udbhava Sthana

Table 1: Showing classification based on the color of Abhraka.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Color</th>
<th>Uses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shweta</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Shweta Karma – silver making</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pita</td>
<td>Yellow</td>
<td>Pita Karma – gold making</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rakta</td>
<td>Red</td>
<td>Rakta Karma – Blood Formation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Krishna</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>Rasayana Karma</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Showing classification based on the Effect of heating.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.N.</th>
<th>Variety</th>
<th>Change on fire</th>
<th>Sound</th>
<th>Effect</th>
<th>Side Effect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Pinaka</td>
<td>Layers get Separated &amp; Swollen</td>
<td>Chit-Chit</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Kusta, Malabheda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Naga</td>
<td>Separate the layers with specific sound</td>
<td>Hissing</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Bhagandara Mandala &amp; Mahakustā</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Manduka</td>
<td>Jumps in fire</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Svasa, Ashmari</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Vajra</td>
<td>Unchanged</td>
<td>No sound produce</td>
<td>Vyadhi-Vardhakaya, Mṛtyu Nasaka, Sarva Rogaharā</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: Showing classification based on Varna of Abhraka.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Color</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brahmana</td>
<td>White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ksatriya</td>
<td>Red</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vaisya</td>
<td>Yellow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sudra</td>
<td>Black</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4: Showing classification based on Udbhava Sthana of Abhraka.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variety</th>
<th>Property</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Uttaraseilottha</td>
<td>Uttama</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daksinaseilottha</td>
<td>Madhyama</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purvaseilottha</td>
<td>Hina</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to Rasendra Chudamani, though all the four types may be used for Rasayana karma but the black one is claimed as to be the best for this purpose.

In some texts it is mentioned that all the above mentioned types are of four colors but according to Rasarnava only Vajrabhraka is of four colors.

**GRAHYAGRAHYATA**

Abhraka which is smooth, heavy, thick layered, could be separated easily, good colored, like Anjana & Vajra; does not change its appearance in fire can be explained as good quality of Abhraka.

Apart from this all of the Rasa texts have unanimously accepted the Krishnavajrabhraka as the ideal one and capable of eradicating all sorts of ailments.

‘Vajrabhraka’ is one which is black in color just like ‘Anjyana’ & remains unchanged when heated in the fire. Further it is also stated that Krishna Vajrabhraka is the only variety recommended for use for all purposes while others are not recommended for use. For this Rasa Hridya Tantra gives the reasoning that all the varieties of Abhraka except ‘Vajrabhraka’ are said to be ‘Nisatwa’ means either they contain metals in small quantities or may not be present; hence are considered, ‘Alpabala’ or Inferior. While ‘Vajrabhraka’ is considered ‘Sasatva’ or superior as when heated strongly it gives satva (metal) while others turn into Kacha (Slag).

**DISCUSSION ON SHODhana**

**AIM OF SHODhana PROCESS**

(i) Removal of undesired physical & chemical impurities.
(ii) Eradication or reduction in toxicity of material
(iii) Conversion of hard and non-homogenous material to soft, brittle, ductile and homogenous material
(iv) Induction of wanted qualities.
(v) Transformation of material in suitable form for further processing.
(vi) Potentiation of therapeutic efficacy of the drug material
(vii) Leads to unique & suitable physico chemical changes.
(viii) For direct therapeutic uses in some cases.

PROCEDURES

- Abhisheka (Sprinkling): The material is heated strongly and the liquid media is sprinkled on i.e. Mandura shodhana.
- Acushana (Absorption): Oily content of certain toxic materials is minimized through different absorption means, i.e. Bhalataka shodhana.
- Atapa / Agni Shoshana (Drying): The material is kept on fire or exposed to sun rays till its dryness i.e. Shilajatu shodhana.
- Bharjana (Frying): The material is fried with specific liquid media on Mandagni (mild heat), i.e. Gairika shodhana.
- Bhavana (Levigation): The material is triturated with prescribed liquid media for specific time period i.e. Hingula shodhana.
- Dhalana (Melting and pouring): At first the material is melted by intense heat and then poured into a liquid media. i.e. Naga shodhana.
- Galana (Melting and straining): The solid material is melted first by heating and then filtered through a cloth i.e. Gandhaka shodhana.
- Mardana (Trituration): The material is grind properly with prescribed drug for specific period. i.e. Parada shodhana.
- Nimajjana (Dipping): The material is kept immersed in the prescribed liquid for specific period i.e. Vatsanabha shodhana.
- Nirjalikarana (Evaporation of water): Whole water of crystallization content of the material is evaporated by heating i.e. Sphatika shodhana.
- Nirvapa (Heating and quenching): The red hot material is dipped into the prescribed liquid i.e. Lauha shodhana.
- Parashravana (Straining): The solid material is dissolved in suitable liquid media and separated from insoluble impurities through straining i.e. Navasadara shodhana.
- Patana (Sublimation): Through Patana Yantra the material is heated and convert into vapour, from which the material is regained again by condensing i.e. Parada shodhana.
- Prakshalana (Washing): The material is washed with prescribed liquid to remove its physical impurities. i.e. Godanti shodhana.
- Prithakikarana (Separation): Physical impurities are removed i.e. Guggulu shodhana.
➢ Swedana (Boiling under liquid bath): The material is boiled in prescribed liquid media through Dola Yantra method i.e. Sankha shodhana.

➢ Vilayana (Elutriation): The material is firstly dissolved in prescribed liquid media and left as such for some time. Then the upper part of the liquid containing the soluble drug material is decanted into another pot leaving behind the impurities in the bottom of first pot. i.e. Shilajatu shodhana.

CONCEPT OF MARANA
The term Marana has been derived from the Sanskrit root Maryate, Nashyate, Bhasmikriyate, which means killing, ruining or and converting in to ashes.

Significance of Marana

❖ The heavy, hard & rough substances get converted in to light, soft and smooth form.
❖ Macro forms will get converted in to micro forms.
❖ The metals and minerals get converted in to such fine forms which are easily absorbable and assimilated by the body
❖ Converted in to ash form
❖ Increase in therapeutic properties and shelf life of drug.
❖ The dose is reduced.
❖ The inert substances are converted in to potentiated forms.
❖ The elements converted into compound form.
❖ The potency & quality of material is increased.
❖ To make the material suitable for therapeutic purposes.

USES
The Therapeutic properties of Abhraka bhasma are mention as following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disease</th>
<th>Modern Correlation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kasa</td>
<td>Cough</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swasa</td>
<td>Asthma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ksaya</td>
<td>Tuber cluosis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prameha</td>
<td>Diabetes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhootonmada</td>
<td>Psychiatric diseases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhrama</td>
<td>Vertigo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vata Vyadhi</td>
<td>Neuritis &amp; other nervine disease</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jirna Jwara</td>
<td>Chronic Fever</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Mandagni  Loss of Apetite  
Parinam shoola  Peptic Ulcer  
Grahani  Irritable Bowl Syndrome  
Arsa  Piles  
Bhagandara  Fistula in ano  
Krimiroga  Worm infestation  
Bandhyvata  Sterility  
Sweta Pradara  Leucorrhea  
Kamala  Jaundice  
Pandu  Anemia  
Hridroga  Heart diseases

**Doses**

Doses of Abhraka bhasma depends upon the severity of the diseases; prakrti of patient & mode of preparation of formulation:

1. Gunjaradhamita (1/2 Gunja = 60mg)
2. Trigunjam (3 Gunja = 360 mg)
3. Vallonmitam (2 or 3 Gunja = 240mg or 360 mg)

**PATHYAPATHYA**

The person using Abhraka bhasma should use Kshirodana (boiled rice & milk) & Ghee as pathya.

Kshara, Amla, Dwidala & Tail are mentioned as apathy in Rasa Kalika.

**Antidote for Abhraka**

According to Rasa Tarangani Umaphala (Atasi) or Nishi / Haridra (Curcuma longa linn.) dipped in water if used for 3 days removes undesired effects of Abhraka i.e. it acts as antidote for Abhraka.

**CONCLUSION**

Abhraka Bhasma is said to possess madhura and kashaya rasa snigdha swadu and sheet viryas. It can overcome all three doshas (tridoshahara). In some texts it is mentioned that Abhraka has got its main effect on vata & pitta only while kapha is not provoked by it hence it is called as vata-pittahara. The demand for Ayurvedic medicines is growing day by day. Medicines like Abhraka bhasma, which have negligible side effects and are non-toxic in large
therapeutic doses, play an important role in establishing their value as powerful alternative medicine for various ailments. This study focuses on research on the multifaceted aspects of mica combustion and shows the future prospects of mica combustion research. Abraka Bhasman is used in diabetes, asthma etc. Future studies are needed to identify it as a primary treatment for various diseases such as Cough, Asthma, Tuber cluosis, Psychiatric diseases, Neuritis & other nervine disease.

REFERENCES