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Rasayana karma of poisonous *Bhallataka*: A Review

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Abstract

Rasayan is considered as one of the (part) of the *Ayurveda*. *Charaka* had described to fulfill the aim of the *Ayurveda* i.e., drugs act by preventing the old age and diseases in the healthy person. *Charaka* stated about two types of medicine, one which promotes resistance to the body and another which cures the diseases and *Rasayan* therapy play a key role in achieving these goals. The main aim of *Rasayan* therapy is to promote formation of or resistance which in modern terminology can be called as promoting the strength of immune system. *Bhallataka*, a medicinal drug has the ability to penetrate deeply into the tissues and rejuvenate the body that's why it was used to held in high esteem by ancient sages of *Ayurveda*. *Maharshi Charak* emphasized the *Rasayana* property of *Bhallataka* and described ten types of preparations with it. He considered *bhallataka* as the best drug to cure the *kaphaj vyadhi*. *Charak* has categorized *Bhallataka* has *Dipaniya* -an appetizer, *Bhedaniya*- to break accumulated *doshas*, *mutra sangrahaniya*-

antidiuretic and *Kusthaghna* - antidermatosis. In the present study, review of the drugs had been made from *Ayurveda* classics. Because it is important to have an awareness regarding the Poisonous drugs, when used in the proper form & prescribed dose they act as a potent therapeutic agent. It is a fact that virtually any substance can be harmful at high enough concentrations as rightly quoted that "All substances are poisons; there is none which is not a poison. The right dose differentiates a poison from a remedy."

Key words: - *Rasayan*, *Bhallataka*, Ten preparations of *Bhallataka*

INTRODUCTION

Rasayan is considered as one of the (part) of the *Ayurveda*. *Charaka* had described to fulfill the aim of the *Ayurveda* i.e. drug acts by preventing the old age and diseases in the healthy person. *Charaka* stated about two types of medicine, one which promotes resistance

to the body and another which cures the diseases, and *Rasayan* therapy play a key role in achieving these goals. The main aim of *Rasayana* therapy is to promote formation or resistance which in modern terminology called as promoting the strength of immune system. ⁽¹⁾

Bhallataka a medicinal drug has the ability to penetrate deeply into the tissues and rejuvenate the body that's why it was used to held in high esteem by ancient sages of Ayurveda. *Maharshi Charaka* emphasized the *Rasayana* property of *Bhallataka* and described ten types of preparations with it. He considered *Bhallataka* as the best drug to cure the *kaphaj vyadhi*. ⁽²⁾

Charaka has categorized *Bhallataka* as *Dipaniya* -an appetizer, *Bhedaniya*- to break accumulated *doshas*, *mutra Sangrahaniya*-antidiuretic and *Kusthaghna* -antidermatosis⁽³⁾ In the present study, review of the drugs had been made from *Ayurveda* classics. Because it is important to have an awareness regarding the poisonous drugs, when used in the proper form & prescribed dose they act as a potent therapeutic agent.

It is a fact that virtually any substance can be harmful at high enough concentrations as rightly quoted that "All substances are poisons; there is none which is not a poison. The right dose differentiates a poison from a remedy." ⁽⁴⁾

Aims And Object

- To discuss and elaborate *Rasayana karma* of poisonous *Bhallataka*.
- To discuss and elaborate properties of *Bhallataka*.

Material and methods

This paper is based on textual review. Material related to *Rasayana* effect of *Bhallataka* was collected from *Charaka Samhita*, modern text, and various websites to collect information on the relevant topic were referred.

Sanskrit term *Rasayana* is a combination of two terms. "*Rasa*" means the best or finest part or constituent fluid or essential juice of body. "*Ayana*" means going, circulating etc. Thus, *Rasayana* means the best constituent fluid circulating in the body. *Rasayana* is the treatment that delays the ageing process, increases life span, memory, strength and is capable of pacifying diseases. It is aimed to achieve optimum quality of body constituents (*Dhatu*). *Rasayana* means rejuvenation and anti-ageing therapies in *Ayurveda*. It also includes all measures for geriatric healthcare and immunity enhancement. *Rasayana* essentially denotes medicinal nutrition, rejuvenation, longevity, immune-enhancing and geriatric health care. ⁽⁵⁾

The *Rasayana* are not necessarily drugs they may be in the form of a *Rasayana* food, or a positive healthy life style with a *Rasayana* effect or a *Rasayana* drug or all the three together. The *Rasayana* remedies promote good qualities of the cells and tissues of the body through improved nutrient effect, boosting the digestion, metabolism and/or augmenting the microcirculation and tissue perfusion.

Visha-Upavisha Dravyas from therapeutic point of view are considered highly valuable on accordance of their

quick effectiveness even in smaller doses. But at the same time are very dangerous also as these may prove fatal to human beings if used without proper care & in higher doses. Therefore, understanding the *Visha Dravyas* its important uses, medicinal applications, benefits, toxic symptoms and its management. The history of *visha* (poison) and its treatment ways back to centuries. *Ayurved* dedicated as one of its branches as *Danshtrachikitsa*, *Agadatantra* or *Vishatantra*, *Vishagara vairodhika prashamana* which is dedicated solely to the concept and treatment of *visha*. These references provide ample evidence to prove that toxicology was a well-developed branch in ancient India. It was believed that *Moksha* (Salvation) is the ultimate aim of life and it was also believed that this can be attained through *Rasa karma* with the proper use of *Visha-Upavisha dravyas* which will fulfill this desire. It is said in the texts that *Visha & Upvisha* when used properly, would prove highly beneficial to the body or even as lifesaving drug like an 'Amrita' (Nectar); otherwise, they are considered to be fatal to the mankind. Probably because of this reason their use was very much limited in the ancient times when different *Shodhan* methods weren't developed, but with the emergence of *Rasashastra* in the field of *Ayurvedic*

medicines, helped much in making their use safe and more frequent in therapeutics. ⁽⁴⁾

The use of *Visha dravyas* as Medicines has been narrated by *Acharya Charaka* as "Even an acute poison can become an excellent drug if it is properly administered on the other hand even a drug, if not properly administered, becomes an acute poison". *Upavisha* are the group of drugs, which are less toxic in nature and not so lethal but produce certain toxic symptoms on consumption or administration. The symptoms produced in the body due to *Upavisha* are less toxic, less severe, usually not life threatening and their toxicity can be controlled by therapeutic measures. ⁽³⁾

An ideal *Rasayana* prolongs life, improves memory and intellect, promote health, and provides immunity against diseases thereby helps an individual to lead an energetic life. It improves lusture and complexion of the body, tones the voice and speech and increases the acuity of all the sensory, motor organs along with vitality and vigour. *Bhallataka* possess all these quality inspite of being poisonous drug and act as a good *Rasayana* (restorative and promotive action) by which a healthy person attains *prasashta rasadi dhathus* along with its *medhya* (intellect) *prabhava*. The fruit has the ability to cure any *Kapha* disorder of the human system. From relieving constipation to improving intelligence and digestion. ⁽³⁾

| Characters Nighantu | Bhavaprakasha Nighantu. (6) | Dhanvantari Nighantu. (7) | Raj Nighantu (8) | Kaidev Nighantu. (9) | Madanapala Nighantu. (10) |
|---------------------|---|--------------------------------------|----------------------|--|---|
| Guna | Laghu | - | - | Laghu | Laghu |
| Rasa | Kashaya, Madhura | Katu, Tikta, Madhura | Katu, Tikta, Kashaya | Tikta, Kashaya, Madhura | Kashaya, Madhura |
| Veerya | Ushna | Ushna | Ushna | Sheeta | Ushna |
| Vipaka | - | - | - | Katu | - |
| Karma | Shukrala | - | - | Grahi, Deepana | Shukrala |
| Doshghanata | V-K | V-K | V-K | P-K | V-K |
| Rogagnata | Udara, Aanaha, Kushta, Arsha, Grahani, Gulma, Jwara, Kshiwtra, Agnimandya, Krimi, Vrana | Krimi, Gulma, Arsha, Grahani, Kushta | Prameha, Arsha | Raktavikar, Kushta, Arsha, Gulma, Shopha | Udara, Aanaha, Kushta, Arsha, Grahani, Gulma, Jwara, Kshiwtra, Agnimandya, Krimi, Vrana |

Properties of bhallataka

Ten yoga of Bhallataka Rasayana. (11)

1. Bhallataka ghrita
2. Bhallataka-ksheeram
3. Bhallataka-kshaudra
4. Guda-bhallataka
5. Bhallataka-yusha,
6. Bhallataka-taila
7. Bhallataka-palala
8. Bhallataka-saktu,
9. Bhallataka-lavana,
10. Bhallataka-tarpana.

Some preparations of Bhallataka are as follows: (11)

Bhallataka ksheeram

- The fruits of *Bhallataka* – undamaged, undiseased, mature in taste, size and potency, looking like ripe jamboo fruits should be collected in the month of *jyeshtha* and *ashadha* and be stored within the granary of barley or black gram.
- After four months, in the month of *Agrahayana* or *Pausha* they should be taken out for use by one who has made his body fit through the intake of cold, unctuous and sweet substances.
- At first ten fruits of *Bhallataka* should be crushed and boiled in ten times of water, when 1/8 extract remains, it should be filtered and

taken mixed with milk after smearing the inner part of the mouth with ghee.

- Gradually increasing the dose by one fruit per day it should be led to thirty which is the maximum dose. In this way the total number of fruits taken comes to one thousand. When the drug is digested, one should take *shali* and *shashtika* rice with milk added with ghee.
- After the treatment is over, the patient should live on milk diet for the period double to that of treatment. By this one attains stable life span of one hundred years without senility.

Bhallataka kshaudram

- The fruits of *Bhallataka* should be crushed and filled in a heating pot which is put on a firm and oiled (with *ghee*) pitcher already dug underground up to the neck covered with alid.
- Then after pushing it with black earth, it should be heated with cow dung fire. The extract which is collected in the lower pitcher should be taken out.
- It should be taken mixed with 1/8 honey and double the quantity of ghee. Regular use of this makes a person of the stable life span of one hundred years without senility.

Bhallataka taila:

The *Bhallataka taila* should be taken in quantity of 2 kg .560 gms and cooked along with milk and paste of *madhuka* in 1/8th quantity. This should be repeated hundred times.

Benefits of *bhallataka*

- The fruits of *Bhallataka* are irritant,

inflaming and are like fire but they assume nectar like properties if used as prescribed. Their use in the above ten forms is described which should be prescribed considering the disease, constitution, and suitability.

- There is no disorder of *Kapha* and obstructive condition which is not ameliorated by *Bhallataka* quickly. Moreover, it promotes intellect and *agni*.
- In early days, the old great sages like *Chyavana* etc, who desiring vital strength, attained immeasurable life span by using these beneficial *Rasayana* formulations.
- After attaining longevity, they performed as desired, spiritual penance, celibacy and self-medication and ascended to the heaven. Hence those who desire longevity, vital strength and happiness should use the *Rasayana* methodically and carefully.

Discussion

- *Rasayana* effect is not a specific pharmacological action but it is a complex phenomenon operating through a comprehensive mechanism involving the fundamental factors like create excellence of *Sapta dhatu* by *prashast rasadi-samvahan* to promote immunity, *agni* to improve metabolism and strotas to improve endocrine and exocrine secretions.
- It may ultimately lead to the achievement of the comprehensive effect as stated by *Charaka* “*Labhopayo Hi Shastanam – Rasadinam Rasayanum*”.⁽¹²⁾
- *Bhallataka* is effective at the level of *agni* by its *ushna veerya*, *laghu guna* and *katu, tikta kashay rasa*. *Snigdha*

guna and *madhur vipaka* promote the nutritional value which helps in obtaining the best quality of dhatu.

- As *Bhallataka* belongs to *Upvisha* group, it possesses the *laghu, ruksha, aashu, vishad, vyavayi, teekshna, ushna guna* this may be eliminating the “ama” and *strotoshodhana* (i.e., Micro channels of all systems) hence nourishment of all the tissues. It reveals the *Rasayan* effect in the body.

Conclusion

This is a small attempt on review of *Bhallataka*, in spite of being included in poisonous plant category, *Bhallataka* draw an attention towards *Rasayan* effects and There is no disorder of Kapha and obstructive condition which is not cured quickly by *Bhallataka*, also it promotes intellect and agni.

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