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An Ayurvedic Literary Review on the Multidimensional Use of *Nagarjunabhra Rasa*

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Abstract

Ayurveda, the ancient medical science has contributed a lot of herbo mineral preparations for the management of different systemic diseases. *Nagarjunabhra rasa* is such a classical product which is prepared by *arjun bark sattwa* (*Terminalia arjuna* (Roxb.) W & A) and purified *vajra abhrak* (a type of mica). Different ancient classical text of *rasaushadhi* like *rasa ratna samucchaya*, *bhaisajya ratnavali* etc. have clearly claimed its beneficial effect over *hridroga* (cardiac diseases) beside its other indications on different diseases like *sarvashula* (general body ache), *hrillasa* (nausea), *chardi* (vomiting), *arochaka* (anorexia), *atisara* (diarrhoea) etc. In present article the literatures of medieval period like *rasa ratna samucchaya* (1300AD), *rasendra chintamani* (1600AD), *rasendra sar samgraha* (1600AD), *bhaisajya ratnavali* (1800AD) and ayurvedic texts of recent past like *rasa tarangini* (2000AD) has been vividly reviewed to collect data rather information regarding the properties, action, therapeutic uses, doses and preparatory procedure of *nagarjunabhra rasa*. It is interesting to note that this medication has a powerful protective impact on the heart muscle and influences appropriate cardiac motility or rhythm by pacifying the aggravated *vata* and vitiated *pitta* as well as *kapha*. Hope, this work could be able to throw a ray of light to the scholars and practitioners of this field towards their better performance and learning.

Keywords: *Nagarjunabhra*, *vajra abhrak*, *arjun*, *hridaya*

1. Introduction

In common sense, *rasa oushadhi* is such a preparation where *parada* (mercury) and *gandhak* (sulphur) are used along with other herbal, mineral, inorganic and organic agents. There are several procedures like *jarana* (oxidation), *marana* (incineration), *murchana* (swooning), *shodhana* (purification), etc. have been employed in *ayurveda* for the purification of metals for the sake of detoxification as well as better action of ingredient in the organs or system or over living beings.

Nagarjun was an authority of *ayurveda*, who has contributed first the use of mercury and others metals in *ayurvedic* medicines for the cure of diseases especially chronic and critical ailments. Literature from 4th century AD To till date, it has been observed that *parada* (mercury), *gandhak* (sulphur), *louha* (iron), *roupya* (silver), *tamra* (copper), *vanga* (tin), *zasad* (zinc), *sisak* (lead), *abhrak* (mica)etc. have been frequently used in different herbo-mineral compounds to treat the troublesome ailments. *Nagarjunabhra* rasa is a herbo-mineral compound which is composed with two main

ingredients namely *abhrak* and *arjuna* bark and interestingly without having *parada* and *gandhak*. In general concept, the medicine name with the term 'rasa' is usually formed by *parada* and *gandhak* by the form of *kajjali* like *ramban* rasa, *laxmivilas* rasa, *vatagajankush* rasa, *ekangaveer* rasa etc. However, the concept does not apply to *nagarjunabhra* rasa, whereas the presence of *abhrak*, an inorganic agent, justifies the term 'rasa' because, in some cases, *rasaushadhi* refers to a preparation that contains metal or other inorganic agents in place of mercury and sulphur in *kajjali* form, such as *kafaketu* rasa and *vasanta kusumakar* rasa.

Generally, the purified *abhrak* or mica possessing the properties like having *rasa* (taste)-*madhura* (sweet), *Kashaya* (astringent), *virya* (potency)-*sita* (cold), and *guru* (heavy), *tridoshaghna* (balancing *tridosa*, *vata*, *pitta*, *kapha*) simultaneously another ingredient of *nagarjunabhra* rasa; *arjun* is usually carrying the properties like *rasa* (taste)-*Kashaya* (astringent), *virya*-*shita* and quality like *laghu* (light), *dosakaya* *kapha* *pitta* *samak* (pacifying the aggravated

state of *kapha* and *pitta*) along with the action of enhancing *vata* where insufficiency of motion or *gati*.

It has been revealed after a thorough review of literatures of *ayurvedic* classics like *rasa ratna samucchaya*, *rasendra chintamani*, *rasendra sar samgraha*, *bhaisaja ratnavali*, *ayurveda sara samgraha* etc. that *nagarjunabhra* rasa as complete preparation carrying the properties related to *dosa kriya vata samaka kapha nasaka* and sometime *tridosasamak* also besides others actions like *hridya* (cardiac tonic), *valya* (strength improviser), *vrishya* (spermatogenic). It is also useful in the management of *hridroga* (cardiac disease), *sarva shula* (generalise body pain), *hrillasa* (nausea), *chardi* (vomiting), *arochaka* (anorexia), *agnimandya* (indigestion), *kshata kshaya* (decaying and degeneration) *sotha* (dropsy) *udara roga* (ascites), *vishama jwara* (malarial) *amlapitta* (hyper acidity) *arsha* (haemorrhoids), *pandu* (anaemia) *kamala* (jaundice), etc. To justify those claims of our ancestors it has been tried in this literary work to go through the cross verification of the literatures and various interesting points have been presented in tabulated form for the better understanding of readers. It is noteworthy to mention here that *maharshi charak* as an earliest treaty has contributed a lot of herbal preparations and *samshodhana* therapy for the management of disease of *trimarma* (head, heart and bladder) but nothing such metallic or inorganic preparations were there in the treatment protocol. So, in latter time contribution of *nagarjunabhra* rasa by our ancestors as a remedy against heart diseases may be called as a milestone to combat serious ailments.

2. Materials & Method

The ancient *ayurvedic* literatures of different era like *bhavaprakash nighantu*, *dhanvantari nighantu*, *rasa ratna samucchaya*, *rasa prakash sudhakar*, *bhaisajya ratnavali* etc. have been reviewed vividly with chronological order & furnishing of the same are described in the table & chart form. Eventually discussion followed by conclusion done here.

Method of preparation of medicine (*nagarjunabhra* rasa) as like *vati/guti* (tablet/pill) *kalpana*:

First, we should prepare the *sahastraputi vajra abhrak bhasma*. Then it usually triturated with *arjun twcha kwath* or *arjun twacha sattwa* for 7 days. Prepare it as pills according to dose.

The procedure of preparation of *abhrak bhasma* is as stated below-

1. Firstly *shodhana* of *abhrak* by heating to red hot and quenching into *kshira* (cow milk) for 7 times. Then trituration is done with *tanduliya drava* and *amla drava* for 8 *yama*.
2. Then *dhanyabhrak* is prepared by mixing purified *abhrak* with 1/4th part *dhanya* (paddy grains) and made it into *pottali* (bundle) and is kept immersed in *kanji* for 3 days. On 4th day it is rubbed vigorously to allow most of the fine *abhrak* particles to pass through into liquid (*kanji*). Then the liquid is filtered to collect fine particles of *abhrak*.
3. Then *dhanyabhrak* ground with *kasamarda* rasa, made into pellets, dried and closed in *sarava samputa* and applied *gajaputa* fire. This type of 1000 *putas* are given for preparation of *sahastraputi vajra abhrak bhasma*.

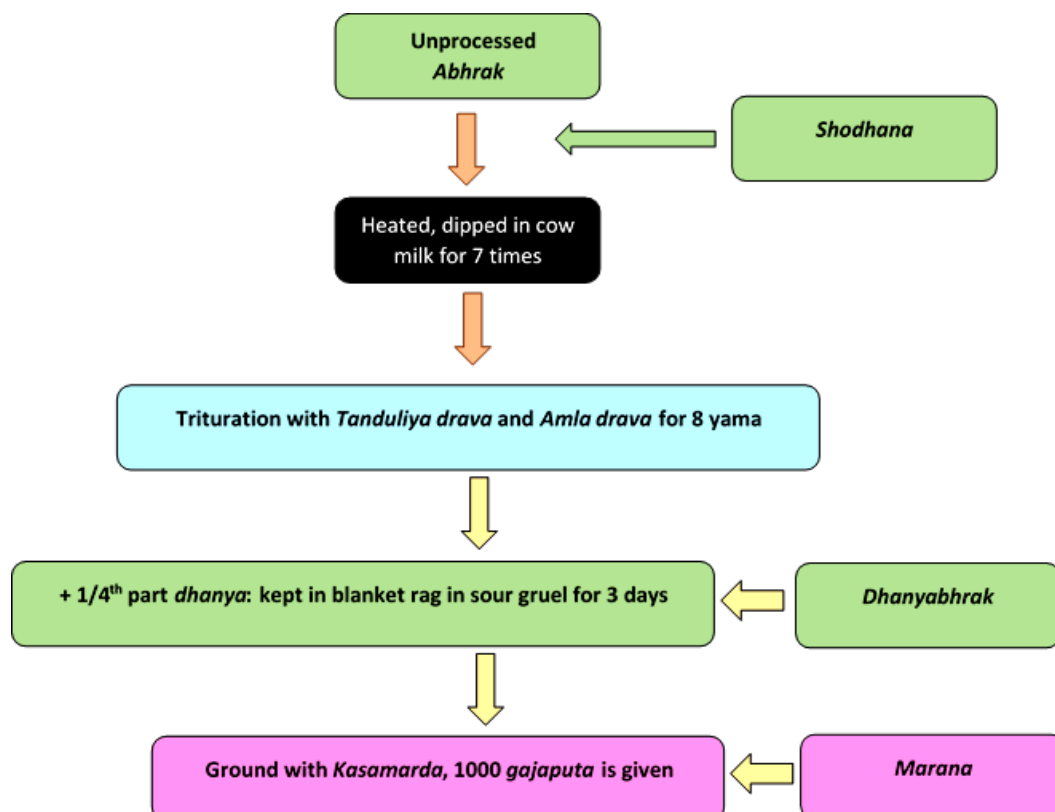


Fig 1: flow-sheet for the preparation of *shashraputa vajra abhrak*

3. Result & Observation^[1] Nagarjunabhra

Table 1: Showing the Drug name, Part used and Quantity

S. No.	Drug Name	Part used	Quantity
1	Sahashra Puta Vajra abhrak	--	Q.S.
2	Arjuna (<i>Terminalia arjuna</i> (Roxb.) W & A)	Bark	Q.S.

Table 2: Showing the pharmacodynamics (rasa, guna, virya, vipaka & dosa karma) of Abhrak as stated in various Nighantu (Ayurvedic pharmacopeia).

Rasa	Rasapanchaka	Rasendra sara samgraha (1600AD)	Bhavaprakash Nighantu ^[3] (1500-1600 AD)	Kaiyadeva Nighantuh [4] (1425 AD)	Rasaratna Samuchchayah ^[6] (1300AD)	Rasendra Chudamoni ^[5] (1200AD)
Abhrak	Rasa	-	Madhura, Kashaya	Madhura, Kashaya	Tikta	-----
	Guna	-	-----	Guru	Snigdha	Snigdha
	Virya	-	Shita	Shita	Ushma	Shita
	Vipaka	-	-----	-----	-----	-----
	Dosa karma	-	Tridoshashaman	Tridoshashaman	Vata kapha nashak	Tridoshashaman

Table 3: Showing the pharmacodynamics (rasa, guna, virya, vipaka & dosa karma) of Arjuna bark (*Terminalia arjuna* (Roxb.) W & A) as mentioned in various Nighantu (Ayurvedic pharmacopeia).

Single herbs	Rasapanchaka	Dhanvantari Nighantu ^[7] (1480 A.D)	Bhavaprakash Nighantu ^[8]	Madanapalle Nighantu ^[9] (1374 A.D)	Raj Nighantu ^[10] (1400 A.D)	Kaiyadeva Nighantuh ^[11] (1425 A.D)
Arjuna (<i>Terminalia arjuna</i> (Roxb.) W & A)	Rasa	Kashaya	Kashaya	-	Kashaya	Kashaya
	Guna	-	Laghu	-	-	-
	Virya	Ushna	Sita	Sita	Ushna	Sita
	Vipaka	-	-	-	-	-
	Dosa karma	Kapha-Pitta samaka, Vata vardhaka	Kapha-pitta shamaka	-	Kapha-Pitta samaka, Vata vardhaka	Kapha-pitta shamaka

Table 4: Showing different ingredients of Nagarjunabhra rasa used in different Rogadhikara according to different Acharya:

Sl. No.	Books	Ingredients		Rogadhikara
1	RasaYogaSagar ^[12]	Sahasraputa Vajra	Arjun Twacha sattwa	Hrid roga, Sarva Shula, Hrillasa, Chardi, Arochaka, Atisara, Agnimandya, Raktapitta, Kshata kshaya, Sotha, Udara Roga, Amlapitta, Vishama Jwara, Balya, Vrishya, Rasayana.
2	Rasendra Sara Sangraha ^[13]	√	√	Hrid roga, Sarva Shula, Hrillasa, Chardi, Arochaka, Atisara, Agnimandya, Raktapitta, Kshata kshaya, Sotha, Udara Roga, Amlapitta, Vishama Jwara, Balya, Vrishya, Rasayana.
3	Rasendra Chintamani ^[14]	√	√	Hrid roga, Sarva Shula, Hrillasa, Chardi, Arochaka, Atisara, Agnimandya, Raktapitta, Kshata kshaya, Sotha, Udara Roga, Amlapitta, Vishama Jwara, Balya, Vrishya, Rasayana.
4	Bhaisaja Ratnavali ^[15]	√	√	Hrid roga, Sarva Shula, Hrillasa, Chardi, Arochaka, Atisara, Agnimandya, Raktapitta, Kshata kshaya, Sotha, Udara Roga, Amlapitta, Vishama Jwara, Balya, Vrishya, Rasayana.
5	Rastantrasaar & Siddhaprayog Sangraha ^[16]	√	√	Hrid roga, Sarva Shula, Hrillasa, Chardi, Arochaka, Atisara, Agnimandya, Raktapitta, Kshata kshaya, Sotha, Udara Roga, Amlapitta, Vishama Jwara, Balya, Vrishya, Rasayana.
6	Ayurveda Sara Sangraha ^[17]	√	√	Hrid roga, Sarva Shula, Hrillasa, Chardi, Arochaka, Atisara, Agnimandya, Raktapitta, Kshata kshaya, Sotha, Udara Roga, Amlapitta, Vishama Jwara, Pandu, Kamala.



Fig 2: Common ingredients of *Nagarjunabhra rasa*

4. Discussion

In *ayurveda*, there are several categories of medicines like *kasthaushadhi* (herbal preparations), *rasaushadhi* (mineral preparations), *rasa-kasthousadhi* (herbo-mineral compounds) and some other preparations having organic components like *kadi* (shell), *sankha* (conch), *sringa* (horn), *asthi* (bones), etc. in the management of acute, subacute and chronic ailments, those preparations have been used by our ancestors very successfully. *Maharshy charak* has contributed a lot of preparations except metallic components in the management of the diseases of *trimarmas* (head, heart, bladder) but in 4th century AD *nagarjun* has contributed the metallic preparations specially *rasa* preparations (preparation with mercury and sulphur) to manage acute and subacute ailments. *Nagarjunabhra rasa* is such a medicine which may be taken under the category of herbo-mineral compound where *arjuna* bark (*Terminalia arjuna* (roxb.) W & a) and purified mica (*abhrak* of *vajra* variety) have been used to cure *hridroga* (heart diseases) in special and others minor ailments like *hrillas* (nausea), *chardi* (vomiting), *arochaka* (anorexia) etc. In literary review the data or rather information regarding the pharmacodynamics of *arjuna* (*Terminalia arjuna* (roxb.) W & a) have been revealed it's contain the *rasa* (taste)-*kashaya* (astringent), *guna* (quality)-*laghu* (light), *virya* (potency)-either *shita* or *ushma* and which have *dosic* action like *kapha-pitta hara*, it indicates that it could remove the *kapha* from *srotas* (minute vessels of heart) by reducing the inflammation for its *pitta nashak* effect simultaneously it has the action like *vata vardhak* means it is capable to enhance cardiac motility (contraction and dilatation) in case of low ejection fraction. *Sodhita vajra abhrak* is a *rasayana* (tonic) means it has the properties like *hridya*, *brimhaniya*, and anti-decaying etc. As the mica possessing the properties like *rasa-madhur kashaya*, so it's *brimhaniya* effect is being justified and as it carries the properties like *virya sita*, means useful against *daha* so the *pradahanasaka* effect (anti-inflammatory action) and the properties like *guru* (heavy), *snigdha* (unctuous) properties of mica is supported the claim of producing tonic effect over the cardiac muscle. As per those pharmacodynamics activity, it could be stated that *arjun* and *vajra abhrak* unitedly able to produce *pradahanashaka* (anti-inflammatory action), *sroto shodhana* (channel cleaning), *valya* (tonic), *snayu uttejak* (nerve stimulating) action over *hridaya* (heart) and could be able to provide different beneficial effect over cardiac muscles, minute vessels, nerve as well as electrical impulse of nodes.

5. Conclusion

From the above discussion it could be concluded that the drug *nagarjunabhra rasa*, composed with *arjun* bark and *vajra abhrak* has the sufficient reference in support of its beneficial

effects on cardiac muscle, vessels, nerves and nodes. It has also the efficacious role on other diseases.

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