

BRIEF REVIEW OF GANDHAKA (SULPHUR) SHODHANA

Chaitra LV*

Assistant Professor, Dept. of Rasashastra and Baishajya Kalpana, Ramakrishna Ayurvedic Medical College, Yelhanka, Bengalure, Karnataka.

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Abstract

Rasashastra is a science which deals with Metals, minerals, herbo-mineral preparation and emphasizing on various process like shodhana (purification), marana, jarana etc. process to increase the pharmacodynamics of the drug. Gandhaka (sulphur) comes under uparasa varga, it place vital role in the preparation of rasaoushadhis (metallic medicine). Saghandha jaritha or moorchitha parade (mercury) is considered as efficacious and can be used for longer duration without any complication and gandhaka is also considered as antidote for Parada. Hence requirement of shodhita Gandhaka (purified sulphur) is of large quantity. Three Methods involved for the shodhana of Gandhaka are Dalana, Swedana, Patana vidhi. Here is an attempt is made to reveal three methods and five liquid media, seven sneha dravya involved in Gandhaka shodhana.

Key words: Gandhaka; Shodhana; Sulphur; Purification.

*Address for correspondence:

Dr. Chaitra LV,
Assistant Professor,
Dept. of Rasashastra and Baishajya Kalpana,
Ramakrishna Ayurvedic Medical College,
Yelhanka, Bengalure, Karnataka – 560 064
E-mail: chaitra.lv@gmail.com

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INTRODUCTION

Rasashastra is most popular part of Ayurveda which deals with complete alchemy (lohaveeda - conversion of mercury to gold and silver, Dehaveeda - internal use of mercury for therapeutic uses). Rasa vaghbata has mentioned that rasavaidya should know about parada shodhana, parada marana, parada moorchana, Gandhaka shodhana, Gandhaka jarana, Abharaka (mica) marana,^[1] which tells about the importance of gandhaka. Gandhaka is mentioned under uparasa varga^[2] and it has been used for the preparation of Rasakalpas like khalviya, parpati, potalli, kupipakwa rasayanas, so requirement of gandhaka is on large quantity, but Gandhaka should be used only after shodhana, because it contains impurities like shilachoorna (physical impurities like stone) and visha (chemical impurities like arsenic)^[3] which causes some disorder in the body like giddiness, burning sensation, skin diseases etc.^[4] Three methods are mentioned for Gandhaka shodhana, so here an attempt was made to review methods of Gandhaka shodhana and material required for Gandhaka shodhana according to various acharyas. (Table 1)

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Three methods of Gandhaka shodhana has been mentioned in classical texts of Rasashastra like Dalana (meting and pouring any of the specified liquid media), Swedana (steaming), Patana (sublimation).

Liquid media used for Dalana, Sneha dravya used for Dalana, Quantity of Sneha and Number of dalana used for the gandhaka shodhana are mentioned in Table 2 to Table 5 respectively.

Dalana vidhi

Gogrutha has to be taken in an iron pan subjected to heat, when it melts add specified quantity of Gandhaka choorna (sulphur powder) to it. When Gandhaka completely

melts, it has to be poured through the cloth smeared with gogrutha (cow ghee) in to pot containing godugdha (cow milk). Same procedure has to be repeated for 3 times. Instead of godugdha even Brungaraja swarasa (Juice of *Eclipta alba*) can be used but procedure should be repeated for 7 times.

Yastimadhu kwatha (Decoction of *Glycyrrhiza glabra*), Aragwadha kwatha (Decoction of *Cassia fistula*), Triphala kwatha [Decoction of the combination *Terminalia chebula*, *Terminalia bellerica* and *Embllica officinalis*]^[5] etc. are the liquid media which can be used for dalana vidhi.

Gandhaka shodhana with gogrutha or bhringaraja swarasa has least remarkable difference in physico - chemical properties, Gandhaka shodhana with equal or onefourth quantity of gogrutha, same organoleptic properties are observed.^[6]

Precautions

- Asudha gandhaka should be in powder form.
- Gandhaka should be melted properly in gogrutha and in mandha agni (mild fire).
- Fresh godugdha and gogrutha should be used for each dalana.

Swedana vidhi

A pot is filled with milk, little quantity of grutha is added to milk and its opening is covered with cloth and tied to neck of the pot. Gandhaka choorna is spread on the cloth and covered by a sarava (earthen plate), joint of sarava and pot sealed with cloth smeared with Multani mitti. When the sealing (sandhibandhana) is dried, it is kept in a pit covering it to the extent that the only earthen plate is exposed. Cow dung cakes are arranged on it and fire is given (this is called Kurmaputa).

Table 1: Methods of Shodhana

Methods	R.T	R.R.S	A.P	R.S	R.S.S
Dalana	+	+	+	+	+
Swedana	+	+	+	-	+
Patana	+	-	-	-	-

Table 2: Liquid media used for Dalana

Liquid media	R.T	R.R.S	A.P	R.S	R.S.S
Godugdha	+	+	+	+	+
Brungaraja	+	+	+	-	-
Lavanadravaka	+	-	-	-	-
Yatimadhu kwatha, Aragwadha kwatha, Triphala kwatha	-	-	-	-	+

Table 3: Sneha dravya used for Dalana

Gogrutha	Acc to R.T, R.R.S, A.P, R.S, R.S.S
Taila [tila (Sesamum), Sarsapa (mustard), Eranda (castor oil) Karanja (<i>Pongamia pinnata</i>), Ballathaka (<i>Semicarpus anacardium</i>)] Jatiphala taila (<i>Myristica fragrans</i>)	According to R.T R.S.S

Table 4: Quantity of sneha

Sneha	Equal	One fourth
Gogrutha	According to R.T, R.R.S, A.P, R.S.S	According to R.S
Tila	According to R.T	-

Table 5: Number of dalana

Liquid media	R.T	R.R.S	A.P	R.S	R.S.S
Godugdha	3	1	3	3	1
Brungaraja Swarasa	7	7	7	-	-
Lavanadravaka	1	-	-	-	-

[R.T.: Rasa tarangini; R.R.S.: Rasaratna samuchaya; A.P.: Ayurveda prakasha; R.S.: Rasayanasar; R.S.S.: Rasendra Sara Sangraha]

On cooling down, set is opened and Gandhaka is collected from the pot and washed. Instead of Gogudha even triphala kwatha can be used for swedana.^[7]

Precautions

- Hole is made to neck of the pot, so that milk can be added on the day of subjecting to agni (fire).

- Sandhi bandhana should be done properly.

Patana vidhi

Gandhaka choorna is placed in damaru yantra and subjected to agni (fire) by which gandhaka will get purified.

Precaution

- Sandhibhandhana should be done properly.
- Mandagni (mild fire) should be maintained.

DISCUSSION

Gandhaka shodhana methods mentioned in classical texts of Rasashastra are Dalana, Swedana, Patana vidhi. Among these Dalanavidhi is widely adopted. In dalana vidhi godugdha and gogrutha are commonly used as shodhana dravya. Instead of godugdha even Yastimadhu kwatha, Aragwadha kwatha, Triphala kwatha can be used as a substituent.^[5] Tilataila (sesame oil), Eranda taila (oil of *Ricinus communis*), Jaipala taila (*Myristica fragrans*), Bhallathaka taila (oil of *Semecarpus anacardium* fruit),^[8] Sarsapa taila (Mustard oil), Kusumbha taila (oil of *Carthamus tinctorius*)^[9] are mentioned as a substitute for gogrutha (cow's milk). Gandhaka is having impurities shila choorna, vishatva, so preferably gogrutha and godugdha are used due to their properties like pitta shamaka, oaksatmya (suitable to a person because of regular use either it is diet or regimen), vishaghna (anti-poisonous), shita virya (cold potency), laghuguna (easily digestible). As per modern aspect gandhaka is soluble in fat and very essential for metabolism in human physiology and it may contain arsenic as a toxic substance which detoxify with hydrocarbons of gogrutha and godugdha. Swedana vidhi - Rasatarangini has mentioned to add grutha in milk but he has not specified the quantity. In Ayurveda prakasha there is a reference of, with grutha and without grutha and even mentioned kanji (rice gruel) as a substitute for ksheera (milk), Rasa Ratna Sammuchaya as not mentioned about grutha. Patanavidhi - explained only in Rasatarangini. In this method only gandhaka is used for shodhana (other materials like gogrutha and

godugdha were not used). Gandhaka shodhana with gogrutha or bhringaraja swarasa has least remarkable difference in physico-chemical properties, Gandhaka shodhana with equal or one fourth quantity of gogrutha, same organoleptic properties are observed.^[6]

CONCLUSION

Gandhaka is widely used in the preparation of Rasa kalpas, shodhana is main process in the preparation of medicines, Gandhaka should be used only after Shodhana process. Three methods are mentioned in the classical text of Rasashastra, selection of methods and liquid media will depend up on the therapeutic need of Gandhaka.

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