A CRITICAL REVIEW ON ABHIRAKA SHODHANA

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ABSTRACT

Abhraka (biotite) keeps its importance in Rasashastra as Maharasa and highly useful mineral next to Parada. It is a main mineral drug used in medicines for different clinical conditions in the Ayurveda since many years. Abhraka is mineral drug and hence always contains in various physical and chemical impurities and poisonous substances. Hence it becomes necessary to remove such impurities from it. For that Abhraka is made pure through different pharmaceutical processing like shodhana (purification) and Marana (incineration) described in classical texts of Ayurveda to convert it into therapeutically important form. The chemical changes lead during these processes which make Abhraka therapeutically suitable. Intention of my study is to review the shodhana process of Abhraka described in Ayurvedic classical texts.

Keywords: Abhraka, Ayurveda, Shodhana, Marana.

1. INTRODUCTION

Rasashastra is a special branch of Ayurveda which is evolved from the remote antiquity. It deals with such pharmacologically potent minerals and metals etc arranged under Maharasa, Sadharanarasa, Uparasa, Loha, Ratna, Visha, and Upavisha Vargas. These minerals contain different impurities and toxins. Their administration as such may prove injurious and harmful for health. To eliminate such impurities and making these mineral suitable for internal use, specific procedures like shodhana, marana and Samskaras were made during medieval period (8-10 AD).

Shodhana is important and play vital role for all Rasa dravya. Shodhana is the very first step. It aims at removing impurities and detoxifying the mineral. Then minerals can be processed further to enhance the properties of the drug. It is considered as a Samskara. For shodhana different techniques like Swedana (Vaporizations of raw drugs in certain liquid materials), Mardana (Trituration with swaras ,kashaya etc.), Patan (to distil), Avap/Dhalan (Melting solid raw drugs and dipping in cold liquid), Nirvapa (Heating solid drugs and dipping into cold liquid), Galan (Filtration), Prakshalan (Proper washing), Nimajjan (dipping), Bharjan (to fry), Sanyog (addition of drug into another drug), Vibhag (Separation of unwanted part), Shoshana (Drying) etc. are adopted. Nirvapa is crucial step of shodhana parakirya. It is used for metals with high melting point. Metal is heated red hot and then dipped into different liquids viz. cow milk, decoction of Triphala, etc. Various processes are described in the literature among them nirvapa is considered the most efficient.

Abhraka is an important mineral. Impure (ashodhit) Abhraka produces various toxic effects and hence its Shodhana is necessary. The term shodhana literally means purification. Abhraka is a mineral drug. It is hard and
2. METHODS

Present study is literary study and hence literary methods were adopted. Literature from different classical texts and modern books was reviewed.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Objectives of Shodhana

- To Purify
- To reduce toxic properties
- To enhance medicinal properties
- To convert metals and minerals into Herbomineral/Organomineral compound (Sendriytyva)
- To help in further processing of drug.

3.2. Types of Shodhana - Shodhana is of mainly two types -

3.2.1. Samanya (General)

It is generally applied for the drugs which come into one category like Maharasa, Uparasa. The drugs of the one group have some similar type of impurities. So general impurities can be removed with the help of Samanya shodhana. E.g.- Dhatu samanya shodhana.\(^1\)

3.2.2. Vishesh (Specific)

It is performed to remove specific impurity and to produce specific properties in a specific substance. E.g. - Haridra powder mixed nirgundi Swarasa for Naga and Vanga.\(^2\)

Abhraka Shodhana

Abhraka (mica) is a group of minerals that contain atoms of aluminum, Oxygen and Silicon bounded together into flat sheets. Mica is found in igneous and metamorphic rocks. Abhraka bhasma is used in diseases like Diabetes mellitus, Dermatoses, Tuberculosis, Asthma, Cough, Anemia, Colitis, Epilepsy etc. It promotes physical and mental vigour, sexual power and immunity.\(^3\) For manufacture of bhasma, shodhana is the first and an important step. Ingestion of Abhraka without proper shodhana may lead to several diseases like Kashaya, Kushtha, Pandu, Shotha, Hritpida, Agnimandhya, Parshvapida, Ashmari etc. It may act like a poison in impure form.\(^4\) In Rasa texts, various methods of Abhraka shodhana are described. Such as –

3.3.1. Shodhana by Nirvapa

- Heat the pieces of mica till they become red and dip into the decoction of Triphala or Kanji or Cow’s urine or cow’s milk. Repeat this process for seven times.\(^5\)–\(^8\)
- Same method is described in the text Ras Prakash Sudhakar\(^9\) and Rasamrita\(^10\) but here Bhringraj Swarasa is also used as a quenching media.
- Abhraka shodhana can be done by performing nirvapa process in Cow’s milk or Triphala kashaya or Badri kwatha for seven times.\(^11\)
- Heat the pieces of mica till they become red and quench into Nirgundi swarasa. Repeat this process for seven times.\(^12\)
- Vajra Abhraka is made red hot and is quenched into Cow’s milk or Badri kwatha. Process is repeated for 21 times.\(^13\)
- Red hot pieces of mica are quenched into the decoction of kola (wild variety) and the process is done for seven times.\(^14\)

3.3.2. Shodhana by Nirvapa and Mardana

- According to Sharangdhar Samhita and Rasendra Chintamani\(^15\) - Do Krishna vajra abhraka red hot and quench into Cow’s milk. After this, triturate the separated abhraka patras with Tandulyak Swarasa and Nimbu Swarasa for 24 hours.
According to Ayurved Prakash - Make abhraka red hot and dip it in cow’s milk for seven times. After this, triturate it with amla dravya and tanduliyak swarasa for one day with each dravya separately.  

According to Anandkanda - Vajra abhraka is made red hot and is quenched into Arkakshira, Kanji, Cow’s urine, Triphala kwatha and Meghnad swarasa. Nirvapa is done in each dravya for three times separately. After this, separated abhraka patras are triturated with Meghnad swarasa and Amla dravya.


According to Rasa Tarangini - Heat Vajra abhraka till it turns red and quench into kanji. Do this process for seven times and then triturate it with any of amla dravya for one day.

Same method as described in Ayurved Prakash. For nirvapa, quenching media should be taken in such amount so that red hot abhraka piece/sheets completely dipped in it and it should be changed each time.

3.3.3. Others methods

According to Rasendra Sara Sangraha - Triturate abhraka with Agastya-pushpa swarasa and form a bolus. Keep that bolus inside jimikand and put it underground at the place where Cow’s live for one month. By this method, abhraka becomes mridu and liquid like Parada.

According to Rasararnava - Do swedana of separated abhraka patras with the help of dolayantra in Agastya-pushpa rasa, Kumud rasa, Kevanch, Tinduk, Jambilri nimbu, Meghnad, Punarnava, Yavachincha, Kanji, Karvira, Vasasurana, Bhumyamalaki, Amavetas, Meshashringi, Rabbit’s fat, Aadraka swarasa, Shami rasa, Vajravalli, Kshirakanda, Maricha, Rai, Tulsi rasa/ kwatha for three days.

According to Rasa Prakash Sudhakar - Do swedana of Vajra abhraka with the help of Sthali yantra in Kanji, Kulattha kwatha, Takra and Cow’s urine for one day in each dravya separately.

4. CONCLUSION

It can be concluded that among different methods for Abhraka shodhana, repeated nirvapa procedure followed by trituration with suitable media is the best. All the liquid medias act as a cooling media during the process of nirvapa. Repeated process of heating and quenching influences the structural distortion and the development of stress induced cracks and spallation of the micaceous plates. At the same time, the toxic elements are leached out from mica to the quenching media through an ion exchange process. Step of trituration/levitation enhance the medicinal property, remove residual toxic effect and make the drug suitable for further processing by reducing particle size.

5. REFERENCES


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### Table No. 1: Showing Medias used in Nirvapa process in Abhraka shodhana

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The table lists various media names and their usage in the Nirvapa process, denoted by '+' or '-'.