

REVIEW OF PUNARNAVA & ITS MEDICINAL IMPORTANCE

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ABSTRACT

Ayurveda is essentially the science of healthy living; it is as much concerned with the normal as with the abnormal or pathological. Being essentially a science of healing, it concentrates on what is required to lead a healthy, normal life. It deals not only with what is to be done when one falls, but also with what should be done to maintain one's health and vigour. Ayurveda contains details about body care and the various food and drinks which promote health. Even though references to the principles of medicine are found in most of the Vedas, the main body of Ayurveda is found in the fourth Veda - the Atharva Veda. However, even though Ayurveda is part of Atharva Veda. It contains the description of various diseases and their aetiology, and recommends the correct diet and behavior regimen to counter these diseases. Mythology states^[1] which tells that Lord Brahma, the creator, imparted the knowledge of Ayurveda to Shri Prajapati Daksha who, in turn, passed it on to the Shri Ashwinikumara then proffered this knowledge to Lord Indra. Lord Dhanwantari was instructed by Lord Indra to spread, this invaluable science of longevity on the earth. Acharya Sushruta, a renowned surgeon and student of Lord Dhanwantari, wrote his famous compendium on surgery the Sushruta Samhita. To Acharya Charaka, who probably lived some time between the second century B.C. and the second century A.D., goes the credit for the famous treatise on general medicine, the Charaka samhita and Sushruta Samhita are the two ancient treatises on which Ayurveda is based. According to ancient Indian Philosophy, the Universe is composed of five basic elements or Pancha bhutas :

- Prithvi (Earth),
- Ap (Water),
- Teja (Fire),
- Vayu (Air)
- Akash (Ether).

Everything in the Universe, including food and the bodies we possess, is derived from these bhutas. A fundamental harmony therefore exists between the macrocosm (the Universe) and the Microcosm (the Individual). As already stated, the human being is comparable to the cosmos, being a minuscule image of the Great entity.

INTRODUCTION

In chikitsa chatuspada, the dravya (drug) has been considered as essential one, among the four basic factors of the treatment. Acharya Charaka has mentioned that the efficacy of any drug depends upon the nature, habitat, preservation and administration etc.^[2] Herbal drugs have been used since ancient times as medicines for the treatment of a range of diseases. Medicinal plants have played a key role in world health. In spite of the great advances observed in modern medicine in recent decades, plants still make an important contribution to health care. **Punarnava** literally means 'bring back to

life' or 'renewer'. It is a creeper that grows wild in India and Brazil throughout year but dries during the summer. It bears small fleshy leaves, small reddish pink flowers and fruits in winter. It is bitter in taste and has cooling effect. It has very high medicinal value. Similar to its name it rejuvenates the whole body i.e. with routine use of Punarnava a fellow become young again – full of vigor and vitality. Punarnava corrects the digestive system, alleviates fluid retention and very useful in managing heart diseases. Punarnava also benefits in anemia, hernia and respiratory distress. Punarnava can also be taken in liver problems and managing lipids and cholesterol in healthy limits. Punarnava is well known

drug in the Ayurvedic therapeutics, being widely used against various disease conditions. It is an important and easily available drug found throughout India. The identity of the drug has been well documented since Samhita period. The plant being a part of nature, Ayurvedic scholars have given position to them. Charak has said that for the successful management of the disease, it is essential to select proper medicine (Ca. Su. 20/20). Punarnava is used as a Rasayana in Ayurveda, it helps to rejuvenate and heal the body. Furthermore, it comes with hepato-protective, immuno-modulatory, anti-cancer, anti-diabetic, hypoglycemic, anti-fibrinolytic, anti-inflammatory, diuretic, antibacterial, anti-oxidant, anti-asthmatic, and anticonvulsant properties.

Classical review of drug

- 1) Charaka Samhita:** Acharya Charaka have categorised Punarnava as swedopaga^[3] (an adjunct to sweating therapy), anuvasanupaga (an adjunct to oleating therapy), kaashara (anti-tussive) and vayasthapana (rejuvenator). Its mool (root) has been written to be used with dahi maanda in kushtha (skin disorder).
- 2) Sushruta Samhita:** Acharya Sushruta has categorised this plant in vidharigandhadi gana^[4] and shaak varga. In this Vedic text, punarnava mool has been told to be used in pittaj ashmari (renal stones); milk boiled with root, Shotha (anti-inflammatory); mool kwatha with shunthi, Mooshaka vish (rat bite), mool (root) of shveta variety with honey), Alarka visha (bite of a rabied dog); mool (root) of shveta variety with dhatura seed powder and water and in jvara (all types of fever); ksheerapaka of mool of shveta (white) variety.
- 3) Ashtanga Sangraha:** In this Ayurvedic text Punarnava is included in Kaashara mahakshaya^[5] (as antitussive) and Vayasthapana mahakshaya (decoction effective as rejuvenator). Punarnava mool (root) is quoted to be effective in Madatya (alcoholism); Ghee to be prepared with decoction of punarnava, milk and madhuyashti kalka, as Rasayana (rejuvenator), Punarnava powder is to be used. The plant has also been included as Shaak (as vegetable diet).
- 4) Bhavprakash Nighantu^[6]:** This is one of the most authentic texts of Dravyaguna written in 16th century A.D. In this text the two varieties of Punarnava have been illustrated separately. These are shveta (white) and rakta (red) punarnava. Shveta punarnava has its synonyms as shvetmoola, shothaghni, and dirghapatrika. It is said to have katu (pungent) and kashaya (astringent) taste and is used in pandu (anaemia), shotha (inflammation), decreased digestive fire, udaroga (abdominal disorders) and for the elimination of vayu (flatus), vish (toxins), kapha (phlegm). Rakta Punarnava has its synonyms as raktpushpa, shilatika, shothaghni, ksudra varshabhu, varshketu and kathillaka. It is constituted by tikta (bitter) rasa, has katu vipaka and is sheetal (coolant), light and increases vata in the

body. It is malasangrahaka (astringents) in action and is beneficial in kapha, pitta and rakta disorders. Karvellaka (bitter gourd) and rakta punarnava (red variety) have both been named as kathillaka in Anekārtha naam varga. It has been told to be used in Sanhdivaata (Osteoarthritis); Punarnava kwatha with kalka of kapur and shunthi to be given for seven days, and in various eye disorders.

- 5) Haarit Samhita^[7]** kwatha of punarnava mool has been told to be effective in nidranasha (insomnia).
- 6) Sodhal Nighantu^[8],** Acharya Sodhal has described its uses in yonishool (vaginal pain), delayed parturition and vishvikara.

MODERN REVIEW

In modern period, the crude drugs have extensively been classified and studied according to their taxonomy. In view of this classification, the Punarnava is categorised as under; Kingdom: Plantaeae Order: Caryophyllales Family: Nyctaginaceae Genus: Boerhavia Species: Boerhavia diffusa The other synonyms of this drug are Boerhavia adscendens, Boerhavia caribaea, Boerhavia coccinea, Boerhavia paniculata and Boerhavia viscosa. Reference is also found that there are six species which are found in India: Boerhavia diffusa, Boerhavia chinensis, Boerhavia rependa, Boerhavia repens, Boerhavia erecta and Boerhavia rubicunda. This plant is found throughout the warmer parts of the country up to the height of 2000 m in the Himalayan area. It is also found grown in the wastelands and fields after the rainy season.^[10]

DRUG REVIEW

Biological name: Boerhavia diffusa

Kingdom: Plantae

Division: Magnoliophyta

Class: Magnoliopsida

Order: Caryophyllales

Family: Nyctaginaceae

Genus: Boerhavia 1.3

Common Names: -santhi, moto satado, ataki, sanadika, gonajali, sanadika, sothaghna, etc.

- Leaves:-leaves are small with whitish on the lower surface and upper green.
- Fruits:-fruits with five coloring glandular
- Medicinal Uses^[9] :-This plants root is useful. The drug punarnava made up by this plants leaves and seeds. This drug consists the alkaloid. Real use of this drug is diuretic but large dose can bring regarding vomiting.

Therapeutic Uses

- Herb is used as diuretic
- Expectorant
- Stomachic
- Prescribed in the treatment of jaundice
- Given in the loss of digestive power
- Enlargement of spleen
- Used for relieving abdominal pains

CONCLUSION

Ayurveda is itself a library of knowledge which inspires each of us to lead a healthy and quality life. With marked changes in the environmental conditions, the effects on the body are well observed as physic-mental disorders. Looking into these challenges, punarnava is one of the potent herbal drugs that are being used nowadays as single or mixed herbal and herbal-mineral formulation. The traditional texts gives us the knowledge about its various properties and formulations being used in various conditions like inflammations, renal stones, anaemia, jaundice, eye diseases, joint pains etc. The modern research has also proved the efficacy of roots in not only the said disorders but also as antidiabetic, antistress, adoptogenic, immunopotentiator and as antioxidant in various models. Studies have shown that leaves have nutritive components like Vitamin C, sodium and calcium due to which it can be considered as an effective component of the diet. Further studies can be aimed for the analysing the effect of punarnava in of diseases like insomnia, delayed parturition and Yonishool (vaginal pain) for which the references are available in ancient texts. Not only this, but the scope of this drug also lies in the fact that more formulations with other herbs and minerals can be formulated and tested which can prove to be beneficial in animal and human life as well.

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