

Review Article on Bhedaneeya Mahakashaya

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ABSTRACT

Bhedaneeya Mahakashaya is referenced in Charaka Samhita, specifically in the fourth chapter of Sutrasthana. The term "Bhedana" translates to "Breakthrough." This formulation consists of potent purgatives that transform solid waste (Mala), whether Baddh or Abaddh Mala, into liquid form and facilitate its expulsion through the Guda marg. This process is referred to as Bhedana. According to Charaka Samhita, each Mahakashaya comprises ten Dravyas. Bhedaneeya Mahakashaya includes those substances which enhance excretion and ranks fourth among fifty Mahakashayas listed. Essentially, these drugs eliminate imbalanced Doshas by displacing them from the body. Treatment approaches are classified into Shamana and Shodhana types. Shodhana involves the removal of imbalanced Doshas from the system. Virechana represents a specific Shodhana method under Panchakarma that incorporates purgation. Hence, the Dravyas classified within Bhedaniya Mahakashaya are perceived as Shodhniya Dravyas. This study aims to provide insight into Bhedaneeya Mahakashaya Dravyas discussed in Shadvirechana Shataashriteeya Adhyaya concerning their morphological characteristics as well as pharmacognostical and pharmacological analyses.

KEYWORDS: Bhedana, Mahakashaya, Shodhana, Virechan, Purgatives.

INTRODUCTION

Mahakashayas represent a remarkable concept introduced by Acharya Charaka. In the Shad Virechana Shataashriteeya Adhyaya, Acharya Charaka describes two hundred seventy-six drugs organized into fifty groups containing ten drugs each for Kashayas preparation. Among these groups, Bhedaniya Mahakashaya is positioned fourth. The term "Bhadana" signifies breaking apart or loosening substances. Commentators on Sharangadhara Samhita suggest that both Baddha and Abaddha Mala are eliminated through Adhomarga (the lower pathway), signifying the essence of Bhedana. Drugs exhibiting drastic purgative properties by ejecting Mala and Dosha from the body are termed as Bhedana Dravya. they convert Pind Mala (solid waste) to liquid form for easier elimination from the system.

The classification of these Mahakashayas divides them into ten categories: the first and third have six Mahakashayas each; while the second and fourth contain four each; the fifth has seven; and categories six through ten comprise five each respectively. These Mahakashayas

serve both external cleansing and internal purification purposes. Sharngadhara describes four types of Virechana karma: Anulomana, Sramsana, Bhedana, and Rechana.

Bhedaniya Mahakashaya encompasses ten specific drugs utilized for treating chronic conditions as well as for purgative purposes across various disorders. Each drug possesses unique Rasa (taste), Guna (qualities), Veerya (potency), and Vipaka (post-digestive effect) while demonstrating their individual Bhadaniyakarma on bodily functions through breaking down hard or constipated waste for smooth expulsion.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study focuses on drugs categorized under Charaka's Bhedaneeya Mahakashaya described in Shadvirechana Shatashriteeya Adhyaya.

Table no. 1:- Drugs of Bhedaneeya Mahakashya

S.No.	Drug	Bot. Name	Family
1	Suvah	<i>Operculina terpeethum</i>	Convolvulaceae
2	Arka	<i>Calotropis procera</i>	Asclepiadaceae
3	Urubuka	<i>Ricinus communis</i>	Euphorbiaceae
4	Agnimukhi	<i>Gloriosa superba</i>	Liliaceae
5	Chitra	<i>Baliospermum montanum</i>	Euphorbiaceae
6	Chitraka	<i>Plumbago zeylanica</i>	Plumbaginaceae.
7	Chirabilva	<i>Holoptelia integrifolia</i>	Ulmaceae
8	Shankhini	<i>Euphorbia dracunculoides</i>	Euphorbiaceae
9	Sakuladini	<i>Picrorhiza kurroa</i>	Scrophulariaceae
10	Svarnakshiri	<i>Argemone Mexicana</i>	Papaveraceae

Probable Mode of Action of Bheedniya Drugs

Bhedena refers to a process that dismantles accumulated Doshas within the body prior to expelling waste downwardly. The constituent Dravya primarily align with Agni and Vayu mahabhoota characteristics; they act as stimulating purgatives with Ushna (hot), Ruksha (dry), and Tikshna (sharp) qualities that induce irritation in intestinal mucosa leading to increased peristalsis while reducing water absorption in intestines resulting in watery stool accompanied by cramps.

Brief Description Of Drugs

Suvaha/Trivritta (*Operculina terpeethum*)



Operculina turpeethum (Trivrit) is a perennial, twining climber of family Convolvulaceae with long, winged, pubescent stems exuding milky juice. Recognized as an effective Virechna Dravya noted

for its significant laxative properties attributed largely to turpethin's presence. Charaka emphasized Trivrita as the best herb for Sukha Virechana. In Kalpasthna different formulation of the Trivrita are described. He further explained that it is of two kind viz., Aruna and Shyama. The second variety is considered to relieve even severe constipation.

Arka (*Calotropis procera*)



Calotropis procera (Arka) is an erect, soft-wooded shrub or small tree, usually 1–4 m tall, with corky, fissured bark and densely tomentose, milky stems. Used extensively for both Vamana and Virechama applications with key properties linked to its Ushna Veerya inducing effects. Charaka described Arka among the Kshiri Dravyasin the first chapter of the Sutra Sthana for the purpose of Vamana as well as Virechana. Sushruta and Vagbhata have mentioned a group with its name viz., Arkadigana. Apart from Virechana it is extensively used in the treatment of Kushtha and Grahani.

Urubuk/Eranda (*Ricinus communis*)



Ricinus communis (Eranda) is a fastgrowing, semi-woody shrub or small tree, typically 2–6 m high, with stout, often reddish to purple stems. Noted for its Vrishya and Vatahara attributes alongside acting against Amavata due to castor oil's efficacy recognized by regulatory bodies. Charaka attributed Vrishya and Vatahara properties to Erand Moola. Bhavamishra mentioned castor oil as the prime drug for Amavata. Sushruta also attributed Vata Sashmana and Adhobhagahara action of Erand. When the Castor oil is taken, it is converted into ricinoleic acid which is the active laxative agent. It directly acts on intestinal mucosa or nerve plexus and alters water and electrolyte secretion. Castor oil is preferred when more complete evacuation is required.

Agnimukhi/Langali (*Gloriosa superba*)



Gloriosa superba (Agnimukhi) is a tuberous climbing herb of family Colchicaceae with flexuous, often branched stems bearing tendril-like leaf tips for support. Its use necessitates purification due to toxicity associated with colchicine present within it. The Bhedan action of Langali is due to the Tikshna, SaraGuna and Ushna Veerya. The colchicine which is a major component of *Gloriosa* is mainly responsible for toxic effect. The toxins present have an inhibitory action on cell division, and depressant action on the bone marrow. Just after Ingestion of tubers, the symptom develops within two hours; vomiting, numbness and severe effects on throat as well as diarrhoea leading to dehydration. Traditionally, water extract of *Gloriosa superba* tuber has been used as an abortifacient.

Chitra / Danti (*Baliospermum montanum*)



Baliospermum montanum (Chitra) is an erect, much-branched shrub 0.6–1.8 m tall of family Euphorbiaceae with reddish or purplish, softly pubescent young stems. Known primarily for its purgative action although literature presents conflicting identifications concerning related plants. Charaka quoted it as the example for Prabhava Dravyas with Chitraka. Chitra of the Bhedniya Mahakashaya is considered as Danti by Chakrapani. There exists some controversy on the identification of the plant with the Dravanti or Badi Danti, Jayapala. Kaideva described Danti and Dravanti together as two varieties of Danti. Its root is considered as purgatives and is extensively used in Virecana Karma. Due to Tikshna, Sara in Guna and Ushna in Veerya, Danti acts as purgative Dravya.

Chitraka (*Plumbago zeylanica*)



Plumbago zeylanica (Chitraka) a straggling or climbing evergreen shrub with slender, much-branched, woody base and herbaceous upper stems. Charaka used the term Chitra-Chitraka together under Bhedaniya Mahakashya. The root is considered superior owing to its medicinal prowess though detailed studies on its pharmacology remain limited. *Plumbago zeylanica* is nowadays considered as original drug source for Chitraka and its root is used for medicinal purposes. The pharmacological properties of Chitraka are Katu in Rasa, Katu in Vipaka and Ushna in Veerya. Its Bhedaniya karma is unknown as mentioned by Bhavaprakash. Roots of Chitraka are best appetite stimulant (Deepana), digestive (Pachana) and best remedy in anus inflammation, piles and abdominal pain.

Chirabilva (*Holoptelia integrifolia*)



Holoptelea integrifolia (Chirabilva) is a large, deciduous tree of family Ulmaceae reaching 18–24 m, with grey, rough, fissured bark. Properties include antiviral actions coupled with ongoing research suggesting potential anticancer capabilities. Chirabilva is a controversial drug and mentioned in Lakhniaya and Bhedniya groups. *Holoptelia integrifolia* is now taken for Chirabilva. Ethno-medically, the leaves and stem bark of this plant have been used by tribes as antiviral, antioxidant, antimicrobial, abortifacient preparations and in the management of cancer.

Shankhini (*Euphorbia dracunculoides*)



Euphorbia dracunculoides (Shankhini) is an annual or short-lived herb 15–45 cm tall with much-branched, often reddish, glabrous stems exuding milky latex. Identified species demonstrate rich antioxidant activities alongside traditional uses linking it back to rheumatism treatments. Saptala-Shankhani both Dravyas are described in Kalpasthana by Charaka. But only Shankhani is mentioned in Bhedniya Mahakashya. It is enlisted under controversial drug. *Euphorbia dracunculoides* (Euphorbiaceae) is identified as Shankhani and its seeds are usable part.

Shakuladani /Kutaki (Picrorhiza kurroa)



Picrorhiza kurroa (Katuki / Sakuladini) is a small, perennial, stoloniferous herb of family Plantaginaceae forming tufted rosettes from a creeping rhizome. Primarily leveraged against pancreatic issues while holding hepatoprotective benefits proven via clinical trials. The Bhedana karma of Kutaki is due to its Prabhava. Kutaki possesses surface lowering action. The drug due to surface lowering action facilitates penetration into the faecal mass thus soften it; which scientifically supports the Bhedana action mentioned in Ayurveda for Kutaki.

Swarnakshiri (Argemone maxicana)



Argemone mexicana (Svarnakshiri) is a spiny, branching annual herb 30–150 cm tall with bluish-green, glaucous stems exuding yellow latex. Noted controversies exist around this drug particularly regarding adulteration within market contexts affecting medicinal reliability based on sourcing practices. *Argemone maxicana* is not original Swarnakshiri. It is the substitute/adulterant of Swarnakshiri. The root and seeds of *Argemone maxicana* shows Bhedana Karma.

Table no. 2:-Rasa Panchaka of Bhedaniya Dravya

S.No.	Drug	Rasa	Guna	Virya	Vipaka
1	Suvah	Tikta, Katu	Laghu, Ruksha	Ushna	Katu
2	Arka	Katu, Tikta	Laghu, Ruksha, Tikshna	Ushna	Katu
3	Urubuka	Madhur, Kashaya	Guru, Snigdha	Ushna	Madhur
4	Agnimukhi	Tikta, Katu	Laghu, Tikshna	Ushna	Katu

5	Chitra	Katu	Tikshna, Laghu	Ushna	Katu
6	Chitraka	Katu	Laghu, Ruksha	Ushna	Katu
7	Chirabilva	Tikta, Kashaya	Laghu, Ruksha	Ushna	Katu
8	Shankhini	Tikta, Katu	Laghu	Ushna	Katu
9	Sakuladini	Tikta	Laghu, Ruksha	Sheeta	katu
10	Svarnakshiri	Tikta, Katu	Laghu, Ruksha	Ushna	Katu

Table no. 3:- Part Used and Phytochemical Constitution

S.No	Drug	Part Used	Phytochemical Present
1	<i>Suvah</i>	<i>Mula, Twak</i>	Alpha And Beta Turpethins, Turpethinic Acid, Scopoletin etc.
2	<i>Arka</i>	<i>Mula, Twak and Kshir</i>	Calotropin, Proceroside, Proceragenin etc.
3	<i>Urubuka</i>	<i>Beej Tail</i>	Arachidic, Ricinolic, Hydrocyanic And Uric Acid etc
4	<i>Agnimukhi</i>	Tuberous Root	Colchicina, Puteolin, Beta-Sitosterol, Cornigerina, Bechuanina etc
5	<i>Chitra</i>	<i>Mula, Beeja</i>	Baliospermim Montanin, Axillarenic Acid etc.
6	<i>Chitraka</i>	<i>Mula</i>	Chitranona, Plumbagin, Plumbagic Acid etc.
7	<i>Chirabilva</i>	<i>Twak (Stem)</i>	Hexacosanol, Friedelin, Betasitosterol etc.
8	<i>Shankhini</i>	Whole plant	Diterpene esters, triterpinoids, flavonoids etc.
9	<i>Sakuladini</i>	<i>Mula</i>	Kutkiol, Kutkisterol, Kutkin, Picrorhizin, picroside 1&2 etc.
10	<i>Svarnakshiri</i>	<i>Mula, seed</i>	Rich in alkaloid, oil, berberine, flavonoids, phenolic compound etc.

DISCUSSION

Drugs outlined within Dashemani from Charaka Samhita are categorized based upon their inherent karmic properties. Wherein Bhedaniya Mahakshaya constitutes a pivotal segment marked by expelling accumulated Mala effectively downwards. Embodying distinct morphological classifications spanning herbs to shrubs along with climbing varieties characterized by unique phytochemical components that stimulate gut mucosa. Further it induces contraction of the intestinal smooth muscles and increases the secretion by irritating the mucous membrane of the gastrointestinal tract as well as its motility which leads to purgation.

CONCLUSION

Most constituents found in Bhedaniya Mahakshaya showcasing varied tastes accompanied by pungent or bitter profiles leading towards mechanisms inducing intestinal irritability ultimately. Resulting in enhanced stool fluidity confirming historical claims surrounding their efficacious roles detailed throughout Ayurvedic scriptures. From an Ayurvedic pharmacodynamics perspective, the predominance of Uṣṇa Vīrya, Tikṣṇa, Sūkṣma, and Laghu Guṇa among the constituents of Bhedanīya Mahākāṣāya explains their efficacy in overcoming obstruction and enhancing gastrointestinal motility. Because of the strong and penetrating nature of Bhedana action, it is crucial to choose drugs judiciously, determine proper dosage, and tailor their use to an individual's Doṣha, Prakṛti, and Bala. Further experimental and clinical research is needed to validate traditional descriptions, standardize formulations, and evaluate their safety and effectiveness through modern scientific approaches.

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