



KANKUSTHA: A CONTROVERSIAL DRUG

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Received on: 08/02/12 Revised on: 19/04/12 Accepted on: 06/05/12

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ABSTRACT

In Rasashastra one can come across certain controversies regarding the identification of Rasashastra dravyas namely Chapala, Vimala, Vaikranta, Agnijara, Kampillaka and Kankustha.

Kankustha, one of the controversial drugs, is classified under Uparasa. Different opinions are given about this drug. Dalhana says that this is the exudates of SwarnaKshiri (*Argemone mexicana*). According to Baluki, this is an ore of Vanga (Tin), Rasavagbhata opines that this is the meconium of the newborn Elephant and according to some Acharyas this is the Umbilical cord of the new born Horse. In Ayurveda it is used for Vrana, Udavarta, Arsha, Amavata and Jalodhara. In this paper, controversies about Kankustha, collection, different synonyms, varieties, shodhana procedure, dose, anupana, indications and different Yogas containing Kankustha has been discussed.

Keywords: Kankustha, Peetarasa, Shodhana, Virechana.

INTRODUCTION

Controversies are the unexplored aspect of a Science. The Word Controversy refers to a confusion or unauthenticity or unjustified versions of subjects. There are different

references in Ayurvedic texts indicating different substances under the same name Kankustha which is classified under Uparasa¹. The different thoughts about this drug by different Acharyas are mentioned below.

SNo	Author/Reference	Kankustha Drug
1	Acharya Dalhana	Swarnakshiri drug/ <i>Argemone mexicana</i>
2	Baluki	Ore (Mineral) of Vanga (Tin)
3	Rasarnava	Coral, as the colour and Luster are same
3	Rasavagbhata	Meconium of the new born elephant
4	Vaidya Pandit SaligramaShastry	Mrudhdhara Shrunga
5	Yadavaji Trikamji	Plant Revandachini (Rhubarb)
6	Dattatreya Ananta Kulkarni	Exudates of Gamboze tree.
7	Ayurveda Prakasha	Faeces of the new born horse

- According to Dalhana Swarnakshiri is considered as Kankustha, here the root of an herb is supposed to be as Kankustha, but the latex not the root of this plant is purgative. Moreover the latex is white in colour not yellow. Thus it cannot be called as Kankustha.
- Vidruma (Coral)² and ore of Vanga do not contain the virechaka properties.
- Mriddarashringa³ is categorized under Sadharana rasa and is the upadhatu of lead, from its extraction lead can be obtained, so it cannot be Kankustha.
- Though it is said that the faeces of a newly born horse⁴ and elephant and umbilical cord of a newly born horse, both have a purgative property, it is not in practice to use these substances as a purgative and not also proved. So these two substances cannot be called as Kankustha.
- The resin collected from the bark of Mysore Gambos tree (*Garcinia morella*) gets a rod like shape (Nalika) and when resin is in liquid state, it contains yellowish black flacks (Renuka). Hence this resin consists of both the forms i.e. Nalika and Renuka as mentioned in the texts. Moreover it is strong purgative thus it can be suitably called as Kankustha.⁵

Vernacular Names

Sanskrit: Kankustha

Hindi: Revand cini

Kannada, Telugu, Tamil: Revala Cinni

English: Ruhbarb, Mysore gamboze.

Synonyms

It has many synonyms like, Kakakustha, Varanga, Kolavaluka, Talakustha, Teeksha dugdhika, Rangadayuka, Rechaka, Viraanga, Swarnakshir, Hemavati, Shodhana.

Utpatti Sthana

Cambodia, Singapore, Malaysia, Burma, Indonesia, Thailand, West- Bengal, Karnataka, Malabar and Himalayan Regions in India.

Varieties

It is of two types 1) Nalika 2) Renuka

a) Nalika: This variety is yellowish in colour, lustrous, heavy, smooth and said to best variety

b) Renuka: this type is blackish yellow in colour, light in weight, has no satva and hence it is not used

Properties

Rasa - Tikta, Katu

Varya- Ushna

Guna- Teekshna, Ushna

Sparsha- Snigdha

Karma- Atirechana (Drastic Purgatives), Varnakaraka⁶

Shodhana Procedure

According to Rasaratna Samuchchaya⁷ Kankustha is purified by processing it with the decoction of dry ginger-Shunti (*Zingiber officinale*) for 3 times.

According to Rasatarangini⁸ powder of Kankustha is rubbed with Tandulodaka for 3 times.

According to Rasamanjari⁹ Kankustha is suspended in kanji in Dola yantra and subjected to shodhana for 3 hours.

Effects

The astringent property of dry ginger reduces the purgative property of Kankustha.

Satvathana

Since it is in a Satvarupa (extract form) Satvathana etc. processes are not indicated for Kankustha.¹⁰

Matra (Dose)

According to R.R.S -Shudha Kankustha- 1 yava along with grahi drugs for purgation or else it may cause overpurging

Fatal Dose

If it is given along with betel leaves and nuts, leads drastic purgation, can kill an individual.

Antidote

In order to nullify the over purging caused by Kankustha, one has to repeatedly use Barbarimoola Kwatha (Decoction of the root of *Acacia Arabica*) added with equal quantity of Jeeraka (cumin seeds) and Soubhagya (dewatered Pyroborate).¹¹

Indications

Vrana, Udavartana, Gulma, Pleehodara, Arsha , Amavata, Kathodar and Krimi

Yogas containing Kankustha

Vishista Yogas

Peetarasa: It is a specific preparation of Kankustha in which Rasakarpura is added with equal quantity of Kankustha, ground to fine powder and preserved. This is given in dose of 5-10 mg in Vataleshmaka jwara. (Ref- Ayurvedic formulary part-I Govt of A.P)

Samanya Yogas

- Udavartahara Ghrita
- Jyotishmana Rasa
- Dhanwantri Ghita
- Dhanawantari Rasa
- Mrut Sanjivini Rasa
- Shothodarari Louha (Rasa)

CONCLUSION

Thus based on the appearance, physical properties, varieties and actions it can be concluded that the resin collected from the bark of Mysore gambosse tree (*Garcinia morella*) is Kankustha. Even according to standard nomenclature of Ayurvedic medicinal plants CCRA and S, New Delhi 1999, *Garcinia morella* Desr is to be taken for Kankustha¹².

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