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CHARAKOKTA SNEHOPAGA MAHAKASHAYA AND ITS UTILITY IN CLINICAL PRACTICE: AN ANALYTICAL REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

Panchakarma therapy detoxifies cells and body tissues, is beneficial in health and diseases and is a part of daily and seasonal regimens. Before subjecting a patient to *Panchakarma, Snehana* and *Swedana* are essential. *Snehana* and *Swedana* are also curative methods in certain diseases and prolong vitality and life. The human being is considered the essence of *Sneha*. It is also believed that the *Prana* or life is dependent on this *Sneha Tattva* in our body**.** *Snehana*, or Oleation Therapy, is an essential treatment procedure that prepares the body to receive specialised *Panchakarma* treatment. The fourth chapter of *Charaka Samhita Sutra Sthana* (*Shadvirechanashatashritiya Adhyaya*) details fifty Mahakashaya used in various diseases for external or external or internal use according to the need. *Snehopaga* is a group of drugs that help promote unctuousness or aid the oleation therapy. This work is intended to throw limelight on the Ayurvedic and pharmacological properties of *Snehopaga Mahakashaya* and its possible clinical use in different modes of administration.

Keywords: *Snehopaga. Mahakashaya, Dashemani, Snehana,* Anti-oxidant, Anti-inflammatory

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda emphasises removing body impurities, like metabolic waste products, toxins, and undigested food from various tissues and organs before treating any disease or applying measures for preservation, protection, and rejuvenating health. A physician should know the unique/selective actions of various preparations meant to remove impurities from the body. The 4th chapter of *Charaka Samhita Sutra Sthana* provides comprehensive information about herbs and their classification by their specific activity and utility, medicinal preparations for evacuation, and specific therapeutic regimens such as purifying process – *samshodhana* -treatment modality based on the principle of removal of vitiated doṣa and pacification process (*samshamana*).

Snehana, or Oleation Therapy, is an essential treatment procedure that prepares the body to receive specialised *Panchakarma* treatment (five internal bio-cleansing therapies). It involves using medicated oils, ghee and herbs internally and externally for three to seven days. *Snehana* is crucial as it destabilises the toxins and *doshas* in the body, thereby facilitating their effortless expulsion during evacuation. References regarding *Snehana* and *Snehopaga Mahakashaya* were collected from various textbooks, published research papers and previous works. The concept of *Dashemani* and its practical utility was analysed and studied in detail.

Concept of *Snehana*

Snehanan snehaviṣhyandamārdavakledakārakam |

The substance which induces *Sneha* (unctuousness, oiliness), *Vishyanda* (liquefaction), *Mardavata* (smoothness) and *Kledata* (moistness or dampness) on consumption (or application) is called *Sneha*. The measures adopted to bring about these actions in the body are known as *Snehana*. [1] *Snehana* is brought about by specific qualities in the drugs, which can be summarised in Table 1.

Table 1: *Sneha Guna, Bhoutika Sanghatana* and *Karmukata* [2-5]

Guna	**Dominant *Mahabhutha***					***Karmukata***
	Prathvi	*Ap*	*Teja*	*Vayu*	*Akasha*	
Picchila		++++				*Lepana, Jivana, Sanghata, Sandhana, Balya, Gouravata*
Sukshma			++	++	+++	*Sroto Vishodhana, Vivarana, Soushiryakara*
Sara		++		+		*Anulomana, Vyaptisheela, Preranasheela*
Snigdha	+	++++				*Snehana, Mardavata, Kledana Bandhana, Vishyandana*
Drava		++++				*Prakledana, Vilodhana, Prasari*
Guru	++++	++				*Brihmana, Malavriddhikara, Tarpana, Angaglani, Balakara*
Sheeta		+++		++		*Sthambhaka, Hladana*
Manda	++	+				*Shamana*
Mrudu		++			+++	*Shaithilya of Avayava, Mardavata*

Mahakshaya/ Dashemani

Sutra Sthana is the first section of Charaka Samhita dealing with fundamental principles of Ayurveda. The section's name suggests that it is a chain of essential principles in a concise form. *Bheshaja* or the *Aushadha* (medicine) *Chatushka* is the first tetrad in *Sutra sthana,* which deals with various medicines used in multiple states, either externally or internally. The fourth chapter (*Shadvirechanashatashritiya Adhyaya*) provides details of fifty *Mahakashaya* (or five classes of groups of ten medicines and six hundred evacuative) used in various diseases in various diseases forms for external or internal use according to the need. The decoctions are named according to the actions they render in the body, which may have a supportive role or a curative role. To name a few, *Jivaniya Mahakashaya* and its ingredients are targeted toward nourishing the tissues. *Brimhaniya Mahakashaya* and its ingredients are focused on promoting the bulk of the muscles and raising the body.

Snehopaga Mahakashaya

There are some *Mahakashayas* which assist or aid in evacuative therapies called *Upaga*. The word *Upaga* refers to being beneficial or going near or joining with. Thus the drugs mentioned under the group of *Upaga Mahakashaya* enhance the action of the procedures either by preventing *Atiyoga* or promoting proper evacuation in the case of *Ayoga*. These *Upaga mahakashayas* refer to groups of 10 drugs intended for similar action to enhance the effect in the presence of the primary drug.

Example - *Vamanopaga* and *Virechanopaga* enhance the action of emetics and purgatives, respectively. Besides the medications described above, *Snehopaga* and *Swedopaga Dashemani* are used for *Purvakarma* (pre-cleansing procedure), while the rest find use in *Panchakarma* procedures.

Snehopaga is a group of drugs that help promote unctuousness or aid in oleation therapy. They are mentioned as follows:

Mṛudvīkāmadhuka madhuparṇīmedāvidārī kākolīkṣhīrakākolī jīvakajīvantī shālaparṇya iti dashemāni snehopagāni bhavanti [6]

A quick overview of the drugs is depicted in Table 2.

Table 2: List of *Snehopaga Dravyas* with their mentioning in other *Mahakshayas*

Dravya	**Botanical Name**	***Mahakashayas* under which it is mentioned**
Mrudvika	*Vitis vinifera*	6 – *Snehopaga, Kanthya, Virechanopaga, Kasahara, Jvarahara, Shramahara*
Madhuka	*Glycyrrhiza glabra*	11 – *Snehopaga, Jeevaniya, Shonita sthapana, Angamrdaprashamana, Mutra virajaniya, Asthapanopaga, Vamanopaga, Kandughna, Kanthya, Varnya, Sandhaniya*
Madhuparni	*Tinospora cordifolia*	2 – *Sandhaniya, Snehopaga*
Meda	*Polygonatum verticillatum*	3 – *Jeevaniya, Shukra janana, Snehopaga*
Vidari	*Pueraria tuberosa*	3 – *Kanthya, Snehopaga, Angamardaprashamana*
Kakoli	*Roscoea procera*	5 – *Jeevaniya, Brimhaniya, Shukra janana, Snehopaga, Aangamrdaprashamana*
Kshirakakoli	*Lilium polyphyllum*	5 – *Jeevaniya, Brimhaniya, Shukra janana, Snehopaga*
Jivaka	*Microstylis wallichii*	3 – *Jeevaniya, Shukra janana, Snehopaga*
Jivanti	*Leptadenia reticulata*	4 – *Jeevaniya, Snehopaga, Vaya sthapana, Shwasahara*
Shalaparni (Sthira)	*Desmodium gangeticum*	4 – *Shothahara, Snehopaga, Balya, Vaya sthapana*

Table 3: *Rasa Panchaka, Doshaghnata* and *Karma* of the *Snehopaga Dashemani* [7]

Dravya	***Rasa***	***Guna***	***Veerya***	***Vipaka***	***Doshaghnata***	***Karma***
Mrudvika (Vitis vinifera)	*Madhura*	*Snigdha, Guru, Sara*	*Sheeta*	*Madhura*	*Vata Pittahara*	*Hrudya, Vrishya, Chakshushya, Srishta Mutravit*
Madhuka (Glycyrrhiza glabra)	*Madhura*	*Snigdha, Guru*	*Sheeta*	*Madhura*	*Vata Pittahara*	*Medhya, Rasayana, Chakshushya, Shukrala, Keshya*
Madhuparni (Tinospora cordifolia)	*Tikta, Kashaya*	*Snigdha, Laghu*	*Ushna*	*Madhura*	*Tridoshahara*	*Hrudya, Vrishya, Chakshushya, Vayasthapana,*
Meda (Polygonatum verticillatum)	*Madhura*	*Snigdha, Guru*	*Sheeta*	*Madhura*	*Vata Pittahara, Kaphavardhana*	*Brimhana, Shukrala, Bhagnasandhanakrit*
Vidari (Pueraria tuberosa)	*Madhura*	*Snigdha, Guru*	*Sheeta*	*Madhura*	*Vata Pittahara*	*Brimhana, Vrishya, Mutrala, Balya*
Kakoli (Roscoea procera)	*Madhura*	*Snigdha, Guru*	*Sheeta*	*Madhura*	*Vata Pittahara, Kaphavardhana*	*Brimhana, Shukrala, Jeevaniya, Vrushya*
Kshirakakoli (Lilium polyphyllum)	*Madhura*	*Snigdha, Guru*	*Sheeta*	*Madhura*	*Vata Pittahara, Kaphavardhana*	*Jwarahara, Brimhana, Vrushya, Shukrala*
Jivaka (Microstylis wallichii)	*Madhura*	*Snigdha, Guru*	*Sheeta*	*Madhura*	*Vata Pittahara, Kaphavardhana*	*Brimhana, Shukrala, Balya*
Jivanti (Leptadenia reticulata)	*Madhura*	*Snigdha, Laghu*	*Sheeta*	*Madhura*	*Tridoshahara*	*Vrishya, Chakshushya, Balya*
Shalaparni (Desmodium gangeticum)	*Madhura, Tikta*	*Snigdha, Guru*	*Ushna*	*Madhura*	*Tridoshahara*	*Balya, Shothahara, Jwarahara*

Table 4: Chemical constituents and pharmacological action of *Snehopaga Dravya*

Dravya	**Botanical Name & Family**	**Chemical Constituents**	**Pharmacological Properties**
Mrudvika [8]	*Vitis vinifera,* Vitaceae	Catechin, Epicatechin, B- Sitosterol, Ergosterol, Jasmonic acid Resveratrol.	Antioxidant, anticarcinogenic, immunomodulatory, anti-diabetic, anti-atherogenic, neuroprotective, anti-obesity, anti-ageing, anti-microbial
Madhuka [9]	*Glycyrrhiza glabra,* Fabaceae	Glycyrrhizin isoliquirtin, gum, mucilage, sulphuric acid and metallic acids, calcium and magnesium salts.	antacid, anti-inflammatory, anti-oxidants, analgesic, immune modulator, anti-bacterial, anti-asthmatic, anti-arthritic and aphrodisiac
Madhuparni [10]	*Tinospora cordifolia,* Menispermaceae	Tinosporin, Isocolumbin, Tinocordifolioside, Cordioside, Syringin, Pregnane glycoside, Beta-sitosterol, Delta-sitosterol, Giloinsterol Tinocordifolin	Anti-inflammatory, anti-pyretic, anti-osteoporotic, anti-oxidant, Hepatoprotective, anti-hyperglycemic, nootropic
Meda [11]	*Polygonatum verticillatum,* Liliaceae	saponin, alkaloids, glycosides, phenols, flavonoids, sterols, tannins. Rhizomes have terpenoids and anthraquinones.	Antipyretic, Anti-inflammatory, Anticonvulsant, Diuretic, Antidiarrheal, Antispasmodic, Anti-nociceptive, Antifungal, Antibacterial Bronchodilator
Vidari [12]	*Pueraria tuberosa,* Fabaceae	ß-Sitosterol, Stigmasterol, Duidzein, Puerarin, daidzein and tuberosin.	Anti-oxidant, antimicrobial, anti-inflammatory, anti-aging
Kakoli [13]	*Roscoea procera,* Zingiberaceae	Carbohydrates, Flavonoids, Protein Alkaloids, glycosides, Phenolics	antidiabetic, immunomodulator, spermopiotic, antipyretic
Kshirakakoli [14]	*Lilium polyphyllum,* Liliaceae	Saponins, Phytosterols and Carbohydrate	Galactagogue, Aphrodisiac, Diuretic, Antipyretic, anti-inflammatory
Jivaka [15]	*Microstylis wallichii,* Orchidaceae	linoleic acid a-linolenic acid oleic acid, palmitic acid, stearic acid, y-linolenic acid	Antioxidant, Anti-inflammatory Analgesic, Styptic, Anti-dysenteric, Anti-microbial Aphrodisiac
Jivanti [16]	*Leptadenia reticulata,* Asclepidaceae	Beta-sitosterol, beta-amyrin acetate, leptidine glycoside.	Anti-inflammatory, antioxidant, galactagogue, the activity of silver nanoparticles, hepatoprotective, antimicrobial, antidiabetic
Shalaparni [17, 18]	*Desmodium gangeticum,* Fabaceae	Gangetinin, Desmodin, Caudicine, Hypaphorine	Analgesic, Cardiotonic, Cardiostimulant, Analgesic, Bronchodilator, Anti-oxidant, Anti-inflammatory

DISCUSSION

A single medicine can work in different ways, and depending upon the properties and modes of interaction with biological systems, it may lead to other pharmacological effects. Similarly, different drugs could result in similar patterns to produce a common cumulative pharmacological effect. Therefore, these drugs have been grouped into specific Mahakashaya. The ingredients of Mahakashayas seem to be the best possible herbs of choice in the given condition. The decoctions are named according to the actions they render in the body, most of which have a supportive role rather than a curative role.

Most herbs have properties like anti-oxidants, anti-inflammatory and so on. The pharmacological action and its probable effect during *Snehana* are discussed as follows:

Anti-oxidants: Anti-oxidant properties help neutralise the effects of free radicals and other substances and also help to boost the immune system. [19] Clearing free radicals could be an essential part of detox therapy.

Anti-inflammatory: The primary mechanism of action is the inhibition of the enzyme cyclooxygenase (COX). [20] Cyclooxygenase (COX) inhibition and the resulting inhibition of prostaglandin and other eicosanoid synthesis mitigate pain, fever, and inflammation. [21] Hence this property assists in preparing the body for the *Pradhana Karma* of *Shodhana*.

Anti-rheumatic and anti-arthritis properties: The herb's anti-rheumatic and analgesic properties of the herb help to reduce the pain and swelling in joints. It also helps to provide relief in stiffness of joints and improves mobility.

Astringent: Helps in the contraction of body tissues. It helps in the removal of waste material and toxins from the body.

Anti-pyretic: Most antipyretics work by inhibiting the enzyme cyclooxygenase and reducing the levels of PGE2 within the hypothalamus. Other mechanisms of action for antipyretic drugs have been suggested, including their ability to reduce pro-inflammatory mediators, enhance anti-inflammatory signals at injury sites, or boost antipyretic messages within the brain. [22]

Diuretics: Through their effects on sodium and water balance, diuretics decrease blood volume and venous pressure. This reduces cardiac filling (preload) and, by the Frank-Starling mechanism, decreases ventricular stroke volume and cardiac output, which leads to a fall in arterial pressure. The decrease in venous pressure reduces hydrostatic capillary pressure, decreasing capillary fluid filtration and promoting reabsorption. [23] By this mechanism, probably there is reduced cardiac load, and it gets easier to perform procedures like *Vamana,* which involves projectile vomiting.

Anti-ageing: They are the therapeutic compounds that are multi-functional and targeted at multiple signalling pathways mediating ageing. Calorie restriction mimetics include resveratrol, rapamycin and metformin, antioxidants (vitamins A, C and E, melatonin), and autophagy inductors, such as spermidine, analytics phytochemicals, e.g., curcumin, and several other natural and chemical compounds. [24] One of the essential benefits of *Shodhana* is *Vayasthapana* and *Rasayana,* which are brought about by these properties.

Galactagogue: Most herbal galactagogues are believed to exert their pharmacologic effects through interactions with dopamine receptors, resulting in increased prolactin levels. This protein hormone controls reproduction, immunomodulation,

angiogenesis, energy metabolism, osmotic balance, and development. [25] Thus, it helps prepare the patient mentally and physically for the procedure.

Anti-microbial: They are a large variety of chemical compounds and physical agents used to destroy microorganisms or prevent their development. [26] *Sneha* causes *Abhishyanda* and *Kleda* in the body, which are friendly for the growth of microbes. Potentially anti-microbial properties might prevent unwanted infections and make one stay safe throughout the procedure.

Anti-hyperglycemic: Increases skeletal muscle uptake of glucose, delayed gastric emptying, and satiety. [27]

Hepato-protective: Actions like recovery of hepatocytes, improving lipid and glycogen metabolism, correcting mitochondrial failure, and activating RNA synthesis. Substances that prevent intracellular fat uptake or increase the turnover and metabolisation of triglycerides have anti-inflammatory and anti-fibrotic impacts on the liver, thereby having a protective action. [28] Thus, a load of excess fat metabolism during *Snehapana* is balanced on the liver.

Practical uses of *Snehopaga Mahakashaya* in clinical practice

Regeneration and Anabolism: The drugs in *Snehopaga Mahakashaya* are predominantly composed of *Prithvi* and *Ap Mahabhuta*. Most of them are *Madhura Rasa Pradhana* and *Guru Snigdha Guna*, having properties like *Vrushya, Brimhana, Balya, Chakshushya* and *Hrudya* properties. These drugs may be used as Snehopaga and in all other conditions wherever anabolism and regeneration are required. In Post Surgeries for tissue repair and healing, enhancement of biological functions like a galactagogue aphrodisiac, immunity boosters etc.

Alternate to regular *Snehana*: It may be used in place of *Sneha* in patients requiring *Alpa Sneha* or those who are contraindicated for *Snehana* as a procedure but may require *Snehana* under certain conditions.

As a form of the additional supplement: It may be used as an adjuvant with food during *Snehapana* for people who are *Sukumara* and are unable to intake large doses of *Snehana* and for people who require *Snehana* but in small divided doses.

For *Bahya Snehana* and *Swedana*: The *Bashpa*/steam of *Kashaya* of these drugs may be used as an added mode of *Snehana* during the preparatory procedures in patients who are very *Ruksha* and *Vata Pradhana Vyadhis*.

Sneha* Processed with *Snehopaga Dravyas* for *Bahya* and *Abhyantara Snehana: *Sneha* prepared out of these drugs for internal use may enhance the effect of *Snehana,* giving rise to prior attainment of *Sneha Siddhi Lakshana*. External use of such *Sneha* may promote better skin tone, lustre and oleation. Use of such *Sneha* for *Matra Basti* may give promising results in improving strength, rejuvenation, tissue healing and repair and beneficial in degenerative conditions.

Selective combination to check over nutrition: The combination of particular drugs having *Laghu Guna* among the other drugs may be intended to counteract any possible ill effects that could arise due to most of the other drugs in the group being *Guru Snigdha* in nature and having *Madhura Rasa*. Therefore, the drugs in the advised combination may enhance the anabolism and check the harmful effects of overnutrition.

CONCLUSION

Snehopaga in the large dose and longer duration may act as *Snehana Dravya*. Different utilities of *Snehopaga Mahakashaya* need to be evaluated and analysed on a large sample to obtain a clear conclusion on its mode of action in varied conditions. The practical uses of each *Mahakashaya* need to be explored in different ways to make the best use of the combination. Examples may be many, but following a systematic explanation, the author has confined mentioning the ten best herbs available for that category.

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