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ISSN 2321 - 6328

Review Article

CONCEPT OF LOHITIKARANA: A REVIEW

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Article Received on: 10/04/19 Accepted on: 20/05/19

DOI: 10.7897/2321-6328.072105

ABSTRACT

Lohitakarana is the pharmaceutical procedure carried out on prepared *Bhasma* (Ash) to induce specific colour to *Bhasma*. There is no direct reference of *Lohitakarana*, it is explained in the context of *Abhraka bhasma* (Ash of Mica) *lohitakarana*. In *Lohitakarana*, *Rakta varga dravyas* (Red coloured drugs group) are used to impart red colour to the *Abhraka bhasma*, as the colour of *Abhraka bhasma* is mentioned as *Ishtika varna* (Brick red colour). The procedure of *lohitakarana* and about the *rakta varga dravyas* used for *Abhraka bhasma lohitakarana* has been discussed here.

KEYWORDS: *Lohitakarana*, *Bhasma*, *Abhraka bhasma*, *Rakta varga dravyas*

INTRODUCTION

Rasashastra is an important branch of *Ayurveda*, specialising in *Ayurveda* pharmaceuticals with herbs, metals and minerals known as *Rasaushadhis*. The internal administration of all metals and minerals became possible because of the knowledge of pharmaceutical technology of converting metals and minerals into *Bhasmas*. *Bhasmas* are unique *Rasa* preparations in which metals and minerals are processed after various *Samskaras* (processing) like *Shodhana* (Purificatory procedures) and *Marana* (Incineration process). In spite of these *Samskaras* if the desired colour of *Bhasma* is not obtained then the pharmaceutical procedures done to induce specific colour to *Bhasma* is called as *Lohitakarana*.

DEFINITION

The pharmaceutical procedures carried out on prepared *Bhasma* to induce *Rakta varna* (Red colour) in it is called as *Lohitakarana*.¹

Generally, the *Bhasmas* prepared with *Loha* (iron) or any mineral that contains iron are turned to red in colour when prepared into *bhasma*. It is believed that the red coloured drugs would affect the blood qualitatively and quantitatively.²

Lohitakarana has been specified for *Abhraka* as after *Marana*, *Abhraka bhasma* turns black in colour. The colour specified for *Abhraka bhasma* is *Ishtika varna*. To get the red colour for *Abhraka*, *Lohitakarana* is specified. Wherein *bhavana* (Impregnation) of the *bhasma* is done with *Rakta varga dravya* like *Gangeruki* (*Grewia tenax*) *kwatha* (Decoction), *Musta* (*Cyperus rotundus*) *kwatha*, *Vataksheera* (*Latex of Banyan tree*), *Vatamula swarasa* (*Juice of roots of Banyan tree*), *Haridra*

swarasa/ kwatha (*Juice of Turmeric*), *Manjistha* (*Rubia cordifolia*) *kwatha* or *Lajjalu* (*Mimosa pudica*) *kwatha*, the incineration is done repeatedly till the *bhasma* attains red colour.³

In *Rasashastra*, as a standard parameter, the colour of *bhasmas* has been specified. It can also be taken as a means for the identification of *bhasma*. This yard stick holds good for even *Sindura kalpas*, *Drutis*, etc. where the colour has been mentioned.

Table 1: Colour of *Bhasma* of *Rasadravyas*

<i>Rasa dravya</i>	<i>Colour of Bhasma</i>
<i>Abhraka</i>	<i>Ishtika varna</i> ⁴
<i>Vaikranta</i>	<i>Rakta</i> ⁵
<i>Makshika</i>	<i>Rakta</i> ⁶
<i>Vimala</i>	<i>Rakta</i> ⁷
<i>Chapala</i>	<i>Rakta</i> ⁸
<i>Kharpara</i>	<i>Peetaba</i> ⁹
<i>Kasisa</i>	<i>Raktaba</i> ¹⁰
<i>Spatika</i>	<i>Shweta</i> ¹¹
<i>Gowripashana</i>	<i>Shweta</i> ¹²
<i>Kaparda</i>	<i>Shweta</i> ¹³
<i>Swarna</i>	<i>Champaka varna</i> ¹⁴
<i>Rajata</i>	<i>Krishna</i> ¹⁵
<i>Kamsya</i>	<i>Kajjala praba varna</i> ¹⁶
<i>Naga</i>	<i>Kajjala praba varna</i> ¹⁷
<i>Vanga</i>	<i>Shweta</i> ¹⁸
<i>Tikshna loha</i>	<i>Pakwa jambu phala</i> ¹⁹

For *Druti* of *Ratnas* the *Acharyas* have said that the *varna* of *ratnas* will be more lustrous than the original *ratna*.²⁰

Sindura kalpas are also named so because of the colour of the preparations. The *Sindhura* preparations in *Rasashastra* are noted

for their positive effect on blood and diseases caused by *Rakta dusti* (vitiation of blood).

DISCUSSION

The pharmaceutical procedures carried out on prepared *Bhasma* to induce *Rakta varna* in it is called as *Lohitakarana*. The only reference available regarding *Lohitakarana* is in *Rasatarangini*, while explaining *Abhraka bhasma lohitarana*.

In the procedure of *lohitarana* the drugs used are *Rakta varga dravya*, which helps in giving red colour to the *bhasma*.

Rakta varga dravyas are specially used in *lohitarana* as they contain Anthocyanins, a chemical constituent which helps in imparting red colour. The drugs like *Vataksheera* contains Leucoanthocyanin²¹ and *Lajjalu* contains Leucoanthocyanin²² helps in imparting red colour to *Abhraka bhasma* as *bhavana* process is done by using them in the procedure of *Lohitakarana*.

CONCLUSION

Lohitakarana is a process that is mentioned to impart the desired colour to the *bhasma*. The only reference of *Lohitakarana* given in the text of *Rasashastra* is for *abhraka bhasma*. The number of *putas* given and the heat it is subjected to and the liquid media used for trituration of the *bhasma* for the purpose of incineration probably leads to a black coloured *abhraka bhasma*. To impart the red colour to it *lohitarana* has been suggested. And an interesting fact that is observed is the use of *rakta varga dravya* to impart the colour to the *bhasma*. The colour of the *bhasma* is an identification criterion of the *bhasma* as well as a test of perfectness of the *bhasma*; the *bhasma* colours of different metals and minerals have been specified in the literature of *Rasashastra*. Whether any therapeutic property is added by the process has not been discussed and it opens new path for research.

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Cite this article as:

Namitha R Chandra et al. Concept of lohitarana: A review. J Biol Sci Opin 2019;7(2):19-20.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.7897/2321-6328.072105>

Source of support: Nil; Conflict of interest: None Declared

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