

A CRITICAL REVIEW ON TWO TYPES OF LAGHUPANCHAMULA

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ABSTRACT

A group of five roots of small plants i. e., *Shalaparni*, *Prshniparni*, *Brhati*, *Kantakari* and *Gokshura* or *Eranda* is known as *Laghupanchamula* under *Mishraka Varga* (group of drugs). It is used as such or with *Mahat Panchamula* i. e., *Bilva*, *Gambhari*, *Shyonaka*, *Agnimantha* and *Patala*, constituting *Dashamula*, a well-recognized and popular Ayurvedic preparation or as an ingredient of different dosage forms. Classical texts of Ayurveda differs regarding components of this *Mishraka Varga*. Four out of five drugs of *Laghupanchamula* are similar in all the Ayurvedic texts, but either *Gokshura* or *Eranda* is considered as the fifth drug. So a comprehensive review of *Veda*, *Samhita Grantha*, *Cikitsa Grantha* and

Nighantus, with regards to synonyms, contents, *Guna-Karma*, origin of variation in contents and possible thought behind two kinds of *Laghupanchamula*, to throw light for rational use of either *Eranda* or *Gokshura* under *Laghupanchamula* was conducted. It was observed that both the traditions were in practice however *Acharya Kashyapa* and *Ravigupta* were in view of *Eranda* as a fifth drug of *Laghupanchamula* whereas *Acharya Charaka*, *Sushruta*, *Vagabhatta*, *Yogaratanakara* and *Chakradatta* are in favour of *Gokshura*. Infact, the variation in content depends on the need i.e *Dosha*, *Dushya* and *Vyadhi*.

KEYWORDS: *Brihatpanchamula, Eranda, Gokshura, Laghupanchamula.*

INTRODUCTION

Plants have been in use since times immemorial as food, fodder, and medicine. The use of plants as medicine is well documented in Vedic compendia – the *Rigveda* and the *Atharvaveda*. During the Vedic period (6000 BC), plants were mostly used as a single drug, i.e., *Arka*,^[1] *Khadira*,^[2] *Durva*,^[3] *Apamarga*,^[4] and *Prshniparni*.^[5] The literature also has reference regarding grouping, i.e., *Dashavriksha* in *Atharvaveda*; Sayana has clarified that it includes *Palasha*, *Udumbara*, etc.^[6]

Initially, the tradition of single-drug therapy since the Vedic times has declined through the ages; currently, rational groups of drugs have been formed under the heading *Mishraka Varga* (group of drugs). On comprehensive review, it was found that a good number of groups are enumerated in Ayurvedic classics, with separate chapters dedicated to each. These groups are named as *Mahakashaya*^[7] or *Gana*^[8] or *Skandha*.^[9] Fifty *Mahakashayas*, which are ascribed in *Charaka Samhita*, are named according to the action they have. On the other hand, in *Sushruta Samhita*, *Gana* are named on the first drug of the every *Gana* and the action has been mentioned as *Dosha Pratyanka* (against *Dosha*) and *Vyadhi Pratyanka* (against *Vyadhi*). Furthermore, in those groups, *Niyatavyaya* (definite number of drugs) or *Aniyatavyaya* (indefinite number of drugs) are also included.^[10]

In fact, although these groups are enumerated for the common person, a person with more in-depth knowledge can add or remove drugs that are appropriate or not appropriate according to *Dosha* and *Vyadhi* by *Yukti* (justification) as per requirement.^[11] Hence, emphasis has been given on the use of all or a few drugs according to requirement. In due course of time, a few of the groups became very popular, namely *Triphala*,^[12] *Trikatu*,^[13] *Dashamula*,^[14] and are still in use.

Among these, *Dashamula* is one of the original compound formulations still widely in use. *Dashamula* consists of *Brihatpanchamula* (i.e., greater five root drugs)^[15] and *Kaniyapanchamula* (i.e., smaller five root drugs).^[16] Drugs of *Kaniyapanchamula* are *Trikantaka*, *Brihatidvaya* (*Brihati*, *Kantakari*), and *Prithakaparnyo* (*Shalaparni*, *Prishniparni*). *Kaniyapanchamula* of *Sushruta Samhita* is reported by other names in various classics as *Vidarigandhadipanchamula*,^[17] *Hrisvapanchamula*,^[18,19] *Khuddakapanchamula*,^[20] *Kanishthapanchamula*,^[21] and *Laghupanchamula*.^[22] Analysis of

the drugs of *Laghupanchamula* show that four drugs, namely *Shalaparni*, *Prishniparni*, *Brihati*, and *Kantakari*, are common to both the groups; however, the fifth drug is either *Gokshura* or *Eranda*. Thus, it is obvious that two traditions are clearly seen regarding the contents of *Laghupanchamula*. Therefore, a comprehensive review of Ayurvedic classics, with the objective of determining the rationality of selecting either *Gokshura* or *Eranda*, as an ingredient of *Laghupanchamula*, was undertaken.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

A chronological review of all available Ayurvedic classics have been carried out, i.e., *Charaka Samhita* (1000 B.C. to 4th Century A.D.), *Sushruta Samhita* (1000 B.C. to 5th Century A.D.), *Kashyapa Samhita* (6th Century B.C.), *Ashtanga Sangraha* (6th Century A.D.), *Ashtanga Hridaya* (7th Century A.D.), *Chikitsa Granthas*, i.e., *Siddhasara Samhita* (7th Century A.D.), *Chakradatta* (11th Century A.D.), *Yogratnakara* (11–12th Century A.D.), *Vangasena* (12th Century A. D.), *Bhaishjyaratnavali* (18th Century A. D.), and *Nighantus Saushruta Nighantu* (6–7th Century A.D.), *Siddhasara Nighantu* (7th Century A.D.), *Ashtanga Nighantu* (8th Century A.D.), *Dhanvantari Nighantu* (10–13th Century A.D.), *Shodhala Nighantu* (12th Century A.D.), *Madanapala Nighantu* (14th Century A.D.), *Kaiyadeva Nighantu* (15th Century A.D.), *Bhavaprakasha Nighantu* (16th Century A.D.), *Raja Nighantu* (17th Century A.D.), *Shaligrama Nighantu* (19th Century A.D.), *Priya Nighantu* (20th Century A.D.), and all relevant information regarding *Laghupanchamula* was gathered. Simultaneous views of commentators like *Chakrapanidatta* (11th Century A.D.), *Dalhana* (12th Century A. D.), *Hemadri* (13–14th Century A. D.), and *Shivdasasen* (15th Century A.D.) were also considered to make the picture more clear regarding two types of *Laghupanchamula*.^[23] The information was critically reviewed and the rationale behind the variation in the content of *Laghupanchamula* was derived.

OBSERVATIONS

In *Charaka Samhita*, the word *Laghupanchamula* as such has not appeared; rather the drugs of *Laghupanchamula* are mentioned under a single group, i.e., *Shvayathuhara Mahakashaya*; the drugs are *Kantakarika*, *Brihati*, *Shalaparni*, *Prishniparni*, and *Gokshura*.^[24] In the same chapter, under *Angamardaprashamana Mahakashaya* the first four drugs, i.e., *Vidarigandha*, *Prishniparni*, *Brihati*, and *Kantakarika*, are present whereas the fifth drug is *Eranda*.^[25] In *Chikitsasthana*, *Vidarigandhadipanchamula* (which consist of *Vidarigandha*, *Brihati*, *Prishniparni*, *Nidigdhika*, and *Shvadmshttra*) is mentioned in *Panchamula* as an ingredient

of *Brahmarasayana*.^[26] At other place in *Chikitsasthana*, either group alone as such or with the drugs of *Brihatpanchamula*, is included in many compound formulations, a few of them being *Mahakalyanaka Ghrita*,^[27] *Taila*,^[28] *Dashamuladi Ghrita*,^[29] *Mustadi Churna*,^[30] and *Taila*^[31] indicated in *Apasmara*, *Visarpa*, *Gulma*, *Kushtha*, and *Vrana*, respectively. *Dridhabala*, who redacted *Charaka Samhita*, mentioned *Vardhamanaka* along with *Shalaparni*, *Prishniparni*, *Brihati*, and *Kantakari* for *Basti*. It is to be noted that before this, all the five ingredients of *Brihatpanchamula* have been included for *Basti*.^[32] This indicates that *Dridhabala* was in favor of including *Eranda* in lieu of *Gokshura* or the combination was the most popular in his time.

In *Sushruta Samhita*, *Kaniya* and *Brihatpanchamula* have been mentioned in successive verses. The drugs of *Kaniyapanchamula* are *Trikantaka*, *Brihatidvaya* (*Brihati*, *Kantakari*), and *Prithakaparnyo* (*Shalaparni*, *Prishniparni*). In the next line, the properties of *Kaniyapanchamula* are also ascribed, i.e., *Kashaya*, *Tikta*, and *Madhura* in *Rasa* as having *Vataghna*, *Pittashamana*, *Brimhana*, and *Balavardhana Karma*.^[33] In *Cikitsasthana*, this group has been prescribed in various dosage forms, i.e., *Kashaya*,^[34] *Kshira*,^[35] *Taila*,^[36] and *Kvatha*^[37] in *Vrana*, *Bhagna*, *Vatavyadhi*, and *Arsha*, respectively.

In both *Ashtanga Sangraha* and *Ashtanga Hridaya*, the five drugs of *Laghupanchamula* are grouped under *Hrisvapanchamula* and its properties are *Madhura Rasa* and *Madhura Vipaka*; neither *Atishita* nor *Atiushna* and *Sarvadoshahara* by its action i.e. neither too hot nor too cold in potency and pacify all the three doshas.^[18,19] In *Chikitsasthana* of both the texts, various formulations of *Hrisvapanchamula* are mentioned such as *Ghrita*,^[38] *Kvatha*,^[39] and *Taila*^[40] for *Shvasa-Hikka*, *Shvasa*, and *Kushtha*, respectively.

In *Kashyapa Samhita*, a compound formulation has been prescribed consisting of *Khuddakapanchamula* (without *Eranda*) along with *Kala* and *Katavanga* for *Vatatisara*.^[20]

Other *Chikitsa Granthas* such as *Chakradatta*,^[41] *Yogaratanakara*,^[22] and *Bhaishajyaratnavali*^[42] have mentioned *Gokshura* as one of the ingredients of *Laghupanchamula*.

However, in *Siddhasara Samhita*, *Eranda* is clearly mentioned in *Kanishthapanchamula* with *Brimhana* and *Vatapittaghna Karma*.^[21]

While reviewing the views of the commentators, it is observed that *Chakrapanidatta*, in his *Bhanumati* commentary of *Sushruta Samhita*, accepted *Eranda* in place of *Gokshura* in *Laghupanchamula* and stated that *Charaka* accepts *Gokshura*.^[43] *Yadavaji Trikrampi Acharya*, in the edition of *Sushruta Samhita* with *Dalhana* commentary, has also reported that *Eranda* was present in places of *Gokshura* in one manuscript that was written in palm leaves.^[44] *Hemadri*, in the *Ayurveda Rasayana* commentary of *Ashtanga Hridaya*, reported that *Sushruta* includes *Eranda* in place of *Gokshura* in *Laghupanchamula*.^[45] *Shivadasasena*, in *Tatvacandrika* commentary of *Chakradatta*, wrote that *Sushruta* accepts *Eranda* whereas *Charaka* accepts *Gokshura* as one of the constituents of *Laghupanchamula*.^[46]

In *Nighantus*, i.e., *Ashtanga*,^[47] *Dhanvantari*,^[48] *Shodhala*,^[49] *Madanapala*,^[50] *Kaiyadeva*,^[51] *Bhavaprakasha*,^[52] *Raja*,^[53] *Shaligrama*,^[54] and *Priya Nighantu*,^[55] the five drugs of *Laghupanchamula* mentioned are *Shalaparni*, *Prishniparni*, *Brihati*, *Kantakari*, and *Gokshura*, except in *Saushruta Nighantu* where *Eranda* is included as one of the constituents of *Vidarigandhadi panchamula*.^[56]

DISCUSSION

The word *Laghupanchamula* as such is not referred to in ancient Ayurvedic classics, i.e., *Charaka Samhita* and *Sushruta Samhita*. However, in *Ashtanga Sangraha*, and *Ashtanga Hridaya*, it is mentioned as a component of many compound formulations. In *Charaka Samhita*, *Sushruta Samhita*, *Kashyapa Samhita*, and *Siddhasara Samhita*, *Laghupanchamula* was known by the name of *Vidarigandhadi Panchamula*,^[17] *Kaniyapanchamula*,^[33] *Khuddakapanchamula*,^[20] and *Kanishthapanchamula*,^[21] respectively. All the above terms indicate the habit of plants of this group, i.e., either herb (*Shalaparni*, *Prishniparni*, *Brihati*, *Kantakari*, and *Gokshura*) or shrub (*Eranda*).

It is worth mentioning here that *Acharya Charaka* named this group as *Vidarigandhadi Panchamula*, based on the first drug *Vidarigandha* (*Shalaparni*). Furthermore, in *Charaka Samhita* under *Angamardaprashamana Mahakashaya*, *Eranda* along with other four drugs of *Laghupanchamula* except *Gokshura* has been mentioned. In other texts such as *Siddhisthana* under *Basti Prakarana*, two kinds of *Basti* have been described; in the first one, five drugs of *Brihat Panchamula* are present and in the second one four drugs of *Laghupanchamula* – *Shalaparni*, *Prishniparni*, *Brihatyau* (*Brihati*, *Kantakari*)

with *Eranda* – have been mentioned.^[32] It signifies that *Eranda* has been used in place of *Gokshura* by *Dridhabala* for pacification of *Vata* by *Basti Chikitsa*.

The other reason for mentioning the two kinds may be availability of these two types of manuscripts of *Sushruta Samhita*. In one manuscript, *Laghupanchamula* includes *Shalaparni*, *Prishniparni*, *Brihati*, *Kantakari*, and *Gokshura*,^[8] whereas the other favors *Eranda* in place of *Gokshura*.^[44] Hence, *Hemadri*, in *Ayurveda Rasayana* commentary,^[45] and *Shivadasasen*, in *Tatvacandrika* commentary,^[46] have mentioned that *Sushruta* accepts *Eranda* and *Charaka* accepts *Gokshura* as one of the components of *Laghupanchamula*. *Dalhana*, the renowned commentator of *Sushruta Samhita*, accepts *Gokshura* and further described that some scholars considered *Eranda* in the place of *Gokshura*.^[57] In *Kashyapa Samhita*, there is no separate description of the group; however, while describing the treatment of *Vatatisara*, *Kashyapa* mentioned that here *Khuddakapanchamula* without *Eranda* should be considered,^[20] which indicates toward *Eranda* as a content of *Khuddakapanchamula*, i.e., *Laghupanchamula*. The clear replacement of *Gokshura* by *Eranda* is found in both *Siddhasara Samhita*^[21] and *Saushruta Nighantu*.^[56]

Thus, it is obvious that two traditions (*Laghupanchmula* with either *Gokshura* or *Eranda*) prevailed with regard to treatment of various ailments. The first tradition – as seen in *Charaka Samhita* – was followed by most of the *Chikitsa Granthas*; *Nighantus* includes *Gokshura* as the content of *Laghupanchamula*. The second tradition was reported by *Acharya Yadavaji* in a manuscript of *Sushruta Samhita* written in *Tada Patra* (palm leaves). *Kashyapa Samhita*, *Siddhasara Samhita*, and *Saushruta Nighantu* accept *Eranda* in *Laghupanchamula*. The other four drugs are common to both the traditions.

The other important aspect of the two traditions seems that they were formulated in accordance with the properties responsible for varied therapeutic responses. This may be analyzed by considering the properties of *Gokshura* and *Eranda* individually. *Gokshura* has *Ushna Veerya*^[58] and *Madhura Vipaka*^[59] and is ascribed as *Mutrakrrachchha Anilharanama*,^[60] whereas *Eranda* has *Ushna Veerya*^[58] and *Vrishya Vataharaanam*^[60] properties. Although both are *Vata Shamaka*, *Eranda* has the added advantage of being *Vrishya* (nutritive to *Dhatu*s). *Dhatukshaya* and *Margavarana* are two well-known causes of *Vata Prakopa*;^[61] therefore, to treat *Dhatukshaya*janya *Vata Prakopa* (vitiation of *Vata* due to improper nourishment of various *Dhatu*s), *Laghupanchamula* having *Eranda* would be more beneficial. On the other hand, if *Mutravaha Srotas* (urinary system) is

affected, and in *Apana Vayu Vikriti* group having *Gokshura* is much more beneficial. In fact, this seems to be the rational use of *Gokshura* or *Eranda* in *Laghupanchamula*.

CONCLUSION

Five drugs in a single group have been in use since ancient times to date. This group is mentioned under various names, i.e., *Vidarigandhadi* in *Charaka Samhita*, *Kaniyapanchamula* in *Sushruta Samhita*, *Khuddakapanchamula* in *Kashyapa Samhita*, and *Kanishthapanchamula* in *Siddhasara Samhita*. The word *Laghupanchamula* is not found *Charaka Samhita*, *Sushruta Samhita*, *Kashyapa Samhita*, and *Siddhasara Samhita*. In *Ashtanga Sangraha*, a new name, “*Laghupanchmula*,” was firstly coined, followed by other classics. The term *Kaniya*, *Khuddaka*, *Kanishtha*, and *Laghu* indicate the same meaning, i.e., small, which signifies the habit of the plants (herb or small shrub) under the group. The term *Vidarigandhadi* given by *Charaka* provided information regarding the first drug of the group, *Vidarigandha* (*Shalaparni*). Four drugs (*Shalaparni*, *Prishniparni*, *Brihati*, and *Kantakari*) are similar in all: *Samhita*, *Chikitsa Granthas*, and *Nighantus*; however, the fifth drug is either *Gokshura* or *Eranda*. *Eranda* is clearly mentioned in place of *Gokshura* by *Siddhasara Samhita*, *Saushruta nighantu*, and in a manuscript of *Sushruta Samhita* edited by *Jadavaji*. Other manuscripts like *Samhita*, *Chikitsa Granths*, and *Nighantus* accepted *Gokshura* under *Laghupanchmula*.

Six drugs, *Shalaparni*, *Prishniparni*, *Brihati*, *Kantakari*, *Gokshura*, and *Eranda*, gave rise to two types of *Laghupanchamula*. Inclusion of either *Gokshura* or *Eranda* may be due to the clinical experience/observations of the concerned authorities, i.e., when *Vata* and simultaneously *Dhatuposhana* need to be pacified; *Eranda* is being considered due to its best *Vrshya* and *Vatahara* property. On the other hand, if pacification of *Vata* is required, and specifically for treatment of urinary tract diseases, then *Gokshura*, due to its best *Mutrakrichrahara* property, is being considered in place of *Eranda*.

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