AGNIJAR (AMBERGRIS): A REVIEW STUDY OF AN ANIMAL PRODUCT W.S.R IN AYURVED MEDICINES

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ABSTRACT

Ayurvedic medicines are the ancient and most trustable therapy. Occurrence of the therapy is of least or with no side effects and also eradicates some diseases are the special qualities of Ayurvedic drugs. Ayurveda has plant origin drugs like ashvagandha, tulsi, brahmi, sunthi etc. Metallic origin drugs as parad, gandhak, loha, tamra etc, animal origin (ex-ghee, dugdha, mukta, sukti, amber etc). Agnijara is an animal origin product obtained from whales. It is called as ambergris, amber. This drug is a decayed intestinal part of whale. Due to ingestion of some grass in sea, the intestine of whale gets obstructed which leading to death of Whale. After the death, the intestinal part starts decaying and floats on sea. Fishermen collects the intestinal part and keep it under sunlight for drying. Drying is an important process because intestine of whale in vivo has a very foul smell and on drying this smell disappears. In Rasa Shastra Agnijara is mentioned under Sadharana Rasa. Agnijara is available in the oceans of Sri Lanka, Indian Ocean, Arabian ocean, seashores of Africa, Lakshadweep and Nicobar island. Agnijara is Tridosha Shamak but specially plays role on kaphavata Dosha. Agnijara is Hridhya, Vajikara, Sheeta Prashamak. In medicinal compounds as Chintamani Ras, Bruhat
Vata Chinta amani Rasa, Vadvanal Rasa, Javaharmohara Vati, all have Agnijara as an active ingredient.

KEYWORD: Agnijar, Rasashastra, Ayurveda, Medicine.

INTRODUCTION
Agnijara is an animal by-product obtained from whales. It is called as Ambergris. Ambergris is a solid, waxy, flammable substance of a dull grey or blackish colour produced in the digestive system of sperm whales. Freshly produced ambergris has a marine, fecal odour. However, it acquires a sweet, earthy scent as the time passes. The odour of Ambergris is commonly likened to the fragrance of rubbing alcohol without the vaporous chemical astringency. Ambergris has been very highly valued by perfumers as a fixative that allows the scent to last much longer, although it has been mostly replaced by synthetic ambroxan (active principle). In Rasashastra literature, ‘Rasarnava’ mentioned about Agnijara for the first time. This product had been classified under ‘Sadharana Rasa’.\textsuperscript{[1]} According to Acharaya Vagbhatt Agnijara is a product of Agninakra fish’s chorion.\textsuperscript{[2]} It is used in the treatment of neurological disorders and Mandagni as it is Deepan Pachan in nature. There is no reference of this product in any of the Ayurvedic classical books like Charaka Samhita, Sushruta Samhita etc. This product is an ingredient of various formulations of rasashastra medicines that are used in the treatment of fever, joint disorders, obesity and also in the manufacture of perfumes.

SYNONYMS
Agniniryasa, Agnijwala, Sindhuplava, Agnijara, Agnija, Sindhuphala, Vahnijara\textsuperscript{[3]}, Agnijara (Latin: Ambra Grisea, Old French: Ambre Gris), Ambergrease, or grey amber\textsuperscript{[4]}

PHYSICAL AND CHEMICAL PROPERTIES\textsuperscript{[5]}
- Amber is very light in weight, and in greyish color.
- It floats over water.
- It has a specific gravity of 780-927.
- When kept in glass bottle and heated, it melts at 145oFs.
- When put in fire after drying, it gives aromatic smell.
- When heated to 212o F, it evaporates with white fumes leaving ash.
- It’s melting point is 145oF and boiling point is 212o
- Amber is an insoluble in water but soluble in alcohol and oil.
- According to P.V Sharma it is soluble in ether, chloroform and oil only.
• In Rasarnava it’s physical appearance is described as muktaphala prabham.\[6\]

Ambergris is relatively nonreactive to acid. White crystals of terpene known as Ambrein can be separated by heating raw ambergris in alcohol allowing the resulting solution to cool.

Breakdown of the relatively scentless Ambrein through oxidation produces Ambroxan and Ambrinol the main odor components of ambergris.\[7\]

Agnijara is black or kapot in colour.

**AGANIJARA SHODhana**

Agnijara is triturated with Adraka Swarasa (ginger juice) or Matulunga Swarasa (lemon juice) for 3 times.\[8\]

‘Marana’ (another method of purification involving burning and exposure to heat) for the product is not needed.

**DESCRIBED IN RASASHASTRA**

It was first mentioned in 8\textsuperscript{th} century in the text ‘Rasarnava’ while explaining its role in ‘Abhrak Druti prakarana’ (Method to melt Abraka).

Ayurveda prakasha considered it to be ‘Kshara vishesh’ (Type of alkali). It has been used for ‘Parad bandan karma’ and ‘Parada jaran’. (Procedure related to Mercury).

**TYPES OF AGNIJARA – AMBERGRIS\[9\]**
On the basis of availability, Amber is classified into different forms and names\textsuperscript{[10]}

1. Baltic amber – Peeta varnayukta (Green colored)
2. Susyhian amber – Arunabha yukta peeta (Pale white)
3. Rumenian amber – Neela lohita varni (Bluish red colored)
4. Vermi amber – Peeta neela lohita varni (Bluish red colored)

**PROPERTIES OF AGNIJARA\textsuperscript{[11]}**

- **Rasa (Taste)** – Katu rasa (pungent)
- **Guna – Laghu** (Light), Rooksha (Dry)
- **Vipaka** – Katu (Pungent)
- **Veerya (Potency)** – Ushna (Hot)
- **Doshakarma (Action on dosha)**
  a) Kaphavatahara, Pitavardhaka, Raktarog, Medhohar, Sannipatatjrog, Shool etc.
  b) Tridoshagna (Pacifies all the vitiated Dosha), Dhanuvarvata(tetenay), Vataroga,\textsuperscript{[12]}
- It is used for viryotkarsh in Parad and made it Bubhukshit
- It is used in Jarana Karma
- With the help of Aganijar, Parad become Sparshvedhi.\textsuperscript{[13]}

**SYSTEMIC MEDICINAL USES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>System</th>
<th>Function</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Samsthank karma</strong></td>
<td>Nadi samsthan as it is helpful for mastishka (Neurogenic)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pachan Samsthan</strong></td>
<td>Dipan, Pachan, Anuloman, Grahi (Helps in proper digestion)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Raktavaha Samsthan</strong></td>
<td>Hridhya (helps in cardiac function)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Prajanan Samsthan</strong></td>
<td>Vajikaran (Improve sexual function)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tapakrama</strong></td>
<td>Sheeta Prashaman (Pacifies coldness in the body)</td>
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DOSAGE
1/4 Ratti to 1/2 Ratti (30-125mg)

ANUPAN
Mixed with Ghee, butter or honey.

AYURVEDIC FORMULATIONS[14]
- **Chintamani Rasa** – It is an Ayurvedic medicine, with herbal and mineral ingredients, in tablet form. It is used in treating heart diseases, diabetes etc.
- **Dhatri Rasayana** – Useful to treat prameha (diabetes)
- **Brihat Vatachintamani Rasa** – Useful to treat vata roga (Disease related to vata dosha)
- **Vadvanal Rasa** – Useful to treat agnimandhya (indigestion or reduced appetite)
- **Javaharmohara vati** and **Ratneshvar rasa**
- **Yakuti rasa**

DISCUSSION
Agnijara is a rare drug, which is briefly described in Rasashastra. It is not mentioned in samhita like charak and sushruta. This product has been classified under sadharana rasa. According to various Rasashastra texts, it is an intestinal part of whale. As I had described before, Agnijara is tridoshagna but it is very much effected in kaphavata pradhana roga. Agnijara is katu in rasa so it is effective in kapha dosha also has ushna virya so effects on both dosha, vata and kapha. It is laghu and ruksha in guna so plays role on kapha. Agnijara has good effect in circulatory system and considered a good hridya dravya, for example; Chintamani Rasa is Hridya drug and it’s contents includes Agnijara. It has anulomaka property that’s why it also works on Pitta Dosha. Agnijara has Sheeta Prashmana property that helps in body temperature regulation. So many of the medicines of fever (Jwar) has Agnijara as it’s main content. Some examples of these medicines are - Javaharmohra Vati. Agnijara is a good nervine tonic, that’s why it is used in Vata Roga. Brihatvata Chintamani Rasa - a good Vata Shamak drug and have Agnijara as it’s main content.

CONCLUSION
As discussed earlier, Agnijara has tridosha-shamak property specially kapha Vata Hara and due to many other qualities it is liked and used by Ayurveda practitioner in Dhanurvata (tetany), Prameha(diabetes), Hridaya Roga(heart diseases). It is not only useful as a medicine but also used as Kshara Vishesh according to Ayurveda Prakash.[15] So it has been used for
Parad Bandhan Karma and Parad Jarana Karma (process used in purification of mercury), it also works as helping agent in Abhraka Druti Prakaran (method to melt Abharak).

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