

Importance of Swarnaprashan W.R.T Vacha Churna as its main content

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Abstract

Ayurveda being a way of living healthy more emphasizes upon prevention and protection of health. Swarnprashan is one such method to achieve better immunity and enhance overall mental and physical wellbeing of a child since birth till his/her growing age. Administration of processed gold (swarn Bhasma) in children is a unique practice mentioned in Ayurveda as Swarnaprashana by Acharya Kashyapa thousands of years back. He explained that administration of Swarnaprashan in children improves intellect, digestion and metabolism, physical strength, complexion and immunity. There are various formulations of gold and even along with herbal drugs explained by different Acharya for prolonged usage in children. This review proposes that the benefits of Swarnaprashana can be achieved at multiple levels like as a general health promoter and in specific to enhancement of intelligence, digestion, metabolism, immunity, physical strength, complexion. Ayurveda recommends only purified and processed form of gold (Suwarna Bhasma) for internal administration. Swarnaprashana yoga content are Ghrita, Honey (madhu) and Swarnbhasma. Swarnprashan Yoga ingredients are proved to possess nootropic, anticonvulsants, antidepressant, antiepileptic, antipsychotic, antioxidant, immunomodulatory properties. This study is to gather the scientific research findings supporting the use of swarnprashan yoga and its ingredients

Keywords: Swarnprashan Yoga; Ayurveda; Brahmi Ghee; Nootropic; Immuno-Modulator; Vacha Churna

1. Introduction

In ancient times, it was customary to apply various types of yoga to children in the form of lehana (avleha) to increase their health, strength and intelligence. These lehana yog were used in ancient times for the same purpose as many types of medicine that are used for the health and intelligence of children nowadays. Gold has a special place in these lehana yog. Gold is quoted to be effective in increasing intelligence. That is why when a child is born it is prescribed to give gold and honey to child. [1]

Pediatric is portrayed in Kashyapa Samhita by Acharya Kashyapa. He portrays the benefits of Swarna Prashan during neonatal period in Lehan-Adhaya of Sutrasthana. He beautifully describes the procedure of making swarna prashana, for this sit confronting the East bearing (poorva disha), rub swarna against the hard surface like stone with water and afterward blend in with Madhu (honey) and Ghrita (cow's ghee) and given for licking. Advantages of swarna prashana are Budhi vardhanam, Medha vardhanam, (improvement of intelligence), Agni vardhanam (improvement in digestive fire), Bala vardhanam (improvement in strength, stamina and insusceptibility), Ayushya vardhanam (improvement in life span), Mangalya, Punya (auspicious), Grahapaham (eases awful evil). By giving swarna to kid for one month makes him/her param Medhavi and for as long as a half year, youngster becomes Shruta Dhara (can recollect whatever she/he hears) [2]

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2. Suvarnaprashan in ayurved

2.1. According to acharya vagbhata

Acharya Vagbhata explain four formulations of Suvarna which enhances intellectual power and overall growth of baby. These are

- Suvarna bhasma, vacha, kushth, madhu, ghrita
- Arkapushpi, suvarna Bhasma, madhu, ghrita
- 3-Suvarna bhasma, matryoshka, shankhapushpi, madhu, ghrita
- Neem, suvarna bhasma, Vacha, madhu, ghrita. [3]

2.2. According to acharya kashyap

Acharya Kashyap has described the Process of Suvarnaprashana in lehanadhyay in detail. According to Acharya Kashyap in Suvarnaprashana Suvarna is rubbed on a washed stone with little amount of water and unequal amount of ghrita and madhu is added. Then it is Licked while holding the baby's face in the direction of East. Benefits of Suvarnaprashana are described as follows.

- Medha-agni-bala-varadhanam

that means it improves intelligence, digestive power, and strength of body)

- *Ayushyathat* means it improves life span
- *Mangalyathat* means it is Auspicious
- *Punya* that means Sacred
- *Vrishya* means Aphrodisiac
- *Grahapaham* that means it provides relief from all bad effects of *grahas*.

If Suvarnaprashana is administered to child for one month, then child becomes Parammedhavi that means child becomes Genius and if swarna prashana is administered for six months then child becomes Shrutadharathat means he can remember all things whatever he listens. [4]

3. According to acharya sushrut

Acharya Sushrut describes four formulations of Suvarna which help to enhance intellect power of child and overall growth of child. These formulations are as follows

- Suvarna Bhasma, Kushtha, Madhu, Ghrita, Vacha.
- Bhrami, Sankhapushpi, Madhu, Ghrita, Suvarna bhasma.
- Arkapushpa, Madhu, Ghrita, Suvarna bhasma, Vacha.
- Suvarna bhasma, Parvateeya Nimb, Aparajita, Durva with Ghrita. [5]

4. Role of contents of swarna prashana

4.1. Gold (swarna)

- **Rasa:** Kashaya, Tikta, Madhura
- **Guna:** Guru, Snigdha
- **Veerya:** Sheeta (cold), Picchila
- **Vipaka:** Madhura

Suvarna bhasma is sweet in taste, provides strength to the body, beneficial for heart and eyes. It also improves intellectual power. It acts as a rasayana also because it pacifies all doshas and it removes all toxic substances from the body and is good for skin. It is also helpful to cure many diseases as anemia, tuberculosis, diarrhea, colitis, heart disease, murcha etc. [6]

5. Brahmighrita

Ayurveda describes various diseases including sharirik vyadhi (somatic disorders), mansik vyadhi (psychological disorders).In Ayurveda, Mansik vyadhi is described in the form of Unmada and Apasmara.Unmada occurs due to mana, buddhi, Chetna,gyan, smaran Shakti, bhakti, sheel, sharirik cheshta, achara vishamta. [7] Apasmar occurs due to smaran shakti, buddhi, mana vibhramta. [8] Brahmi Ghrita is an important formulation for the treatment of unmada, apasmara and graha disorders.Brahmi ghrita is prepared with Brahmi, Vacha, Kushtha, Shankhapushpi and Purana Ghrita. [9]

6. Madhu

Acharya Charakahas described four types of *madhu*. These are as follows-

- Makshika-
- Bhramara
- Ksaudra
- Pautikka

Out of these four *Makshika* is considered best.

Bhramara is considered heavy. Makshika type of Madhu is oftail varn (oil color). Pauttikais of ghrita colour. Ksaudra is Kapil (Brown) in colour. Bhramara is white in colour. [10] All types of madhu are generally vata dosha aggravator, heavy, sheeta in potency, rakta pittanashak and kapha dosha nashak. It promotes healing and depletion. It is Ruksha,Kashaya, and Madhura in Rasa. [11] Taking warm madhu is fatal. During the process of collection of madhu it is contaminated with poisonous material from the bees themselves or from the various poisonous plants. Therefore, madhu taken by an individual suffering from heat is fatal. Due to its ruksha, heavy, Kashaya andsheeta properties madhu should be taken in small quantities.[12] Madhu is the best Yogavahi substance. [13] Madhu is Madhura in rasa with Kashaya as subsidiary Rasa, Ruksha,sheeta. It promotes appetite,complexion and strength. It is easily digestable, beneficial for heart,union-promoting, cleansing, healing, wholesome for eyes, pleasing, permeates through minute channels, alleviatesPitta, Kapha,Sthoulya, Prameha, Hicca, Swasa, Kasa, Atisara, Vamana, Trishna, krimi and Visha.Beneficial for heart and pacifies three doshas.Due to its lightness itpacifies kapha dosha, due to sliminess,Madhura rasa and Kashaya Rasa it pacifies vata and pitta dosha. [14] Acharya Sushrut has explained eight varieties of madhu.These are as follows-

- Pauttika
- Bhramara
- Ksaudra
- Makshika
- Chatram
- Arghyam
- Auddalakam
- Dalam [15]

Pauttika Madhu is rough and hot in potency. It aggravates vata, rakta and pitta.[16] Bhramara madhu is heavy in nature due to its sliminess and excessive madhur rasa properties. Ksaudra madhu is Sheetal, laghu and lekhana in nature. [17] Makshika madhu is lighter than the above, rough and is considered best among all. It is recommended in diseases like Kasa, shawasa etc.[18] Chatram madhu is madhura in veepaka, heavy in digestion, sheetal and sliminess in nature.It is recommended in diseases like raktapitta, shveta kushtha, prameh, krimi etc.[19] Arghya Madhu is Chakshushya(beneficial for eyes), pacifies kapha and pitta dosha,kshaya and katu in veepaka, Balk arak,Tikta, and slightly increases vata dosha.[20] Auddalaka Madhu is Ruchivardhak, beneficial for voice and alleviates Kushtha and Visha. Dala madhu is kashaya, amla, ochna, katu in veepaka and it is useful in vamana and Prameha. [21]

7. Vacha

- Botanical Name – Acoruscalamus Linn
- Family – Araceae
- **Vernacular names**
Vacha is commonly known as –
- *Shadgrantha*-Rhizome has six nodes on it
- *Golomi*-Hairs on rhizomes resemble hair of cow

- Ugragranthi-Rhizome has very strong odour in Sanskrit. [22]
- Vekhand in Marathi,
- Godavaj in Gujarat,
- Varja in Punjab,
- Vasa in Telugu,
- Vashambu in Tamil,
- Baje inKannada,
- Vayambu in Malayalam,
- Agri-turki in Persian,
- Sweet flag in English. [23]

8. Varieties

According to *Bhavprakash* there are four varieties of *Vacha*. These are as follow-

- Ghona Vacha – *Acorus calamus* Linn
- Bala Vacha (ParseekVacha) _Majorly found in Eran and Kashmir. In Himalaya Pradesh it is known as Hemvati.Also known as Majar Posh (Qabr ka phool). It has three varieties of flower that is white, blue, red.
- Mahabhari Vacha(kulanjana)
- Dwipantar Vacha (chopcheeni) [24]

8.1. Rasapanchaka

- Rasa -Katu, Tikta
- Virya- Ushna
- Vipaka- Katu
- Doshaghnata–vatkaphaghna,pittavardhak
- Guna- Laghu, Tikshna
- Prabhav – Medhya [25]

9. Morphology

Vacha (*Acorus calamus* L.) is perennial wetland monocot,which is 3-5 feet tall.

9.1. Leaves

3-6 inches long [26]

9.2. Rhizome

The root system of *Vacha* consist of shallow, branching rhizomes. These are stout and knobby. The leaves are basal which occurs along these rhizomes while fibrous roots develop below. These plants multiply by its rhizomes, which are long indefinite branched, smooth, pinkish or pale green. Internally it is whitish pink. [27]

9.3. Flower

Plants are having very rarely flower or set fruit, but when they have it, it is 3 to 8 cm long, cylindrical in shape,greenish brown in colour and having spikes.

9.4. FRUIT: The fruits are found to be small and berry like. [28]

PART USED: Root

DOSAGE: 145-500 mg, for *vamana* (emesis)1-2 gm.

FORMULATION: *Medhya rasyana,Saraswat churna*. [29]

PHYTOCHEMICAL CONSTITUENTS: Asaryl aldehyde, A-asarone and B-asarone, acorin, eugenol,caffeine. [30]

Table 1 Different varga of vacha by different acharya

S.no	Name of the text	Skanda / varga / gana
1.	Charaka Samhita	Lekhaneeya varga,[31] Triptighna varga,[32] Arsoghna varga, [33] Asthapanopaga varga,[34] Seethaprashamana varga,[35] Sangyasthapana varga[36]
2.	Susruta Samhita	Pippalyadi gana,[37] Vachadi gana,[38] Mustadi gana[39]
3.	Ashtanga Sangraha	Lekhaneeya varga, [40] Triptighna varga,[41] Arsoghna varga [42], Seethasamana varga [43] Sangyasthapana varga [44] Vatsakadi gana [45] Vachaharidradi gana [46], Mustadi gana [47] Pippalyadi gana, [48] Tikta skandha[49]
4.	Ashtanga Hridaya	Tikta skandha,[50] Vamana upyogidravya,[51] Niruha gana,[52] Vacha Haridradi gana[53] Mustadi gana[54]
5.	Raja Nighantu	Pippalyadi varga[55]

10. Some important points related to vacha

In the Samhita period, vacha is described as a rasayana (rejuvenation) drug. It has appreciable therapeutic applications and is frequently recommended as epileptic drug on account of its efficacy against apasmara (epilepsy). [56] Acharya Charaka includes Vacha as an ingredient of the Prathama Brahma rasayana which can promote medha (grasping and retention of knowledge) and smriti (memory) and bala. Another formulation that is Dwitheeya Brahma rasayana which includes vacha can promote dhaarana (retention of knowledge), bala etc.[57]

11. Discussion

- Swarnprashan improves vyadhisamatva (insusceptibility) and is proved to possess nootropic, anticonvulsant, antidepressants, anti-epileptic and immunomodulatory properties.
- Acharya Kashyap beautifully explained the benefits of Swarnprashan yoga in children. According to him Swarnprashan yoga is prescribed to children with age group 0- 16 year's, which is a long duration to cure any disease, if a child is suffering from any kind of disease. And if a child is free from disease, then taking Swarnprashan on Pushya Nakshatra help the children to lead a healthy life.
- Swarnprashan yoga can be prescribed to children in two ways -
- Pushya Nakshatra Swarnprashan (which is viewed as very auspicious day)
- Anudina Swarnprashan.
- In Kashyapa Samhita, it is mentioned that, Swarnprashan shows its maximum benefits if administered daily. Though Pushya Nakshatra Swarnprashan has equal benefits but if it administered Anudinalie daily it's effects can be multifold.
- As we know that Swarnprashan as a whole is extremely useful for overall development of the body, but Vacha which is one of the contents of Swarnprashan also plays a very vital role in this yoga.

Conclusion

Swarnprashan is a very beneficial sanskar mentioned in classical literature of ayurveda. Every child should get benefitted with the use of this excellent formulation for overall mental and physical growth, as well as for improvement in immunity.

This study will definitely benefit the society by making people aware about swarnaprashan which will be responsible for making children healthy and disease free.

Compliance with ethical standards

Disclosure of conflict of interest

No conflict of interest between authors.

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