

A REVIEW ARTICLE ON ARKA IN VRANA CHIKITSA

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ABSTRACT

Persons are vulnerable to *Vrana* (wounds) from very early phases of human development. Feasibly, after being exposed to injury, plants or their parts were used for the treatment, easily presented in the surrounding. Several drugs of plant, mineral, and animal origin are described in the *Ayurveda* for their wound healing properties under the term *Vranaropana*. *Ayurveda* is mainly based on herbal medicine. Medicinal plants are considered new resources for producing agents that could act as an alternative to antibiotics. *Arka* (*Calotropis Procera*) a widely growing plant has antimicrobial properties against various bacteria and has been reported to possess several medicinal properties and other purposes. *Arka* is used in traditional medicine as a purgative, antihelminthic, anticoagulant, anticancer, anti-inflammatory, antipyretic, analgesic, and antimicrobial and to treat leprosy, leucoderma, ulcers, tumors, piles, fistula -in -ano and diseases of the spleen, liver, and abdomen. Various *in vivo* and *in vitro* studies have been done to prove the medicinal property of *Arka* (*Calotropis Procera*) against various bacteria such as *Enterobactercloacae*, *Escherichia coli*, *Staphylococcus aureus*, *Streptococcus faecalis*, etc. Its active principles are calotoxin, calactin, calotropin, calotropagenin, and uscharin. In *Ayurvedic* text, it is described as *Krimighna* (antihelminthic), *Kandughna* (reduces itching), *Vranashodhan* (wound healing), *Jantughna* (antimicrobial), *Kushthaghna* (treat leprosy), *Shothhar* (reduces edema), *Vednasthapan* (analgesic).

Keywords: *Arka*, *Vranaropana*, *Vranashodhana*, *kushthaghna*

INTRODUCTION

The topic of wound healing has been one of the most important thrust areas of medical science since the commencement of life in the world. *Acharya Charaka* said, on this earth, each *Dravyas* are *Panchbhautik* so each *dravya* is used as an *Ausadhi* according to *Yukti* and *Prayojana*. *Arka* (*Calotropis Procera*) is *sthawar vanaspatik visha*. In a high dose, it acts as poison but in a proper dose, it acts as medicine. *Arka* should be used after *Shodhan karma* (detoxification) in cow milk and cow *ghee* otherwise it will be harmful to the human body. According to its properties such as *rasa*, *guna*, *virya*, *vipaka*, it is used in various diseases as a single drug or as an Ayurvedic formulation. *Arka* (*Calotropis Procera*) is used as a traditional medicinal plant with unique properties. According to Ayurveda *Calotropis procera* is used alone or with other medicines as *Ayurvedic* formulations to treat common diseases such as *jwara* (fever), *Amvata* (rheumatism), *Aama* (indigestion), *kasa* (cough), *pratishyaya* (cold), *vicharchika* (eczema), *shwasa* (asthma), *shlipad* (elephantiasis), *chardi* (nausea and vomiting), *Atisar* (diarrhea). This article is based on therapeutic uses and recent advances of *Calotropis Procera*. Related Literature has been collected from *Samhita* and textbooks related to the subject. The properties of *Calotropis Procera* according to different Ayurvedic texts have been presented. The main Ayurveda texts *Charak Samhita*, *Sushruta Samhita*, *Astang hrudaya*, *Dhanwantari Nighantu*, *Bhavaprakash Nighantu*, *Raj Nighantu*, *Shaligram Nighantu*, *Adarsh Nighantu*, *Kaiyadev Nighantu* and available commentaries on these are used in this study. Information related to recent advances have been collected from the different article available on the internet

DEFINITION:

व्रणगात्रविचूर्णनिव्रणयतीतिव्रणः।⁶ (*Su.Chi.1/6*)

“*Gatra*” means tissue (body tissue or part of body)

“*Vichurnane*” means destruction, break, rupture, and discontinuity (of the Body or tissue)

“**The destruction/break/rupture/discontinuity of body tissue part of the body is called *Vrana*.**”

So *Vrana Gatra Vichurnane* means marvel complex causing destruction or rupture or discontinuation of

tissue in a particular part of the body, which is termed as *Vrana*, whereas *Vranayati* means discoloration. Hence, the definition of *Vrana* implies the damage of a part of the body leading to discoloration.

Vyutpatti Of Arka¹ –

अर्कः, पुं, (अर्च + कर्मणि घञ्, कुत्वम्) सूर्यः | (शब्दकल्पद्रुं)

Nirukti Of Arka² -

अर्क- अर्कः सूर्यः आह्वा अस्य |

सूर्य के जितने नाम हैं,वे इसके भी हैं |

अर्क्यते – स्तुत्येअर्कः | (निघण्टु आदर्श) **RASA PANCHAKA**

THE RASAPANCHAKA OF ARKA³¹ –

According to P.V. Sharma (Voll.2, page.no.434)

TABLE 1

ARKA	
Rasa	Katu, Tikta
Guna	Laghu, Ruksha, Tikshna
Vipaka	Katu
Virya	Ushna
Dosha Karma	Kaphavata Shamak

TYPES OF ARKA-

- *Dhanvantari Nighantu*: 2 varieties, 1- Arka, 2- Rajarka
- *Sodhal Nighantu*: 2 varieties, 1- Raktarka, 2- Shwetarka
- *Kaiyadeva Nighantu*: 2 varieties, 1- Arka, 2- Rajarka
- *Bhavaprakash*: 2 varieties, 1- Shwetarka, 2- Raktarka
- *Raj Nighantu*: 4 varieties, 1- Arka, 2- Rajarka, 3- Shuklarka, 4- Shweta mandaraka
- *Priya Nighantu & Dravyaguna Vigyana*: 2 varieties

1- Mandar/Rajarka/Alarka 2- Arka/Rakta

ARKA IN VERIOUS SAMHINTA

IN CHARAKA SAMHITA (2nd Century BC)⁹:

In *Charak Samhita*, the first mention of *Arka Ksheer* uses as a *Vaman* and *Virechana* in *sutra sthana dirghamjivatiya adhyaya*. The all parts of *Arka* (*Calotropis Procera* (Ait) R.Br.) like leaf, flower, root bark, and latex are mentioned for the treatment of various diseases.

In *Charaka Samhita* approximately more than 31 references of *Arka* have been mentioned. Approximately

Seven references of *Arka Ksheer* as a content of *Manashiladi lepa (Kushtha)*, *Bhedaniya Mahakashaya*, *Pralepa (Arsha)*, *Krimighnadi Varti (Udavarta)*, *Dantyadi Lepa (Kaphaja Granthi)*, *Arkadi Varti (Kaphaja Yoniroga)*, *Arka Ksheer* used in *Vata Kaphaja Vyadhi*.

IN SUSHRUTA SAMHITA (3rd Century BC)¹⁰:

In *Sushruta Samhita*, the first medicinal use of *Arka Ksheer* as a *Pratisaraniya kshar* in *sutra sthana* 11th chapter. The all parts of *Arka (Calotropis Procera (Ait) R.Br.)* like leaf, flower, root bark, and latex are mentioned for the treatment of several diseases. In *Sushruta Samhita* approximately more than 42 references of *Arka* have been mentioned. Approximately six references of *Arka Ksheer* as the content of *Pratisaraniya kshar*, *Arkadi Gana (Krimi, Kustha, Vrana Shodhana.)*, *Arka ksheera Siddha Taila (Arsha)*, *Ghontaphaladi varti (Nadivrana)*, *Trivridadi taila (Bhagandara)*. *Arka Ksheer* is used in *Vata Kaphaja Vyadhi*.

IN ASHTANGA HRIDAYA (7th Century AD)¹¹:

In *Ashtanga Hridaya*, the first use of *Arka* as a *Dantpawan* in *sutra sthana* 2nd chapter is given. The all parts of *Arka (Calotropis Procera (Ait) R.Br.)* like leaf, flower, root bark, and latex are mentioned for the treatment of several diseases. In *Ashtanga Hridaya* approximately more than 39 references of *Arka* have been mentioned. Approximately 12 references of *Arka Ksheer* as the content of *Lepana (Arsha)*, *Lepana (Granthibhedana)*, *Manashiladi lepa (Kustha)*, *Mahavajraka taila (Shwitra)*, *Kushthadi taila (Kustha)*, *Kutajabeeja vama yoga (Vaman)*, *Sharkara* and *Arka ksheera (eye layering)*, *Saptachhada* and *Arka ksheera purana (Krimi janita shula in Krimidanta.)*, *Bhadrashryadi taila (Kushtha, DustaVrana, Nadivrana, Apachi)*, *Varti (Nadi Varana)*, *Shirishadi agada (animal bite)*. *Arka Ksheer* is used in *Vata Kaphaja Vyadhi*.

IN KASHYAP SAMHITA: (6th – 7th Century A.D.)¹²

In *Kashyap Samhita*, the medicinal uses of *Arka (Calotropis Procera (Ait) R.Br.)* are mentioned for several diseases.

In *Kashyap Samhita* approximately more than 3 references of *Arka* have been mentioned.

IN BHELA SAMHITA (7th Century A.D.)¹³: In *Bhela Samhita*, the parts of *Arka (Calotropis Procera (Ait) R.Br.)* like root bark and latex are mentioned for the treatment of several diseases.

In *Bhela Samhita* approximately more than 5 references of *Arka* have been mentioned. *Arka ksheer* is the content of *Mahanimba taila (Arsha)*.

IN CHAKRADATTA (11th Century A. D)¹⁴: In *Chakradatta*, the parts of *Arka (Calotropis Procera (Ait) R.Br.)* like, leaves, flowers, root bark, and latex are mentioned for the treatment of several diseases. In *Chakradatta* approximately more than 7 references of *Arka* have been mentioned. *Arka ksheera puarana* for *Krimidanta* and *Arka ksheer* for *Anamaka Roga*.

IN VANGASENA SAMHITA : (12th Century A.D)¹⁵

In *Vangasena Samhita*, the parts of *Arka (Calotropis Procera (Ait) R.Br.)* like root bark and latex are mentioned for the treatment of several diseases. In *Vangasena Samhita* approximately more than 3 references of *Arka* have been mentioned. *Arka ksheer* with *haridra* for *pralepa in Mukhakarshnya*. Specific reference in this *Samhita* is **the Juice of Arka root collected in varun nakshatra for Aschyotana**.

IN SHARANGDHARA SAMHITA: (13th Century A.D)¹⁶

In *Sharangadhara Samhita*, the synonyms and parts of *Arka (Calotropis Procera (Ait) R.Br.)* like leaves, flowers, root bark, and latex are mentioned for the treatment of several diseases.

In *Sharangadhara Samhita* approximately more than 7 references of *Arka Ksheer* have been mentioned. Many formulations of *Arka ksheera* are given in this *Samhita* like *Shadabindu*, *Kaseesadi taila*, *Marichyadi taila*, *Vajree taila*, preparation of *Aarabhasma*, *Tamra*, *peetala* and *kansya bhasma*, *Madankamdev rasa*.

IN BHAVAPRAKASHA SAMHITA (16th Century A.D)¹⁷:

In *Bhavaprakasha Samhita*, the synonyms and parts of *Arka (Calotropis Procera (Ait) R.Br.)* like leaves, flowers, root bark, and latex are mentioned for the treatment of several diseases. In *Bhavaprakasha Samhita* approximately more than 6 references of *Arka Ksheer* have been mentioned. Many formulations of

Arka ksheera are given in this *Samhita* like *Vrihatkasisadi Tail* for *Arsha*, *Vaishwanara kshar* for *Jathara*, *Vrihatshankha vati* for *Jathara*, *kumbhikadya Tailam* for *Nadi vrana*, *Varti* for *Nadi vrana*.

IN SIDDHA BHESHAJYA MANIMALA: (20th Century A.D.)¹⁸

In *Siddha Bhashajya Manimala*, the synonyms and parts of *Arka* (*Calotropis Procera* (Ait) R.Br.) like leaves, flowers, root bark, and latex are mentioned for the treatment of several diseases. In *Siddha Bhashajya Manimala* approximately more than 8 references of *Arka Ksheer* have been mentioned. *Siddha Bhashajya Manimala* was written by *Sri Krishnaram bhatt* in form of *Guchchha*. Medicinal uses of *Arka ksheera* as a *Bhavana dravya*, the content of *Bhasma*, *Utkarika* in *Shotha*, *Lepa* for *Nadi Vrana*, the content of *Bhasma* for *Vajikarana*.

ARKA IN VARIOUS NIGHANTUS -

The foremost determination of *Nighantus* is that which gives a comprehensive knowledge from all parts of a specific subject, especially plants through synonyms. For the development of the *Dravyaguna*, *Nighantu Kala* was the golden period. The era of *Nighantu* has provided evidence of systematic & scientific understanding of the drug. In this period the drugs were elucidated with their synonyms, *Rasa Panchaka*, and their utility in different ailments. The descriptions concerning actions and indications of *Arka* have been reviewed from various *Nighantus* are as follows:

DHANVANTARI NIGHANTU: (Mahendra bhogika 10-13th Century A.D.)¹⁹

In *Dhanwantari Nighantu*, *Arka* has been described in *karaveeradi varga*. In this *Nighantu* various properties and Indications are described.

(D.N. *karaveeradi varga*/ 12,13)

अर्कः सूर्याह्वयः पुष्पी विकीरोऽथ विकीरणः | जम्भलः क्षीरपर्णी स्यादास्फोटो भास्करो रविः ||१२||

अर्कस्तु कटुरुष्णश्च वातहृदीपनः सरः | शोफन्नरणहरः कण्डूकुष्ठप्लीहकृमीञ्जयेत ||१३||

SODHALA NIGHANTU: (Sodhala 12th Century A.D.)²⁰

Arka has been included in *Karaveeradi Varga* in this *nighantu*. In *Naamsangraha* of this *Nighantu*, various synonyms of *Arka* have been described. In

Gunasangraha of this *nighantu*, various properties and indications has been described. (S.N. *Karaveeradi Varga* / 399)

अर्कः क्रिमिहरस्तीक्ष्णः सरोऽर्शकफ्रोगहृत | विसूचिकाशिरोवातकुष्ठशोफापहारकः || (३९९)

MADANPAL NIGHANTU: (Madanpal, 14th Century A.D.)²¹

In this *Nighantu* *Arka* has been described in *Abhayadi varga*. Various synonyms and properties of *Arka* has been described. (M.N. *Abhayadi varga*/ 322,323)

अर्कः सूर्याह्वयः क्षीरः सदापुष्पो विकीरणः | मन्दारो वसुकोऽलको राजाह्वो दीर्घपत्रकः ||३२२||

अर्कद्वयं शङ्खवातकुष्ठकण्डु विषन्नगान | निहन्ति प्लिहगुल्माशौयकृच्छलेभोदरक्रिमिन ||३२३||

KAIYADEV NIGHANTU: (Kaiyadeva 15th Century A.D.)²²

In this *Nighantu*, *Arka* has been described in *Oshadhi varga*. Various synonyms have been described. Properties and Indications of various *Prayojyanga* of *Arka* has been described. (K.Ni. *Oshadhi varga*/ 1534,1537,1538)

अर्कालको सरो तिक्तावुष्णो वातकफौ हतः | क्रिमिकुष्ठन्नगानांऽप्लिहगुल्मविषन्नगान || (१५३४)

अर्कक्षीरं स्नुहीक्षीरं स्निग्धं वा कटुकं लघु | गुल्मिनां कुष्ठिनां चापि तथैवोदरोगिणाम् ||१५३७||

क्षीरमर्कस्य तिक्तोष्णं स्निग्धं सलवणं लघु | कुष्ठगुल्मोदरहरं श्रेष्ठमेतद्विरेचनम् || (१५३८)

BHAVAPRAKASHA NIGHANTU: (Bhavmishra 16th Century A.D.)²³

In this *Nighantu*, *Arka* has been described in *Guduchyadi varga*. Various synonyms have been described. Properties and Indications of various *Prayojyanga* of *Arka* has been described. (B.N. *Guduchyadi varga*/ 69,70,72)

अर्कद्वयं सरं वातकुष्ठकण्डुविषन्नगान | निहन्ति प्लीहगुल्मार्शःश्लेष्मोदरशकृत्कृमीन् || ६९||

अर्कद्वयं सरं वातकुष्ठकण्डुविषन्नगान् | निहन्ति प्लीहगुल्मार्शःश्लेष्मोदरशकृत्कृमीन् ||७०||

क्षीरमर्कस्य तिक्तोष्णं स्निग्धं सलवणं लघु | कुष्ठगुल्मोदरहरं श्रेष्ठमेतद्विरेचनम् || ७२||

RAJ NIGHANTU: (Pandit Narhari, 17th Century A.D.)²⁴

In this *Nighantu*, *Arka* has been described in *Karaveeradi varga*. Various synonyms, properties and Indications has been described.

(R.N. *Karaveeradi varga*/ 26,27,28)

अर्कः क्षीरदलः पुष्पी प्रतापः क्षीरकाण्डकः | विश्कीरो भास्करः क्षीरी खर्जून्ः
शिवपुष्पकः ||२६|| भञ्जनः क्षीरपर्णी स्यात्सविता च विकीरणः | सूर्याह्वश्च सदापुष्पो
रविरास्फोटकस्तथा | तूलफलः शुकफलो विंशत्येकसमाह्वयः ||२७||

अर्कस्तु कटुरुष्णश्च वातजिदीपनीयकः | शोफत्रणहरः कण्डूकुष्ठकृमीविनाशनः ||२८||

Detailed description of Vernacular names, properties and Indications has been given.

PRIYA NIGHANTU: (P.V Sharma, 21st Century)²⁹

In this *nighantu*, *Arka* has been described as *Hraswagulma* having *Arunabh pushpa* and *latex in Shatapushpadi varga*. Various synonyms, Properties and Indications of *Patra and ksheera* has been described. (P. N./ *Shatapushpadi varga* / 67)

क्षीरमर्कस्य विज्ञेयं वमने सविरेचने | त्वग्दोषश्चित्रनाशि स्यान्नियतं लेपनादपि ||
(श.व.६७)

IN SAHSRAYOGAM³⁰:

In Sahasrayogam, Arka and Snuhi latex has been described for Vranaropanarth (wound healing). Oil (Til tail) cooked with latex of Snuhi and Arka along with bee-wax heals chronic wound healing.

“महावृक्षार्कजे दुग्धे मधूच्छिन्न साधितं । तैलं सकृत्प्रयोगेण दुष्टत्रण विरोपणम्॥”

(सहस्रयोगम् \ व्रणरोपणे)

MODERN REVIEW OF ARKA

Taxonomical Classification³³:

Kingdom: Plantae – Plants

Subkingdom: Tracheobionta – Vascular plants

Superdivision: Spermatophyta – Seed plants

Division: Magnoliophyta – Flowering plants

Class: Magnoliopsida – Dicotyledons

Subclass: Asteridae

Order: Gentianales

Family: Asclepiadaceae – Milkweed family

Genus: *Calotropis R. Br. – calotropis P*

Species: *Calotropis procera (Aiton) W.T. Aiton – roostertree P*

Vernacular names³⁴:

Sanskrit: *Bhanu, Ravi, Tapanu, Arka*

English: *Madar Tree*

Hindi: *Aak, Akavana, Madar*

CHEMICAL CONSTITUENTS³⁸: voruscharin (0.45%), calactin (0.15%), clactin composed of calotropagenin and hexose, uzarigenin, syriogenin, proceroside, calotropin, calactinica acid, uscharin, α -amyrin, β -amyrin, β -sitosterol and calotoxin (0.15%) (latex).

PHARMACOLOGICAL ACTIVITIES³⁹: Anti-cancer, Antiimpalntation, Antimicrobial, nematicidal, high fibrinolytic, anticoagulant, vermifugal, anthelmintic, stimulant, spasmogenic, and mild diuretic.

Calotropin showed digitalis-like action on the heart, but its action was not cumulative and less harmful.

ACTIONS AND USES⁴⁰: The whole dried plant are bitter, thermogenic, laxative, anthelmintic, anticarcinogenic, expectorant, depurative, and good tonic. It is used in worms and ulcers. The leaves are used in the treatment of paralysis, arthritis, swellings, pain, leprosy, skin diseases, wounds, ear diseases, and cancer.

PART USED⁴¹: Root, Root bark, Leaf, Flower, Latex.

DOSES: Root bark – 0.5 to 1 gm; Latex – 250 to 750 mg; Flower – 1 to 3 gm. Leaf - 250-750 mg of the drug in powder form. *

TOXICOLOGY⁴²: Latex is highly toxic to rabbits, dogs, and donkeys when administered in large doses. A lethal dose of usharin and calotoxins, the constituents of latex are 0.5 microgram and 0.7 microgram per gram of frog respectively.

SUBSTITUTE AND ADULTERANTS⁴³: *Calotropis procera R. Br.* and *Calotropis gigantea (L.) Ait.f.*, both the species are used as substitutes for one another and are said to have similar effects.

FORMULATIONS – *Arka vati, Ravimuladi vati, Arka lavan, Prawalpanchamrit ras, Arka taila, Ekang veer ras.*

CONCLUSION

This article elaborates on the therapeutic uses of *Calotropis Procera (Arka)* in bunch. Due to its toxic nature, many physicians and pharmaceutical units avoid using *Arka* preparation in practice. This article will help physicians, pharmaceutical companies, and students to use *Arka* in day-to-day practice after the proper shodhana (detoxification) process. The therapeutic significance of *Calotropis Procera* would help in

developing herbal medicine and its uses will minimize the adverse effect of modern medicine and overcome drug resistance. This article will inspire and motivate researchers to work on the medicinal properties of *Calotropis Procera (Arka)* and to use plant resources in the field of medicine. To summarize, plenty of literature on *Arka* is found. Its properties have been described in *Brihatrayi*, *Laghutrayi*, and *Nighantus* along with various medicinal properties and therapeutic uses for *Vrana Ropana Karma* (wound healing activity).

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