

DHUPANA KARMA IN AYURVEDA TEXTS: A REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

The ancient literature is enriched with the description of various *Krimi*, diseases caused by them and the remedies to get rid of those harmful micro-creatures. It includes various modalities like *Yagya*, *Homa*, *Havana*, *Rakshoghana Karma*, *Krimihara Dravaya*, *Dhupana Karma*. *Dhupana Karma* is the use of medicated fumes (by burning of dried plant & animal parts). The changing phase of preventive aspect of *Dhupana Karma* in *Krimi Roga* in Vedic period in form of *Havana* and *Yagya* to clinical focus in *Samhita* period reveals its escalating significance with due course of time. It presents the scientific approach to create aseptic environment by reducing microbial load to non-pathogenic levels. And along with emergence of various infectious diseases later, it molded into clear cut fumigation procedure with the use of many herbal drugs indicated as *Dhupana Dravaya*. Although due to many reasons like effectiveness, convenience & cost, modern fumigating physical & chemical agents has replaced this classical *Dhupana* technique. But the overweighing of harmful effects of these agents over the disinfection purpose directs us to think for the revival of this outdated primitive *Dhupana* technique. The present study is aimed to compile the classical concept of *Dhupana Karma* so as to do further studies regarding its efficacies in combating the infective diseases.

Keywords: *Krimi*, *Krimi Roga*, *Rakshoghana Karma*, *Dhupana Karma*.

INTRODUCTION

Our classical texts are well equipped with the description of the concept of *Krimi*. The *Acarya* were well aware about their existence. They have mentioned about their appearance types, action and diseases caused. Since Vedic time, the potentiality of these microorganisms in various diseases has been enlightened. A range of diseases produced by *Krimi* are mentioned such as *Kustha*, *Yakshma*, *Atisara*, *Pandu*, *Siro Roga*¹, *Hrdya Roga* etc. Along with vivid description of microorganisms, proper light have been thrown on the modalities to get free from these infections.

“*Rakshoghana gana*” is described as group of plants possessing *Krimighana* properties². Also the *Krimighana Mahakasaya*³ is mentioned in *Caraka Samhita* focusing on the antimicrobial action of many drugs. *Dhupana Karma* having the literally meaning of fumigation⁴ is one of those natural and traditional methods which can be useful in controlling the infections. It is the use of medicated fumes. No specific *Yantra* has been described for this *Dhupana Karma*. Although *Vrana Dhupana Netra* is mentioned by our *Acarya Sushruta* to be made of *Ashta Angula*⁵, it has

been explained to sprinkle powdered herbal drugs and various animal products having antimicrobial properties over burning flame in a *Sarava* and fumes thus produced were supposed to be used as per local or generalized purpose. Thus it can be taken as modified form of *Havana/ Yagya Karma*. *Dhumapana*⁶ is the internal application of medicated fumes through oral & nasal route in various infectious diseases presenting the other face of *Dhupana Karma*.

Materials and Methods:

For the present study the primary source of literature are the classical text books of *Ayurveda*, various peer reviewed Journals, previous studies conducted on similar subject at different universities and other research centers. Information available on internet is also incorporated in the study.

Description in Ayurveda texts

Vedic literature

Beginning from the Vedic period, it is found that emphasis was done on preventive aspect of *Dhupana Karma*. *Homa, Havana, Yagya* these ceremonies were aimed at purification of environment from *Bhuta* or *Rakshasa*, creating positive energy in surroundings along with the religious values. These acts reduced the microbial load of the environment and thus aim of massive sterilization was achieved.

- 1) The indication of herbal drugs like *Guggula, Ajashringi* for *Kriminashana*⁷ purpose reveals that antimicrobial activity of medicinal plants was a well-known concept.
- 2) There is a complete *Sukta* dedicated to *Rakshoghana Karma*⁸.
- 3) There is indication of act of perfuming, fragrance and making things odorous during offerings to the almighty God⁹.
- 4) *Yajurveda* advocates performing *Havana* twice everyday i.e. morning and evening to attain spiritual enlightenment, mental peace, purification of mind and the environment¹⁰.

Samhita period:

Samhita plays an imperative role in elaborating the concept of *Dhupana Karma*. It emphasizes on wide aspect of *Dhupana Karma* including detailed descrip-

tion of indications, classification, *Dhupana* drugs, and mode of administration / procedure of *Dhupana*.

Indications

a) Preventive aspect: it includes fumigation for creating aseptic environment for the healthy beings so that no infectious disease can develop, especially wards fumigation and mass areas. In this context, we have following

- *Homa, Havana* and *Yagya Vidhi* in holy places
 - *Kumaragara Dhupana*¹¹ (paediatric wards)/ *Aristagara Dhupana*¹²
 - *Vranitagara Dhupana*¹³ (postoperative wards)
 - *Sutikagara Dhupana* (labour wards)
- It aimed at massive / general sterilization.

b) Curative aspect: it includes specific fumigation from treatment point of view for particular diseases. *Dhupana Karma* is indicated for both infectious and non-infectious diseases. In this context, we have *Dhupana* in *Jvara, Arsha, Kustha, Psychic ailments like Unmada and Apasmara, Vrana* (wound), *Yoni Roga, Visa Vikara* etc.

These are aimed at using specific drugs indicated for specific diseases.

c) Other effects: indication of *Dhupana Karma* for a good progeny, prosperity and auspiciousness.

Classification

a) On the basis of indication:

- ✓ Preventive: for prevention of diseases and healthy well-being.
- ✓ Therapeutic: for infectious and non-infectious disease.

b) On the basis of action (Karma)¹⁴:

Acarya Kashyapa has classified *Dhupana* on the basis of action (*Karma*) as follows.

- ✓ *Dhupa*: main *Dhupa* indicated for any particular purpose.
- ✓ *Pratidhupa*: to be done after *Dhupa*, for preventing reoccurrence of disease.
- ✓ *Anudhupa*

c) On the basis of mode of use :

- ✓ External: medicated fumes exposure to a whole i.e. *Dhupana*.
- ✓ Internal: intake of medicated fumes via oral or nasal route i.e. *Dhumapana*¹⁵

d) On the basis of origin of Dhupana drugs:

- ✓ **Sthavara Dravya:** *Dhupana dravya* of plant origin like *Guggulu, Nimba, Vaca, Haritaki, Sarsapa* etc.
- ✓ **Jangama Dravya:** animal origin, *Sarpnirmoka, Bastaloma, Nrakesha*, faeces of cat, owl, hen, monkey hairs etc.
- ✓ **Mineral origin:** like *Haratala, Manashila*¹⁶

e) Etymological¹⁷:

- ✓ **Raksoghana Dhupa :** for protection from infections.
- ✓ **Svastika Dhupa:** for increasing auspiciousness.
- ✓ **Gana Dhupa:** for all diseases originating from *Bhuta* (microbes).
- ✓ **Punya Dhupa:** for holy people & holy purpose.
- ✓ **Varuna Dhupa:** for *Shlesma Roga* in summer season.
- ✓ **Shri Dhupa:** for prosperity

f) On the basis of area of exposure:

- ✓ Local *Dhupana*: e.g. *Karna Dhupana, Vrana Dhupana*
- ✓ Systemic *Dhupana*: e.g. *Jvara* (generalised *Dhupana*).

g) On the basis of action on wound¹⁸:

- ✓ **Kathinyakara Dhupana:** fumigation for hardening of excessively soft tissues of wound. When fumi-

gated with aromatic drugs and heartwood of aromatic plants, the ulcerated tissue gets hardened.

- ✓ **Mardavakara Dhupana:** fumigation for softening of excessively hard tissues of wound. When fumigated with fumes of ghee, bone marrow and muscle fats (*Vasa*), softens the ulcerated tissue.

Dhupana drugs:

A variety of *Dhupana* drugs of herbal, animal and mineral origin are mentioned in our classical texts.

Mode of administration / procedure:

- a) **Form of drug:** various references are found to use the drug in powder form (*Curma*)^{19,20}, *Kalka*^{21,22} form for *Dhupana Karma*. Although reference *Dhupana Karma* using *Dhupa Varti* is not directly available in the texts. But it is mentioned in relation to odour of *Varti* made with various aromatic drugs^{23,24}.
- b) **Dhupana Yantra**²⁵: For fumigating wound, the wound pipe should be eight fingers long, having blunt mouth, thickness of *Kalaya* and a hole of horsegram size.

➤ **Caraka Samhita:**

Acarya Caraka has indicated *Dhupana Karma* in many diseases which are tabulated below.

Table 1:

S.no.	Indication	Reference	Drugs / comments	
1.	<i>Jvara</i>	Prodromal stage	Ni.1/36	Fumigation is prescribed
		<i>Jirna Jvara</i>	Chi.3/176, 307-308	<i>Guggulu, Nimba, Vaca, Kutha, Haritaki, Sarsapa, Yava</i> with <i>Ghrta</i> . Relieves chronic fever
2.	<i>Unmada</i>		Ni.7/8	Indication of fumigation
3.	<i>Aparapatana</i>		Sh.8/41	<i>Bhurjapatra, Kacamani, Sarpanirmoka</i> fumes exposed to <i>yonis</i>
4.	<i>Kumaragara</i>		Sh.8/61	Sterilising of beddings, clothings, <i>Yava, Sarsapa, Atasi, Hingu, Guggulu, Vaca, Coraka, Brahmi, Jaṭamansi, Ashoka, Rohini, Sarpnirnok</i> with <i>Ghrta</i>
5.	<i>Kustha</i>		Chi.7/159	Fumigation with <i>Viḍanga</i> and <i>Khadira</i>
6.	<i>Apasmara</i>		Chi.10/36	<i>Guggulu, Vaca, Haritaki, Sarsapa, Jaṭamansi, Lashuna, Hingu, Coraka</i>
7.	<i>Arsha</i>		Chi.14/48-50	Fumigation formulations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human hairs, snake slough, cat's skin, root of <i>Arka, Shami</i> leaves. • <i>Tumbaru, Viḍanga, Devadaru, Aksata & Ghrta</i> • <i>Bṛhati, Ashvagandha, Pippali, Surasa & Ghrta</i>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dung of goat, <i>Saktu</i> and <i>Ghrita</i> • Dung of elephant, <i>Sarjarasa</i> with <i>Ghrita</i>.
8.	<i>Vrana</i>	Chi.25/42, 108-109	For hardening and softening of wound tissue. Relieves pain, discharges, foul odour, parasites infesting the ulcer, excessive looseness of tissue
9.	<i>Pradara</i>	Chi.30/120	For checking the discharge, vagina should be oiled and fumigated with <i>Sarala</i> , <i>Guggulu</i> , <i>Yava</i> mixed with <i>Ghrita</i> or by bitter fish (<i>Saphari</i>) mixed with oil

Acarya Caraka also advised to perform religious rituals like *Yagya* etc. in the wake of epidemic diseases (*Janapadodhvansa*)²⁶.

Sushruta Samhita:

Acarya has described fumigation of postoperative wound with analgesic (*Vedanahara*) and disinfectant

drugs (*Raksoghana*)²⁷. It has also been mentioned to disinfect the *Shastragara* and the instruments used for *Shastra Karma* including dressing materials (*Kavalika*) etc.

The various references of indication of *Dhupana Karma* as mentioned by *Acarya Sushruta* are tabulated below.

S.no.	Indication	Reference	Drugs / comments
1.	Postoperative	Su.5/18	<i>Guggulu</i> , <i>Agaru</i> , <i>Sarjarasa</i> , <i>Vaca</i> , <i>Sarsapa</i> , <i>Lavana</i> with <i>Ghrita</i> Fumigate not only wound but also beds etc. in order to remove foul odour and flies.
2.	<i>Vranitagara</i>	Su.19/24, 28	<i>Sarsapa</i> , <i>Nimba</i> , <i>Lavana</i> with <i>Ghrita</i> fumigation to be done twice a day for 10 days microbes are destroyed by <i>Raksoghana</i> drugs and do not re-attack the surgical patient.
3.	<i>Vrana</i> (wound)	Su.36/22 Chi 1/8, 80	<i>Shrivestaka</i> , <i>Sarala</i> , <i>Devadaru</i> , <i>Sarjarasa</i> <i>Guggulu</i> , <i>Yava</i> , <i>Ghrita</i>
4.	<i>Garbhasanga</i> obstructed labour	Sh.10/13	<i>Sarpanirmoka</i> , <i>Madanaphala</i>
5.	<i>Aparapatana</i>	Sh.10/23	<i>Kaṭukalabu</i> , <i>Kritavedhana</i> , <i>Sarsapa</i> and <i>Sarpanirmoka</i> with <i>Kaṭu Taila</i>
6.	Newborn	Sh.10/26	<i>Raksoghana Dhupa</i> The child should be fumigated with incenses warding off evil organisms
7.	<i>Karna Roga</i>	Utt.21/11, 40, 52-53	<i>Guggulu</i> , <i>Agaru</i> , <i>Ghrita</i>
8.	<i>Yoni Roga</i>	Utt.38/27	<i>Bṛhatiphala</i> , <i>Haridra</i> , <i>Daruharidra</i>
9.	<i>Visama Jvara</i>	Utt.39/262	<i>Aja Carma</i> , <i>Roma</i> , <i>Vaca</i> , <i>Kustha</i> , <i>Guggulu</i> , <i>Nimba</i> , <i>Madhu</i>

➤ **Aṣṭanga hradaya**

Acarya has described fumigation of dressing material²⁸ also to be used after surgical procedure.

S.No	Indication	Reference	Drugs / comments
1.	Postoperative	Su.29/26	<i>Guggulu</i> , <i>Agaru</i> , <i>Sarsapa</i> , <i>Hingu</i> , <i>Sarjarasa</i> , <i>Vaca</i> , <i>Nimba</i> , <i>Lavana</i> with <i>Ghrita</i> .
2.	<i>Garbhasanga</i>	Sha.1/83, 86	<i>Kṛishna Sarpa Nirmoka</i> , <i>Bhurja</i> , <i>Langali</i> , <i>Tumbi</i> , <i>Kuth</i> , <i>Sarsapa</i>
3.	<i>Visama jvara</i>	Chi.1/162	<i>Guggulu</i> , <i>Neem</i> , <i>Vaca</i> , <i>Kutha</i> , <i>Haritaki</i> , <i>Sarsapa</i> , <i>Yava</i> with <i>Ghrita</i>
4.	<i>Arsha</i>	Chi.8/18, 27	<i>Arka</i> , <i>Shami</i> , human hairs, <i>Sarpanirmoka</i> , cat skin, <i>Ashvagandha</i> , <i>Tulasi</i> , <i>Bṛhati</i> , <i>Pippali</i> with <i>Ghrita</i> . It helps in letting of vitiated blood

5.	Paediatric ward	Utt.1/25, 26	Dead crow with <i>Sarpi, Vasa, Majja Raksoghana Dhupa</i> for sterilising beddings, clothings, coverings of child
6.	<i>Balagraha</i>	Utt.3/55-56 Utt.5/6	Horns, skin, hairs of cow, <i>Sarpnirmoka</i> , cats fecas, <i>Nimbi</i> , <i>Kuṭaki</i> , <i>Madanaphala</i> , <i>Brhati</i> , <i>Yava</i> , goat hairs, <i>Devadaru</i> , <i>Sarsapa</i> , <i>Mayurapiccha</i> , <i>Sarjarasa</i> , <i>Tusa</i> , <i>Hingu</i>
7.	<i>Bhutagraha</i>	Utt.5/6, 18	<i>Karpasbijadi Dhupa. GrahaRoga</i> and <i>jvara</i>
8.	<i>Unmada</i>	Utt.6/40	<i>Brahmyadi Dhupa varti</i>
9.	<i>Kukkunuka</i>	Utt.9/26	<i>Musta, Haridra, DaruHaridra, Pippali, Sarsapa</i> with <i>Ghrita</i>
10.	<i>Netra Roga</i>	Utt.11/40	<i>Mahanila Gutika</i>
11.	<i>Karna Roga</i>	Utt.18/18	<i>Guggulu</i> Helps in reducing pus and secretions.
12.	<i>Vrana</i>	Utt.25/45	<i>Yava, Bhurjapatra, Moma, Devadaru, Shrivestaka</i> with <i>Ghrita</i> Removes pus and relieves pain
13.	<i>Visa</i>	Utt.37/23	Human hairs, <i>Sarsapa</i> , old jaggery

➤ *Kashyapa Samhita*

Kashyapa Samhita is a medical text dealing with diseases of newborn and children. *Acarya* has given a complete separate chapter describing near about 40 *Dhupana* formulations to be done for newborn, growing and diseased child²⁹. He also opined that physician should always possess fumigating material³⁰ with him at the time of visit to patient. The procedure of preparation of fumigation material and their collection in *Pusya* or *Maitraya Nakshatra* from southeast or north direction is also described. *Acarya* has also mentioned to chant hymn at the time of fumigation. He also focused on antimicrobial potential of *Dhupana* drugs by indicating them in various *Graha Roga* as morphology and fate of *Graha* mentioned in Ayurveda texts in different can be unequivocally interpreted as microscopic pathogenic organism like virus and bacteria etc.

➤ *Bhela Samhita*³¹

Acarya has indicated *Dhupana Karma* in *Jvara*, *Aparasanga* and *Arsha*

➤ *Harita Samhita*

Acarya has dedicated a whole chapter on *Havana Vidhi*³² in which *Sanidvarga* & various aromatic drugs are described. Specific mantras for specific drugs for specific *Nakshatra* are also mentioned. Indication of *Dhupana* can be cited in *Arsha* and *Grahadosa*.

➤ *Shargandhara Samhita*

✓ *Acarya* has described *Vrana Dhupana* as one of the six types of *Dhuma*³³

- ✓ *Vrana Dhupana Netra*³⁴: 10 *Angula Nadi*, thickness of *Kalaya*, having hole of horse gram size.
- ✓ Described the procedure for *Dhupana* in *Vrana*.

DISCUSSION

Dhupana is a concept very well known since ancient times along with the concept of microbiology. Indication of *Dhupana Karma* in *Sansargaja Vyadhi* like *Jvara* and *Kustha* suggests its antimicrobial activity. Emphasis was laid on importance and utility of *Dhupana Karma* by coupling it with religious rituals so that the society can get benefit on mass level and can perform it on routine basis. *Yagya* were done for the welfare of the society as it resulted in mass hygiene. It is also evident from its indication in epidemics (*Janapadodhvansa*) in classical texts. Thus the aim of *Dhupana Karma* is antiseptic, anti-inflammatory due to bactericidal effect of the *Kṛmighana* drugs³⁵ in the treatment of various diseases like *Vrana*, *Arsha Roga*, *Shvasa Roga* and *Karna Roga* and *Yonivyapada*³⁶.

CONCLUSION

Dhupana Karma is an important modality & primitive method of sterilization. Besides its antimicrobial potential, it also can be used as route of drug administration without any side effect. The classical indication of *Dhupana Karma* in epidemics suggests exploring its role in managing the outbreaks of many new emerging infectious diseases. The dispersed descrip-

tion make the need of proper compilation of the related facts and further studies should be done to elaborate the role and efficacy of *Dhupana Karma* in present context.

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