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# A broad review on *Shwasakuthar Rasa* (herbo-mineral formulation)

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## ABSTRACT

In Ayurveda *Shwasakuthar Rasa* is one of the important and widely used *Rasaushadhis* (herbo-mineral drug) in respiratory disorders especially in *Shwasa* (bronchial asthma) and *Kasa* (bronchitis) *Roga*. The *Shwasakuthar Rasa* contains minerals i.e., *Parada* (mercury), *Gandhaka* (sulphur), *Tankana* (borax) and *Manahshila* (arsenic sulphide) in purified form and herbs like purified *Vatsanabha* (*aconitum ferox*), *Pippali* (*Piper longum*), *Maricha* (*Piper nigrum*) and *Shunthi* (*Zingiber officinale*) as per Ayurvedic text. This review article documents the method of preparation, indications, probable mode of action and therapeutic properties of *Shwasakuthar Rasa*. This study concluded the antibacterial, anti-inflammatory, bronchodilator and expectorant effects of *Shwasakuthar Rasa*. So, it can be used as an effective medicine for respiratory disorders.

**Key words:** Ayurveda, Herbo-Mineral Formulation, Respiratory Disorders, *Shwasakuthar Rasa*.

## INTRODUCTION

Ayurvedic classics have very selected and sparing references regarding the usage of *Rasaushadhis* (herbo-mineral formulations) in the management of *Shwasa Roga* (respiratory diseases). Their administration is pressed into usage from the medieval period with *Rasaushadhis* (herbo-mineral formulations) getting more popular in very short time due to their faster absorption, quicker assimilation, easy to administration, easily palatable and almost swift action even in minimal doses without any

remarkable side-effects. *Acharya Charak* has described properties of an ideal drug as the administered in proper dose is that which in small dose exerts great force and eliminates plentiful impurity, easy to take, light in digestion, good in taste, saturating, alleviates disease, even in faulty administration does not harm, does not cause much depression and is endowed with good smell, colour and taste. The *Rasaushadhis* (herbo-mineral formulations) fulfill each and every criterion of ideal drug as stated by *Acharya Charak*.<sup>[1]</sup> *Shwasakuthar Rasa* is one of the commonest herbo-mineral formulations which is used widely in practice. The name of *Shwasakuthar Rasa* is made up of two words i.e., *Shwasa* and *Kuthar*, *Shwasa* stands for “respiratory disorders” and *Kuthar* refers to “an axe”. So, the name itself indicates that it cuts (eliminates) the respiratory disorders as strong as an axe. The *Shwasakuthar Rasa* is one of the *Khalveeya Rasayan* mentioned in most of the classical text as *Shwasakuthar Rasa*, *Maha Shwasakuthar Rasa*, *Bruhat Shwasakuthar Rasa* and *Shwasari Rasa*. *Maricha* (black pepper) is a major constituent of it. The *Shwasakuthar Rasa* mainly indicated in bronchial asthma, bronchitis, allergy and other respiratory disorders. Apart from

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respiratory problems it also used in anorexia, indigestion, tuberculosis, unconsciousness, coma, mental disorders and heart diseases.<sup>[2,3]</sup> This review article provides the detailed study on *Shwasakuthar Rasa* and also explained probable mode of action of it by using *Ayurvedic* and modern parameters.

### AIM AND OBJECTIVES

- 1) To study the contents, method of preparation and indications of *Shwasakuthar Rasa*.
- 2) To explore the probable role of *Shwasakuthar Rasa* in the management of respiratory disorders.

### MATERIALS AND METHODS

For this review study literary material i.e., *Ayurvedic* text *Bhaishajya Ratnavali*, authentic publications indexed in Google scholar & pub Med and modern medical literature have been reviewed.

### DRUG REVIEW

Classical reference of *Shwasakuthar Rasa* is mentioned in *Shwasa Chikitsa Prakaran* of *Bhaishajya Ratnavali*.<sup>[4]</sup> The table no. 1 and figure no. 1 are showing the ingredients of *Shwasakuthar Rasa*

**Table 1: Showing the ingredients of *Shwasakuthar Rasa*.**

SN	Drug	English/Botanical Name	Quality	Parts used
1.	<i>Shuddha Parada</i>	Purified Mercury	10g	-
2.	<i>Shuddha Gandhak</i>	Purified Sulfur	10g	-
3.	<i>Shuddha Vatsanabha</i>	Purified Aconitum Ferox	10g	Root
4.	<i>Shuddha Tankan</i>	Purified Borax	10g	-
5.	<i>Shuddha Manahshila</i>	Purified Realgar	10g	-
6.	<i>Pippali</i>	<i>Piper longum</i>	10g	Fruit

7.	<i>Shunthi</i>	<i>Zingiber officinale</i>	10g	Rhizome
8.	<i>Maricha</i>	<i>Piper nigrum</i>	20g	Fruit

**Figure 1: Showing the contents of *Shwasakuthar Rasa***



**Vatsanabha**



**Tankan**



**Manahshila**



**Samaguna Kajjali**



**Pippali**



**Shunti**



**Maricha**

**Table 2: Showing the Rasapanchaka of contents of Shwasakuthar Rasa<sup>[5]</sup>**

Drug	Guna	Rasa	Vipaka	Virya	Dosha Karma
Shuddha Parada	Snigdha (unctuous), Sara (mobility), Guru (heaviness)	Shadrasa (all the five tastes)	Madhura (sweet)	Ushna	Tridoshghna
Shuddha Gandhaka	Ushna (hot)	Madhura (sweet)	Katu (pungent)	Ushna (hot)	Kaphavat ahara (balances Vata and Kapha body humors)
Shuddha Vatsanabha	Ruksha (dryness), Tikshna (piercing), Laghu (light to digest), Vyavayi (first quickly spread in body then digest), Vikasi (relaxant)	Madhura (sweet)	Madhura (sweet)	Ushna (hot)	Tridoshah ara/balances body humors (Specially Vata kaph ahara/balances Vata and Kapha body humors)
Shuddha Tankan	Laghu (light to digest), Ruksha (dryness), Tikshna (piercing)	Katu (pungent), Lavana (salt)	Katu (pungent)	Ushna (hot)	Kaphavat ahara (balances Vata and Kapha body humors)
Shuddha Manasila	Sara (mobility), Snigdha (unctuous)	Katu (pungent), Tikta (bitter)	Katu (pungent)	Ushna (hot)	Vata kaph ahara (balances Vata and Kapha body humors)
Pippali (Piper longum)	Laghu (light to digest), Snigdha (unctuous), Teekshna (piercing)	Katu (pungent)	Madhura (sweet)	Anushna (neither too hot nor too cold)	Kaphavat ashama ka (balances Vata and Kapha body humors)

<i>Shunti</i>	<i>Laghu</i> (light to digest), <i>Snigdha</i> (unctuous)	<i>Katu</i> (pungent)	<i>Madhura</i> (sweet)	<i>Ushna</i> (hot)	<i>Vatakaph ahara</i> (balances <i>Vata</i> and <i>Kapha</i> body humors)
<i>Maricha</i>	<i>Laghu</i> (light to digest), <i>Ruksha</i> (dryness), <i>Tikshna</i> (piercing)	<i>Katu</i> (pungent)	<i>Katu</i> (pungent )	<i>Ushna</i> (hot)	<i>Kaphavat ahara</i> (balances <i>Vata</i> and <i>Kapha</i> body humors)

### Method of Preparation (According to *Bhaishajya Ratnavali Shwasa Rogadhikara*)

First of all, we prepared fine *Samaguna Kajjali* out of purified *Parada* and *Gandhaka*. Then *Kajjali* was triturated with reference amount of purified *Manahsila*, *Vatsanabha*, *Tankana* and *Trikatu* for 72 hour and obtained fine powder of *Shwasakuthar Rasa* and it was allowed for drying and stored in the form of *Vati* in dose of 125mg each.

### Indications

The *Shwasakuthar Rasa* indicated in *Shwasaroga* (bronchial asthma), *Kasa* (bronchitis), *Pratishyaya* (coryza), *Aruchi* (anorexia) and *Mandagni* (indigestion).

### Method of Administration

Consume one pill (125mg) once or twice a day with *Adraka Swarasa* (ginger juice) or honey or betel leaf.

### DISCUSSION

*Shwasakuthar Rasa* counteracts the symptoms of respiratory disorders due to the action of its ingredients which directly act on *Pranavaha Srotasa*.<sup>[6]</sup> *Shwasakuthar Rasa* is a herbomineral drug and it contains minerals i.e. *Parada* (mercury), *Gandhaka* (sulphur), *Tankana* (borax) and *Manahshila* (arsenic sulphide) in purified form and herbs like purified *Vatsanabha* (*Aconitum ferox*), *Pippali* (*P. longum*), *Maricha* (*P. nigrum*) and *Shunthi* (*Zingiber officinale*) as per *Ayurvedic* text.<sup>[7]</sup> The table no. 2 is showing the *Rasapanchaka* of contents of *Shwasakuthar Rasa*. The table no. 3 is showing the *Rasapanchaka Karmukta* of

*Shwasakuthar Rasa*. The table no. 4 and illustration no.1 are showing the probable mode of action and schematic representation of probable *Samprati Vighatan & Karmukta* of *Shwasakuthar Rasa* respectively.

**Table 3: Showing the *Rasapanchaka Karmukta* of *Shwasakuthar Rasa***

<b>Rasa</b>	<i>Katu</i>	<i>Agnideepak, Amapachak, Srotoavarodhahr</i>
	<i>Tikta</i>	<i>Agnideepan, Pachan, Srotovishodhan</i>
<b>Guna</b>	<i>Ruksha</i>	<i>Kaphanashak, Amanashak</i>
	<i>Teekshna</i>	<i>Kapha-Chhedan, Kaphanihsaraka, Srotoshodhak</i>
	<i>Vyavayi &amp; Vikasi</i>	<i>Vata-Kaphahra, Kapha-Nirharan, quick action in Vegavastha (acute phase)</i>
<b>Veerya</b>	<i>Ushna</i>	<i>Deepan, Pachan, Swedan, Srotovishodhan</i>
<b>Vipaka</b>	<i>Katu</i>	<i>Agnideepan, Malarupi-Kapha Nashak</i>

**Table 4: Showing the Probable Mode of Action of *Shwasakuthar Rasa***

Drugs	Probable mode of action through <i>Rasapanchaka &amp; pharmacological properties</i>
<b><i>Samaguna Kajjali</i></b>	<i>Yogavahi</i> and quick action in small dose.
<b><i>Shuddha Vatsanabha</i></b>	It is <i>Usna Veerya</i> and <i>Katu Vipaki</i> . It possesses <i>Yogavahi, Vyavayi, Vikasi, Rasayan, Deepana, Brimhana</i> and <i>Vataghna</i> properties. It is antispasmodic in nature, hot and stimulant for mucous membrane. Inhibited the biosynthesis of polymorphonuclear leukocytes. <sup>[8]</sup>
<b><i>Shuddha Tankana</i></b>	It is an anti-spasmodic and removes <i>Kapha</i> . It is <i>Madhura</i> in <i>Rasa, Laghu-Ruksha-Tikshna</i> in <i>Guna, Ushna Veerya</i> and <i>Katu Vipaki</i> . Thus, it has <i>Kapha-Vishleshaka</i> (mucolytic), <i>Hridaya, Vatashamaka</i> and <i>Agnideepana</i> properties.

<b>Shuddha Manashila</b>	It is having <i>Katu-Tikta Rasa, Sara Guna, Ushna Veerya</i> and <i>Katu Vipaka</i> by these properties it acts as <i>Srotoshodhani, Shoshni (Kaphashoshaka)</i> and <i>Kasahara</i> . Realgar absorbs excessive secretion from the alveoli. <sup>[9]</sup>
<b>Pippali</b>	It possesses <i>Katu Rasa</i> , and <i>Laghu-Tikshna Guna</i> by which it has <i>Deepan, Parshvashool Prashmana</i> and <i>Vatanulomana</i> effects. It also possesses <i>Madhura Vipaka</i> and <i>Anushnasheeta Veerya</i> . So, it acts as <i>Balya</i> and <i>Rasayan</i> . <i>Piper longum</i> have traditional claims of <i>Ayurveda</i> for antiallergic and anti-spasmodic activities. <sup>[10]</sup>
<b>Shunthi</b>	It is <i>Katu</i> in <i>Rasa</i> , <i>Snigdha</i> in <i>Guna</i> , <i>Ushna Veerya</i> and <i>Katu Vipaki</i> . It is <i>Shothhara</i> (anti-inflammatory) & <i>Vata-Kaphahara</i> and used as <i>Deepan</i> and <i>Bhedhan</i> . <i>Zingiber officinale</i> is capable of inhibiting allergic reaction and is useful for the treatment and prevention of allergic diseases. <sup>[11]</sup> It also releases sputum and favours the expectoration of sputum. <i>Adraka Swarasa</i> (ginger juice) is also given as <i>Anupana</i> . Ginger contains two important sulphur based amino acids called cysteine and methionine which can act as phytochelatins and makes arsenic in the <i>Manashila</i> a nontoxic element. <i>Zingiber officinale</i> affected the bioavailability, elimination and uptake of heavy metals in a time-dependent way in the liver. <sup>[12]</sup>
<b>Maricha</b>	It is <i>Katu Rasa</i> and <i>Ushna Veerya</i> thus it is having mainly <i>Kapha-Nihsaraka</i> property and additionally it has <i>Deepan, Pachan</i> and <i>Bhedhak</i> actions. <i>Maricha</i> is the chief ingredients in many references mainly contain an alkaloid piperine which acts as an efficient bioavailability enhancer for different nutrients and trace elements. <sup>[13]</sup> It exhibits potent antimicrobial, antipyretic, analgesic, anti-asthmatic activities and better bronchodilator activity. <sup>[14]</sup>

All the drugs of *Shwasakuthar Rasa* have *Ushna Veerya* and *Vata-Kaphahara* properties. *Vata* and *Kapha* are the main *Doshas* which are involved in *Shwasa Roga Samprapti* and this formulation is having *Kapha-Vatashamaka Karma* due to its *Katu Rasa, Tikshna-Vyavayi-Vikasi Guna, Katu Vipaka* and *Ushna Veerya*.

Its most of the ingredients are mainly *Kapha-Nihsaraka* with *Laghu, Ruksha* and *Ushna Guna*, therefore it mainly acts on *Agnimandhya* and breaks the *Kapha Dosh Pradhan Samprapti* of *Shwasa Roga*.

### Illustration 1: Showing the schematic representation of probable *Samprati Vighatan* & *Karmukta* of *Shwasakuthar Rasa*

*Deepana-Pachana* properties improve the status of *Agni*, subsequently prevents *Ama* formation and vitiation of *Doshas*. It also prevents further vitiation of *Kapha* by preventing the formation of *Rasamalibhuta Kapha*.

Inhibits formation of inflammatory factors

**[Anti-inflammatory<sup>[15]</sup> & Anti-microbial<sup>[16]</sup> actions]**



*Katu Rasa* and *Laghu-Teekshna-Vyavayi-Vikasi Guna* of *Shwasakuthar Rasa* are having *Kapha-Chhedana* and *Kapha-Nirharna* action by which it penetrates the *Margavarodhit Kapha* (obstructed mucus in bronchioles) and eliminates the vitiated *Kapha* from *Uras* (chest) region.

***Kapha-Nirharana* - Expectorant<sup>[17,18]</sup>**



*Ushna Veerya* counteracts on *Sheeta Guna* of *Vata* & *Kapha Doshas*. *Kapha-Vatahara* & *Kapha-Nirharana* properties remove the obstruction of *Kapha Dosh* and then *Vayu* attains its own path i.e. *Anuloma Gati*.

**Bronchodilator<sup>[19,20]</sup>**



*Ushna Veerya* and *Kaphanirharana* properties remove *Margavarodha* (obstructed mucus) and helps in *Vatanulomana*, leading to *Prakruta Shwasa Gati* (normal respiration) thus relieves in *Shwasakashtata* (dyspnoea), *Kasa* (cough), *Ghurghuraka* sound (wheezing) and *Parshvashula* (chest tightness).

**CONCLUSION**

The *Shwasakuthar Rasa* mainly possesses *Katu Rasa* (pungent taste), *Ushna Veerya* (hot potency), *Katu Vipaka* (pungent taste conversion after digestion) and *Virechaka* (purgative) properties. It also acts as anti-microbial & anti-inflammatory, bronchodilator and expectorant drug, thus it can be effective in the management of respiratory disorders.

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