

Kovidar- A Holistic Ayurvedic Approach

Ankita Abhijeet Shirkande¹ and Abhijeet Sarjerao Shirkande²

¹Department of Rasashastra, D.Y. Patil College of Ayurveda, Pimpri, Pune, India

²Department of Dravyaguna, D.Y. Patil College of Ayurveda, Pimpri, Pune, India

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Abstract Maharashtra is part of mega diverse country India. Internally, it is richly diverse in itself. From biodiversity to cultural diversity, Maharashtra has unmatched variety. Festivals in this state are varied too. One of the festivals is Dassera. This is celebrated by greeting each other with leaves of Shami. Apart from festive importance, Kovidar or Kanchanar has immense medicinal value too. Ayurveda people routinely use this drug by many aspects. Present paper elaborates use of Kovidar by Vaidyas and tribal people.

Keywords Kovidar; Kachnar; *Bauhinia Variegata*; Vata; Pitta; Kapha; Gandmala

1. Introduction

1.1. Kovidar (*Bauhinia variegata* Linn.)

Nighantu View

Bhavmishra described Kovidara & Kanchanarnas two varieties. But Dhanvantari & Raj Nighantu mention the two names synonymous. However Tamrapushpa synonym is given to Kovidara by bhavmishra. In Shivadatta Kosha, it is described that Kanchanara possess red flowers & grown to limited height, on the other hand, kovidara possess the white flowers, strong branches.

Kanchan means Suvarna (Gold). The plant used in incineration process of Suvarna Bhasma is named as Kanchnar. According to Bhavprakash Nighantu, Kanchnar is classified as Kanchanar and Raktakanchanar (Kovidar) depending on Flower color whereas Kovidar is explained as a synonym for Kanchanar by Rajnighantu. Again Kovidar is stated as synonym for Ashmantak by Bhavprakash. Kanchanar is classified in to 3 types by Nighantu ratnakar as Peeta, Rakta and Shweta.

Veda & Samhita View

Kovidar is the original name of Kanchanar during Vedic and Samhita period.

Vedic literature considers its stems are forbidden for rituals. Its utility is relatively less in the Bruhat trayi Period. Charak considered it as Vamanopag while Sushruta also described it as vamaana

(Urdhvabhaghara). Shushrut also clarified that the root is useful part of Kovidar (S.S.Su. 39/3). While the practice at present is to use stem bark. Another important aspect about Kovidar is that it is described along with Karbudar i.e. white variety of Kovidara. This variety is identified as Bahuhinia alba. Karbudar is described only once by Vagbhata (A.H.K. 1/7). It is mainly known for its action on lymphadenitis. Hence the name Gandari.

Controversial Studies

There is some controversy in the identity of Karbuudar since Dalhana treated it as a variety of Kanchanara or as Shleshmantaka (Bahuvara). In one content it is described along with Selu (S.S.Su. 46/249). Selu is the synonym of Shleshmantaka. Thakurji consider it as B. Variegata Linn. He opines that it may be another plant since a plant Rajjudara described in the Vedic literature is identified by the commentators with Karbudara. It is described as possessing a fruit resembling penis (Shishna) in appearance. This plant may be Olare sccindes Roxb.

In general B. Purpura is less available when compared with B. Variegata. In my opinion that another species B. Tomentosa possessing yellow flowers & yellowish bark is Kanchanar. Since it is traditionally used by some vaidyas.

Different Varieties

Kovidara & Karbudara are described in the samhitas. Chakrapani quoted that the flowering of Kovidar & Karbudara occurs in Sharada & Vasant rutu respectively. (C.S.K.2)

Mostly used Bauhinia variegata Linn. (Fabaceae) is a valued medicinal plant. Besides this, B. tomentosa Linn., B. racemosa Lam., B. retusa Roxb., B. vahlii Wight and B. purpurea Linn. have also been reported to have medicinal value. Kachnar is a Vrikshya i.e. medium sized deciduous tree with dark brown, smooth bark. Flowers large, fragrant, white or purplish, appearing when the tree is leafless. Young shoots brown-pubescent. It is distributed in sub-Himalayan tract and outer Himalayas of Punjab, ascending to 1300 m from the Indus eastwards, Kumaon between 200-2000, in Sikkim, extending from India to Burma and China. Abundantly available all over India & Shrilanka.

1.2. Common Name: Mountain Ebony

Sanskrit: Ashmantaka, Asphota, Chamari, Chamarika, Champavidala, Gandari, Girija, Kanakaprabha, Kanchanala, Kanchana, Kanchanara, Kanchanaraka, Kantar, Karaka, Karbudara, Karbudara, Kovidara, Kuddala, Raktapushpa, Shonapushpaka, Suvannara, Svalpakkesara, Tamrapushpa, Uddalaka, Yamalachada, Yugapatraka, Yugmapatra

Marathi: Kanchan, Raktakanchan, Koral

Hindi: Barial, Gurial, Gwiar, Kachnar, Kandan, Kaniar, Khairwal, Khawairaal, Koliar, Padrian

Konkani: Kanchan

Gujarati: Champakati

Bengali: Raktakanchan

Malayalam: Kovidaram, Suvannamandaram, Unna, Chuvannamandaram

Mundari: Burju, Buruju

Tamil: Mandarai, Segappumandarai, Semmandarai, Vellaippuvatti.

Telugu: Bodanta, Devakanjanamu, Kanjanamu, Mandara, Mandari

Urdu: Kachnal

Uriya: Boroda, Kosonaro, Kanjoni, Ronga-Konjono.

Kol: Juraju, Buja, Vuranga
Kannad: Keyumandar

1.3. Across the World, Kovidar is Known As

Burmese: Bwaycheng, Bwechin

Canarese: Arisinantige, Ayata, Bilikanjivala, Irkubalitu, Kanjivala, Karalabhogi, Kempukanjivala, Kempumandara, Mandara, Ulipe

French: Arbe de saint Thomas, Bauhinie panachee (Kirtiker and Basu, 1935).

Known to Tribal and Non-Tribal People As

Santhals: Kouar, Buriju-dar

Saora: Boda, Rovilara

Lodhas: Koch-nar

Ayurveda view

Rasa- Kashaya

Veerya- Sheeta

Vipaka- Katu

Doshakarma- Kapha-Pittashamaka

Guna- Laghu, Ruksha

2. Charak Samhita and Sushruta Samhita

The root is prescribed in combination with other drugs for the treatment of snakebite (Anonymous, 1963).

Ayurveda employs kovidar in the preparation of several medicines/formulations/decoctions for the treatment of various ailments. Fresh bark of kovidar mixed with dry ginger pounded with sour gruel is an excellent remedy for goiter. Decoction of Kachnar and pippali (*Piper longum* Linn.) powder or swarna bhasma is also beneficial (Sharma, 1996).

_ Bhavprakash

Both types are Sheet (Cold Potency) and useful in Malavrodha (Constipation), Krumi (Worms), Kushtha (Skin Diseases), Gudabhransha (Rectal Prolapse), Gandmala (Cervical lymphadenitis), Raktapradar (Menorrhagia), Kshaya (Tuberculosis), Kasa (Cough), Apachi (Neck Swelling).

In Vrana (Wound), Kanchanar decoction along with Guggul is used internally as well as externally for prakshalana.

Flowers with sugar used as mild laxative.

Root powder is used in Arsha (Haemorrhoids) with buttermilk.

Root decoction is used in Apachana & Adhmana (Indigestion).

In Masurika (Chickenpox), its decoction is advised along with Suvarnabhasma.

Gargles of Kovidar, Khadirphala, Dadimpushpa decoction is useful in excessive salivation & throat diseases.

Flower powder & honey linctus is given in Raktapitta (Haemorrhage) even its leaves in form of vegetable, are also advised.

Excess dose may be responsible for Vomiting or loose motions.

_ Vanoushadhi Gunnadarsha

Grossly Kanchanar is classified in 3 types as Red, white & Yellow.

Rakta (Red) Kanchanar bark has Sheeta (Cold Potency), Sarak, Agnideepan (Increase digestion) properties. It is used in Vrana (Wound), Krumi (Worms), Gandamala (Cervical lymphadenitis), Raktapitta (Haemorrhage), Kushtha (Skin disease), Gudabhransha (Rectal Prolapse). Whereas flowers are used Pradar (Menorrhagia), Kasa (Cough), Raktavikaras (Blood purifier).

Shweta (White) variety is used in Shwas (Asthama), Kasa (Cough), Raktavikara (Blood purifier), Vrana (Wound), Pradar (Menorrhagia)

Peet (Yellow) Kanchanar is basically used in Mutrakruccha (Dysuria) & pacify Kaphavata. Its bark decoction along with Shunthi powder is to be administrated for 42 days in Gandmala (Cervical lymphadenitis).

_ Aushadhi Sangrah

According to Vd Vaman Ganesh Desai, Kanchanar's principle action is on Skin & Lymphatic channels.

_ Gharguti Aushadhe

Vd Aapashastri Sathe explained that it can be used in any types of Cysts, for regulation of menstrual cycle, in treatment of Prameha pitika (Diabetic Carbuncle).

3. Therapeutic Use

Cures intestinal worms, leprosy, tumour, wounds, ulcers and goiter.

It also cures diarrhoea, dysentery, inflammations, scrofula, proctoptosis, haemorrhoids, haemoptysis, menorrhagia and diabetes. Kanchanar is good for the skin & also benefits in prolapsed of anus. Kanchanar is specially recommended for extra growth in thyroid. There are two varieties of Bauhinia- red and white.

3.1. Red Flowered Variety

The bark acrid, cooling, laxative, appetising, astringent to bowels in lower doses, cures biliousness, ulcers, tuberculosis and leprosy. The flowers are acrid, dry, sweet, cooling, astringent, galactagogue, cure diseases of the blood, bronchitis, consumption, vaginal discharges, biliousness and headache. The juice of the root is given internally in snakebite.

3.2. White Flowered Variety

The bark is acrid, sweet, appetising, cooling, astringent to the bowels, cures biliousness, leucoderma, anal troubles, tuberculosis, cough, asthma, diseases of the blood, ulcers, vaginal discharges; anthelmintic, used in strangury, thirst and burning sensation (Kirtiker and Basu, 1935).

_ Roots carminative, decoction prevents obesity. Bark tonic and anthelmintic, used in scrofula and cutaneous troubles; bark as well as flowers used as pot herbs; flower buds pickled. Leaves and pods eaten as a vegetable. Leaves used for bidi manufacturing. Wood used for agricultural implements (Anonymous, 1986).

The tribal and non-tribal people of different areas use the plant in several ways for the treatment of skin diseases (leucoderma and leprosy), wounds, ulcers, cough, dysentery, snakebite, tumors, flatulence, indigestion, piles and also lots of other ailments.

_ Lodhas prescribe root bark decoction, about 15 ml per day for reducing obesity. They apply stem bark paste in the treatment of leucoderma and take fresh flower paste with sugar (2: 1 w/w) as a laxative (Plate-4-I).

_ Mundas give flower decoction 20 ml to women as a galactagogue and prescribe dried flower bud powder with water (1: 3 w/v) as vermifuge.

_ Santhals give powder of flower buds with paste of black peppers (5: 3 w/w) to women to regulate vaginal discharge.

_ Andh and Bhil use the leaf as laxative.

_ Chakma use the flower for the treatment of women's diseases.

_ Bhojpas of U.P. use the flower for cure of diarrhoea and dysentery and bark for the cure of malaria and bleeding piles. The bark is also used for the treatment of snakebite and ulcers; the flower and bark both for curing tumors and root and root bark both for the treatment of obesity and indigestion in different parts of Uttar Pradesh (Shah and Joshi, 1971; Sharma et al., 1979; Bhalla et al., 1982 and Megoneitso and Rao, 1983).

_ The flower is used to cure diarrhoea and both leaves and flowers are eaten in North-Eastern regions of the country (Bhargava, 1959; Gupta, 1962; Jain and De, 1966; Ball, 1967; Rajwar, 1983; Pal, 1984 and Negi et al., 1985).

_ Plant bark is used for the treatments of leprosy and scrofula in Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh.

_ The young unopened flowers of *Bauhinia purpurea* and *Bauhinia variegata* find way to tribal markets of Garo, Kuki and Mizo tribe along with the flowering twigs (acidic in taste) of *Vaccinium serratum* Wight and are eaten cooked (Jain, 1997).

_ In the Konkan, the juice of the fresh bark is given as an expectorant and the bark is used with dried ginger (*Zingiber officinale* Rosc) as an internal remedy for scrofula (Kirtiker and Basu, 1935) (Plate-4-I).

- _ In Indo China and Philippine islands, an infusion of the new flowers is given in dysentery.
- _ South Indians use decoction of the leaves to allay headache in malarial fever.
- _ Its bark reported to be used in dyeing to obtain various fast shades of brown colour. The plant is good fodder for cattles (Anonymous, 1956)
- _ According to ancient Hindu literature, red flowers of Kachnar are compared with women's beauty.
- _ Kachnar is considered as sacred to Buddha (Pal and Raychaudhary, 1982). *Bauhinia variegata* is widely used in Ayurvedic and Yunani medical system. Ayurvedic literature describes the plant in Sanskrit in the form of a poem. Review Article ISSN 2250-0480 Vol 2/Issue 4/Oct-Dec 2012 L – 72 Life Science Ethno botany Kachnar is astringent, cool and acrid in taste.

4. Specific Action

- Constipating, depurative, anthelmintic, vulnerary and anti-inflammatory.
- The alcoholic extract of B Variegata (bark) showed C.N.S. activity. Besides producing hypothermia in mice. It also responded to amphetamine hyperactivity test.
- The alcoholic extract of B. Racemosa (bark) was found to have anti – cancer activity against human epidermal carcinoma of the nasopharynx in tissue culture.
- Its used in the treatment of experimental goiter in rats.

_ Yunani

The bark is astringent to the bowels, liver tonic, cures biliousness, leucoderma, leprosy, dysmenorrhoea, menorrhagia, impurities of the blood, tuberculosis, asthma, wounds and ulcers; used as a gargle in stomatitis. The buds are acrid; indigestible; used in piles, cough, eye diseases, liver complaints; astringent to the bowels, styptic in haematuria and menorrhagia.

5. Bauhinia Purpurea Linn

5.1. Common Name: (Purple Mountain Ebony)

Hindi: Gairal, Kaliar, Kandan, Katniar, Khairwal, Koilari, Koinar, Sona
 Sanskrit: Raktapushpakovidara
 Marathi: Atmatti, Deva Kanchana, Rakta Kanchan
 Tamil: Kalavilaichi, Mandarai, Peddiari
 Telugu: Bodanta, Kanjanamu
 Bangali: Devkanchana, Raktakanchana
 Uriya: Boroda, Debokanjoro
 Burma: Mahahlegani

5.2. It is known by Various Names by Different Tribes

Bhil: Kanchana
 Santhals: Baper

Lodhas: Kochner, Sing-ara
Mundas: Sapidanka

_ Lodhas prescribe root bark paste with rice water (water obtained after washing rice) (3:1 w/v) for ripening of boils. They use pounded stem bark in the treatment of rheumatism and give dried flower powder as laxative.

_ Oraons give dried root powder with water (2:3w/v) to patients suffering from rheumatism.

_ Mundas prescribe dried root powder with Brassica oil (1:1w/v) as balm on cuts and wounds. They apply stem bark paste for healing bone fracture (Pal and Jain, 1998).

_ Bhoxa use the bark as an astringent.

_ Khasi tribe and non-tribal people of Assam region use stem in bone fracture, flower in indigestion and bark is used for curing of small pox.

_ In South India, Sikkim, Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, leaf is used for the treatment of jaundice and for cure of wounds and tumour in stomach (Jain and De, 1966; Sharma et al., 1979; Kumar et al., 1980; Karnick et al., 1981; Rao and Jamir, 1982 and Apparanantham and Chelladurai, 1986).

_ It is eaten as vegetable in different parts of India like U.P., North-East region and central part of India (Gunjatkar and Vartak, 1982).

_ Naga use the plant as an antidote to certain toxins and poisons (Bedding, 1927; Jain and Tarafder, 1970 and Rao and Jamir, 1982).

6. *Bauhinia vahlii* Wight and Arn.

6.1. Common Name: *Malucreeper Bauhinia or Camel's Foot Climber*

Sanskrita: Kovidar, Yugmapatra, Pruthakparni

Marathi: Chambal, Chambil, Chambura, Charbor, Maljan

Hindi: Jallur, Malghan, Maljan, Maljhan, Mahul, Malo, Malu, Maulein, Maurain

Bangali: Chehur

Tamil: Mandarai

Telugu: Adattige, Madapu, Muduka

Uriya: Shiali, Shioli, Siyali

6.2. It is known by Various Names by Different Tribes

Saora: Addotige

Santhals: Birgungunari, Siharichop

Lodhas: Sehari, Jomlar

Oraons: Lamaklar

Oraons prescribe root juice with curd (2:1 v/v) as cure of dysentery.

Lodhas give stem bark paste with butter milk and rice beer (2:1:1) thrice a day, in the treatment of diarrhoea. They apply leaf paste with paste of black peppers (2:1w/w) on boils for suppression. They

apply mucilage of stem bark to cattle for healing bone fracture. These people extract vegetable tannin from stem bark and use it for tanning the skin of coldblooded animals.

Lodhas and Santhals use the dichotomous tendrils as magical safeguard against evil activities of supernatural powers. Santhals use the plant in stomachache and dysentery (Jain and Tarafder, 1970).

Flower is used as an antifertility agent in Bihar.

Bhoxa tribe and non-tribal people of Tehri Garwal region use the seeds as an aphrodisiac and tribes of Terai region of Gorakhpur district use the seeds as vermifuge (Sharma *et al.*, 1979).

Bhumiya and Agariya tribe of Madhya Pradesh use the leaf for making cigarettes Review Article ISSN 2250-0480 Vol 2/Issue 4/Oct-Dec 2012 L – 74 Life Science Ethno botany (bidis) and the seeds as tonic (Jain, 1963; Sharma *et al.*, 1979 and Roy and Chaturvedi, 1987)

Fruits are eaten in West Bengal, Maharashtra and Goa.

Seeds are also eaten as vegetable in Morni and Kalesar of Haryana, Bastar district of M.P. and Kumaon (Jain, 1963, 1964; Ball, 1967; Vartak, 1981; Maji and Sikdar, 1982; Gunjatkar and Vartak, 1982; Jain, 1984 and Bhujel *et al.*, 1984). According to Ayurvedic literature, the seed possesses tonic and aphrodisiac properties. Leaves are demulcent and mucilaginous.

7. *Bauhinia Racemosa Lamk.*

7.1. Common Name: *Common Mountain Ebony*

Hindi: Ashta, Asoda, Dhorara, Ghila, Kachnal, Marvil, Maula

Sanskrit: Anupushpaka

Marathi: Apata, Apta, Kanraja, Seyara, Shiara

Tamil: Ar, Arai, Aram

Telugu: Adiviyavise, Are

Uriya: Omborda

7.2. Names known by Different Tribes

Santhals: Beriju

Lodhas: Kaimu

Oraons: Ambulata

_ Lodhas use dried root bark powder as vermicide and they prescribe stem bark decoction with that of Gara-Ratan (*Terminalia arjuna* (Roxb.) Wt. and Arn.) (2:1) in the treatment of throat diseases. They give this gum along with long pepper decoction (1:1) to patient in brain tumours. Decoction of leaves is taken in the treatment of malarial fever.

_ Santhals give root bark decoction with paste of black peppers (3:1) to epileptic patients. They rear fine fibres from the stem bark and use it for stitching of deep cuts on animal body (Pal and Jain, 1998).

_ Oraons use fresh leaf paste as a remedy for urinary diseases.

_ Some ethnic communities give stem bark extraction with cow milk (3:2) as cure of glandular inflammation.

_ Bhils use the stem fibre for making baskets (Joshi, 1982).

_ Tribes of Western region of country use the leaf in making Bidi (Mittre, 1981).

_ Bhils of Rajasthan use the plant bark in diarrhoea and dysentery and eat the fruits.

_ **Ayurveda**

Stem bark is used for dysentery and diarrhoea and as an astringent. Leaf is used for malaria and headache. The fibre is used to stitch wounds. The plant is also used to cure skin diseases like leprosy and leucoderma. The gum is used medicinally in South India (Kirtiker and Basu, 1935).

8. *Bauhinia Retusa* Roxb.

8.1. Common Name: *Semla*

Hindi: Kanalla, Kandalu, Kandla, Kanla, Kwayral

Telugu: Goddukura, Godduyare, Godi-sep

Soara: Are

8.2. This Plant is also Medicinally Important

_ Santhals use the plant for curing cholera and snakebite (Jain and Tarafder, 1970).

_ Gum is applied on sores and leaf bud is eaten in Garhwal region of U.P.

_ Some Indian practitioners consider it as an emmenagogue and diuretic.

9. *Bauhinia Tomentosa* Linn.

9.1. Common Name: *Wild Champak*

Sanskrit: Aswamantaka, Phalgu

Marathi: Sona

Hindi: Kachnar, Kanchana

Tamil: Kanjini

Bark Consist of tannin also it secrets resin.

In the Malabar Coast, a decoction of the root bark is administered in inflammation of the liver. Review Article ISSN 2250-0480 Vol 2/Issue 4/Oct-Dec 2012 L – 75 Life Science Ethno botany. The native practitioners in Southern India prescribe the small dried buds and young flowers in dysenteric affections.

The decoction of the root bark is also used as vermifuge.

The bruised bark is externally applied on tumours and wounds.

The fruit is diuretic; an infusion of the bark is used as an astringent gargle (Kirtiker and Basu, 1935).

Sushruta Samhita: All parts of the plant are recommended in combination with other drugs for the treatment of snakebite and scorpion sting. In the case of snakebite, the fresh seeds are made into a paste with vinegar and applied externally to the affected part.

_ *Bauhinia malabarica* Roxb. and *Bauhinia macrostachya* Wall are also medically valued species as they cure several ailments like dysentery, diarrhoea and skin lesions.

10. Chemical Constituents

Stem: Beta sitosterol, lupeol, kaempferol, 3 glucoride.

Dose (Matra) - Twakchurna- 2-4 gm
Pushpachurna- 1-2gm

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