

HARITAKI – ITS PROPER WAY OF USING AS PER BRIHATRAYEE**K. VASUDEVAN NAIR, B. V. HOLLA & S. N. YOGANARASIMHAN***Regional Research Centre, Jayanagar, Bangalore – 560 011, India.***Received: 8 October, 1985****Accepted: 10 July, 1986**

ABSTRACT: *The proper way of using the common ayurvedic drug Haritaki as depicted in Brihatrayee is discussed. It is evidenced that the entire fruits should be used as the drug unless otherwise specified to derive the optimum benefit and discarding any part results in the loss of the particular therapeutic property which in turn lowers the total therapeutic efficacy of the drug/preparation.*

INTRODUCTION

Haritaki is an important household drug used in many ayurvedic preparations in the treatment of several diseases. The fruits of *Terminalis chebula* (Gaertn.) Retz., is the accepted source of *Haritaki* (Anonymous 1978). Though *Haritaki* is such a common drug, observations made by the authors in South Indian Pharmacies and by the physicians revealed that the drug is not used in the proper way as depicted in the *Brihatrayee* (Gupta 1970; Sastri 1970; Acharaya 1980). Even the *Ayurvedic Formulary of India – Part I* (Anonymous 1978) gives the part used as fruit pulp except in some specific preparations. This improper way of using the drug has resulted in not utilizing the therapeutic properties of the drug in full which in turn has adverse effect on the optimum therapeutic efficacy of the drug. Hence an attempt is made here to bring to light the proper way of using *Haritaki* with reference to *Brihatrayee*.

Varieties of the Drug

In Ayurveda, seven varieties of *Haritaki* are recognized depending upon the place of occurrence and shape of the fruits; further each variety has a specific therapeutic

action, like *Vijaya* variety used in diseases caused by all *doshas*. A similar categorization is done by Hooker (1886) who recognizes six varieties under *Terminalis chebula*. However, these varieties do not find a place in recent floras (Gamble 1967, Cooke 1967, Ramaswamy & Razi 1973, Rao & Razi 1981, Yoganarsimhan al, 1982, Saldanha & Nicolson 1976).

Part Used

The entire fruit is used unless otherwise specified (Gupta 1970).

Therapeutic Properties

Haritaki is endowed with five *rasas*, viz., *kashaya*, *thiktha*, *amla*, *katu* and *madhura*; *ushna veerya*; *ruksha guna* and *madhura vipaka*. Hence the drug is considered as *Tridosha samana* (Chunekar & Pandey 1984).

Parts and their properties

Each part of the fruit has a specific property. The external skin (pericarp) posses *katu*

rasa, the pulp (mesocarp) *thiktha rasa*, the *snayu* (fibrous portion of mesocarp) *amla rasa*, the *asthi* (endocarp) has *kashaya rasa* while the *beeja* (kernel) has *madhura rasa* (Chunekar & Pandey 1984). “Pathyaya majjani swadu: snayuyamlae vyavasthita:

Vruntae thiktha twachi katu rasthithuvaro rasa: (Chunekar & Pandey 1984).

Present day Usage of the drug.

At present, it is observed that in all preparations Haritaki is used *without the seed* (endocarp and kernel portion). Thus, the drug is devoid of 2 mina *rasas kashaya* and *madhura* and possess only the other 3 *rasas* present in the pericarp, pulpy and fibrous portion of mesocarp.

Classical Usage

In *Brihatrayee*, it is underlaid that *Haritaki* should be used in most of the preparations as whole (entire) fruits except in some specific places – for example, in *Abhayarishtha*, only *phala twak* (pericarp) should be used while in *Asmarinasaka panaka*, only the seed (endocarp and kernel) is used. Some preparations like *Agastya Haritaki*, *Danti Haritaki* and in *Arsa chikitsa*, *Haritaki seva* depict that the entire fruits are to be used in the preparations. Even in the *rasayana yogas* mentioned in *Caraka Samhita* (Sastri 1970), the entire fruits must be used for preparing decoctions first and the seeds should be discarded subsequently only. This results in the extraction of all the *rasas* required at the time of preparation of the decoction – e.g *Brahma rasayana*.

DISCUSSION

The five different *rasas* are essential for the curative purpose of ‘*tridosha*’ wherein *Haritaki* is used. The five *rasas* are present

in the different parts of the fruit. Discarding any of the part(s) results in the loss of a particular *rasa* which in turn adversely effect the curative property of the drug / preparation. Hence, it is necessary that the entire fruits should be used as mentioned in the *Brihatrayee* instead of omitting the endocarp and kernel which is followed in the present day usage. This is evidenced by the fact that in *Susruta Samhita (sutra sthana)* and in *Astanga Hridaya*, it is clearly mentioned to use *Haritaki* as entire fruits (Acarya 1980, Gupta 1970):-

1. “Pugadinam erandanthanam phalam” (Susruta : sut, 39/4 etc):
2. “Pathya sata dwayan mutra dronaenamutra sankasayat
Pakwan khadet sa madhui dwe dwe hanti khaphotbhavan
Durnama kushta swayadhu gulma mehodara krimin
Grandhyarbudapachi sthaulya pandu roga adhyamarutan”- (*Astanga Hridaya* : Chi : 8/55, 56)
3. “Dasamular swayanguptam sankhapushpim satim balam
Leham dwechabhaye nityamata: Khadet rasayanat..” – (*Astanga Hridaya*: Chi: 3/127 to 132)

However, in certain preparations, the specific part to be used is also mentioned, (Gupta 1970) – for example:

“Kapotavanga mulam va pibedekam suradibhi:
Tat sidham va pibet kshiram vedanabhirupadruta:
Haritaky athisidham va sadhitam va punarnavai.” – (*Astanga Hridaya*: Chi : 11/33, etc)

mentions that only the kernel and endocarp must be used in *Asmarinasaka panaka* for *asmari chikitsa*. This also indicates that the endocarp (*asthi* – hard portion) of the fruit of *Haritaki* is also used for medicinal purposes. Again, the pericarp and mesocarp are only to be used in *Abhayarista* for the treatment of *arsas* (Gupta 1970):-

“Salilasya vahe paktwa prasthadha *mabhaya twacham*”. – (*Astanga Hridaya* : Chi : 8/64, etc).

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CONCLUSION

It is concluded that the drug *Haritaki* in the present day is not used as mentioned in the *Brihatrayee*. This has resulted in the non utilization of two important *rasas* (properties) of the drug which has in turn an adverse effect on the therapeutic efficacy of the drug/ preparation. It is evidenced that the entire fruits of *Haritaki* should be used as propounded in the *Brihatrayee* to derive the optimum benefit of the drug. A similar case is applicable to the drugs *Amalaki* and *Vibhitakii* also.