

## LITERARY REVIEW ON SHANKHA

**Dr swathi K.S**

Assistant Professor Department of Rasashastra and Bhaishajya Kalpana, Jayoti Vidyapeeth Women's University Jaipur, Rajasthan, swathiks091@gmail.com

**Dr priya K.pillai**

Assistant Professor Department of Panchakarma Jayoti Vidyapeeth Women's University Jaipur, Rajasthan

**Dr Shyamveer Gurjar**

Assistant Professor Department of Roganidana and Vikriti Vignana Jayoti Vidyapeeth Women's University Jaipur, Rajasthan

**Dr Mayukh Sharma**

Assistant Professor Department of Agada tantra vyavahara –Ayurveda Evum Vidhivaidyaka and Jayoti Vidyapeeth Women's university Jaipur, Rajasthan

**Dr Jyoti Yadav**

Assistant Professor Department of Kriya Sharir Jayoti Vidyapeeth Women's University Jaipur, Rajasthan

**Dr Manisha Gurjar**

MD Scholar, PG Scholar Department of Kaya chikitsa,, Dr S.R.Raj .Ayurved University, Jodhpur, Rajasthan

### Abstract

*Ayurveda* comprise of drugs derived from herbs, minerals, metals and animals. But they can't be taken as it is, hence need to be converted into such form which will be therapeutically fit for use. *Rasashastra* is the most important and popular branch of *Ayurveda* which was developed in the medieval period. *Bhasma* are the unique dosages form of *Ras Shastra*, prepared after proper bhavana with particular herbs with particular metals and

minerals and later they are subjected to put a in a particular manner and due to its fineness and nano particle size it turn into most assimilatory, harmless and therapeutically effectual form

**Key words-Rasashastra ,shankha,bhasma**

## Introduction:

Shankha is known to humans since history, they are mainly used it as ornament, medicine etc. Meaning of term Shankha is “Shankha iti jalajantu vishesha”<sup>1</sup> i.e. a special type of marine animal. According to Sir Monier Williams Dictionary<sup>2</sup> “Conch shell”. It is the shell of a species of large predatory sea snail, turbinella pyrum, which lives in the Indian ocean and surrounding seas. It is considered to be one of the sacred and most auspicious objects that emerged from the sea during the kshira sagar samudra manthan. In Rasa shastra shankha is included under sudha varga dravya i.e. calcium group of drugs i.e. well known since vedic period but its internal use was seen from samhita period. Shankha are mostly found in shallow ocean coast with abundant sea weed. The most characteristic feature of this class is the spirally coiled shell.<sup>3</sup> On the basis of size conch can be divided into two varieties, big size conch and small size conch. The big one measures 8-10" in length and 6-7" in breadth, weight around 2.5 kg. Small size conch is generally 4" in length and 2-3" in breadth.<sup>4</sup> According to *Rasa-tarangini* 2 types of Shankha – *Dakshinavarta* and *Vamavarta*. *Dakshinavarta* is rare to find and is considered for religious purposes whereas *Vamavarta* variety is used for Therapeutic purpose.<sup>5</sup> *Shankha bhasma* is used in diseases like *Amlapitta*, *Agnimandhya*, *Atisara*, *Parinaamshula*, *Grahni*, and *Ajirna*, *Visha*.<sup>6</sup>

## Vernacular names

|          |                           |
|----------|---------------------------|
| Sanskrit | - Shankha                 |
| Hindi    | - Shank                   |
| English  | - Conch                   |
| Tamil    | - Sangu                   |
| Kannada  | -Shankha                  |
| Latin    | - <i>Turbinella pyrum</i> |

## Scientific Classification-

- Kingdom : Animalia
- Phylum : Mollusca
- Class : Gastropoda
- (unranked) : clade Caenogastropoda  
clade  
Hyps  
ogastropoda  
clade  
Neogastropo  
da

- Super family : Muricoidea
- Family : Turbinellidae
- Genus : Turbinella
- Species : T. pyrum
- Binomial name *Turbinella pyrum* Linnaeus, 1758.

**Table No 1 Showing Paryayas of shankha**

|                |   |
|----------------|---|
| Kambu          | One which is available from Kambhoja desha                    |
| Trirekha       | One which has three lines on it                               |
| Samudraja      | That which is created in Samudra (sea )                       |
| Sunaada        | One which produces a particular sound which is auspicious     |
| Deergha naada  | That which can produce a sound for long duration              |
| Kambhoja       | That which is created from place called a Kambhu              |
| Arnabhava      | One which is formed in Arna (Sea )                            |
| Jalaja         | One which takes birth in jala                                 |
| Paavana dhvani | That which produces auspicious sound                          |
| Maha naada     | Instrument with which can produce a sound of great importance |
| Suswara        | One which produces an auspicious sound                        |
| Bahunada       | Instrument with which can produce a sound                     |

|                 |  |
|-----------------|--|
|                 |  |
| Haripriya       | One instrument which LORD Vishnu likes the most  |
| Shri vibhushana | One instrument which LORD Vishnu holds along with other things like Chakra , Gada, Padma etc |
| Dhavala         | One which is having a noble color  |
| Jalada          | One which takes birth in jala  |
| Deerghanistana  | One which has got an elongated shape   |
| Vaari sambhava  | One that takes birth in vari (water )  |

**Table no 2 showing paryayas of shankha according to various classics**

| Synonyms       | R.T | R.S.S | B.P.N | A.P | K.N | Sh.N | R.N | D.N |
|----------------|-----|-------|-------|-----|-----|------|-----|-----|
| Shankh         | +   | -     | +     | +   | -   | +    | -   | -   |
| Shankaka       | +   | -     | -     | -   | -   | -    | -   | +   |
| Trirekha       | +   | -     | -     | -   | -   | +    | -   | -   |
| Samudraja      | +   | -     | +     | +   | -   | +    | -   | -   |
| Sunada         | +   | -     | +     | -   | -   | +    | +   | -   |
| Deerghanada    | +   | -     | -     | -   | -   | -    | +   | +   |
| Kambooja       | +   | +     | -     | -   | -   | +    | -   | -   |
| Kshudra        | -   | -     | -     | +   | -   | -    | -   | -   |
| Shankhanakha   | -   | -     | -     | +   | -   | -    | -   | -   |
| Varichara      | -   | -     | -     | -   | +   | -    | -   | -   |
| Jalaja         | -   | -     | -     | -   | +   | +    | +   | +   |
| Dirghaniswanah | -   | -     | -     | -   | +   | +    | -   | +   |
| Suswarah       | -   | -     | -     | -   | +   | -    | +   | +   |
| Dhavala        | -   | -     | -     | -   | +   | -    | +   | +   |
| Kambu          | -   | +     | +     | +   | -   | +    | -   | +   |
| Srivibhusanah  | -   | -     | -     | -   | -   | +    | -   | +   |
| Pavanadhwani   | -   | +     | +     | -   | -   | +    | +   | -   |
| Arnobhava      | -   | -     | -     | -   | -   | +    | +   | -   |
| Antakutula     | -   | -     | -     | -   | -   | +    | -   | -   |

|                    |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|--------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Mahanada           | - | + | - | - | - | + | - | - |
| Swetaputha         | - | - | - | - | - | + | - | - |
| Mukharadeerghanada | - | - | - | - | - | + | - | - |
| Bahunada           | - | - | - | - | - | + | + | - |
| Haripriya          | - | + | - | - | - | + | - | - |
| Surachara          | - | - | - | - | - | + | - | - |
| Jalodhbhava        | - | - | - | - | - | + | - | - |
| Vishnupriya        | - | - | - | - | - | + | - | - |
| Kutilanta          | - | + | - | - | - | - | + | - |
| Putra              | - | - | - | - | - | - | + | - |
| Antarmahanad       | - | - | - | - | - | - | + | - |
| Mangalprad         | - | - | - | - | - | - | + | - |

**Table no 3 showing Classification of shankha<sup>7</sup> –**

| Name of Varga          | Reference  |
|------------------------|--|
| <i>Shukla Varga</i>    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Rasarnava</i>(5/40),</li> <li>• <i>Dhanvantri Nighantu</i>(63, pg 271),</li> <li>• <i>Rasa Ratanakar</i>(2/6),</li> <li>• <i>Raj Nighantu</i>(67, pg 669)</li> </ul>   |
| <i>Sudha Varga</i>     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rasamritam</li> </ul>   |
| <i>Uprasa varga</i>    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Bhavaprakash Nighantu</i> 101/pg 614,</li> <li>• <i>Dhanvantari Nighantu</i> (87-88/pg 275),</li> <li>• <i>RasaRatnakara</i>(Ri.3/67),</li> <li>• <i>Rasendra Chintamani</i>(70/pg 98),</li> <li>• <i>Rasendra Sara Samgraha</i>(1/118-119),</li> <li>• <i>Ayurveda Prakasha</i>(2/346)</li> </ul> |
| <i>Suvarnadi varga</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Madanpal Nighantu</i>(62-64/pg 118),</li> <li>• <i>Raj Nighantu</i>(120-122/pg 452)</li> </ul>   |

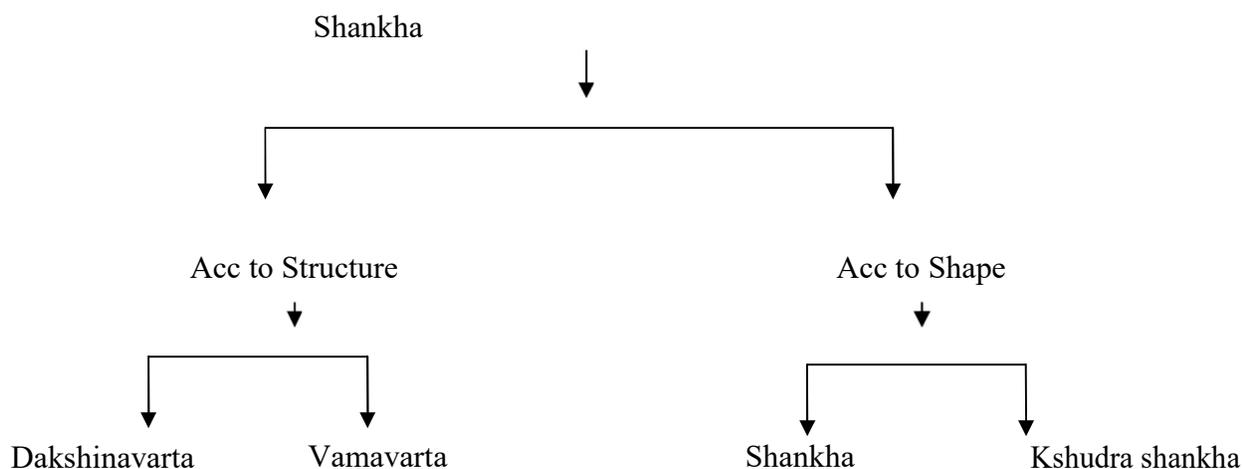
|   |   |
|---|---|
| <i>Dhatu Varga</i>                                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Kaideva Nighantu</i>(131-132/pg 296),</li><li>• <i>Bhavaprakasha Nighantu</i>(159/pg 622)</li></ul>  |
| <i>Vatapittaghana &amp; Kaphapittaghana Varga</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Siddha Mantra Prakasha</i>(73/33, 111/35-36)</li></ul>   |
| <i>Mansa Varga</i>                                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Kaideva Nighantu</i>(34-35/pg 445),</li><li>• <i>Bhavaprakasha Nighantu</i>(34/pg 710)</li></ul>   |
| <i>Svedaja Varga</i>                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Dravya Guna Vigyana</i>(Sharma, 2005, pg 60-61)</li></ul>  |
| <i>Chandanaadi Varga</i>                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Dhanvantari Nighantu</i>(159-160/pg 119),</li><li>• <i>Sodhala Nighantu</i>(S.N.I.480/50, S.N.II 35/93)</li></ul>                          |
| <i>Uparatana</i>                                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Bhavaprakash Nighantu</i>. 189/pg 628,</li><li>• <i>Dhanvantari Nighantu</i>(86/pg 275),</li><li>• <i>Ayurveda Prakasha</i>(3/6)</li></ul> |

### Table no 4 showing Grahya lakshana of shankha <sup>8</sup>

According to Acharya Sadananda Sharma, he explains some of the lakshana for grahya variety<sup>39</sup>.

|                |                                       |
|----------------|---------------------------------------|
| Vrutta         | It should be Round shape              |
| Snigdha        | It should have slimy texture          |
| Sookshma mukha | It should have a minute opening       |
| Nirmala        | Should have a clean surface           |
| Indu sundara   | Colour should be same to that of moon |
| Deergha kaaya  | It should have a elongated body       |
| Guru           | It should be heavy                    |

Chart no.1 showing types of shankha



## Lakshanas of shankha

### According to structure<sup>9</sup>:

- **Dakshinavarta;**

This is a rare variety in which the spiral growth of the shell of gastropods will be left handed, according to Indian tradition this variety is given very great importance. This variety is considered as very auspicious.

- **Vamavarta:**

In this variety spiral shell growth is right-handed, which is available abundantly, this variety is considered as best one which one should use for bhasmikanana procedure.

### According to shape:<sup>9</sup>

- **Shankha** – Normal Conch which is available from the sea and which has got above said characters.
- **Kshudra Shankha** – This is another variety which is very small in size and these are available from the water sources other than sea.

## Shodhana :

For purification of shankha, the selected sample of drug has to be tied in a cloth and hang in dola yantra containing amla varga dravya as liquid media. The swedana process is carried out over mild fire for one prahara (3 hours). Later the drug is collected from the cloth, washed in warm water, dried and stored as shuddha shankha.

The same opinion of shanka shodhana is expressed by Rasamanjari, Rasendra sara Sangraha and Rasa tarangini. Following are the different methods employed for shankha shodhana;

1. Swedana in dolayantra for 4 prahara kala by using jambira swarasa as liquid media
2. Swedana in dolayantra for 1 yama kala by using jayanti swarasa as liquid media
3. Swedana in dolayantra for 1 yama kala by using tanduliya swarasa as liquid media
4. Swedana in dolayantra for 1 prahara kala by using kanji as liquid media
5. Swedana in dolayantra for half yama kala by using nimbuamla yukta jala as liquid media
6. Nimajjana in ghata yantra for 8 yama using nimbu rasa as liquid media

### Marana:

- Marana of shankha is done by incenerating it with half of tankana in andhmusha.
- Shankha pieces heated over 10 sher coals or kande ,levigated in nimbu swarasa.After giving three bhavana rubbing and put in air tight box.
- Shankha pieces heated over smokeless coal or incinerate in laghuputa,after self cooling levigated in nimbu swarasa and after rubbing put in air tight box.
- Shodhita shankha is placed in sharava samputa,sandhi bandhan is done and dried ,and gajaputa is given.two gajaputa is indicated for the preparations of bhasma.
- Shodhita shankha is placed in sharava samputa,sandhi bandhan is done and dried, and gajaputa is given.this process is

**Table No: 5 Showing Properties of shankha**

|                   | Dh .N <sup>10</sup> | B.P.N <sup>11</sup>   | R.N <sup>12</sup> | A.P <sup>13</sup> | R.T <sup>14</sup> |
|-------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Rasa</b>       | Madhura             | -                     | Katu              | kshara            | Kshara            |
| <b>Guna</b>       | -                   | Laghu                 | Laghu,<br>Lekhana | -                 | -                 |
| <b>Virya</b>      | Ushna               | Sheeta                | Sheeta            | sheeta            | Sheetha           |
| <b>Vipaka</b>     | Katu                | -                     | -                 | -                 | -                 |
| <b>Doshghanta</b> | -                   | Pitta kapha<br>nashak | -                 | Tridosh<br>nashak | -                 |

### Indication <sup>15</sup>-

*Amlapitta, Grahani, Parinaamshula, Tarunyapidika, Atisara, Vishdosha.*

## Dosage

- 2 gunja(250mg-500mg)16
- 4-8 ratti(500-1000mg)17
- 250-300mg18

## Formulations

Shankhavarti

Shankha bhasma

Kaphaketurasa

Lokanatha rasa

Hemagarbhapottali rasa

Ksharavati

## Discussion and conclusion

In *Rasashastra*, *Shankha* categorised under *Sudha varga dravya* that is calcium group of. The main chemical composition in *Shankha* is  $CaCo_3$ , but it also have trace amount of minerals which result in the transformation of therapeutic efficiency, also it can be used as calcium supplements. It is having the properties like *Madhur*, *Sheetal*, *Laghu*, *Kshar* etc so it can be prescribed in *Amlapitta*, *agnimandya*, *Grahani*, *Parinamshula*, *Udarshula*, *Atisara* etc. In classics many formulations are mentioned for treating numerous vyadhis. more analysis is to be inspired considering its various properties and therapeutic uses.

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