

**A MEDICO-HISTORICAL REVIEW OF ARJUNA
(TERMINALIA ARJUNA, W. & A.)**

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ABSTRACT

Ancient Indian Medical knowledge known as Ayurveda goes back to a immortal past. The Vedas and Puranas refer various materials of medical importance including herbs, plants and trees etc.

The ancient medical scientists have mentioned the properties of the Arjuna, and recommended mainly for the management of Hrita / Rudhira vikaras, Vrana, Prameha, Visa Vikaras, Asrugdhara, Kshetriya / Shukra dosha etc., The modern medical / Botanical scientists have also carried out so many researches on Arjuna and do not find any difference with the ancestry knowledge.

Arjuna is one of the most useful drugs of Ayurvedic materia-medica, the study of the progress of knowledge with regard to this drug has to be examined in a sequential pattern mainly from Vedic era to the medieval period.

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Synonyms:

The authors of various Ayurvedic classics have mentioned different names of Arjuna which are indicative of various aspects of this drug i.e., morphology, habitate and therapeutic uses etc. The synonyms are given alphabetically in the following table.

Sl. No.	Synonyms	Classics											
		AH	AV	BP	BR	CD	CS	DN	KDN	RN	SGN	SN	SS
1.	Arjuna	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+
2.	Chitrayodhi	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	+	-	+	-
3.	Dhanunjaya	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	+	+	+	-
4.	Dhanvi	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-
5.	Dhurthabhu	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-
6.	Gandivi	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-
7.	Indra Sunusca	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-
8.	Kakubha	-	-	-	+	+	-	+	+	-	-	+	-
9.	Kireeti	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	+	+	-	-
10.	Karnari	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-
11.	Kuruveeraka	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-
12.	Kauntheya	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-
13.	Krishna Sarathi	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-
14.	Madhugandhi	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-
15.	Nadisarja	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	-	-
16.	Partha	+	-	-	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	-
17.	Phalguna	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	+	+	-	-
18.	Prasunaka	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-
19.	Pruthaja	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-
20.	Pandavi	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-
21.	Shvetavaha	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-
22.	Shambara	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-
23.	Shivamallaka	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-
24.	Savyasaci	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-
25.	Shatadruma	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	-	-
26.	Veerantaka	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	+	+	-	-
27.	Veeradru	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-

Classification:

Gana: Kashayaskandha, Udarda Prashamana (Charaka.),
Nyagrodhadi, Salsaradi (Sushruta)
Kula: Haritakyadi (Combretaceae)

Names in different languages:

Assam Orjun; *Beng:* Arhan; *Can.:* Maddi; *Eng.* Arjuna myrobalan; *Guj.* Sadado; *Hindi:* Arjuna; *Mar.:* Sanmadat; Sadaru; *Oriya* Arjuna; *Tam.:* Vellamatta; *Tel.* Yerra maddi¹¹

I. Vedic Period:

Arjuna is mentioned in Vedas. In Atharva Veda (IV:37:3) it is said that the Krimi (microbes) keep themselves away from the Arjuna.

The drug was widely used in Vedic period as:

1. Krimi nāshaka (IV:37:34)
2. Vāyū mandala shodhaka (IV:37:31)
3. Kshetriya roga nashaka (II:2:8/3)
4. Bala vardhaka (V:28:5)
5. Hridya (V:28:9)⁴

II. Samhitā period:

In Charaka Samhitā (3rd century B.C.¹³), the medicinal plants have been classified according to Karma (action) and prabhāva (specific action).

Arjuna is mentioned in the Kashayaskandhagana as Udarda prashamana (anti urticarials). It has also been mentioned in 84 varieties of Asavas which are considered the most wholesome, out of the innumerable varieties

resulting from different combinations.

The uses of Arjuna for various conditions found in Charaka Samhita are as under:

1. Its decoction to be taken with honey by persons suffering from Urinary anomalies due to kapha and pitta.
2. As one of the ingredients in Trikantakadya taila ghrta for management of prameha (urinary anomalies) with predominance of vata and kapha doshas.
3. As one of the ingredients in Shadyusha Yoga for the management of Diarrhea.
4. As one of the main drugs in the Lutavisha Siddhayogas which are curative of ulcers resulting from the insect and spider bites.
5. Used for the wound healing.
6. Used in the form of Udumbaradileha, Mahaneelataila for the treatment of the affections of the three vital regions associated with kapha dosha.
7. As an ingredient in pushyanuga churna for the management of Asrugdara².

Sushruta (6th century B.C.¹³) classified the drugs according to actions, odour and taste. The Arjuna has been described in Salsaradigana. These drugs cure Kushtha, Meha (Diabetes) and pandu (Anaemia). These drugs also pacifies kapha and medas (fat).

In One context, Sushruta described the Arjuna's medicinal values that, the pulp of the Kapitha (*Feronia elephantum*) fruit

should be taken out and its shell should be filled with goats urine, kasisa etc. and then be burried for a month in the ground under Arjuna tree and then applied over the black portions of the scar for restoration of normal skin colour.

Sushruta mentioned the following so many therapeutic uses of Arjuna.

1. Along with the barks of Ashvakarna etc. and latex trees for the preparation of oily formulae in the management of wound healing.
2. Poultice of bark of Arjuna alongwith Madhuka (*Glycyrrhiza glabra*) and Jambu should be applied for glandular swellings due to pitta after application of leeches and irritation.
3. Paste of Arjuna along with padmotpala etc., in the management of upadamsa (venereal disease) with pitta predominance.
4. In the form of Neelitaila and Sairiyakaditaila for blackening the greying hairs.
5. As alkaline antivenomous compound "Ksharagada" for anti poisonous virtues.
6. As anti dote to bites by a spider of the rakta species.
7. In the form of ghritha along with Dhataki pushpa, durgs of sālsarādi group for the clotting of semen.
8. As an Anjana (collyrium) prepared along with patala etc. for the management Raktā-bhishyanda.
9. In the form of taila along with Bijaka etc.

for the management of Jirna jwara.

10. As pāneeyam with Badariphala twak etc. for the management of Atisāra.

11. Along with udumbara, jambu, it is used for the management of Raktapitta.

12. In the form of liquid along with gāyatri (*Acasia catechu* wild) etc. for the management of ūrdhwagata Raktapitta .

13. In the form of liquid with Mātulunga etc. for the management of Nāsāgata Raktapitta.⁶

Vagbhtah - II (4th century A.D.)¹³, the author of Ashtānga Hridaya, the popular work of highest authority and essence of Charaka and Sushruta Samhitā described the Arjuna as pāṛthā and indicated in Nyagrodādhi gana⁸. He was the first to prescribe as tonic the pulverised bark with milk and treacle water or Rasa ghritha and very elaborately described its therapeutic uses, such as:

1. As ghritha, along with Dhātaki etc. for the management of Kunapa (smelling like dead body).
2. As Rasayana along with Rodhra, Gāyatri etc. for the treatment of Prameha (urinary disorders including Diabetes).
3. One of the ingrediants for the treatment of Arshas .
4. Useful in Bāla chikista.
5. As nasya, kavala grahana, along with Mustaka etc. for the management of Mukharoga.

Govinda Dāsa, 19th century A.D. 13, the author of Bhaishajya Ratnāvali, has mentioned Arjuna in the following formulations for the management of Hrita Vikaras (Cardiac disorders):-

1. Arjunadi siddha ksihram
2. Arjunatwak chūrna
3. Kakubhadi chūrna
4. Arjuna ghrita⁵

Description:

It is a large, ever green tree, with a spreading and drooping branches. It extends northwards to the sub Himalayan tract, where, it is distributed along the banks of streams, rivers. It is common in Chota Nagpur, Orissa and Northern Circars. It is extensively planted in many parts of India specially in avenues / parks for shade and ornament. Its stem rarely long, straight and bark is very thick, grey or pinkish green, smooth leaves sub-opposite, elliptic, usually 10-15 cm; flowers in paniculated spikes; fruits 2.5-5.0 cm. long winged angles, seeds ripen during Feb-May and fit for collection during April-May.

Rasayanika Sanghatana (chemical composition¹):

Bark contains - B-sitosterol, ellagic acid and tri Hydroxy, triterpenemon Carboxylic acid. (arjunic acid - $C_{30}H_{48}O_5H_2O$; M.P.335°) glucoside arjunetin ($C_{36}H_{58}O_{16} \cdot 3H_2O$; M.P.238-240°)

Fruit contains - 7.20% Tannin

Parts used - Leaves, Bark, Seeds.

General Uses:

The bark is easily leached and the solution used in Tanneries. It ferments more slowly and penetrates more rapidly than the solutions of other tanning materials.

Important Preparations / Formulations:

1. Arjunarishta.
2. Arjunatwak churna
3. Arjuna siddha kshira
4. Arjuna ghrita
5. Arjuna taila
6. Arjuna kwatha
7. Pushyanugachurna
8. Baladya ghrita etc.

Therapeutic indications / Uses :

The ancient medical scientists of India, have very extensively described its properties which are as follows:

Guna - Laghu, Ruksha

Rasa - Kashaya

Virya - Shita Virya

Vipaka - Katu

Prabhava - Hridya.

Arjuna is indicated in various diseases as shown in the following table:

Sl. No.	Indications	Classics											
		AH	BP	BR	CD	CS	DN	KDN	NR	RN	SS	Ved	
1.	Arbuda (glandular Swellings)	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-
2.	Asrugdhara (Uterine disorders)	-	-	-	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
3.	Atisara (Diarrhoea)	-	-	-	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	+	-
4.	Bhagna (Fractures)	-	+	-	+	-	-	+	+	-	-	-	-
5.	Dourbalya (general debility)	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	+
6.	Guhyarogas (Disorders of Genitals)	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
7.	Hritroga (Cardiac disorders)	-	-	+	+	-	-	+	+	-	-	-	+
8.	Jwara (fever)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-
9.	Kshetriyaroga (Hereditary disorders)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+
10.	Kushtha (Leprosy)	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
11.	Kshaya (Tuberculosis)	-	+	-	+	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-
12.	Marma dosha (Disorders of vital parts)	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
13.	Mukha rogas (Oral diseases)	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
14.	Mutra krichra (Retension of Urine)	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
15.	Prameha (Diabetes/Urinary anomalies)	+	+	-	+	+	-	+	+	-	-	-	-
16.	Palita (Greying of hair)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-
17.	Paaidu (Anaemia)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-
18.	Raktabhishyanda	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-
19.	Rakta pitta (Haemoptysis)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-
20.	Rudhira Vikara (Circulatory anomalies)	-	+	-	-	-	-	+	+	-	-	-	-
21.	Shukra doshas (disease of semen)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-
22.	Shwasaroga (Respiratory disorders)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-
23.	Upadamsha (Venereal Disease)	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-
24.	Visha (Venom)	+	+	-	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	+	-
25.	Vrana (wounds)	-	+	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-

According to the modern medical^{1/} botanical scientists, Arjuna is found effective as ebrifugal, anti dysenteric, cardiac stimulant and debriding agent of wounds. Its fruit is tonic and deobstruent. The juice of its fresh leaves is used in earache etc.

N.B. Abbreviations: A.H.- Ashtanga Hridaya; B.P. - Bhava Prakasha; B.R. - Baishajya Ratnavali; C.D. Chakra Datta; C.S. - Charaka Samhita; D.N. - Dhanwantari Nighantu; D.D.N. - Kayya Deva nighantu; N.R.- Nighantu ratnakara; R.N.- Rajanighantu; S.S. Sushruta Samhita; Ved.- Veda (Atharva).

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सारांश

अर्जुन पर आयुर्विज्ञानीय इतिहासपरक एक सर्वेक्षण

— ए. नारायण
आर कुमारस्वामी

प्राचीन भारतीय चिकित्सा विज्ञान “आयुर्वेद” अनादि काल से चला आ रहा है। वेदों तथा पुराणों में चिकित्सापरक महत्त्वपूर्ण विभिन्न तथ्यों के साथ साथ वानस्पतिक औषध द्रव्यों का भी उल्लेख मिलता है। जिन में से अर्जुन भी एक है जो आयुर्वेदिक औषध शास्त्र का एक प्रमुख द्रव्य है। आयुर्वेद में अर्जुन को हृत् व रुधिर विकारों, व्रणों, विषविकारों एवं शुक्र विकारों आदि में उपयोगी बताया गया है। इस बात की पुष्टि आधुनिक अनुसन्धान कर्ताओं ने भी की है। अतः इस द्रव्य के विषय में किये गये अध्ययन (विशेषतः वैदिक तथा मध्यकालीन) के क्रमिक विकास का इस लेख में अवलोकन करने का प्रयास किया गया है।