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A Review on Literary Aspect of "Kanta Lauha"

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ABSTRACT:

Rasoushadhis(Mineral and metallic drugs) plays an important role in Ayurvedic therapeutics because of their unique qualities such as quick action, minimum dose and tastelessness. Rasayana(Rejuvenation) and Yogavahi (Catalytic activity) are characteristics of a properly made herbo-mineral preparation, which is also nontoxic, readily absorbable, adaptable and assimilable in the body. Bhasmas are unique Ayurvedic metallic/mineral preparation, treated with herbal juice or decoction to form organometallic complexes, and are widely recommended for treatment of a variety of chronic ailments. The incinerated iron preparations of Ayurveda are known as Lauha Bhasma(Incenerated iron). In Samhitha period Ayas(Iron) was used in the form of fine powder. Kanta Lauhais considered as best variety among Lauhas for Lauha Bhasma compared with Teekshna and MundaLauha.Kanta Lauha is chemically Fe₃O₄ (magnetite) as per API. Pure magnetite contains 72.4% of Iron, but since this metal never occurs alone, the metal content of real ores is lower.

So, an attempt has been made in this article to gather all the possible information regarding *KantaLauha* explained in *Rasashastra* classical textbooks.

Key words: Kanta Lauha; Lauha; Magnetite; Rasaushadhis

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda is a holistic medical science providing its services to mankind for thousands of years, the day of its incarnation. In the current kinetic era, *Rasaushadhis* have given Ayurveda a complete novel health care look. The innate qualities such as quick action, lesser dose, tastelessness, prolonged shelf life and capacity to treat chronic and terrible diseases, better palatability of *Rasaushadhis* have helped them to conquer the demand of patients as well as pharmaceutical proprietors. Indians know *Lauha* since *Vedic* period. The word *Lauha* was firstly mentioned in *Yajurveda*.In *Rigveda*, the earliest

treatise, Lauha had been mentioned for the rehabilitation of the amputated limb of Visphala by the name of Ayas. Description of Lauha is available in the Ayurvedic classics like Charaka Samhita and Sushruta Samhita, and they have mentioned various iron-containing preparations in the treatment of many diseases. In Samhitha period Ayas was used in the form of Churna(fine powder). The processing of raw Lauha was mentioned firstly in Charaka Samhita. Kanta Lauha is considered as best variety among Lauhas for LauhaBhasma. Shodhana(purification and detoxification) process of Lauha was firstly mentioned in Rasarnava (10th Cen. A.D.). Preparation of Lauha



*Bhasma*has been mentioned firstly in *Rasarnava*. The use of *Lauha* in therapeutics was firstly mentioned in *Charaka Samhita*.

PeetavarnaKantalauha(Yellow coloured Kanta Lauha) is Sparshavedi, Krishna Varna Kanta Lauha(Black coloured Kanta Lauha)is having Rasayana property and Rakta Varna KantaLauha(Red coloured Kanta Lauha) has Rasa bhandhana(Controlling Mercury) property¹.

Bhramaka is having Avara (least) quality, Chumbaka is Madhyama(Mediumquality), Karshaka is Uttama (Superior quality) and Dravaka variety is Uttamottama(Superior among all)².

Kanta Lauha:

Definition: 'Luhyate Akrishyate Dhatubhah Eti Lauham' - means metals, those are extracted from their ores. Kanta Lauha is an Iron ore containing magnetite, a ferric oxide (Fe₃O₄) mineral.

Synonyms: *Kanta, Kantaka, Ayaskanta, Kantayasa,Mahalauha*³.

Vernacular names:

English: Magnetite Guajarati: Natisa Hindi: Chumbaka Tamil: Kantham

Telugu: Sudantu rayi, Ayaskantamu

Urdu: Faulad

Features of Shreshta Kanta Lauha (Superior variety):

- 1. If a drop of oil is put on the water taken in a vessel made of *Kanta Lauha*, the oil does not spread.
- 2. The smell of *Hingu* vanishes, if it is smeared inside the vessel of *Kanta lauha*.
- 3. The *Kalka*(Paste) of *NimbaPatra*loses its bitterness when it smeared in *KantaLauha* vessel.
- 4. The milk when heated in the *Kanta Lauha* vessel come up and attains *Shikarakhara*(Conical shape) over the brim of the vessel, but does not spill over the vessel ⁴.

Samanya Lakshana (General features):

- The Kanta Lauhawhich has four or five faces is said to be best. However, the one which has the faces at all the direction is extremely good.
- Among the varieties of Kanta Lauha, Bhramaka and Chumbaka are capable of eradicating diseases, whereas Karshaka and Dravaka types are said to be useful in Rasakarma(Metallurgic proceedings) and Rasayana Karma.

- *Kanta Lauha* is considered as the *Ankusha*(Elephant goad) for the *Parada* which is like an arrogant elephant.
- An intelligent physician should always collect the *Kanta Lauha* by selecting a proper *Kshetra*(Region). One should discard the *Kanta Lauha* which is vitiated by polluted air and sun rays without any doubt⁵.

Vishesha Lakshanas (Specific features):

- Bhramaka kanta lauha: When small pieces of Iron are brought near the Kantha Lauha, these pieces tremble a little and revolve around. Such a Kanta Lauha is Bhramaka Kanta Lauha.
- *Chumbaka Kanta Lauha*: The Iron pieces are attracted and attached when brought near *Chumbaka Kanta Lauha*.
- Karshaka Kanta Lauha: It can attract and catch iron pieces.
- Dravaka Kanta Lauha: it can attract Iron pieces from far distances. It is considered as best Kanta lauha
- Romaka Kanta Lauha: On breaking it attracts its small pieces⁶.

Bheda (Types):

Table No. 1: showing *Bheda* of *Kanta Lauha* as per different references:

Comparative Superiority of *Lauhas*:

- The *Munda* Variety of *Lauha* is ten times superior therapeutically to *Mandura*.
- The *TikshnaLauha* is one hundred times beneficial as compared to the *Munda Lauha*.
- The *KantaLauha* is said to be one lakh times more superior to the *TikshnaLauha*.
- There is no other excellent Rasayana which is good as the KantaLauhaRasayana, which improves life span, strength, potencyand it cures the diseases¹².

According to Rasendra Sara Sangraha

- Krauncha Lauhais two times better than Samanya Lauha,
- 2. Kalinga Lauha is eight times better than Krauncha Lauha
- 3. Badara Lauha is 100 times better than Kalinga
- 4. Vajra Lauha is 1000 times better than Bhadra Lauha
- 5. Pandi Lauha is 100 times better than Vajra Lauha
- 6. Niranga Lauha is 10 times better than Pandi Lauha
- 7. *Kanta Lauha* is 1000 times better than *Nirangi Lauha*¹³.

LauhaDosha(Blemishes of Lauha):

Guruta(Heavy), Dridhata(Firm), Utkleda(Slimy), Dahakari (Cause burning sensation), AshmaDosha(Cause calculi), Durgandha (Foul smell)¹⁴.

AshodhitaKanta Lauha Bhasma SevanaDosha (Effects of impure Bhasma consumptions):

- 1. Consumption of *Bhasma* prepared out of *AshudhaLauha* (Impure *Lauha*) is unwholesome.
- 2. It destroys strength, complexion and reduces life span.
- 3. It causes *Hridayashula* (Cardiac illness), *Shandatva* (Impotency), *Kushta* (Skin diseases), *Shoola*(Colic pain), *Ashmari*(Urolithiasis) and *Shareera Shaidhilya*(Organ abnormalities)and many other diseases and even death.
- 4. Hence *Bhasma* of *Lauha* should be prepared only after proper *Shodhana*¹⁵.

Management of LauhaUpadrava (Untoward effects):

- Vidanga with Agastya Swarasa should be licked and the patient should be exposed to sunlight.
- Vidanga with any Shoolaghna drug should be licked with Agastya Swarasa.
- Virechana karma (Purgation) should be performed with Aragwadha¹⁶.

Quantity to be taken for Lauha karma:

Amount of *Lauha* for the processing of *Lauha* should be 5 to 13 *Pala*(240-624g), or 1 to 3 *Sera*(3 kg) or 40 to 60(480 - 720 g) *Tola* according to different references¹⁷.

Samanya Shodhana(General purification)of KantaLauha:

The raw drugs utilized for the manufacturing of medicament must be subjected to purification. In *Rasasastra* where the raw material is utilized, they are mainly from ores, minerals and animal origin; so, *Shodhana* is unavoidable. The raw materials contain many undesired qualities which are deleterious to the body and which should be removed through *Shodhana*.

Objectives of *Shodhana*:

- i. To make a metallic substance suitable for *Marana* (Incineration).
- ii. To remove physical and chemical impurities.
- iii. To make metals, minerals free from toxicity.
- iv. Transformation of attributes.

Samanya and Vishesha Shodhana methods must be followed to make all the Lauhas free from Doshas.

For *Samanya Shodhana* generally, the metalsare heated up to the red-hot state and quenched 7 times in each *Tila Taila*, *Takra*, *Gomutra*, *Aranala*, and *Kulattha Kwatha*¹⁸

Vishesha Shodhana (Specific purification) of Lauha/Kanta Lauha: Table no. 2, Table no. 3

After Samanya Shodhana, Vishehsa Shodhana is performed, to remove the impurities peculiar to the

substance which cannot be removed by SamanyaShodhana.

After *VisheshaShodhana*, there are considerable physical changes in the chemical structure of the substance under *Shodhana* such that it is rendered soft, fragile and suitable for incineration.

The *Vishesha Shodhana* method in classics must be followed after *Samanya Shodhana* to make *Lauha* free from all the remaining *Doshas*.

This procedure is specifically mentioned for all the varieties of *Lauha* and is same for all types of *Lauhas* including *KantaLauha*.

Marana of Kanta Lauha:

Marana is the process in which metals and minerals of inorganic nature are subjected to extensive heat by various *Puta*(Amount of heat) like *Mahaputa*, *Gajaputa* etc. to make the substance into minute form. By this process hard, heavy, and shining metals and minerals will be transformed to minute powder form; which becomes soft, smooth and lustreless powder otherwise called *Bhasma*.

Rasa Ratna Samucchaya had described 4 basic types of *Marana* process for metals, according to the material used for *Marana*, they are ¹⁹;

- 1. With the help of *Rasa Bhasma* (*Shreshta*)
- 2. With the help of Plant materials (*Madhyama*)
- 3. With the help of Sulphur and Sulphur containing materials (*Kanishta* Least)
- 4. With the help of *Arilauha* (*Durgunaprada* Reduces quality)

So, there are 4 kinds of *Marana* according to the materials used out of them the best process is which, where *Parada* is employed for *Marana*. **Table No.4 Table no.5**

Asamyak Marita Lauha(Improperly incinerated Lauha):

Shuka-varnabha twak(Reddish discoloration of skin), Kanta-twak Sphota(Boils over skin), Aruchi (Anorexia)and Vibhandakrit(Constipation).

Madakari(Intoxication), *Dehashula* (Myalgia), *Hridruja*(Cardiac pain), *Tanupatana*(Collapse) and even death ²¹.

Ashuddha Lauha Marita Bhasma Sevana Dosha:

Ayu-Bala-Kanthivinashana (Derangement in lifespan, strength, complexion) *Hritpida* (Cardiac pain), *Alasya* (Tiredness), *Ruja* (Pain)²².

Kanta Lauha Druti:

Prativapa of Kanta Lauha Bhasma into Suradhalibhava bhasma which is given Bhavana(Trituration) with Naramootra(Human urine) for 21 times²³.

Pharmacological action and Therapeutic indications of *Kanta Lauha Bhasma*:

Kanta Lauha Bhasma Ati-Rasayana, is Chirayupradha(Provides long life), Snigdha(Unctous), Tridoshashamana (Pacifies 3 Dosha), Kantijanana (Improves complexion), Garavishaharam(Detoxification), Balakaram(Improves strength), Vrishya (Aphrodisiac), Vaya-Stambhanam (Reduces ageing) and Sarva-vyadhi-hara (Eliminates all diseases).

Kanta Lauha Bhasma is indicated in Prameha(Diabetes), Shula, Aamadosha (Toxins), Arshas(Haemorrhoids), Gulma(Tumour), Pleeha(Splenomegaly), Yakrit Vikara (Liver disorders), Kshaya(Emaciation), Pandu(Anemia), Udara(Ascitis), Kushta-vinashanam, Sthaulya(Obesity), Grahani(IBS), Jwara(Fever), Sopha (Oedema), Agnimandhya(Reduced digestive fire). Visha (Toxin), Vata vyadhi, Pittamaya, Kapha-roga.

Kanta Lauha Bhasma Taken along with Trikatu, Vidanga, Ghrita and Madhu is Jara-marana-Vyadhi nashanam (Eliminates old age, prolongs death, eliminates diseases) and is Sat-putradam (Good progeny).

Kanta Lauha Bhasma is superior among Rasayana according to Basavarajeeyam and RasaRatna Samucchaya²⁴.

Kanta Lauha Bhasma Shershtata:

Daily intake of *Kanta Lauha Bhasma* is *Jara-Mrityuhara*²⁵.

Kanta Lauha Bhasma Varna:

Uttama Kanta Lauha Bhasma resembles *Pakwajambu-Phala*²⁶.

Matra(Dose):

1/4th to 2 Ratti(31 - 250 mg)per day, according to the need of the patient²⁷.

Anupana(Adjuvant):

Triphala and Madhu²⁸.

Apathya (Unwholesome)during Lauhasevana:

The following foods should be avoided during *Lauha* intake ²⁹:

- i. Kushmanda
- ii. Tila taila
- iii. Masha
- iv. Rajika
- v. Madya

- vi. Amladravya
- vii. Masura

CONCLUSION

The present review highlights the overall view of Kanta Lauha described in classical texts which are considered as best variety among Lauhas for Lauha Bhasma Nirmana.It is mainly five types that are Bhramaka Kanta Lauha, Chumbaka Kanta Lauha, Karshaka Kanta Lauha, Dravaka Kanta Lauha and Romaka Kanta Lauha. For purification of Kanta Lauha, most of the texts have described Nirvapa (heating and quenching) method by the use of TriphalaKwatha. Marana is done mainly by the Gajaputa in which heat is provided by using 1000 cow dung cakes. Kanta Lauha possesses Tikta Rasa(Bitter taste), Sheeta Veerya(Cold potency) with Tridoshahara property. It acts as Atirasayana. It is one of the drugs of choice in Pandu Roga, Prameha, Shula, Aamadosha, Arshas, Gulma, Pleeha, Yakrit Vikara, Kshaya, Udara, Kushta Sthaulya, Grahani, Jwara, Sopha, Agnimandhya. Garavisha, Vata vyadhi, Pittamaya, Kapha-roga and so on. Overall, it can be said thateven though Kanta Lauha Bhasma is not widely practised in our routine clinical practice due to its unavailability, it is an excellent and promising medicine mentioned by our Acharyas.

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Table No. 1: showing Bheda of Kanta Lauha as per different references:

Sl no.	Name of text	Types		
1	Rasa Ratna Samucchaya ⁷	1. Bhramaka Kanta Lauha		
	Rasa Tarangini ⁸	2. Chumbaka Kanta Lauha		
	Ayurveda Prakasha ⁹	3. Karshaka Kanta Lauha		
	Rasendra Sara Sangraha ¹⁰	4. Dravaka Kanta Lauha		
		5. Romaka Kanta Lauha		
2	Rasendra Choodamani ¹¹	1. Romaka Kanta Lauha		
		2. Bhramaka Kanta Lauha		
		3. Chumbaka Kanta Lauha		
		4. Dravaka Kanta Lauha		
3	Rasa Ratna Samucchaya,	1. Eka mukha		
	Rasa Tarangini,	2. Dwi mukha		
	Ayurveda Prakasha,	3. Tri mukha		
	Rasendra Sara Sangraha,	4. Chatur mukha		
	Rasendra Choodamani,	5. Sarvato mukha		
	Rasaprakasha Sudhakara,			
	Rasapadhati etc.			

Table no. 2showing SamanyaShodhana ofLauha/ KantaLauhaby different Acharyas:

Sl No.	Name of the procedure	Drugs and media	Repetition	References
1	Nirvapa	Tila Taila, Takra, Gomutra, Aranala, and KulatthaKwatha.	7 times in each	RRS 5/11
2	Nirvapa	Tila Taila, Takra, Gomutra, Aranala, and Kulattha Kwatha.	21 times in each	R P 5/1 A P 3/48
3	Nirvapa	Tila Taila, Takra, Gomutra, Aranala, and Kulattha Kwatha.	3 times in each	Sha.Sam 11/2- 3 R T 15/5

^{*}Note- RAV- Rasarnav, RC- Rasendra Choodamani, RPS-Rasaprakasha Sudhakara, RRS- Rasa Ratna Samucchaya, AP-Ayurveda Prakash,RT-Ras Trangini,CD- Chakardutta.SH- Sam Sharanangadhara Samhita

Table no. 3 Showing Vishesha Shodhana of Lauha/ Kanta Lauha:

Sl No.	Name of the procedure	Drugs and media	Repetition	References
1	Dhalana	Swarasa(Fresh juice)of Guduchi, Hamsapadi Naktamala, Triphala, etc.	-	R A V 7/108
2	Lepanaand Parilepana	Shasha Rakta(Rabbit blood)	3 times 3 times 7 times	R C 4/96 R P S 4/66 R R S 5/63
3	Lepana and Parilepana	Saindhava Lavana and Triphala Kwatha	-	R C 4/97 R P S 4/67 R R S 5/104
4	Nirvapa	Chincha Phaladala Kwatha	-	R C 4/98 R R S 5/105
5	Nirvapa	Triphala Kwatha	7 times 7 times 7 times 7 times	R C 4/98 R R S 5/102 R S S 1/297 A P 3/244 R T 20/16
6	Nirvapa	Gomutra	-	R C 4/98
7	Abhisheka	Kadali moola jala	7 times	R T 20/70
8	Lepana and Nirvapa	Shasha Rakta and Triphalajala	30 times	A P 3/244 R T 20/19
9	Nirvapa	Triphala Kwatha and Gomutra	7 times	RT 20/18

Table No.4: showing Dravya, media, types and process of Lauha/Kanta Lauha Marana:

Sl No.	Drug and media for Bhavana	Procedure	Puta specification	Repetition/ Duration	References
1.	Salila, Triphalajala Bringaraja, Keshara, Shatavari, Manakanda, Bhallataka, Karnachadamula, Punarnava- Swarasa	Bhanupaka Sthalipaka Putapaka			CD 66/63-75
2.	Dhatripatra rasa or Triphala Kwatha	Putapaka		4	R. Chu14/93 R R S5/108
3.	Guda and Gandhaka	Putapaka		20	RChu14/107 RPS 4/71
4.	Shweta Punarnava and Vasa Swaras	Putapaka		30	R. Chu14/ R R S5/118
5.	Triphalajala	Putapaka		5	RChu14/104 R R S5/119
6.	Guda, Gandhaka and Triphala Kwatha	Putapaka		20 30	RChu14/104 R R S5/127

7.	Gandhaka and Kumari jala	Niragni Paka			RChu14/108
					R P S 4/75
					R R S5/125
8.	Swetapunarnava Patra	Putapaka		10	R P S 4/74
9.	Suta and Gandhaka	Putapaka		20	R R S 5/133
10.	Hingula- 1part andNari Stanya,	Putapaka	Gaja Puta		
	Hingula1/20 part and Triphala	_		2	
	Kashaya,			+	
	Jambira Rasa and Kanji			38	R R S5/115
11.	Hingula and Jambira Rasa	Nirvapa			R R S5/126
12.	Triphala Kwathaprepared using Gomutra	Putapaka	Gaja Puta	21	R R S5/103
13.	ParadaBhasma 1/4 partor	Putapaka			R R S 5/
	Makshika/ Gandhaka/ Parada- 1				
	part, Shasha Rakta,Kshara- Amla dravy				
14.	Shuddha Parada- 1 part,	Niragni Paka		3 days	R R S5/110
	Gandhaka- 2partand Kumari			,	ShSam
	Swarasa				R S S 1/340
					A P 3/257
15.	Rakta Punarnava or Girikarni or	Putapaka		30	RP
16.	Changeri Swarasa Gandhaka-1/2 part, Parada- 1/4	Bhanupaka	Surya Puta	14days	53Pg.no:65 RP54/P.no66
10.	part, Bringaraja or Girikarni	Впапирака	Surya I uta	140ays	A P 3/255
	Swarasa				111 3/233
17.	Patalagarudi rasa and Kumari	Putapaka		3	ShSam
	Swarasa	1		+	
				6	
18.	Hingula- 1/10 or 1/!2 part, Kumari	Putapaka		7	Sh. Sam
	Swarasa				R S S 1/343
					A P 3/262
19.	Manashila or Gandhaka and Arka Dugdha	Putapaka		12	ShSam
20.	Triphala Kwatha or Hastikarna/	Bhanupaka		7	R S S 1/336
	Bringaraja rasa	Sthalipaka		-	R T 20/ 52
21		Putapaka	G : P	10-1000	4 P 2 /252
21.	Soraka- 1part, Gandhaka- 1part, Kumari Swarasa	Putapaka	Gaja Puta		A P 3/272
22.	Hingula- 1part, Kumari Swarasa	Putapaka	Gaja Puta	1	R T 20/53
	and Hingula- 1/20-partTriphala			1	
	Kwatha			+ 40	
23.	Manashila- 1part and Shalimula	Putapaka	Gaja Puta	3	R T 20/ 64
	Swarasa Swarasa				
24.	Makshika Bhasma-1/4part,	Putapaka	Gaja Puta	3	R T 20/72
	Nimbukavari				

Table no.5: Different Kanta lauha Marana for specific conditions explained by RasaRatna Samucchaya 20:

Sl No.	Marana Vidhi	Indications
1.	The paste made up of Nirgundi moola-twak choorna and Saindhava	Kapha Prakopa janya
	Lavanausing Ushnodaka(Hot water), applied over Kanta Lauha Patra and is subjected to Puta	roga(Kapha aggravated diseases)
2.	The paste made up of <i>Guduchi Choorna</i> with <i>Guduchi Swarasa</i> , applied over <i>Kanta Lauha Patra</i> and is subjected to <i>Puta</i>	Pitta Prakopa janya roga(Pitta aggravated diseases)
3.	The paste made up of <i>Galambu</i> , applied over <i>Kanta Lauha Patra</i> and is subjected to <i>Puta</i>	Vata Prakopa janya roga(Vata aggravated diseases)
4.	The paste made up of Nirgundi moola choorna and Galambu, applied over Kanta Lauha Patra and is subjected to Puta	Vaya: stambha (prevent ageing)
5.	SwarnamakshikaLepa applied over Kanta Lauha Patra and is subjected to Puta	Gala roga(Throat diseases)
6.	Manashila Lepa applied over Kanta Lauha Patra and is subjected to Puta	Kandu(Itching)