



## A CONCEPTUAL STUDY OF LEPA KALPANA

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### ABSTRACT

With the way of living and thinking. Toxins have been an integral part of life physiologically and psychologically, affecting both our body and mind in a way that is the most evident on our skin in various manners and amidst the dilemma of looking beautiful but avoiding chemicals, a rare gem of ayurveda “the leap kalpana” has been overlooked. In contrast, give all other medicines like swarasa, Heem, Fanta, kalka, and kwatha. Our Acharyas have also mentioned the lepa kalpana taking care of all the external requirements, including therapeutic needs, nourishment, and cosmetology. In the age of chemical dominance, we already have the right way of nurturing, caring for, protecting, and nourishing ourselves. According to Sharangdhara Samhita, smearing is called Lepa or medicines used in paste. The external application is lepa, which is further classified into palapa, pradeha and sales based on their utilities. Aadra (wet) or shushka (dry) dravya, along with jala, mix well, are made into a paste and are applied externally as lepa. Considering the wide spectrum utility of lepa kalpana, this paper deals with a holistic approach to lepa kalpana, covering all the references to the brihat and laghu trays. This article provides a comprehensive overview of Lepa Kalpana, delving deep into its history, principles, methodologies, and applications. It is designed to be a valuable resource for Ayurveda enthusiasts, students, practitioners, and anyone intrigued by the profound healing potential of traditional therapeutic pastes, ointments, and applications.

**Keywords:** *lepa, lepa Kalpana, toxins, sharangdhara samhita, therapeutic needs, nourishing and cosmetology.*

## INTRODUCTION

The omnipresence of physiological and psychological toxins intricately weaves its influence on human existence in the dynamic tapestry of health and well-being. This influence is most palpable on the canvas of our skin, where the pursuit of beauty converges with the imperative to avoid harmful chemicals. A resplendent yet oft-overlooked facet of Ayurveda, "the Lepa Kalpana," emerges as an ancient remedy in this intricate dance between aesthetics and chemical consciousness. While Ayurvedic literature expounds upon diverse medicinal forms, the therapeutic potential of lepa Kalpana for external applications has awaited its due recognition. Contrary to the prevailing ethos of chemical dominance, Ayurveda is a bastion of wisdom, offering lepa kalpana as a holistic solution for nurturing, protecting, and nourishing the body. As illuminated in the Sharangdhara Samhita, lepa, defined as the act of smearing, takes the form of aadra (wet) or shushka (dry) dravya combined meticulously with water to form a therapeutic paste. This paste addresses many needs when applied externally, encapsulating therapeutic requirements and cosmetologist aspirations. In a contemporary era marked by chemical saturation, lepa kalpana emerges as a venerable alternative by mentioning the importance and utility of lepa, pralepa and Alep as a beacon guiding us back to traditional healing and beautification practices. This paper explores the profound utility of lepa kalpana, drawing insights from the brihat and laghu trays, as documented in Ayurvedic scriptures. The brihat tray encompasses comprehensive references to larger formulations, while the laghu tray delves into the subtleties of smaller formulations, together painting a holistic picture of lepa Kalpana's versatility. This comprehensive overview aims to unravel the historical evolution, fundamental principles, methodologies, and diverse applications of lepa kalpana. It beckons Ayurveda enthusiasts, students, practitioners, and those captivated by ancient healing practices to delve into the broad-spectrum utility of lepa kalpana. By exploring the wisdom encapsulated in both bruhat tray and laghu tray, this paper endeav-

ors to guide us towards a nuanced understanding of lepa Kalpana's pivotal role in Ayurveda, urging a connection with traditional therapeutic pastes, ointments, and applications.

### Definition

According to **Sushruta Samhita**:

- Amongst all the upakarama used in shopha, lepa is considered the best. Additionally, they benefit profoundly in shuddhi, vrana ropana and asthi sandhi Sthirita.

According to **Sharangdhara Samhita**:

- The act of smearing is called Lepa, or medicines used in the form of paste for

External applications are called lepa. Either Aadra or shushka Dravya, along with jala, mix well.

and is made into a paste and applied externally, known as lepa.

### Reason for using lepa kalpana.

Lepa Kalpana is an herbal preparation used locally on the external skin to benefit the region both externally and internally—a formulation described by all the acharyas in their respective Samhita for cosmetic, therapeutic and preventive purposes. The types are differentiated based on the utility of that particular lepa.

**Pralep** - Skin Disorders, Cosmetic Purposes and Pain Relief

**Pradeh** - Respiratory Conditions, Digestive Issue and General Wellness

**Aalep** - Oil Application: for relaxation, improved circulation, and skin nourishment.

**Doshaghna** - to balance the tridoshas.

**Vishagna** - to act as anti-venom or for detoxification.

**Varnya**- to enhance skin complexion.

**Snehika lepa** - skin nourishment

**Nirvapana lepa** - for pain relief

**Prasadana**- for skin Rejuvenation

**Stambhana** - for firming and tonic effects

**Pachana**- to aid digestion.

**Pidana**- for stimulating effect.

**Shodhana** - for detoxification

**Vilayana** - for moisturizing

**What is to be used for lepa formation:** All three acharyas have described various ingredients based on different doshas and their utilities.

**Ingredients mentioned for Lepa Kalpa in Charak Samhita**

are from all three origins of Materia Medica of Ayurveda, i.e. herbal, mineral, and animal.

*Saindhav, Sauvarchala, Ksharas*, various metals and minerals such as *Naga, Vanga, Loha, Pinda, Hartal, Manahshila, Kasis, Tuttha, Gairika* of mineral origin; *Gorochana, Gomutra, Godugdha, Ajadugdha, Kukuta Shakruta, Kapota Vishtha, Goshakruta, Gajashthi, Vasa* of camel; and *Chuluki Matsya, Godharasa, Loma, Khura Shringa* of various animals are used in preparation of *Lepa Kalpana*.

**Ingredients mentioned for Lepa Kalpa in Sushruta Samhita**

Are from all **three origins, i.e. herbal, mineral, and animal**. Apart from herbals, which are abundant in number, *Saindhav, Sauvarchala*, various *Ksharas Sarjiksara, Yavakshara, Palashakshara, Masi* such as *Hastidanta masi, Krishnasarpa masi*,

**Minerals** such as *Kasis, Tuttha, Hartala, Manahshila, Gairik, Rasanjana, Mandura* and *Ghrita, Taila, Vasa, Majja, Gorochana, Gomutra, Gudugdha, Putikita, Loma, Khura Shringa* of various animals are used in preparation of *Lepa Kalpana*.

**Ingredients of plant origin** such as *Rala, Guggula, Laksha, and Kampillaka*, along with the *Visha-Upavisha Varga Dravya* like *Vatsanabha, Karavira Gunja, Bhallataka Arka, Snuhi, Langali*, including ingredients of animal origin such as *Gomutra, Kukuta Vishtha, Gajashthi*, Goat's urine, *Godugdha, and Takra*.

**Ingredients of marine origin** like *Mukta, Shankha, Praval*.

minerals such as *Hartal, Manashila, Kasis, Tuttha, Gairik, Gandhak*; various salts, such as *Saindhava, Sauvarachala, Yavakshara, and Grihadhum*, are found mentioned. The main contribution of this *Samhita* is the description of different *Mukhalepa* according to various seasons. This explains the cosmetic value of the *Lepa*. Some ingredients of these *Lepas*,

which are indicated in different seasons, are given as mentioned below.[7]

**Hemanta** - *Kolamajja, Vasamoola, Sabara Lodhara, Gaurasarshapa*

**Sisira** - *Simhimoola, Krishnatila, Darvitvak, Nistusha Yava*

**Vasant** - *Darbhamoola, Chandana, Useera, Sireesha, Misi, Tandula*

**Grishma** - *Kumuda, Utpala, Kalhara, Doorva, Madhuka, Chandana*

**Varsha** - *Kaliyaka, Tila, Useera, Mamsi, Tagara, Padmakh*

**Sarad** - *Taleesapatra, Gundra, Pundarika, Yash-timadhu, Kasha, Tagar, Aguru*.

**Sharangdhara** also mentioned various ingredients of plants, minerals, marine, and animal. origin such as *Dhattura, Posta dana, Shankha, Hingula, Swarnamakshika, and Parada*.

**How to apply lepa**

1. **Consultation:** Consult an experienced Ayurvedic practitioner to determine the appropriate lepa formulation for your specific health condition and dosha.
2. **Gather Ingredients:** Prepare the herbal ingredients according to the prescribed formula. Common ingredients include herbs, oils, water, and other natural substances.
3. **Cleanse the Skin:** Cleanse the area of the skin where the lepa will be applied. This can be done with warm water and a mild herbal soap or cleanser. Pat the skin dry gently.
4. **Prepare the Lepa:** Mix the herbal ingredients to form a smooth paste or poultice. The consistency should be thick enough to adhere to the skin without dripping.
5. **Warm the Lepa (Optional):** If specified in the prescription, warm the lepa slightly. Warm lepa can enhance the therapeutic effects and improve absorption. Do not overheat to avoid burns.
6. **Application Process:**
  - **Lie Down:** Find a comfortable and quiet place to lie down.

• **Application:** Apply the lepa evenly over the affected area or the specific body part as directed by your practitioner. Use a spatula, brush, or your fingers to spread the paste in a uniform layer.

• **Direction of application:** gently rubbed in an upward or reverse direction of the hair over the skin to make the application action quicker & more effective.

• **Thickness:** The lepa layer should be thick enough to cover the skin adequately, usually about 1/4 to 1/2 inch thick.

• **Covering (Optional):** In some cases, the lepa might be covered with medicinal leaves, cloth, or bandages to retain warmth and prevent the paste from drying out quickly.

7. **Rest: Lie down and relax once the lepa is applied.** Try to remain still to allow the lepa to work effectively.

8. **Duration:** The lepa is usually left on the skin for a specific duration as the practitioner prescribes. This duration can vary from 15 minutes to an hour or more, depending on the type of lepa and the health condition being treated.

9. **Removal:** After the specified duration, gently remove the lepa using lukewarm water and a soft cloth. Avoid scrubbing the skin vigorously.

10. **Cleansing:** Cleanse the skin with warm water to remove any residue of the lepa. Pat the skin dry with a clean towel.

11. **Moisturize (Optional):** Depending on the lepa used, your practitioner might recommend applying a light herbal oil or moisturiser to the skin after removing the lepa to keep the skin hydrated.

12. **Rest:** After lepa application, rest for a short period is often advised to allow the body to absorb the herbal benefits fully.

13. **Follow Practitioner's Instructions:** Follow any specific instructions given by your Ayurvedic practitioner regarding diet, lifestyle, and further care after the lepa application

#### **Thickness of Lepa**

The thickness of lepa (herbal paste or poultice) applied during Ayurvedic treatments can vary based on the specific condition being treated, the dosha imbalance,

and the recommendations of the Ayurvedic practitioner. Different acharyas (ancient scholars and practitioners) have provided guidelines regarding the thickness of lepa in their respective texts. Here's a general overview of the recommended thickness of lepa according to various acharyas:

**According to Charaka Samhita,** the thickness of lepa should be approximately the **width of the wheat**. Grain (Godhuma Pindi) or the thickness of the palm (Hastapadatala). Charaka emphasises that the lepa should be thin and thick for optimal therapeutic effects.

**Sushruta Samhita** suggests that the lepa should be applied with a thickness equivalent to the back of a **knife's edge (Ardhatala)** or slightly thicker, according to the treated condition. It should be spread evenly to cover the affected area.

**Ashtanga Hridaya** advises that the lepa be of moderate thickness, smooth, and uniform.

Applied. The text does not specify an exact measurement but emphasises the importance of uniformity in application.

**Kashyapa Samhita** recommends that the lepa be applied with a thickness equivalent to the **width of barley grain (Yava Pindi)** or slightly thicker, depending on the nature of the ailment. The consistency should be such that it adheres well to the skin without dripping.

**Bhavaprakasha**, a later Ayurvedic text, suggests that the lepa should be applied with thickness equivalent to a finger's width (**Angula**) or slightly thicker. The paste should be spread evenly to cover the affected area without gaps. Additionally, the type of lepa (Sneha Lepa, Upanaha Lepa, etc.) and the individual's dosha constitution influence the lepa's thickness.

DOSHAGNA LEPA -1/4 ANGULA

VISHAGHNA LEPA -1/3 ANGULA

VARNYA LEPA -1/2 ANGULA

#### **Utilities of Lepa Kalpana**

Lepa Kalpana, the preparation and application of medicinal pastes or poultices in

Ayurveda serves several therapeutic purposes. Its utility in Ayurveda is vast, and

It is employed for various health conditions and benefits. Here are some of the key utilities of Lepa Kalpana in Ayurveda:

- **Targeted Therapy:** Lepa allows for targeted treatment of specific body parts or localized areas affected by pain, inflammation, swelling, or skin disorders.
- **Musculoskeletal Issues:** It's often used in musculoskeletal conditions like arthritis, joint pain, and muscle sprains to reduce pain and inflammation.
- **Skin Disorders:** Lepa is used to address skin issues such as eczema, psoriasis, acne, and allergic rashes. Herbal ingredients in lepa formulations can have healing and soothing effects on the skin.
- **Enhancing Complexion:** Certain lepas are used to improve skin complexion, reduce blemishes, and promote a healthy glow.
- **Wound Management:** Lepa helps in wound healing by providing a protective layer and facilitating the regeneration of tissues. It's used for minor cuts, burns, and abrasions.
- **Pain Relief:** Lepa formulations containing analgesic herbs help in reducing pain associated with various conditions, such as headaches, back pain, and muscular pain.
- **Anti-Inflammatory:** Lepa with anti-inflammatory herbs helps reduce inflammation in conditions like arthritis and swollen joints.
- **Detoxification:** Lepa can be part of Panchakarma therapies, aiding in the removal of toxins from the body.
- **Rejuvenation:** It's used in rejuvenation therapies to promote overall well-being and vitality.
- **Natural Beauty Treatments:** Lepa formulations enhance skin health, providing natural solutions for beauty enhancement without harsh chemicals.
- **Anti-Aging:** Certain lepas contain herbs with anti-ageing properties, promoting youthful skin and reducing wrinkles.

- **Relaxation:** Applying lepa and resting during the therapy can have relaxing effects, reducing stress and promoting mental well-being.
  - **Dosha Balance:** Lepa formulations are often tailored to balance specific doshas (Vata, Pitta, Kapha) in the body, promoting overall dosha equilibrium.
  - **Skin Hydration:** Certain lepas containing natural oils and herbs hydrate the skin, preventing dryness and promoting suppleness.
  - **Nutrient Absorption:** The skin absorbs nutrients from lepa formulations, nourishing the body and improving overall health.
- In Ayurveda, Lepa Kalpana is considered a valuable therapeutic modality due to its natural, localized and holistic approach to healing various health conditions. However, it's important to note that the specific lepa formulation and application method should be determined by a qualified Ayurvedic practitioner based on an individual's unique constitution and health needs.

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#### **IDEAL TIME FOR LEPA APPLICATION**

The body's heat usually comes through the skin pores at night; if medicinal applications are done at night, the skin pores get blocked & obstruct the transfer of body heat. That's why Lepa Kalpana should not be done at night. Lepa is to be removed immediately after drying. It should never be overlapped. Previous-day prepared lepa should not be used.

#### **CONCLUSION**

In this comprehensive compilation, we have delved into the ancient and intricate practice of *Lepa Kalpana* in Ayurveda, uncovering its multifaceted applications and therapeutic significance. Rooted in the wisdom of Ayurvedic texts and the profound knowledge of revered scholars, they have provided a deep understanding of the art and science behind herbal pastes, or *lepas*, and their diverse uses. We've traversed the nuanced world of *lepas*, from the foundational principles outlined in texts like Charaka Samhita and Sushruta Samhita to the varied types of *lepas* such as *Pralepa*, *pradeha*, and *Aalepa*. The me-

ticulous preparation methods, emphasizing precise consistency and individualized formulations, have been illuminated. We've observed the careful selection of herbs, liquids, and oils, each chosen for its specific properties, catering to various health conditions, from skin disorders to pain management. Our journey through the pages of Ayurvedic wisdom has revealed the holistic nature of lea Kalpana. It goes beyond topical application, offering therapeutic solutions aligning with an individual's unique constitution and imbalances. Whether it's the cooling touch of sandalwood for Pitta imbalance, the detoxifying properties of neem for skin disorders, or the nourishing effects of herbal oils, *lepa*s exemplify Ayurveda's Personalised and natural approach to healing. As we conclude this compilation, it's evident that *Lepa Kalpana* is not just a therapeutic practice; it's a profound embodiment of Ayurvedic philosophy. It embodies the belief that healing is an individualized, holistic journey where the synergy of nature's elements restores balance and vitality. The knowledge imparted here is a valuable resource, bridging ancient wisdom with modern understanding, ensuring the legacy of *Lepa Kalpana* continues to thrive and heal in future generations.

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