

## MAHAUSHADHA (ZINGIBEROFFICINALE ROSC.) OF BRIHATTRASI- A REVIEW

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### ABSTRACT

*Zingiberofficinale* Rosc. is the accepted source of well-known drugs of *Ayurveda* namely *Shunthi* (dried rhizome) and *Aardraka* (fresh rhizome). Apart from used as drugs these herbs are widely used as spices all over the world. *Charak* had used the term *Mahaoushadha* for *Zingiberofficinale* Rosc. for the first time in treatment of *Stanya Shodhan Mahakashya* (Drugs that purify breast milk). It is found in many single and compound formulations in *Ayurvediya* literatures. *Shunthi* (dried rhizome) and *Aardraka* (fresh rhizome) are very well known medicine for digestive system, piles, analgesic property etc. This paper will put forward the medicinal uses of *Zingiberofficinale* Rosc. as per *Ayurvediya* classics and its contemporary review.

**Keywords:** *Shunthi, Aardraka, Mahaoushadha, Zingiberofficinale* Rosc.

### INTRODUCTION

*Mahaoushadha*, botanically accepted as *Zingiberofficinale* Rosc. is the member of family *Zingiberaceae*. It is perennial, creeping herb, rhizome stout, tuberous with erect leafy stem, 60-90 cm. tall. Leaves sessile, linear-lanceolate, 10-25 x 1.5-3 cm, narrowed to the base, acute or acuminate, sheath 10-15 cm.

long. Flower greenish white with a small dark purple lip, in oblong, cylindrical spikes unsheathed in a few scarious, glabrous bracts 4-7 cm. long. Fruits are oblong capsules<sup>1</sup>.

As per the classics of *Ayurveda*, *Rasa Panchaka* (taste, odour, potency etc.) of *Aardraka* and *Shunthi* is different<sup>2</sup>.

**Table 1: Raspanchaka of Aardraka & Shunthi**

<i>Rasa Panchaka</i>	<i>Shunthi</i>	<i>Aardraka</i>
<i>Rasa</i>	<i>Katu</i>	<i>Katu</i>
<i>Guna</i>	<i>Laghu, Snigdha</i>	<i>guru, Ruksha, Tikshna</i>

Virya	Ushna	Ushna
Vipaka	Madhura	Katu
Karma	KaphaVataShamaka, Anulomana, Deepan, Pachan, Aamdoshahara, Grahi, Vrishya, Hridya	KaphaVataShamaka, Deepaniya, Bhedniya, Vibandhar, Rochana, Hridya, Svarya, AanahShoolahar

**Therapeutic indications of Mahaoushadha (Zingiberofficinale Rosc.) in Charak Samhita:-**

Zingiberofficinale Rosc. is mentioned as having Vrishya (Spermatogenes) property

and Hridya (beneficial for heart) properties which is not the usual (Saamanya) property of Katu Rasa Dravya (pungent taste)<sup>3</sup>. Charak included Aardrak & Shunthi in approximately 250 preparations for therapeutic use.

**Table 2:** Some therapeutic indications of Shunthi (dry rhizome) in CharakSamhita-

S.No.	Reference	Preparation	Indication
1	C.S.Su.14/17	TrayusnadiManth	SantarpanJanyaVyadhi
2	C.S.Su..14/20	Vyoshadhya Saktu	SantarpanJanyaVyadhi
3	C.S.Su...27/256	Sunthi, Pippali prepared Laja	Pathya, Ksudhaadhikya, Pipasaadhikya
4	C.S.Su...27/296	AaharopyogiVarga	Properties of Shunthi
5	C.S.Chi.5/74	Ingrident of PippalyadiGhrit	Vatajgulma, Yonishool, Shirshoola, Arsha
6	C. S.Chi.11/85	SaindhavadiChurna	Rochan, Deepan, Parshavpidanashak
7	C. S.Chi.11/91	Shunthi Kalka	Pusti, Aayu, BalaAarogyaVardhaka
8	C. S.Chi.12/24	Paste of Dantimoola, Nishotha, Shunti...	Shotha
9	C. S.Chi.13/80	VidangadiKshar	Gulma, Pleeha-roga
10	C. S.Chi.18/115	Nagaradi Yoga	KaphajaKasa
11	C. S.Chi.21/58	DarakshadiKawath	Trishna, Visarpa
12	C. S.Chi.26/224	Gandha Tail	Karnashoola
13	C. S.Chi.27/43	Kusthadi tail	Uroosthambha
14	C.S.Chi/170	Vrashmooladi Tail	Vatavayadhi
15	C. S.Chi.30/90	PushyanugaChurna	Yonivayapad
16	C.S.Si.9/19	Hingu, Sunthi, Aamlavetas.....with Yava Kawatha	Aaptantraka

**Table 3:** Some therapeutic indications of Aardraka (fresh rhizome) in Charak Samhit-

S.No.	Reference	Preparation	Indication
1	C.S.Chi/53	LasunadhyaGhrit	Unmad
2	C.S.Chi12/17	GudaardraKalpa	Savyathu, Gulma, Arsha
3	C.S.Chi13/152	Tila Tail processed with Aadraka Juice	UdarRoga
4	C.S.Chi15/88	Panchamuladhya Ghrit	Vata-kapha Aavrat Grahani Dosha
5	C. S.Chi.24/125	Pathya Dravya (Mansa+Aadraka in Pishti)	In VatajaMaddataya
6	C.S.Chi28/136	Mulaka Tail	VatajaVikara

Therapeutic indications of *Mahaoushadha* (*Zingiberofficinale* Rosc.) in *Sushrut Samhita*:-

*Sushruta* has reported *Hridya Karma* of *Shunthi* in addition to its *Vrishya*, *Deepana*,

*Pachana* effects<sup>4</sup>. *Sushruta* has utilized *Aardrak* & *Shunthi* in about 150 formulations for treatments of various diseases.

**Table 4:** Some therapeutic indications of *Shunthi* (dry rhizome) in *Charak Samhita*-

S.No.	Reference	Preparation	Indication
1	S.S.Su.44/20	<i>Nisoth, Yavkshar, Sunthi, Pippali Churna</i> with honey	Best purgative
2	S. S.Su.46/519	<i>Sunthi, Harada Churna</i>	<i>Aajirna</i>
3	S. S.Su.10/68	<i>Kshir</i> prepared with <i>Sunthi, Kshirkakoli</i>	<i>Garbhastravahar Yoga</i> used in 9 <sup>th</sup> month
4	S.S.Chi.6/13	<i>Paste</i> of <i>Karanj, Sunthi</i>	<i>Arsha</i>
5	S. S.Chi.19/57	Ingrident of <i>Shalipadahar Yoga</i>	<i>Shalipada</i>
6	S. S.Chi.23/15	Jaggery, <i>Sunthi Churn</i> inequal ratio	<i>Sotha</i>
7	S.S.U.9/20	<i>Sandhava, Daruharidra, Sonth, lemon juice</i>	<i>AanjanainSuskaakshipaka</i>
8	S. S.U.40/36	<i>Sunthi, Mustak, Dhaniya</i> etc.	<i>Aamatisara</i>
9	S. S.U.40/104	<i>DarvayadiiGhrit</i>	<i>Raktatisara</i>
10	S. S.U.40/153	<i>Sunthayadi Yoga</i>	<i>Pravahika</i>
11	S. S.U.43/12	<i>PippalayadiChurna</i>	<i>VatajaHirdyaRoga</i>
12	S. S.U.47/38	Use of <i>Chavya, Ela, Hingu, Shunthi, Pippalimula</i>	In <i>Pannajirna</i>
13	S. S.U.50/23	<i>Sunthi Kshir</i>	<i>Hikka</i>
14	S. S.U.51/21	<i>Shringayadi Ghrit</i>	<i>Swas, Kasa, Hikka</i>
15	S. S.U.52/15	<i>PathyadiCurna</i>	<i>Kasa</i>
16	S. S.U.55/45	<i>DevdarvadiKawath</i>	<i>Udavarta</i>
17	S. S.U.60/43	<i>ShirishadiAnjanvarti</i>	<i>Garhabadha</i>

**Table 5:** Some therapeutic indications of *Aardraka*(fresh rhizome) in *SushrutSamhit-*

S.No.	Reference	Preparation	Indication
1	S. S.Chi.14/10	<i>Tilvaka Ghrita</i>	<i>Vata</i> diseases, <i>Udar, Gulma</i>
2	S. S.U.12/46	<i>Kasishadi, Rasanjan Kriya</i>	In <i>Puyalas</i>
3	S. S.U.21/17	<i>Karnapuran</i> with <i>Lasuna, Aadraka, Sahinjan</i> extract	In <i>Karnashula</i>
4	S. S.U.24/19	<i>Pey</i> prepared with <i>Aadrakajuice</i>	<i>Apakva Pratishayay</i>
5	S. S.U.42/56	<i>Ardrakasheer</i>	<i>Baddhavarchas Gulma</i>
6	S. S.U.47/24	<i>Maddhya</i> prepared with <i>Chukra, Ardraka, Maricha, Kustha</i>	In <i>Vataja Madatayeya</i>
7	S. S.U.55/46	<i>MulkadiGhrita</i>	In <i>Udavarta</i>

Therapeutic indications of *Mahaoushadha* (*Zingiberofficinale*Rosc.) in *AstangHridya*:-

*Vagbhatt* in *Astang Hridya* used *Shunthi* in 200 various preparations for therapeutic pur-

pose. *Shukta-Aardraka Bhakshana* was appreciated by him in case of hampered digestion<sup>5</sup>.

**Table 6:** Some therapeutic indications of *Shunthi* (dry rhizome) in *AstangHridya*-

S.No.	Reference	Preparation	Indication
1	A.H.Su10/35	<i>Sunthi, Pippali, Rason</i>	<i>Vrishya, Vatashamaka</i>
2	A.H. Chi. 1/15	Content of <i>Shadangpaniya</i>	<i>Jawara, Trishnashamka, Pachan</i>
3	A.H. Chi. 1/26	Ingredient of <i>Lajapeya</i>	<i>Jawara</i>
4	A.H. Chi. 1/62	<i>Pathyadi Kashaya</i>	<i>VataKaphajaJawara</i>
5	A.H. Chi. 1/76	<i>Pathya Shaka</i>	<i>Jawara</i>
6	A.H. Chi. 2/38	<i>Peya prepared with Sonth, Sugandhbala, Kamalkesar</i>	<i>Adhoga Raktapitta</i>
7	A.H. Chi. 3/15	<i>Pippali, Sonth, Guda with musteredoil</i>	In <i>Kasa</i>
8	A.H. Chi. 3/172	<i>Haritaki, Sunthi, Nagarmotha, Guda</i>	In <i>Kasa</i>
9	A.H. Chi. 4/35	<i>Sonthi, Maricha, Kshar</i>	In <i>Sawas</i>
10	A.H. Chi. 6/28	<i>Sunthiyadighrit</i>	<i>Hridyarog</i>
11	A.H. Chi. 8/86	Ingredient of different <i>Peya</i>	<i>Arsha</i>
12	A.H. Chi. 9/105	<i>Sunthayadi Tail</i>	<i>Pravahika</i>
13	A.H. Chi. 10/16	<i>Talishadi Gutika</i>	<i>Grahani Dosh</i>
14	A.H. Chi. 14/34	<i>Veshvanar Churna</i>	<i>Gulma</i>
15	A.H. Chi. 14/94	<i>Dantiharitaki Yoga</i>	Use in <i>Gulma</i>
16	A.H. Chi. 15/71	<i>Hingvadi Kshar</i>	<i>Udar Roga</i>
17	A.H. Chi. 15/104	<i>Kshar Gutika</i>	<i>Jalodara</i>
18	A.H. Chi. 1729	<i>Matulunga, Aarni, Sunthi</i>	<i>Vataja Sotha</i>
19	A.H. Chi. 21/37	<i>Tumbruvadi Yoga</i>	<i>Aaptanaka Vata</i>
20	A.H.U34/47	<i>Pushyanuga Churna</i>	<i>Guhiya Roga</i>
21	A.H.U39/104	<i>Sunthayadi Rasayana</i>	<i>Sata(100) VarshAayu</i>

**Table 7:** Some therapeutic indications of *Aardraka* (fresh rhizome) in *AstangHridya* -

S.No.	Reference	Preparation	Indication
1	A.H.Chi.8/82	Used as <i>Pathya Shaka</i>	In <i>Arsha</i>
2	A.H.Chi.8/146	<i>Karanjadi Chukra</i>	<i>Arsha</i>
3	A.H.Chi.10/28	<i>Panchmooladi Ghrit</i>	<i>Grahni Dosh</i>
4	A.H.Chi.17/8	<i>Ardrakadi Ghrit</i>	In <i>Sotha</i>
5	A.H.U.11/5	Ingredient of <i>Churna anjan</i>	In <i>Puyaalsaka</i>
6	A.H.U.18/12	Used in <i>Karnapurana</i>	<i>Kaphja Karnashoola</i>

### CHEMICAL CONSTITUENTS<sup>6</sup>:-

The primary known constituents of *Zingiberofficinale* Rosc. rhizome include Gingerols, Zingibain, Bisabolene, Oleoresins, starch, essential oils (zingiberene, zingiberole, camphene, Cineole, borneol), mucilage and protein.

Primary nutrients: Calcium, iron, magnesium, phosphorus, potassium, proteins, sodium, vitamin A, vitamin B complex and vitamin C. The pungency of *Zingiberofficinale* Rosc. rhizome is due to Gingerol. It owns its aroma to about 1 to 3% of volatile oils, which are Bisabolene, zingiberene and zingiberole.

### **PHARMACOLOGICAL ACTIVITIES<sup>7</sup>:-**

Anti-inflammatory, hypo-lipidemic, anti-atherosclerosis, antiemetic, antiulcer, anti-platelet, antipyretic, cardiovascular, anti-oxidant, anti-bacterial, antifungal, antitumor, molluscicidal, carbonyl reductase activity, anti-serotonergic, anti-rhinoviral, hypouricemic, analgesic, antidepressant, hepato-protective hypoglycemic, inotropic, inhibition of prostaglandin release (dose dependent).

### **ACTIONS AND USES<sup>8</sup>:-**

The dry ginger is emollient, appetizer, laxative, stomachic, stimulant, rubefacient, anodyne, carminative, laxative and anthelmintic. It is used in anorexia, coryza, fever, dropsy, otalgia, cephalgia, bronchial asthma, jaundice, cough, hiccough, colic, diarrhea, flatulences, anorexia, dyspepsia, piles, cardiac disorders, disease of pharynx, hyperacidity vomiting, abdominal pain, elephantiasis, inflammation and rheumatoid arthritis. It is prescribed as an adjunct to many tonics and remedies. It is chiefly used to cure diseases due to the morbidity of *Kapha* and *Vata*.

### **DISCUSSION**

*Shunthi* (dry rhizome) is easy to digest, unctuous and *Madhur* in *Vipaka* while *Aardraka* (fresh rhizome) is heavy to digest, not unctuous, *Katu* in *Vipaka* and *Bhedi* in action. Due to *Madhur Vipaka Shunthi* is aphrodisiac while no aphrodisiac property is present in *Aardraka*. Similarly, due to *Ruksha* and *Teekshna Guna Aardraka* has *Bhedana Karma* (purgative action) but no such activity is present in *Shunthi*.

*Shunthi* is aphrodisiac so, it increases or balances all the *Dhatu*s of the body. Because *Shukra* is the last *Dhatu* and all the *Dhatu*s are related to each other. As evident by the indications of *Shunthi* in classics, it is a wide spectrum drug having efficacy in many diseases. *Shunthi* is more used in drug formulations as compared to *Aardraka* which is more used in food preparations. So the term *Mahaoushadha* should particularly be used for *Shunthi* as the word *Mahaoushadha* literary means a drug having wide spectrum. *Kaidev Nighantu* had also used the term *Mahaoushadha* for *Shunthi*<sup>9</sup>.

### **CONCLUSION**

The ancients put their maximum effort to treat diseased conditions. The use of plants as food and medicine is based on initial observation on animals first. The study revealed that *Zingiberofficinale* Rosc. Rhizome was used both in dry and fresh form. The drug was used widely in a number of diseases such as *Ajirna*, *UdarRoga*, *Grahani*, *VaatVyadhi* etc. In simple words *Zingiberofficinale* Rosc. is beneficial in diseases pertaining to every organ system. Thus, clearly it is the *Mahaoushadh* of Ayurveda.

### **Abbreviations Used:-**

C.S. Su.-CharakSamhita Sutra Sthan  
C.S.Chi.-CharakSamhitaChikitsaSthan  
C.S.Si.-CharakSamhita Siddhi Sthan  
S.S.Su.-SushrutSamhita Sutra Sthan  
S.S.Chi.-SushrutSamhitaChikitsaSthan  
S.S.U.-SushrutSamhita Uttar Tantra  
A.H.Su.-AstangHridya Sutra Sthan  
A.H.Chi.-AstangHridyaChikitsaSthan  
A.H.U.-AstangHridyaUttar Tantra

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