SHILAJEET: A BRIEF REVIEW

Dr. Pooja V. Shaha¹* and Dr. Shashiprabha L. Gupta²

¹PG Scholar, Rasashastra and Bhaishajyakalpana Department, Government Ayurved College, Osmanabad, Maharashtra, India.
²Asso. Professor, Rasashastra and Bhaishajyakalpana Department, Government Ayurved College, Osmanabad, Maharashtra, India.

ABSTRACT

Rasashastra is a specialized branch of Ayurveda which mainly deals with the metals, minerals, animal origin product, toxic herbs and their use in therapeutics. The mixture of metallic and herbal products combinelly forms herbomineral formulation or Rasaushadhi. Shilajeet is one of important Rasdravya mentioned as a Maharasa. According to Acharya Charaka there is no disease in the world which cannot be treated by Shilajeet, if it administered at appropriate time and combined with suitable drugs in proper dose. Shilajeet is considered as a best Rasayan. In ayurvedic texts it’s types, Shodhana, Marana, Satvapatan procedures have been mentioned in details. Chemical constituents of Shilajeet are humic substances like fulvic acid, humic acid, triterpenes, selenium and nearly 85 ionic minerals. According to Acharyas, Shilajeet is used in the urinary disorders, urinary stones, diabetes, obesity and also for antiaging, rejuvenation and vitality.

KEYWORDS: Shilajeet, Maharas, Rasayan.

INTRODUCTION

Varga – Maharasa.

English Name – Black Bitumen/mineral pitch.

Latin Name – Asphaltum punjabinum.

Synonyms – Adrijatu, Ashmasar, Girija, Shilajatu, Shaila, Shailodbhava.
Shilajeet is the blackish brown exudation caused by the intense heat of sun, from rocks in the womb of which lie deposited gold and other metals. It is formed for centuries by the gradual decomposition of certain plants by the action of microorganisms. It mainly contains humus and organic plant material. Shilajeet is mentioned under the Rasayana category in Chikitsasthana of Charaka Samhita. According to Acharya Charaka there is no disease in the world which cannot be treated by Shilajeet if it administered at appropriate time and combined with suitable drugs in proper dose (Cha. Chi. 1-3/65). Acharya Sushruta has described Shilajeet in Madhumeha Chikitsa, in which purified Shilajeet bhavit with decoction of Salsaradi Gana Dravyas is advocated in Madhumeha (Diabetes Mellitus). Shilajeet is briefly described in Rasgranthas. Rasaratnasamuchchaya includes Shilajeet under Maharasa, Rasatarangini includes under Mishralauha and Ayurved Prakash under Upadhatu.

Chemical constituents: It consists of 60-80% organic matter, 20-40% mineral matter and 5% of trace elements. Shilajeet mainly contains humic substances like fulvic acid, humic acid and humin. It has been also containing a number of components including benzoic acid, hippuric acid, fatty acid, resin & waxy materials, gums, albuminoids & vegetable matter.

Types of Shilajeet

1) Acharya Charaka – Acharya Charaka explains 4 types of Shilajeet based upon stones of four types of metals from which it exudes: Swarnadrija, Rajatadrija, Tamradrija & Lauhadrija.

2) Acharya Sushruta stated 6 types of Shilajeet based upon its origin. He added Nagadrija and Vangadrija in above listed types.

3) Acharya Vagbhata also explained 6 types of Shilajeet.

4) According to Rasa-granthas Shilajeet is of 2 types –

a) Gomutragandhi Shilajeet – i. e. the variety which possesses the odour of cow’s urine. It again subdivided into two classes, viz.

1) Sasatva Gomutragandhi Shilajeet (containing active principles)

2) Nisatva Gomutragandhi Shilajeet (does not contain active principles)

b) Karpuragandhi Shilajeet – i. e. the variety which has the odour of camphor
**Shuddha Shilajeet Pariksha (Test of purified Shilajeet)**

According to ayurveda

वन्हौ क्षऺप्तं भवेद्दत्ल्लऱङा गऱतत् तन्तुवत् | गोमूत्रगल्न्धमलऱनं िुध्दं भवेद्दत्ल्लऱङा कारमधूमकम्। सलऱऱे अपऩ अपवऱीनं च तच्छुध्दं हि शिलाजजु।

(र. र. समु २९४)

According to modern parameters

a) Physical characteristics
   - Color – Blackish brown
   - Odor – Pungent
   - Taste – Bitter
   - Touch – Rough
   - Form – Crystalline

   pH of 2% aq. Solution – 3.46 to 3.86

b) Elemental analysis
   - Calcium – 45.36%
   - Hydrogen – 5.92%
   - Nitrogen – 2.31%
   - Sulphur – 0.39%

c) Spectroscopic analysis
   - UV/Vis Spectra
   - FTIR (Fourier transform infrared spectroscopy)
   - Powder x-ray diffraction
   - DSC (Differential Scanning Calorimetry)
   - Scanning electron microscopy
**Shodhana of Shilajeet (Purification of shilajeet)**

In *Shodhana* process unwanted impurities are removed from the substance by various pharmaceutical methods with specific drugs which increases therapeutic efficacy of drug and minimizes the toxicity. In Ayurvedic classics different method for purification of *Shilajeet* are mentioned. For the purpose of increasing the strength of *Shilajeet*, it is subjected to bhavana with juices or decoction of drugs which can pacify the three *Doshas*. Dry *Shilajeet* is subjected in 2-4 times of hot water, stirred well. Solid waste particles are separated by filtration. After that it is heated upto boiling and allowed to cool down. During cooling process *Shilajeet* forms a foamy layer on the top of the vessel. It is carefully collected and the procedure is repeated till the foam is formed. Such type of *Shilajeet* is called as *Agnitapi Shilajeet*, while heating is done under direct sunlight, then it is called as *Suryatapi Shilajeet*. In above procedure, in the place of water, *Triphala Kwatha, Gomutra, Goksheera, Bhringraj Swarasa* can also be used.

**Marana of Shilajeet (Incineration of Shilajeet)**

Nowadays, *Marana of Shilajeet* is not in practice, *Shuddha Shilajeet* is used. But *Rasaratnasamuchchhayakar* explain the procedure of *Shilajeet Marana*. *Shilajatu* is incinerated, if it is mixed with *Manashila, Gandhaka* and *Haratala* rubbed together with the juice of *Matulunga* and then subjected to *Putam* with a fire made of eight pieces of cowdung cakes.

**Satvapatana of Shilajeet**

*Shilajeet* discharges its essence, if rubbed with the *Dravana-varga* and some vegetable acid and heated in a crucible by a strong fire made of coal, which is to be blow by means of bellows. The essense, thus extracted, has the appearance of iron. It should be incinerated and applied in medicines in the same way as iron.

**Properties of Shilajeet**

The text like *Rasaratnasamuchhaya* believed that *Shilajeet* possess all the properties of *Ras, Uparas, Parad, Ratna* and *Lauha* together in itself. (RRS 2/116).

1) **Colour**

According to all texts colour of *Swarna Shilajeet* is red like *Japakusuma, Rajat shilajeet* having pale colour(*Pandu*), while as *Tamra Shilajeet* possess blue colour and *Lauhaja* type is of black colour like *Guggulu*. (Cha chi. 1-3/57, RT 22/65-68).
2) **Rasa**
Majority of texts believe that the rasa of *Swarna Shilajeet* as Madhura and Tikta. Maximum authors considered *Rajat Shilajeet* and *Tamra Shilajeet* possessing Katu and Tikta Rasa respectively while as *Lauha Shilajeet* possess Tikta and Lavan Ras. But according to *Ashtanga Hridaya* believe it to of Katu Rasa. *Naga Shilajeet* possesses Tikta Rasa. *Vanga shilajeet* is having Katu Rasa and Tikta Rasa.

3) **Guna**
*Swarna, Rajat and lauha shilajeet* – Sheeta guna
*Tamra shilajeet* – Ushna guna
*Naga shilajeet* – Ushna, mridu guna
*Vanga shilajeet* – Sandhra guna

4) **Virya**
All the authors considered *Swarna Shilajeet, Rajat Shilajeet* and *Lauha Shilajeet* to be Sheeta Virya. But exception in the case of *Brihatrasrajsundara*, who consideres *Rajat Shilajeet* as *Ushna Virya*. *Tamra, Naga and Vanga* variety of *Shilajeet* is believed to have Sheeta Virya.

5) **Vipaka**
*Swarna Shilajeet, Tamra Shilajeet, Lauha Shilajeet* and *Naga Shilajeet* variety to be of Katu Vipaka whereas Vipaka of *Rajat Shilajeet* is Madhura.

6) **Karma**
*Swarna shilajeet* – Rasayana karma
*Rajat shilajeet* – Pandurog nashaka
*Tamra shilajeet* – Lekhana
*Lauha shilajeet* – Rasayan, vrishya

7) **Uses**
According to *Charak Samhita*, there is no curable disease in the world which cannot be treated by *Shilajeet* if it administered at appropriate time and combined with suitable drugs in proper dose. *Shilajeet* is a well-known Ayurvedic drug having Rasayan properties. According to *Ayurvedic Granthas* it is useful in *Kasa, Shwas, Hikka, Hridroga, Urakshata, Agnimandya, Shoolu, Amlapitta, Aamdosha, Chhardi, Gulma, Visha, Udara, Shotha, Kshaya, Jwara, Pandu, Aamvata, Arsha, Kamla, Vatarakta, Visarpa, Kushtha, Galaganda, Granthi,*
Apachi, Arbud, Medorog, Prameha, Sthaulya, Madhumeha, Unmada, Apasmara, Phiranga, Mutrakrichhra, Ashmari, Mutraghata etc.

According to modern, some preclinical research studies on Shilajeet indicate its great potential uses in certain diseases and shows various properties like antioxidant properties\textsuperscript{[8-9]}, antidiabetic properties\textsuperscript{[10]}, antiulcerogenic properties\textsuperscript{[11]}, antiallergic and immunomodulatory\textsuperscript{[12-13]}, anti-inflammatory\textsuperscript{[14]}, analgesic properties.\textsuperscript{[9]}

8) Dosage

Acharya Charaka mentioned that the dose is depending upon disease and Bala of the patient. Dosage of Shilajeet according to Charaka is divide into three classification viz Uttam, Madhyam and Avara. In the Uttam type the quantity is one Pala for seven weeks. In Madhyama type ½ Pala for 3 weeks and Avara type 1 Karsha for 1 week. In Sushruta the dose of Shilajeet is 100 Pala for gaining Pushti, Bala, Varna, curing Madhumeha and longevity upto 100 years. In Rastarangini dose of Shilajeet is from 2 to 8 Ratti depending upon the factor like age, strength etc.

Pathya during Shilajeet Sevan

पथ्यांसि तक्काणि रसः सयूषस्तोयं समूत्रा विविधः विविधाः कष्टाः।

आलोडनार्थ गिरीजस्य शस्तान्ते ते प्रयोज्या: प्रसमीक्ष्य कार्यम्॥ (च.चि.१/३/२७)

1. Dugdha
2. Takra
3. Mudga
4. Water from natural resources

Apathya during Shilajeet Sevan

शिलाजुण्योगेषु विदाहीनि गुरुणि च।

वर्ज्येत् सर्वकालं तु कृतत्थान् परिवर्ज्येत्॥(च.चि.१/३/६२)

1. Heavy exercise
2. Kulatha
3. Kakmachi
4. Kapot mans etc.
DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Shilajeet is the humus rich blackish brown exudation having Rasayan properties and useful in many diseases. As we see Shilajit is important but rare drug its chances of adulteration possible, so for standard Shilajeet above Ayurvedic and modern tests are important. Shilajeet mainly contains humic substances like fulvic acid, humic acid and humin. Generally, Shilajeet is used in purified form though Maran and Satvapatan of Shilajjeet is mentioned in text, but now a day it is not in practice.

REFERENCES

3. Ashtanga Hriday – Vagbhata, commentary by Dr. Brahmanand Tripathi, Chaukhamba Sanskrit Pratishthan, Delhi.
