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A Critical Review on *Takra* from *Charak Samhita*

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ABSTRACT

As per Ayurveda *Ahara*, *Nidra* and *Brahmacharya* are *Trayopastambha*. When they are judiciously used, they give support to the body by giving strength, colour and growth for whole life span. Among them “*Aahar*” is very much essential for sustainment of life of all living beings, it is stated to be responsible for both *Aarogya* and *Vyadhi*.

Aacharya Charak described food substances in to twelve groups, one of them is *Goras Varga* (milk and its products) in which *Takra* included, while explaining qualities of *Takra* (buttermilk) said that it is used in *Shoph* (swelling), *Udara* (ascites), *Arsha* (piles), *Grahani* (colitis), *Mutragrah* (dysuria), *Aruchi* (loss of taste), *Snehvyapad*, *Pandu* (Anaemia) and *Garvish* (Poison).

Takra which is one of *Aahardravya* explained in various *Vyadhi Chikitsa*, so the study is planned to review about *Takra* in detail from *Charak Samhita* which is easily available & can be used in curing various diseases.

Key Words *Takra*, *Buttermilk*, *Udara*, *Grahani*, *Arsha*

Received 20th August 22 Accepted 18th September 22 Published 10th November 2022

INTRODUCTION

As per Ayurveda *Ahara*, *Nidra* and *Brahmacharya* are *Trayopastambha*. When they are judiciously used, they give support to the body by giving strength, colour and growth for whole life span. Among them “*Aahar*” is very much essential for sustainment of life of all living beings¹, it is stated to be responsible for both *Aarogya* and *Vyadhi*.

Aacharya Charak described food substances in to twelve groups, one of them is *Goras Varga* (milk and its products) in which *Takra* included, while explaining qualities of *Takra* (buttermilk) said that it is used in *Shoph* (swelling), *Udara* (ascites), *Arsha*(piles), *Grahani* (colitis),

Mutragrah (dysuria), *Aruchi* (loss of taste), *Snehvyapad*, *Pandu* (Anaemia) and *Garvish* (Poison)².

The person who consumes *Takra* is never affected by diseases. Also, the diseases cured by *Takra* never arises again, as Elixir is good for the Gods similarly *Takra* acts for human being.

On consumption of Elixir Gods remains disease free & hence never dies. Similarly, *Takra* is said to benefit common persons like us. The word to word meaning of this might seen to be an over exaggeration but the overall theme suggests the greatness of butter milk or *Takra*³.

Dadhi is said to be cause of inflammation but the *Takra* prepared from this *Dadhi* is indicated in

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inflammation also *Takra* which is one of *Aahardravya* explained in various *Vyadhi Chikitsa*, so the study is planned to review about *Takra* in detail from Charak Samhita which is easily available & can be used in curing various diseases.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Materials related to *Takra* and other relevant topics have been collected from Charak Samhita and commentaries were referred. Modern textbook also referred to collect information on the concerned topic.

LITERARY REVIEW

Definition of *Takra*⁴

After *manthan* (churning) of *Dadhi* removing butter from it and adding water in half the

Table 2 *Bahyaprayog*

Name	Contents	Vyadhi
<i>Udvartan</i> ⁶	Both types of <i>haridra</i> , <i>tulasi</i> , <i>patola</i> , <i>nimba</i> , <i>ashwagandha</i> , <i>devadaru</i> , <i>shigru</i> , <i>sarshapa</i> , <i>tumburu</i> , <i>dhanyaka</i> , <i>vanya</i> and <i>chanda</i> , ground with buttermilk.	<i>Kandu</i> , <i>Pidaka</i> , <i>Kota</i> , <i>Kushta</i> and <i>Shotha</i> .
<i>Udvartan</i> ⁶	Leaves of <i>aragvadha</i> , <i>kakamachi</i> and leaves of <i>karavira</i> with buttermilk	<i>Kushta</i>
<i>Lep</i> ⁶	Barley powder mixed with buttermilk, heated and added with alkali	<i>Udarshul</i>

The Table No.3 shows the different *yoga* of *Takra* in different *Vyadhi* from Charak Samhita.

Table 3 Different *yoga* of *Takra* in different *Vyadhi*

<i>Takraprayog</i>	Vyadhi
<i>Takrarish</i> ⁷	<i>Snehvyapat chikitsa</i>
<i>Takrarish</i> ⁸ i.e., buttermilk fermented with Spices.	<i>Atisthaulya Chikitsa</i>
<i>Takra</i> is advised as <i>Anupan</i> ⁹	<i>Mutrakruch</i> and <i>Prameha</i>
<i>Haritaki</i> with buttermilk ⁹	<i>Santarponatta Vyadhi</i>
Regular intake of buttermilk ¹⁰	best in Curing <i>Grahani</i> , <i>Shotha</i> , <i>Arsha</i> & <i>Ghrutvyapat</i> .
<i>Udashvit</i> ¹¹ (a mixture of water and buttermilk in equal quantity) along with Salt and Powder <i>Pippali</i> , root of <i>Pippali</i> , <i>Chavya</i> , <i>Chitraka</i> , <i>Shringavera</i> . is explained as <i>Anupan</i> .	<i>Prakriti Vighat chikitsa</i> in <i>Krimi</i>

quantity, we get a mixture which is not very thick or very watery, sweet, sour and astringent in taste called *Takra*. If fats (butter) from it are not removed & no water added in it then it is said to be *Ghol*.

Now we would see details of *Takra* from Charaksambhita

Different *Kalpana* of *Takra*

The Table No.1 shows the different *Yavagu* (gruel) *Kalpana* of *Takra* from Charak Samhita.

Table 1 *Yavagu* (gruel) *Kalpana*

Contents of <i>Yavagu</i>	Vyadhi
The gruel of <i>vidanga</i> , <i>pippalimula</i> , <i>shigru</i> and <i>maricha</i> prepared with buttermilk and having <i>suvarchika</i> ⁵	alleviates <i>krimis</i> (helminths).
The gruel prepared with buttermilk ⁵	Incorrect intake of <i>Ghrut</i>
The gruel prepared with buttermilk and oilcake ⁵	Incorrect intake of Oil

Table No.2 shows the different *Bahyaprayog* of *Takra* from Charak Samhita.

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Intake of buttermilk advised ¹²	<i>Vishamjwara Chikitsa</i>
Buttermilk sprinkled with powder of <i>Yavani</i> and <i>Lavan</i> ¹³ (Rock Salt).	Stimulate the power of digestion and helps in the downward movement of <i>Vata</i> , <i>Kapha</i> and <i>Mutra</i> in <i>Kaphaj Gulma</i> .
Buttermilk ¹⁴	If the patient of oedema suffers from diarrhoea
<i>Punarnava Mandura</i> mixed with ample butter milk ¹⁵	<i>Pandu Chikitsa</i>
Buttermilk as <i>Anupan</i> of <i>Mandurvata</i> ¹⁵	<i>Pandu Chikitsa</i>

Takraprayog in Udara Chikitsa¹⁶:

Buttermilk which is not very thick, which is sweet (not sour) and which is free from fat should be used in *Udara Chikitsa*.

The Table No.4 shows the *Takra Prayog* with different *Dravya* in eight types of *Udar* from Charak Samhita.

Table 4 *Takra* is advised to consume with different *Dravya* in eight types of *Udar*

Type of <i>Udara</i>	<i>Takra Prayog</i> with different <i>Dravya</i>
<i>Sannipatika Udara</i>	<i>Trikatu</i> + Alkalies + Rock salt.
<i>Vatodar</i>	<i>Pippali</i> + Rock salt
<i>Pittodar</i>	sweet buttermilk added with sugar and <i>madhuka</i> .
<i>Kaphodara</i>	warm and defatted buttermilk added with <i>yavani</i> , <i>saindhava</i> , <i>jiraka</i> and <i>trikatu</i> along with honey
<i>Plihodara</i>	Buttermilk added with honey, oil, <i>vacha</i> , <i>Shunthi</i> , <i>Shatahva</i> , <i>kuṣṭha</i> and <i>saindhava</i> .
<i>Jalodar</i>	Buttermilk added with <i>trikatu</i>
<i>Baddhodar</i>	Buttermilk added with <i>hapuṣha</i> , <i>yavani</i> , <i>jiraka</i> and <i>saindhava</i> .
<i>Chidrodar</i>	Buttermilk added with <i>pippali</i> and honey

Here in *Udara Chikitsa* said that butter milk is like nectar for those suffering from heaviness, anorexia, poor digestion, diarrhoea and *vata-kaphaja* disorders.

Takraprayog in Arsha Chikitsa:

Below are the few combinations in *Arsha Chikitsa* are seen in which buttermilk advised¹⁷

1) *Haritaki* along with buttermilk 2) *Triphala* along with buttermilk 3) buttermilk added with *kapittha* and *bilwa* 4) buttermilk added with *chavya* and *citraka* 5) buttermilk added with *bhallataka* 6) buttermilk added with *bilwa* and *shunthi* 7) buttermilk added with *yavani* and *chitraka*, *hapuṣha* and *hingu* 8) buttermilk added with *panchakola*.

Takrarisht¹⁷

Contents and Preperation Method:
Hapusa, *kuncika*, *dhanyaka*, *jiraka*, *karavi*, *Shati*, *Pippali*, *Pippalimula*, *Chitraka*, *Gajapippali*, *Yavani* and *ajamoda* all powders are mixed with butter milk so that it becomes mildly sour and pungent and be kept in a ghee coated vessel. When it is well fermented the sour and pungent tastes becomes well manifested this is called *Takrarishṭa*.

Matra: should be taken in appropriate dose in condition of thirst before, in between and after meals.

Upayuktata: *Takrarista* is appetiser, improves relish, promotes complexion, carminates *kapha* and *vata*, alleviates swelling, itching and pain of the anorectum and promotes strength.

Takra Prayog¹⁷

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There is no any medicine better than *Takra* on *Vata-kaphaja Arsha* that means *Takra* is only medicine on that type of *Arsha*.

three types of butter milk are described in this topic -

1) Butter/fat less: from which butter is removed completely - (*Ruksh Sneha*)

2) Half the butter is removed (*Ardhodadhrut sneha*)

3) Butter /fats not removed at all (*Andhrut sneha*)

This should be used with or without *Sneha* according to (predominance of) dosha (the former in case of *vata* and the latter in *kapha*).

The physician considering the strength of the patient as well as the nature of the season should administer buttermilk for duration of a week, ten days, a fortnight or a month.

If the power of digestion is very weak, the patient should be given only buttermilk (both in morning and evening) or *Takravalehika* (linctus of buttermilk prepared with flour of parched paddy) is given in evening.

After the buttermilk (taken in the morning) is digested (in the evening) the patient should be given *Takrapeya* (gruel of buttermilk added with rock salt) thereafter *Takraudana* (rice with buttermilk added with some fat) and buttermilk is given to such a patient as a post prandial drink. As food he may be given vegetable or meat soup mixed with buttermilk or thereafter the above soup prepared with buttermilk can be given.

The physician aware with the time (*Kala*) and procedure of administration (*Krama*) should not discontinue buttermilk all of sudden, the use of

buttermilk should continue for a month and then withdrawn gradually, it is withdrawn gradually in the same quantity in which it was increased. This order is prescribed for attainment and maintenance of energy, improvement of the digestive power and promotion of strength, development and complexion.

The *Arsha* destroyed once by buttermilk do not recur. Even when buttermilk sprinkled over the ground, burns all deep-rooted grasses similarly destroy the dry piles in person whose digestive fire kindled through this therapy.

The functioning of butter milk is described here very nicely *Takra* / Butter milk clears the channels of all *strotasas* & thus, the digested food (*Aahar Ras*) reaches the *dhatu*s (basic element). The *dhatu*s develop properly & increase strength of the body & increases the vitality of a person. This is a systemic effect occurring in our body (even though its description comes under the treatment of piles).

It also alleviates the hundred disorders of *vata* and *kapha* (80) disorders of *vata* and 20 of *kapha*). Thus, there is no remedy better than buttermilk for the disorders caused by *kapha* and *vata*.

- ***Vibandhyukt Arsha Chikitsa***¹⁸: *Yavani*, *Shunthi*, *paṭha*, pomegranate juice, jaggery mixed with salted butter milk should be administered for carination of flatus and stool.

- ***Raktasravi Arsha Chikitsa***¹⁹

- a) One should administer the vegetable of onion cooked with buttermilk

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b) pulse of *Masura* soured with buttermilk in case of haemorrhage.

- Buttermilk is one of the *Pathya Dravya* in *Arsha*²⁰.

Grahani Chikitsa²¹

Buttermilk is efficacious in *Grahani* disorder due to *Deepan* (appetising), *Grahi* and *Laghu* in nature. Due to its sweet *Vipak* does not cause aggravation of *Pitta*, because of its astringent taste, hot potency, *Vikasi* and rough properties it is useful for counteracting the *Kapha Dosha* and due to sweet, sour taste and viscous nature useful in aggravated *Vata Dosha* (thus it is useful in all the three *Doshas*). Buttermilk, if fresh, does not produce burning (or acidity). Hence the uses of buttermilk described earlier in *Udara* and *Arsha* are all applicable in *Grahani* disorder and should be applied in all ways.

Takrarisht²¹

Contents: *Yavani*, *amalaka*, *haritaki*, *maricha*, five types of salts should be powdered together and kept for fermentation in buttermilk till it is soured completely. This is *takrarista* which acts as appetiser and alleviates oedema, *Gulma*, *Arsha*, worms, *Prameha* and *Udara*.

Literature of Buttermilk according to Modern Science

Properties and benefits of fermented milk according to modern science²²:

According to modern science *Takra* i.e., Buttermilk is the product of fermented milk food, where microbial activity is an essential feature of their production. Almost without exception, fermented foods were discovered before mankind

had any knowledge of micro-organisms other than as witness to the effects of their activity. It was simply an empirical observation that certain ways of storing food effected desirable changes in its characteristics. Originally the most important of these changes must have been an improvement in their shelf-life.

We now know that, in food fermentation, conditions of treatment and storage produce an environment in which certain types of organism can flourish and these have a benign effect on the food rather than spoiling it. The overwhelming majority of fermented foods is produced by the activity of lactic acid bacteria and fungi, principally yeasts but also, to a lesser extent, moulds. Both groups of organisms share a common ecological niche, being able to grow under conditions of low pH. although only lactic acid bacteria and

facultative yeasts will prosper under anaerobic conditions.

Lactic acid bacteria (LAB): Health prompting effects of L.A.B. according to modern concept i.e.

- 1) L.A.B. have been reported to stimulate the immune system and various studies have described their ability to activate macrophages & lymphocytes, improve levels of immunoglobulin-A (IgA) and the production of gamma.

- 2) Lactic acid present in fermented milk products improves the normal function of intestine e.g., the antimicrobial activity of L.A.B. reduces the side effects produced by the intestinal putrefaction which occurs due to colonic bacteria.

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This is because intestinal bacteria are destroyed by L.A.B. similarly in a condition called lactose intolerance the bacteria in the milk cannot be digested due to deficiency of certain enzymes leading to symptoms like abdominal discomfort, flatulence, diarrhoea. These symptoms cannot be observed in people consuming fermented milk.

3) Anticancer activity

4) Increases absorption of certain minerals.

DISCUSSION

Dadhi is said to be cause of inflammation but the *Takra* prepared from this *Dadhi* is indicated in inflammation because, *Dadhi is being abhishyandi blocks the strotasas* (channels and empty spaces) while butter -milk clears all these obstructions and hence cure diseases. Even in 'Ascites' the aetiology lies in vessels. *Takra* acts on these blocked *strotrasas* and helps in clearing their flow.

Arsha is caused due to *agnimandaya*, due to the properties like sour taste and *ushna virya*, *Takra* increases the appetite and hence eradicates piles. Even in *Grahani* *Takra* acts similarly and that is the reason for its importance in the above two diseases. *Takra* clears the pathways of *strotasas* it is used in dysuria. It increases appetite and hence is used when there is loss of taste due to *agnimandya*.

Takra is useful in *snehvyapad* (overdoses of oily preparations or fats) according to Charak Samhita Due to some properties of *sneha* like heaviness (*Guru*), cold (*Sheet*), slowly (*Mand*) etc. above

condition produced. The properties of *Takra* are opposite to this and hence *Takra* is useful in *Snehvyapad*.

L.A.B. present in fermented milk have been reported to stimulate the immune system, inhibits petrification of colonic bacteria, anticancer activity, Increases absorption of certain minerals, useful in lactose intolerance.

CONCLUSION

- *Takra* has *Deepan* (Carminative), *Laghu*, *Grahi* and *Tridoshahara* property.
- it is mainly indicated in disorders like *Udara*, *Arsha*, *Grahni*, *Shoth*, *Mutrakruch*, *Agnimandya*, *Krumi*, *Pandu*, *Snehvyapad*.
- Buttermilk used in *Yavagu*, *Udavartan*, *Lep* preparation, also advised as *Sahpan* and *Anupan*,
- *Takrarisht Kalpana* is useful in *Sehvyapat*, *Atisthaulya*, *Arsha* and *Grahni Chikitsa*.

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