

# MEDICINAL EFFECTIVENESS OF CANDANA WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO CARAKASAṂHITĀ, SUŚRUTASAṂHITĀ AND BHAIṢAJYARATNĀVALĪ

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[*Candana* is one of the essential elements of almost of all Hindu religious work. It is mostly used as *tilaka*. Apart from the spiritual influence, application of *candana* has great medicinal effect. In *Ayurveda* *candana* is used as the remedy for both physical and mental disorders. In *Carakasamhitā* Caraka has mentioned *candana* as the remedy of numerous diseases. According to him *candana* relieves body ache (*dahaprasāmana*), relieves thirst (*tr̥snā nigrahana*), improves complexion of the skin (*varṇya*) etc. *Suśrutasaṁhitā* also has mentioned it as *vimlapana* (cleanses) and *oedema* (allevites). Besides these, *candana* is also used as *joargna* (antipyretic), *mutrakṛcchraghna* (anti dysuria), *rakta stambhaka* (arrests bleeding) and *pitta rogaghna* (alleviates diseases due to vitiation of *pitta doṣa*). *Candana* is also used as remedy of internal diseases like liver stimulant, gastric mucosa, etc. *Candana* has managed to secure its place as the most necessary medicinal herb in this present day of scientific medicine through its effectiveness. Through this paper, an attempt is made to emphasize the medicinal effect of *candana* as mentioned in the Ayurvedic literature.]

## Introduction

Ancient Indian medicine is mainly based on or manufactured from three kinds of substances; these are minerals, vegetables and animals. Amongst the vegetables, there are several medicinal herbs, which are famous for their utmost remedial power in Ayurvedic literature. From the time of Veda, the herbal plants are used as medicine. Atharvaveda has mentioned several medicinal herbs and their benefits viz. *Neem*, *tulsi* (Basil), *haldi*, (Turmeric), *candana* (Sandalwood) etc. *neem*, *basil*, *turmeric*, *sandalwood* are such Vedic herbs, which are used for different preventive and curative measure. Not only the Vedas, the Purāṇas, the Smṛtis are also not lacking behind in speaking about the various medicinal herbs. Among various herbs there is a very special herb in Indian land,

which not only carries the spiritual value but also has uncomparable stand with its medicinal value. This is the *Candana*-the Sandal Tree. Here, a modest attempt is made to find out the medicinal use of this most valuable herb. *Candana* is completely associated with Indian culture. *Candana* is the second most expensive wood in the world. *Candana* or Sandal tree is known scientifically as Santalaceae Santalum Album. Depending on the age of the tree, *Candana* is found in white, yellow and reddish colour. These varieties have variation in quality also. White sandalwood, which has reddish heartwood, is the best, if the heartwood is yellow, then it is moderate standard, if the heartwood is yellowish-white then it is of inferior type.<sup>1</sup> This evergreen tree grows only in the southern areas of India, Indonesia and in some parts of Australia. It grows to a medium height of 30 feet.

### Spiritual Value of *Candana*

*Candana* is counted as the spiritual element like flowers, milk, honey, butter etc. and used almost in every religious rite of the Hindu. Hindu people used to take *candana tilaka* (auspicious mark with sandal paste on the forehead). *Tilaka* is applied at the *ajñacakra*, the space between the two eyebrows. The Brāhmins anoint their forehead with *candana* paste at the time of worship and religious function. In the age of *Veda*, *candana* is used in Vedic *yāga*. In the Purāṇas, also the gods and goddesses are worshipped offering *candana*. In the Matsyapurana it is mentioned that lord Siva and Uma is worshipped with lotus and *Candana* on the 14th day (*caturdaśī*) of bright fortnight in the month of *Mārgaśīrā* (Nov-Dec).<sup>2</sup> On the *Samkrānti* day lord Āditya is worshipped drawing a lotus with eight petals with sandal on the earth in the centre of which the presence of the Sun is invoked.<sup>3</sup> The sandal paste is smeared on the foreheads of devotees of Viṣṇu and Śiva. It is particularly placed as a dot or *tilaka* in the forehead between the eyebrows, which is known as *ajñacakra* and where Hindus believe power resides and can be awakened. People belonging to three major religions of the world Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam, esteem the aroma of the oil and the wood. It is used in sacred ceremonies and to purify holy places. In Hindu temples, the air is usually suffused with incense and the smell of sandalwood, jasmine and turmeric. Among the Buddhists, sandalwood is burnt during prayers and meditation. It

is customary in certain communities among the Hindus to put a piece of sandalwood in the funeral pyre to help the soul rise towards God, and to comfort mourners. It is a belief firmly entrenched that the fragrance of sandalwood is potent and can ward off evil spirits. For such holiness *Candana* is referred to anything what is excellent.

### Medicinal Effectiveness of *Candana*

From the period of *Veda* to the present day *candana* is used as herbal remedy of both internal and external diseases. The Ayurvedic literature used this herb in almost all kinds of diseases. *Candana* is used as *tilaka* at the *bhrumadhya* (space between the two eyebrows). It has a cooling and soothing power. It soothes anger, promote compassion and openness and support coherent brain functioning. In the *Matsyapurāna*, *candana* paste is directed to use as *tilaka*, for good health.<sup>4</sup> According to Āyurvedic literature, there are three life energies in our bodies. They are *pitta*, *kapha* and *vāta*.<sup>5</sup> These life energies are balanced in a proportion that is unique to every individual, and when the balance is disturbed, ill health is the result. Sandalwood has been known to reduce *pitta* and *vāta*, when they are aggravated, and has a neutral effect on *kapha*.<sup>6</sup> It is considered to have bitter, sweet, astringent and cooling properties. The great Caraka in his work *Carakasamhitā* categorised *candana* as *dahaprasamaṇa*, (relieves body ache), *trsnā nigrahana* (relieves thirst), *varṇya* (improves complexion of the skin), *kāndughna* (antipruritic) and *biṣaghna* (antitoxin). The mixture *candana*, *durva*, *manjisthā* is used in *pitta* type eye diseases.<sup>7</sup> The mixture juice of *candana* *iḷṣvaka*, lotus root and stamens, milk all types of head diseases,<sup>8</sup> *Candana* is also used in making the remedy of *grahani* disorder caused by *pitta doṣa*,<sup>9</sup> heart disease, anemia, colic, anorexia, fever, jaundice, sannipata and oral diseases.<sup>10</sup> In case of fever with burning sensation, *candanādi taila*<sup>11</sup> is prescribed for massage. During spring, the accumulated irritated by the strong rays of the sun disturbs the body-heat and thus causes many diseases. To prevent and get rid of such problem one should use the paste of sandal and *agaru* on the body.<sup>12</sup> During summer, the sun, with his rays, draws up excessively the moisture of the nature hence in that season should smeared pasted sandal on his body as it keep the body temperature low.<sup>13</sup> The paste of *candana* alleviates foul smell,

heaviness, drowsiness, itching, dirt, anorexia, and vulgar appearance of sweat.<sup>14</sup> Churned drink prepared with *anjana*, *candana*, *usira* marrow, blood, *śarkarā*, water and powder of parched paddy is an excellent remedy for excessive application of purgation.<sup>15</sup>

Maharṣi Suśruta in his work *Suśrutasaṃhitā* has mentioned it as *vimlapāna* (cleanses) and *oedema* (alleviates). According to him a decoction of *Śrīparṇi* (a plant species), *Raktacandana* (red sandalwood), *Usira* (khas), *Parushaka* (a herbal species) and *Madhuka* (sweet wood) flowers duly boiled and after cooling it, sugar is mixed in a proportionate quantity, this mixed medicine cure a case of *pittaja* fever.<sup>16</sup> *Candana* paste is used as the remedy for day blindness.<sup>17</sup> In the treatment of deafness sandal paste is used with the other elements like water, milk *vilva* (wood apple), cow's urine, sugar and *vambi* (melon) fruit. An eardrop is made with these elements mixing with cooked oil and used in cases of deafness.<sup>18</sup>

*Bhaiṣajyaratnāvali* also kept *candana* forward as a remedy of *pittaja* fever.<sup>19</sup> Again in case of *sannipāta* fever red-sandalwood is used with *padmakāsthā*, *katuki* (Indian gentian) and *prithakaparṇa* (a herbal creeper). These elements are pulverizing together, a decoction is prepared, and after one night the next day, it is used after filtering it. Sandal paste is effective in curing the temperature problem of the body, morbid, thirst, *prameha* (obstinate urinary disorders including diabetes) and *raktatisāra* (diarrhea).<sup>20</sup> Red sandalwood is effective for the *arśāroga* (piles).<sup>21</sup> It is mixed with *kiratatikta*, *duralabha* (a plant species), *cassia*, *usira*, *neem* and water. This recipe is a perfect cure of bleeding piles. In case of anemia, jaundice, anorexia, bronchitis, breathing troubles, *kustha* (skin diseases including leprosy) hernia, stone diseases the both white and red sandal is used with other remedial elements like *saralā kāsthā* (cherpine wood or trupentine), *devadāru* (Himalayan cender), *haridrā* (turmeric) etc.<sup>22</sup> Due to suppression of urge, indigestion etc. blood get vitiated and affect the brain and gradually due to heat of the sun-rays and headache increases as the day advances and gets subsided at the end of the day when the brain matter is solidified. This is *sūryavartaśīraroḡa*. In cases of this *śīraroḡa* *Candana* mixing with the *sirisha* and *mūlaka* seeds or bamboo-roots camphor, or

*yashti-madhu* and honey, should be stuffed into the nostrils.<sup>23</sup> *Candana* also has the power to cure from the vomiting.

cf. *candanenakṣamātreṇa samyojyāmalakirasam/  
pibenmakṣikasamyuktam chardistena nivarttate/*<sup>24</sup>

However, excessive use of sandalwood should be avoided as it may cause allergies in some people. Very finely pounded and thick paste of sandal causes burning sensation due to blocking of heat in skin<sup>25</sup> and for persistent problems, sandalwood preparations should be used only under the guidance of a trained Ayurvedic physician.

## Conclusion

*Candana* is such a herb that it has the solution of every disease or disorder that we face in our day-to-day life. Hence it is the epitome of excellence, imparting fragrance even to the axe that cuts it. Ravindranath Tagore said, "The Sandal Tree as if to prove that love would conquer hate, love, perfumes the axe that lays it low." *Candana* is not just a tree it is the god, s blessings upon us that we have this herb in our soil to prevent and cure our diseases. There is hardly any other herb in this world with such spiritual and medicinal value. But we somehow failed to protect and increase the numbers of *candana* tree. Now people have moved towards the herbal therapy for its safe treatment and hence the need of herbal product has increased so in case of the herb. To increase our herbal property like *candana* we need investments, vigilance and dependable plant protection methods. Let the fragrance of sandalwood fill our home with the serenity of spirituality, and the glow of good health.

## References :

- 1 *śvetacandanamatyantasnigdham guru sugandhi ca/  
bhavedyaccandanam raktapitasaram taduttmam/  
yatpāṇḍuramasarañca na bhadrām pravādanti tat//*  
Bhaiṣajyaratnāvalī, II.XXVI.476
- 2 *Matsyapurāna*, 95.9-13
- 3 *ibid.*, 98.3

- 4 *gorocanaṃ sagomūtramuṣṇaṃ gośakṛtaṃ tathā/  
dadhicananasammiśraṇaṃ lalāte tilakaṃ nyaset/  
saubhāgyārogyadaṃ yasmāt sadā ca lalitā priyam//, ibid., 62.6*
- 5 *vāyuh pittaṃ kaphaścoktaḥ śāriro doṣasamgrahaḥ/  
mānaśaḥ punaruddiṣṭo rajaśca tama eva ca// q Carakasamhitā,  
Sūtrasthāna, I.57*
- 6 *ibid., Vimānasthāna, VI.17*
- 7 *ibid., Cikitsāsthāna, XXVI.229*
- 8 *ibid., Cikitsāsthāna, XXVI.269*
- 9 *ibid., Cikitsāsthāna, XV.125-127*
- 10 *ibid., Cikitsāsthāna, XV.136-140*
- 11 *ibid., Cikitsāsthāna, XI.258*
- 12 *ibid., Sūtrasthāna, VI.22-26*
- 13 *ibid., Sūtrasthāna, VI.27-32*
- 14 *ibid., Sūtrasthāna, V.93*
- 15 *ibid., Siddhisthāna, VI.45-51*
- 16 *Suśrutasaṃhitā, Uttara Tantra, XXXIX.82-87*
- 17 *ibid., Uttara Tantra, XVII.18*
- 18 *ibid., Uttara Tantra, XXI.27-30*
- 19 *candanalodhrapārusakayasti gosutāmbujakeśāryuktam/  
toyamidam saśītaṃ vinihanti marutapittakṛtaṃ jvaramāsu//  
Bhaiṣajyaratnāvalī, I.V.153*
- 20 *pitvā saśarkaraṃ kṣaudraṃ candanaṃ taṇḍulāmbunā/  
dahaṃ tṛṣṇāṃ pramehañca sadyo raktaṃ niyacchati// ibid., I.VII.83*
- 21 *ibid., II.9.32*
- 22 *ibid., II.90.28-35*
- 23 *ibid., II.XXVI.12-14*
- 24 *ibid., II.XIX.6*
- 25 *carakasamhitā, Cikitsāsthāna, XXX.323-325*

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