



Indigenous “green” synthesis methods of incinerated Gold nanoparticles (*Swarna Bhasma*): A review

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ABSTRACT: The convergence of traditional Ayurvedic alchemy and modern nanotechnology opens new avenues for understanding and optimizing therapeutic formulations like *Swarna Bhasma* (incinerated gold). This review explores the indigenous process of *Swarna Marana* in Ayurveda and juxtaposes it with contemporary green synthesis methods for gold nanoparticles. Classical Ayurvedic texts were systematically reviewed to identify 19 plant-based media used in the traditional incineration of gold, while a thorough PubMed search revealed 45 plants currently explored in the green synthesis of gold nanoparticles. Notable overlaps and unexplored opportunities were observed, particularly in phytochemicals such as alkaloids and flavonoids that contribute to nanoparticle formation and stabilization. The review highlights that while green synthesis adopts a bottom-up approach using metal salts, *Marana* employs a top-down strategy starting from elemental gold, yet both converge toward producing bioactive and biocompatible nanogold. The findings support the hypothesis that classical methods are inherently aligned with green chemistry principles. A call for interdisciplinary collaboration is made to explore the therapeutic potential of classical plant media in modern nanoparticle synthesis, ensuring safer, cost-effective, and environmentally friendly alternatives for future biomedical applications.

INTRODUCTION

The emerging field of nanotechnology has opened ways for Ayurveda to expand the therapeutic applications of its formulations, especially the range of indigenous nanomedicines. *Bhasma* are formulations which are sought for their enhanced therapeutic efficacy delivered in low doses. Even though these formulations show significant therapeutic efficacy in clinical settings, their mode of action remain unexplored. The postulation of a core shell model for metallic *Bhasma*, especially in the context of *Lauha Bhasma* leads to an assumption of an organometallic complex being formed on the core, which is the metal nanoparticle.¹ The formation of a metal organic framework in such formulations cannot be neglected because of the complex pharmaceutical procedures and treatments with a variety of plant extracts.² Green synthesis of metal nanoparticles is a new perspective in nanotechnology, which makes use of the same principle of plant extracts. They differ from the indigenous method of preparation of *Bhasma* because of the fact that metal salts are reduced to metal nanoparticles in green synthesis.³ The scientific community is in constant search for novel phytochemicals which can aid in the formation of stable metal and metal oxide nanoparticles. The classical *Rasashastra* literature has ample number of plant extracts enlisted for the preparation of *Bhasma*. Gold nanoparticles are at present highly sought for their wide range of applications in medicine viz., diagnostics, photothermal therapy, photodynamic therapy, and as effective drug carriers. Similar to the therapeutic possibilities enlisted in Ayurvedic classics for *Swarna Bhasma* in the field of immunology, gold nanoparticles are being studied and proved as a good therapeutic agent in boosting the non-specific immunity in humans.⁴ The plant extracts

used for the synthesis of gold nanoparticles do have several phytochemical constituents like alkaloids and flavonoids which aid in the synthesis of the same.⁵ Similar to this process, *Marana* (incineration) is a pharmaceutical process in which elemental gold is converted to nanoparticles. While green synthesis is a bottom up approach, the process of *Marana* can be thought of as a top down. Thus, this paper is an attempt to explore the current state of knowledge in the field of green synthesis of gold nanoparticles and to compare the same with the references the classical Ayurvedic textbooks.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

50 textbooks from Classical Ayurveda literature were searched thoroughly and reviewed to compile the different methods of *Marana* (incineration) adopted for the preparation of *Swarna Bhasma* using herbal extracts. The current state of knowledge and advancements on green synthesis of Gold nanoparticles were compiled through and thorough and systematic search of database with the help of PubMed. The search strategy included the following keywords combined with 'AND' as the Boolean operator. The keywords used were *Ayurved*, *Ayurveda*, *Swarna*, *Bhasma*, Gold nanoparticles and Green synthesis. Reviews and Original research published within the past 10 years were compiled and reviewed thoroughly.

RESULT

The search for the number of plant extracts explored for their application in green synthesis of gold nanoparticles yielded 45 plants with the part of the plant used for preparation of the extract. Classical literature mentions 19 plant extracts for the preparation of *Swarna Bhasma*. These plant extracts are specifically used for trituration, which is an important pharmaceutical process in the preparation of *Bhasma*. The details of the results obtained from PubMed are enlisted in Table 1, while the results of the classical literature search have been tabulated in Table 2.

DISCUSSION

On critically analysing the data obtained from the review, it was observed that majority of the plants selected for green synthesis belong to the following families, i.e., Fabaceae, Rutaceae and Malvaceae. The extract of leaves is used predominantly in the process. All three families have Alkaloids and Saponins in abundance as the major phytoconstituents.⁶ This observation has been made in many a number of original researches done in the field of green synthesis of metal nanoparticles. Importance of the process of *Marana* and *Bhasma* can be elucidated in the light of studies which show the metal nanoparticles produced by plants are more stable and bioactive in comparison with those produced by extracts of specific phytoconstituents of plants.⁷ Comparison of the plants enlisted in classics versus plants explored in the area of green synthesis leads us to a newer and broader understanding that many a number of plants remain unexplored for their potential in the synthesis of nanoparticles. While chemical synthesis methods still exist for synthesis of gold nanoparticles, the toxic by products that might get incorporated into the synthesised nanomaterial poses a major concern. Green synthesis methods not only help us to overcome this confounding toxic by product synthesis, but also helps in cost effective synthesis of safe and stable gold nanoparticles.⁸ *Swarna Bhasma*, which can be termed as the incinerated gold nanoparticles, have been found cytocompatibility as well as compatible with all the blood components in previous studies indicating the absence of any toxic by products in the formulation.⁹ This also supports the previous findings obtained from researches conducted using green synthesis method.

CONCLUSION

The world is turning towards green and safe methods for synthesis of materials which are to be used therapeutically in the human body. Development of green synthesis technology for production of metal

nanoparticles not only ensures its biological safety but also ensures an environment friendly synthesis technique. Ayurveda, especially the field of Rasashastra has a lot to offer in this regard with an abundant reservoir of knowledge in the form of classical scriptures. The plants mentioned in classics can be studied for their potential in the synthesis of such nanomaterials, especially for gold nanoparticles due to its wide range of applications in medicine. An interdisciplinary and collaborative research process with experts from both the fields can definitely give interesting outputs which shall benefit mankind.

Table 1: Plants explored in green synthesis of Gold nanoparticles

Sl. No.	Plant name	Family	Part
1	<i>Artemisia vulgaris</i> ¹⁰ , <i>Coreopsis lanceolate</i> ¹¹	Asteraceae	Leaves
2	<i>Clitoria ternatea</i> ¹² , <i>Cassia auriculata</i> ¹³ , <i>Cassia tora</i> ¹⁴	Fabaceae	Leaves
3	<i>Murraya koenigii</i> ¹⁵	Rutaceae	Leaves
4	<i>Artocarpus hirsutus</i> ¹⁶	Moraceae	Leaves
5	<i>Justicia glauca</i> ¹⁷	Acanthaceae	Leaves
6	<i>Terminalia arjuna</i> ¹⁸	Combretaceae	Leaves
7	<i>Memecylon umbellatum</i> ¹⁹	Melastomataceae	Leaves
8	<i>Mangifera indica</i> ²⁰	Anacardiaceae	Leaves
9	Olive ²¹	Oleaceae	Leaves
10	<i>Lonicera Japonica</i> ²²	Caprifoliaceae	Flower
11	<i>Nyctanthes arbortristis</i> ²³	Oleaceae	Flower
12	<i>Guazuma ulmifolia</i> ²⁴	Malvaceae	Bark
13	<i>Salix</i> ²⁵	Salicaceae	Bark
14	<i>Acacia nilotica</i> ²⁶	Fabaceae	Bark
15	<i>Musa paradisiaca</i> ²⁷	Musaceae	Peel
16	<i>Lantana camara</i> ²⁸	Verbenaceae	Fruit
17	Citrus (Lemon, tangerine, orange) ²⁹ , <i>Citrus maxima</i> ³⁰	Rutaceae	Fruit
18	Pear ³¹	Rosaceae	Fruit
19	<i>Sterculia acuminata</i> ³²	Malvaceae	Fruit
20	<i>Pistacia integerrima</i> ³³	Anacardiaceae	Galls
21	<i>Abelmoschus esculentus</i> ³⁴ , <i>Theobroma cacao</i> ³⁵	Malvaceae	Seed
22	<i>Hevea brasiliensis</i> ³⁶	Euphorbiaceae	Latex
23	<i>Zingiber officinale</i> ³⁷ , <i>Curcuma longa</i> ³⁸	Zingiberaceae	Rhizome
24	<i>Panax ginseng</i> ³⁹	Araliaceae	Rhizome
25	<i>Acorus calamus</i> ⁴⁰	Acoraceae	Rhizome
26	<i>Areca catechu</i> ⁴¹	Arecaceae	Nut
27	<i>Momordica cochinchinensis</i> ⁴²	Cucurbitaceae	Biomass
28	<i>Macrotyloma uniflorum</i> ⁴³	Fabaceae	Whole plant
29	<i>Salvia officianalis</i> ⁴⁴	Lamiaceae	Leaves

30	<i>Dendrobium officinale</i> ⁴⁵	Orchidaceae	Powder
31	<i>Garcinia mangostana</i> ⁴⁶	Guttiferae	Pericarp
32	<i>Delphinium chitralense</i> ⁴⁷	Ranunculaceae	Tuber
33	<i>Cretaeus oxycantha</i> ⁴⁸	Rosaceae	Twigs
34	<i>Ligustrum vulgare</i> ⁴⁹	Oleaceae	Berry
35	<i>Tamarindus indica</i> ⁵⁰	Fabaceae	Seed
36	<i>Capsicum chinense</i> ⁵¹	Solanaceae	Leaves
37	<i>Punica granatum</i> ⁵²	Lythraceae	Fruit
38	<i>Pelargonium graveolens</i> ⁵³	Geraniaceae	Leaves
39	<i>Lippia citriodora</i> ⁵⁴	Verbenaceae	Leaves

Table 2: Plants mentioned in classics for Swarna Marana;

Sl.No.	Media	Botanical name	Family name	Reference
1	Arkakshira	<i>Calotropis procera</i>	<i>Apocynaceae</i>	Ras. Sa. Sa. ⁵⁵ , Ra. Ta. ⁵⁶ , Bha. Pra ⁵⁷ , Aa.Ve.Pra ⁵⁸ , Sha. Sam. ⁵⁹
2	Nimbu	<i>Citrus limon</i>	<i>Rutaceae</i>	Ras. Sa. Sa. ⁶⁰ , Aa.Ve.Pra ⁶¹ , ⁶² , Bhava Prakasha ⁶³ , Ras. Amr. ⁶⁴ , Yo.Rat ⁶⁵ , Sha. Sam. ⁶⁶ , Ras. Chu. ⁶⁷ , Ra. Rat ⁶⁸ , Ra Pra Su ⁶⁹ , Ras.Chu ⁷⁰ , Ra. Ta. ⁷¹ , R.R.S ⁷² , Ba. Ra. ⁷³ , A.K ⁷⁴ , Bha. Pra ⁷⁵ , Yo.Rat ⁷⁶
3	Jambira Nimbu	<i>Citrus medica</i>	<i>Rutaceae</i>	R.R.S ⁷⁷ , Ras. Pa. ⁷⁸ , Ras. Amr. ⁷⁹ , Ra. Pra.Su ⁸⁰
4	Kanchanara	<i>Bauhinia variegata</i>	<i>Fabaceae</i>	Ras. Pa. ⁸¹ , Ras. Amr. ⁸² , Aa. Ve. Pra ⁸³ , Bha. Pra ⁸⁴ , Aa. Ve. Pra ⁸⁵ , Sha. Sam. ⁸⁶ , Ras. Chu. ⁸⁷ , Aa. Ve. Pra ⁸⁸ , Ra. Ta. ⁸⁹
5	Tulasi	<i>Ocimum tenuiflorum</i>	<i>Lamiaceae</i>	Ras. Amr. ⁹⁰ , Bha. Vig. ⁹¹
7	Vajridugdha	<i>Euphorbia neriifolia</i>	<i>Euphorbiaceae</i>	R.P.S ⁹² , Bha. Vig. ⁹³ , A.K ⁹⁴ , Ras. Rat. ⁹⁵ , Ras. Chu. ⁹⁶
8	Hingu	<i>Ferula asafoetida</i>	<i>Umbelliferae</i>	Aa. Ve. Pra ⁹⁷ , R.P.S ⁹⁸ , Bha. Vig. ⁹⁹ , Ras. Chu. ¹⁰⁰
9	Langali	<i>Gloriosa superba</i>	<i>Colchicaceae</i>	Bha. Pra. ¹⁰¹ , Aa.Ve.Pra ¹⁰² , Bha. Vig. ¹⁰³
10	Gulabansi, Jangli Gulab pushpa	<i>Rosa rubiginosa</i>	<i>Rosaceae</i>	Bha. Vig. ¹⁰⁴
	Nimba,	<i>Azadirachta indica</i>	<i>Meliaceae</i>	Bha. Vig. ¹⁰⁵
11	Kataka	<i>Strychnos potatorum</i>	<i>Loganiaceae</i>	Bha. Vig. ¹⁰⁶

12	<i>Nagavalli</i>	<i>Piper betle</i>	<i>Piperaceae</i>	Bha. Vig. ¹⁰⁷
13	<i>Jwalamukhi</i>	<i>Capsicum annum</i>	<i>Solanaceae</i>	Rasa Pra Su ¹⁰⁸ , Bha. Pra. ¹⁰⁹ , Aa.Ve.Pra ¹¹⁰ , Bha. Vig. ¹¹¹
14	<i>Rajavriksha</i>	<i>Cassia fistula</i>	<i>Caesalpinioideae</i>	Ras. Rat. ¹¹² , A.K ¹¹³
15	<i>Bhallathaka,</i>	<i>Semecarpus anacardium</i>	<i>Anacardiaceae</i>	Ras. Rat. ¹¹⁴ , A.K ¹¹⁵
16	<i>Chincha</i>	<i>Tamarindus indica</i>	<i>Fabaceae</i>	A.K ¹¹⁶
17	<i>Jala Pippali</i>	<i>Lippia nodiflora</i>	<i>Verbenaceae</i>	Bha. Vig. ¹¹⁷
18	<i>Swarnakshiri</i>	<i>Argemone mexicana</i>	<i>Euphorbiaceae</i>	Bha. Vig. ¹¹⁸
19	<i>Shleshmantaka</i>	<i>Cordia dichotoma</i>	<i>Boraginaceae</i>	Ras. Chu ¹¹⁹

List of abbreviations

Rasendra Sara Samgraha: Ra. Sa. Sa.

Bhava Prakasha: Bha. Pra.

Rasa Tarangini: Ra. Ta.

Ayurveda Prakasha: Aa. Ve. Pra.

Sharangadhara Samhita: Sha. Sam.

Rasamritam: Ras. Amr.

Yoga Ratnakara: Yo. Rat.

Rasendra Chudamani: Ras. Chu.

Rasa Ratna Samuchchaya: R.R.S

Anandakanda: A.K

Basavarajeeyam: Ba. Ra.

Rasapadhathi: Ras. Pa.

Bhasma Vigyaneeya: Bha. Vig.

Rasa Prakasha Sudhakara: R.P.S

Rasa Sanketa Kalika: R.S.K

Rasa Ratnakara: Ras. Rat.

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