



A Classical Review on Kampillaka - The Red Powder of Ayurvedic Wisdom

Panwar D^{1*}, Singh A², Kumar A³, Agarwal AK⁴

DOI:10.21760/jaims.11.2.56

^{1*} Deepali Panwar, Post Graduate Scholar, PG Department of Dravyaguna, Lalit Hari State PG Ayurved College and Hospital, Pilibhit, Uttar Pradesh, India.

² Amrita Singh, Post Graduate Scholar, PG Department of Dravyaguna, Lalit Hari State PG Ayurved College and Hospital, Pilibhit, Uttar Pradesh, India.

³ Akhilesh Kumar, Reader, PG Department of Dravyaguna, Lalit Hari State PG Ayurved College and Hospital, Pilibhit, Uttar Pradesh, India.

⁴ Ajay Kumar Agarwal, Professor and HOD, PG Department of Dravyaguna, Lalit Hari State PG Ayurved College and Hospital, Pilibhit, Uttar Pradesh, India.

Kampillaka (*Mallotus philippensis* Muell.Arg.), commonly known as the Kamala tree, is a well-known medicinal plant extensively used in traditional Ayurvedic medicine. It belongs to the Euphorbiaceae family. It is distributed in tropical and sub-tropical regions. It is the drug of herbal origin and has been grouped into one of the eight Sadharana Rasa groups. It has most recently been assessed for The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species in 2018 and is listed as Least Concern. It is known for the red-orange powder found on its fruit. This powder has been used in Ayurveda since ancient times. Kampillaka is known for its Krimighana, Kushtaghana & Rasayana properties. The plant is rich in bioactive compounds such as rottlerin, isorottlerin, and kamalins, which contribute to its diverse pharmacological properties including antiparasitic, anti-inflammatory, antimicrobial, antioxidant, and hepatoprotective effects. It is used as Virechanartha (used for purgation therapy). This review aims to provide a comprehensive exploration of Kampillaka's classical references and therapeutic actions. This article also deals with the common adulteration and purity check of Kampillaka. A comprehensive review of Samhita and Nighantu has been done to evaluate the ancient references of it to observe its therapeutic efficacy. According to NMPB, it has been under the highly demanded plant so the need to use this plant judiciously is important. Hence the preservation and conservation of this plant is also highlighted in this article.

Keywords: *Mallotus philippensis* Muell.Arg., Kampillaka, Virechanartha, Kamala, Red dye

Corresponding Author	How to Cite this Article	To Browse
Deepali Panwar, Post Graduate Scholar, PG Department of Dravyaguna, Lalit Hari State PG Ayurved College and Hospital, Pilibhit, Uttar Pradesh, India. Email: deepalipanwar1998@gmail.com	Panwar D, Singh A, Kumar A, Agarwal AK, A Classical Review on Kampillaka - The Red Powder of Ayurvedic Wisdom. J Ayu Int Med Sci. 2026;11(2):354-359. Available From https://jaims.in/jaims/article/view/5501/	

Manuscript Received
2025-12-07

Review Round 1
2025-12-15

Review Round 2
2025-12-23

Review Round 3
2026-01-02

Accepted
2026-01-28

Conflict of Interest
None

Funding
Nil

Ethical Approval
Not required

Plagiarism X-checker
11.64

Note



© 2026 by Panwar D, Singh A, Kumar A, Agarwal AK and Published by Maharshi Charaka Ayurveda Organization. This is an Open Access article licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/> unported [CC BY 4.0].



Introduction

The genus name *Mallotus* derives from the Greek word *Mallotos*, meaning "wooly" or "lined with wool", referring to the hairy appearance of some species. The *Philippensis* Latin word, referring specifically to the Philippines where the plant was first collected. *Mallotus philippensis* is a plant in the Euphorbiaceae family, known as red *Kamala* tree, due to the fruit covering that produces a red dye. *Mallotus philippensis* consists of gland & its fruit has hairs. It is a common perennial shrub or small tree found in the outer Himalayas up to an altitude of 1500 meters.[1] *Kampillaka* has been categorized as one among eight *Sadharana Rasa*. [2] The plant's fruit and seeds are used in formulations to treat cough, asthma, bronchitis, and chronic skin conditions like eczema. The red covering of its fruit contains a natural substance that helps fight germs and parasites. Besides medicine, its bright color is also used as natural dye. Because of its healing properties, *Kampillaka* is an important plant in herbal medicine. It is traditionally used for its *Krimighana* (anthelmintic), *Rakta Shodhaka* (blood purifier), and *Tvachya* (skin-protective) properties. The vivid red glandular hairs obtained from the fruit are known as *Kampillaka Bhasma* or *Kamala*, which are widely used in treatment of *Krimi* (helminthic infestations), *Kushta* (skin disorders), and *Arsha* (piles). *Kampillaka* (*Mallotus philippensis*) has most recently been assessed for The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species in 2018 and is listed as Least Concern. [3]

Materials and Methods

The present study is classical review based on comprehensive textual analysis and literature survey. Ayurvedic texts were systematically reviewed to collect references related to *Kampillaka* (*Charaka Samhita*, *Sushruta Samhita*, *Ashtanga Hridaya*, *Ash-tanga Nighantu*, *Madanadi Nighantu*, *Dhanvantari Nighantu*, *Sausruta Nighantu*, *Saligrama Nighantu*, *Madanapala Nighantu*, *Kaiyadeva Nighantu*, *Raja Nighantu*, *Bhavaprakasha Nighantu*, *Nighantu Adarsha*, *Abhidhanamanjari*, *Nighantu Shesha*, *Abhidhana Ratnamala*, etc.). Also, review has been done following various research journals/databases, internet sources.

Observation

Botanical Identity[4]

Botanical name: *Mallotus philippinensis* Muell.Arg.

Family: Euphorbiaceae

Botanical synonyms:

- *Rottlera tinctoria* Roxb.
- *Croton philippense* Lam.
- *Mallotus rottleranus* (Gaertn.) Hurus.
- *Rottlera ferruginea* Willd.
- *Mallotus roxburghianus* Müll.Arg.

Etymology of *Kampillaka*

The plant is called *Kampillaka* because it is found abundantly in *Kampilla region*. It is called *Kampi-llaka* because consuming it causes a sensation of trembling or shivering (*Kamp*). [5]

Taxonomical Classification of *Kampillaka*

Kingdom: Plantae

Subkingdom: Tracheobionta

Division: Magnoliophyta

Class: Magnoliopsida

Order: Malpighiales

Family: Euphorbiaceae

Genus: *Mallotus*

Species: *Mallotus philippinensis* (Lam.) Muell. Arg.

Vernacular names of *Mallotus philippinensis* [6]

- Sanskrit: *Rajanaka*, *Kampillaka*
- Assam: *Lochan*
- Bengali: *Kamalagudi*
- Gujarati: *Kapilo*
- Hindi: *Kabila*, *Kamila*, *Kamala*
- Kannada: *Kunkumadamara*, *Chandrahettu*, *Kapila*, *Kapilathettu*
- Malayalam : *Kampippaka*, *Kampipalu*, *Kuramda-kku*
- Urdu: *Kamila*
- Telugu: *Kampillamu*, *Kunkuma*
- Marathi: *Shendri*, *Kapila*
- Tamil: *Kamala*, *Kampila*, *Kumkuma Madam*, *Kungumam*
- Punjabi: *Kamila*

Synonyms (*Prayayas*) in various texts [7]

Kampillaka (found mostly in the region of *Kampilla*), *Raktarenu*, *Raktaphala*, *Raktachurna* & *Raktang* (fruits and fruit hair are red in colour), *Rechana* (acts as purgative),

Lohitanga (ripen fruits become brick red in colour), *Rochana* (appetizer), *Ranjaka* & *Patodaka* (used as colouring material), *Karkasha* (a rough powder), *Raktasamana* (pacifies *Rakta*), *Vrana Shodhaka* (cleans the wounds).

Morphological characteristics of *Mallotus philippinensis*[8]

- Habit: A small size much-branched evergreen tree. Young branches are covered with short rusty hairs.
- Leaves: Simple, ovate-lanceolate and strongly three-nerved with minute glands underneath.
- Flowers: Unisexual, male and female flowers occurring on different trees in terminal elongate inflorescences. Male flowers are clustered whereas female flowers are solitary.

- Fruits: Three lobed orange - red small capsule.
- Flower, Fruit: June to March.
- Distribution: India (throughout Eastern Ghats), Sri Lanka, Western Himalaya, Australia.

Useful Parts of *Kampillaka*[9]

Phalraj

Dose: 1-3 gm.

References of *Kampillaka* in various *Samhita* and *Nighantu*

Acharya Charaka described *Kampillaka* as “*Virechanartha Dravya*”.

Classical references of *Kampillaka* in *Brihatrayi*.

SN	Reference	Indications
1.	C.S.Su.1.83 Deerghanjiviteeya Adhyaya	Phalini Dravya
2.	C.S.Su.2.9 Apamargantanduliyam Adhyaya	Virechanarthadravya
3.	C.S.Su.3.10 Aragvadhiya Adhyaya	Kushtadi Churna
4.	C.S.Su.26.84 Atreyabhadrakapiya Adhyaya	Viruddhahara
5.	C.S.Vi.8.136 Rogabhishagjitiya Adhyaya	Virechana Karaka Dravya
6.	C.S.Ci.5.105 Gulma Chikitsa Adhyaya	Neelinighrita
7.	C.S.Ci.5.130 Gulma Chikitsa Adhyaya	Gulmahara
8.	C.S.Ci.6.35 Prameha Chikitsa Adhyaya	Used in Kapha-Pitta Prameha
9.	C.S.Ci.7.103 Kushta Chikitsa Adhyaya	Kushtadiya Taila
10.	C.S.Ci.7.114 Kushta Chikitsa Adhyaya	Kanakshiri Taila
11.	C.S.Ci.7.120 Kushta Chikitsa Adhyaya	Vipadikahara Ghrita-Taila
12.	C.S.Ci.13.120 Udara Chikitsa Adhyaya	Patolamooladi Churna
13.	C.S.Ci.21.137 Visarpa Chikitsa Adhyaya	Kampillakadi Taila
14.	C.S.Ci.25.90 Dwivraniya Chikitsa Adhyaya	Kampillakadi Taila
15.	C.S.Ci.25.93 Dwivraniya Chikitsa Adhyaya	Kampillaka Taila
16.	C.S.Ci.26.13 Trimarmiya Chikitsa Adhyaya	Krimighanadi Varti
17.	C.S.Ci.26.64 Trimarmiya Chikitsa Adhyaya	Trutiyadi Churna
18.	C.S.Ka.9.10 Tilvaka Kalpa Adhyaya	Kampillaka Churna Virechanartha
19.	C.S.Si.10.26 Vastisiddhi Adhyaya	Pakwashaya Shodhaka Basti
20.	Su.S.Su.38.29 Dravya Sangrahiya Adhyaya	In Shyamadi Gana
21.	Su.S.Su.39.4 Samsodhana Samsamaniya Adhyaya	In Adhobhagahara Dravya (Phalaraja used)
22.	Su.S.Su.44.83 Virechanadravyavikalpavijnaniya Adhyaya	Immediate purgation is done with the pill of Kampillaka processed with <i>Euphorbia neriifolia</i> (Snuhi Kshir)
23.	Su.S.Su.45.115 Dravadravya Vidhi Adhyaya	Vayu, Kapha, Krimi, Kushta, Prameha, Shiroroga harini
24.	Su.S.Su.45.124 Dravadravya Vidhi Adhyaya	Adhobhagadoshahara, Krimikaphakushtaanilahara, Dushtavrana Shodhan

SN	Reference	Indications
25.	Su.S.Ci.4.27 Vatavyadhi Chikitsa Adhyaya	Ingredient of Tilvakaghrita (used as Sneha Virechana for VataRogi)
26.	Su.S.Ci.9.61 Kushta Chikitsa Adhyaya	Ingredient of Mahavajraka Taila (Sarvakushta, Gandamala, Bhagandara, Nadi, Dushta Vrana Hara)
27.	Su.S.Ci.11.8 Prameha Chikitsa Adhyaya	Sarvaprameha Hara
28.	Su.S.Ci.12.5 Pramehapidika Chikitsa Adhyaya	Ingredient of Dhanvantaram Ghrita
29.	Su.S.Ci.31.5 Snehopayaugika Chikitsa Adhyaya	Usea as Sneha Virechan
30.	Su.S.U.42.94 Rasa Vishesha Vijnaniya Adhyaya	Ingredient of Vidangadi Churna used in Vataja Shula
31.	Su.S.U.55.53 Udavarta Pratishedha Adhyaya	Ingredient of Udavartahara Varti
32.	A.H.Su.7.37 Annaraksha Adhyaya	Viruddha Aahara if processed with Takra
33.	A.H.Su.15.2 Shodhanadigana Samgraha Adhyaya	In Virechana Dravya
34.	A.H.Ci.12.16 Prameha Chikitsa Adhyaya	Used in Kapha-Pitta Prameha
35.	A.H.Ci.12.22 Prameha Chikitsa Adhyaya	Ingredient of Dhanwantar Ghrita
36.	A.H.Ci.14.54 Gulma Chikitsa Adhyaya	Used in Gulma Nashak Ghrita
37.	A.H.Ci.14.61 Gulma Chikitsa Adhyaya	Used as Virechanartha in Pittaj Gulma
38.	A.H.Ci.15.10 Udara Chikitsa Adhyaya	In Udararoganashak Churna
39.	A.H.Ci.18.35 Visarpa Chikitsa Adhyaya	Used in Vrana Chikitsa
40.	A.H.Ci.19.67 Kushta Chikitsa Adhyaya	In Dadrunashak Churna
41.	A.H.Ci.19.71 Kushta Chikitsa Adhyaya	Kushtanashak Taila
42.	A.H.Ci.19.77 Kushta Chikitsa Adhyaya	Used as a Lepa in Vipadika
43.	A.H.Ci.19.81 Kushta Chikitsa Adhyaya	Ingredient of Mahavajraka Taila

Reference of *Kampillaka* in various Samhitas and Nighantus

SN	Nighantu	Gana/Varga/Skanda
1.	Charaka Samhita	Phalinidravaya & Virechaka
2.	Sushruta Samhita	Shyamadigana
3.	Ashtanga Sangraha	Virechanopypgi Gana
4.	Ashtanga Hridaya	Shyamadigana
5.	Raja Nighantu	Suvarnadi Varga
6.	Hridya Deepak Nighantu	Kapha Vata Ghana Varga
7.	Sodhala Nighantu	Chandanadi Varga
8.	Kaiyadeva Nighantu	Aushadhi Varga
9.	Bhavaprakash Nighantu	Haritakayadi Varga
10.	Sarasvati Nighantu	Kushtaghna Varga
11.	Ashtanga Nighantu	Shyamadi Gana
12.	Madanapal Nighantu	Abhayadi Varga
13.	Priya Nighantu	Haritakyadi Varga
14.	Madanadi Nighantu	Dwitiya Gana
15.	Dhanvantari Nighantu	Chandanadi Varga, Mishrak Varga
16.	Sausruta Nighantu	Shyamadi Gana
17.	Shaligrama Nighantu	Ashtavarga
18.	Nighantu Aadarsha	Amlakiyadi Varga
19.	Abhidhanamanjari	Nikumbhadi Varga
20.	Nighantu Shesha	Vriksha Kanda
21.	Abhidhana Ratnamala	Tikta Skanda

Rasa Panchak according to different classical texts

Texts	RasaGuna	VeeryaVipaka
Dravyaguna Vigyana[10]	Katu Laghu, Ruksha, Tikshna	Ushna Katu
Bhavaprakasha Nighantu[11]	Katu -	Ushna -
Dhanvantari Nighantu[12]	Katu -	Ushna -
Raja Nighantu[13]	Katu Laghu	Ushna -
Kaiyadeva Nighantu[14]	Katu -	Ushna -
Api[15]	Katu Laghu, Ruksha, Tikshna	Ushna Katu

According to API

Karma - Virechana, Vranapha, Krimighna

Therapeutic Indications[16]

- *Kampillaka* 5 gm, taken with jaggery fells all the worms out of the bowels. (BP.Ci.7.22)
- In *Raktagulma*, the powder of *Kampillaka* mixed with sugar and honey should be given which also eliminates faeces. (BP.Ci.32.49)
- One suffering from *Prameha* caused by *Kapha* and *Pitta* should use powdered flowers of *Kampillaka*, *Saptaparṇa*, *Sāla*, *Bibhitaka*, *Rohitaka*, *Kutaja* and *Kapittha* mixed with honey or the paste thereof in the dose of 10 gm. with the juice of *Amalaka*. (CS.Ci.6.35-36)

- Oil cooked with *Dūrvā* juice or *Kampillaka* or the paste of *Dāruharidrā* bark is an efficacious wound-healing drug. (CS.Ci.25.93)

Phytochemical Constituents

The most important active constituent is a brownish red or reddish yellow color called Rottlerin.[17] Capsule hair and glands gave phloroglucinol derivatives; rottlerin, isorottlerin, isoallorottlerin (the "red compound") and methylene-bis-methyl- phloracetophenone (the "yellow compound"). Two more compounds designated as kamalins 1 and 2 have been isolated. The stem bark contains kamadiol-3-acetate and friedelin.

Test of purity[18]

1. Does not dissolve in water.
2. Dissolves in alkali.
3. When rubbed on paper, leaves behind a yellow line.
4. When sprinkled over fire, it gives crackling appearance.

Conclusion

The literature review on *Kampillaka* highlights its importance in Ayurveda. It has been used primarily as an antimicrobial, anti-inflammatory and has hepatoprotective effects. Modern studies also support these claims. This correlation between traditional uses and scientific evidences strengthens the plant's therapeutic credibility. According to NMPB (National Medicinal Plant Board), *Kampillaka* is the highly demanded tree and its trade is done under the names *Kameela* and *Kampilla*. So, the proper cultivation and preservation of *Kampillaka* is very important. *Kampillaka* should be used in after doing its examination as mentioned in classical texts as it is commonly adulterated with Annato dye, ferric oxide, brick dust and ferruginous sand.

References

1. Government of India, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Department of Ayush. The Ayurvedic Pharmacopoeia of India. Part 1. 1st ed. Vol. 1. New Delhi: Government of India; 2001 [Crossref][PubMed][Google Scholar]
2. Shastri A. Rasaratna Samuccaya. 9th ed. Varanasi: Chaukhamba Amarabharati Prakashan; 1995. [Crossref][PubMed][Google Scholar]

3. Available from, <https://share.google/fRpM6wVDTcEA48qhV>. [Crossref][PubMed][Google Scholar]
4. Kirtikar KR, Basu BD. Indian Medicinal Plants. Part 3. 2nd ed. Dehradun: International Book Distributors [Crossref][PubMed][Google Scholar]
5. Bhavamisra. Bhavaprakasha Nighantu. Commentary by Chunekar KC, edited by Pandey GS. Varanasi: Chaukhamba Bharati Academy; Reprint 2024. [Crossref][PubMed][Google Scholar]
6. Government of India, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Department of Ayush. The Ayurvedic Pharmacopoeia of India. Part 1. 1st ed. Vol. 1. New Delhi: Government of India; 2001 [Crossref][PubMed][Google Scholar]
7. Anonymous. Naamroopgyanam. [Crossref][PubMed][Google Scholar]
8. Sankara Rao K, Arun Singh R, Deepak Kumar, Raja K Swamy, Navendu Page. Digital Flora of Eastern Ghats. 2016. [Crossref][PubMed][Google Scholar]
9. Sharma PV. Dravyaguna Vigyana. Vol. 2. Reprint 2019. Varanasi: Chaukhamba Bharati Academy [Crossref][PubMed][Google Scholar]
10. Sharma PV. Dravyaguna Vigyana. Vol. 2. Reprint 2019. Varanasi: Chaukhamba Bharati Academy [Crossref][PubMed][Google Scholar]
11. Bhavamisra. Bhavaprakasha Nighantu. Commentary by Chunekar KC, edited by Pandey GS. Varanasi: Chaukhamba Bharati Academy; Reprint 2024. [Crossref][PubMed][Google Scholar]
12. Sharma PV. Dhanwantari Nighantu. Chandanadi Varga, Mishrak Varga. Varanasi: Chaukhamba Orientalia; 2005. [Crossref][PubMed][Google Scholar]
13. Narahari P. Raja Nighantu. Edited by Tripathi I. Karaviradi Varga. 2nd ed. Varanasi: Chaukhamba Krishnadas Academy; 1998 [Crossref][PubMed][Google Scholar]
14. Kaiyadeva Pandit V. Kaiyadeva Nighantu. Edited by Sharma PV, Sharma G. Aushadhi Varga. Varanasi: Chaukhamba Orientalia; 1979 [Crossref][PubMed][Google Scholar]

15. Government of India, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Department of Ayush. The Ayurvedic Pharmacopoeia of India. Part 1. 1st ed. Vol. 1. New Delhi: Government of India; 2001 [Crossref][PubMed][Google Scholar]

16. Sharma PV. Classical Uses of Medicinal Plants. 1st ed. Varanasi: Chaukhamba Bharati Academy; 1996. [Crossref][PubMed][Google Scholar]

17. Government of India, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Department of Ayush. The Ayurvedic Pharmacopoeia of India. Part 1. 1st ed. Vol. 1. New Delhi: Government of India; 2001 [Crossref][PubMed][Google Scholar]

18. Sharma PV. Dravyaguna Vigyana. Vol. 2. Reprint 2019. Varanasi: Chaukhamba Bharati Academy [Crossref][PubMed][Google Scholar]

Disclaimer / Publisher's Note: The statements, opinions and data contained in all publications are solely those of the individual author(s) and contributor(s) and not of Journals and/or the editor(s). Journals and/or the editor(s) disclaim responsibility for any injury to people or property resulting from any ideas, methods, instructions or products referred to in the content.