Chaami and Buddu learn about Natural Dental Care

Shikha Hajela

New session at school was to begin soon. Final exams were over, result was out. Buddu was enjoying his vacation with Chaami. Their favourite activity was playing hide and seek. Buddu would climb a tree and lie there like a leopard while Chaami believed in disguising herself as a tree or flower.

Chaami was watching TV when Buddu came to play with her. "Chaami, I am going to the playground, do you want to come along" he asked. "No, I don’t feel like coming, you go ahead Buddu", she replied. Buddu had never before seen Chaami so glum, he was immediately very concerned. "What is the matter Chaami, are you not feeling well" he enquired.

"No, Buddu, there is nothing wrong with me. My nanaji had a terrible toothache last night, he was up all night. Amma has gone over to nanaji’s place. She hasn’t called me yet; I don’t know what is going on. I don’t know what to do" said Chaami in a worried tone. "Don’t worry Chaami, let’s go over to mamaji’s place. He would know what to do".

Buddu’s mother and mamaji were in the garden when Buddu and Chaami arrived.

"Ma, Chammi’s nanaji had a toothache last night and aunty left for his place and now Chaami is worried, what should she do" said Buddu in one breath. "First thing that you both need to do is to calm down", Buddu’s mom said slowly. "He has toothache which can cause lot of pain but at least it is not life threatening. I think we should call Chaami’s mother and find out what is going on".

As they stepped inside the house, phone started ringing. Chaami and Buddu ran towards it and Chammi grabbed the receiver. It was indeed her mother on the other side. "How is nanaji? Has the pain gone? When can I see him" asked Chaami? "Don’t worry Chammi, I am bringing him home so you will be able to see him soon. I need to talk to your Aunty now. Thanks, Alka for taking care of Chaami. Baba had intense toothache last night. My mom had applied clove oil to his tooth that has helped a lot. As you know he is diabetic and very fussy about invasive procedures so I want to show him to an Ayurveda dentist. The one he usually goes to is out of town. Do you know anyone I can take him to" enquired Chaami’s mother. "Yes, there is ......"

As their mothers where talking, Buddu and Chaami went to the garden and started chatting with Buddu’s mamaji.

After hearing her mother’s voice Chaami had calmed down and was her normal self by now. "Mamaji, what is an Ayurveda dentist", asked Chaami. "What a mouthful that word is for you little kids. In kid’s language, he is simply a person who uses ayurveda to treat dental problems", answered mamaji. "Can I become one once I grow up", asked Chammi. "Yes, you can but first you need to understand what it is all about. Let me see what I can do".

He returned after sometime with a wide grin. "It has been all arranged. I have asked my friend Dr Rao who has done dentistry in Ayurveda to give a small talk in your school Chammi. He has agreed, now all I have to do is fix up a day with your school", "That is great mamaji", said Chammi.

Dr Rao was a very jovial person and in his talk he explained the importance of oral hygiene especially for kids. Then he spoke about his native village where people had rich traditional knowledge about Daton or Datun (twigs of different herbs used for chewing and preparing a tooth brush for teeth cleaning). He also mentioned about various herbs used for dental care. When the toothpaste culture was not introduced, the Daton was an integral part of everyone’s daily routine. The Daton prepared from Neem and Babool twigs are still in use. The traditional healers recommend different twigs to be used as Daton to different patients according to their problems. And then, Dr Rao explained them all about the wonder herb, Vajradanti. Turn overleaf......
**Botanical Name:** Barleria prionitis

**Family:** Acanthaceae

**Common English Name:** Porcupine Flower

**What are my Vernacular names?**

- Hindi: Kantasaria/Vajradanti
- Gujarati: Kanta shari, Vajradanti
- Bengali: Zanti
- Kannada: Mulu Goranti
- Malayalam: Kuttivetila

- Sanskrit: Kurantak
- Marathi: Koranthi
- Tamil: Kundan
- Telugu: Goredun

**Where am I found?**

I am found as a commonly grown herb in India, widely found growing along the hedges and neglected areas near habitations, open scrub forests, and rocky habitats throughout the tropical parts of India from South up to foothills of Himalayan ranges. I am also grown as a hedge plant in the gardens.

I am cosmopolitan in distribution, and globally found distributed in many parts of the world such as United States of America, Australia, and parts of Asia in Indonesia, Malaysia and in Philippines.

**How do I look like?**

I am an erect bushy shrub about 1.5 metres tall. My leaves are narrowly to broadly elliptic, lanceolate, entire and appraised, hairy beneath, the entire apex spine tipped; tender leaves usually soft with hairy beneath, inflorescences are auxiliary and terminal spike clusters, many flowered, up to 10 cm long. Flowers are sessile, borne on spine tipped, leaf like bracts, bright orange-yellow in colour, Capsules 1.5 - 2.5 cm long, brown, minutely hairy, beaked, seeds are two per capsule, orbicular in outline, compressed and hairy. The flowering season is September to March.
TEETH WITH VAJRADANTI

What are my Uses?

- The herb is considered Vajradanti described in ancient Ayurvedic literature. The word Vajradanti (diamond teeth)-means that it strengthens the teeth and makes them as tough as the diamond.

- Its twigs and leaves are chewed to maintain dental hygiene and to guard the teeth against decay.

Medicinal Uses

- Vajradanti has numerous medicinal properties including treating fever, respiratory diseases, toothache, joint pains and a variety of other ailments; and it has several cosmetic uses.

- A mouthwash made from root tissue is used to relieve toothache and treat bleeding gums.

- A paste of the leaves with salt is applied to strengthen the gums and bring relief from toothache.

- Leaves are chewed as such to relieve toothache.

- Tooth powder is also prepared from this plant.

- The leaves are used to promote healing of wounds and to relieve joint pains and toothache.

- Because of its antiseptic properties, extracts of the plant are incorporated into herbal cosmetics and hair products to promote skin and scalp health.

GET RID OF YOUR TOOTHACHE

Apply vajradanti leaf juice mixed with honey on your aching tooth, your toothache will disappear. This can also be applied on bleeding gums.