

Expanding our Options in Anthroposophic Therapy

Rudolf Steiner's Insights into the Spiritual Significance

of the Pharmaceutical Ashing Process

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Over the years Rudolf Steiner recommended a number of novel pharmaceutical processes. Among the many, here are a few examples: the use of metals that have gone through a vaporization and then a condensing state- leading to so called “metal mirrors”; the incorporation of minerals into growing plants called “the vegetableized minerals”; forming new mineral remedies based on so-called “plant models”; and many more. These have led to what are today considered core anthroposophic remedies.

A common thread among the above-mentioned processes is the unique introduction of working with minerals in therapy. Rudolf Steiner however also wanted remedies made with the ashes of plants, especially of plant roots, and this direction has been much less observed than the previously mentioned examples. This will be the topic of the brief considerations here. (We are not trying by any means to say that serious efforts have not been made by such important anthroposophic companies as the Weleda and the Wala. However, to our knowledge, none of these or similar companies have attempted up to now to come out with dedicated lines of supplements that contain the salts and ashes of the plants as Rudolf Steiner envisioned it and how we characterize it below.)

Rudolf Steiner points out in general that minerals introduced into the body have a special affinity to the Ego organization, strengthening and supporting it. He also mentions that the plants have a special affinity to the astral body, the animal products to the etheric body, and surprisingly enough, human products introduced into the human organism (such as blood transfusions, etc) rest as physical matter in the physical body. The fact that a plant affects the astral body has to be understood correctly though because Rudolf Steiner will very often refer to the therapeutic influence of plants on the etheric body as opposed to the astral. One has to understand him correctly. He explains in some of the lectures directed towards physicians that the plants and herbs will of course strengthen the astral body but that the astral body in turn will then stimulate the etheric body so that the ultimate effect will be of the plant having a therapeutic effect on the etheric body.

It is also significant to know how Rudolf Steiner describes the physical – spiritual constitution of the plant. Aside from its obvious physical appearance the plant has of course its main expression in the light

forces, the etheric body. This is manifested mainly in the dominant characteristic green color that the plants have. The plants also however have a “tinge” of an astral nature manifested either in the color of the flowers or even more significantly, from a certain point of view, in the aromatic substances that give the well-known fragrances of the herbs. Where then would we find the “plant Ego”? This Rudolf Steiner explains is anchored in the minerals and trace minerals of the plant.

In a sense, as each plant has its own “Ego signature” not surprisingly then each plant has its own characteristic “mineral signature”. This is briefly – and incompletely – illustrated in the table below (Scholten).

The plants in the left column show a relative abundance in the mineral noted in the right column when compared to many other plants.

PLANTS	MINERAL
Hedera helix, Bryonia dioica, Conium maculatum	Argentum
Tormentilla erecta, Verbena officinalis, Paeonia officinalis	Arsenicum
Melissa officinalis	Barium
Chelidonium majus	Beryllium
Thuja occidentalis, Ulmus campestris	Calcium
Bellis perenis	Chromium
Verbena officinalis, Tussilago petasites, Tormentilla erecta	Cuprum
Chelidonium majus, Taraxacum officinalis, Urtica dioica	Ferrum
Belladonna, Hyoscyamus niger	Lithium
Alchemilla vulgaris, Melilotus officinalis, Scutellaria	Magnesium
Ruta graveolens, Cimicifuga racemosa	Manganese
Bryonia dioica, Fraxinus excelsior, Petroselinum crispum, Gnaphalium leontopodium	Plumbum
Bryonia dioica, Vinca minor, Alchemilla vulgaris	Silicium
Scrophularia nodosa, Glechoma hederacea, Vinca minor, Leonorus cardiaca	Stibium

Aconitum napelus	Strontium
Cheledonium majus, Cimicifuga racemosa, Angelica archangelica	Vanadium

Clearly then, having an understanding of the mineral composition of the plant is of considerable importance. Using plants in therapy can have a deep influence on all three spiritual members of the Human Being – on the Ego (through the minerals), on the astral body (f. ex. through the oils, etc.) and on the etheric body (through the carbohydrates and proteins). Obviously it can lead us to the new realization that we must consider not only the carbohydrates and the proteinaceous components of the plant material but also to wonder about its mineral makeup.

It does of course lead us to a deeper understanding of Rudolf Steiner’s insistence that the mineral characteristics of the plant have such a central significance in anthroposophic therapy.

Some of the minerals and salts of the herb will of course “leak out” from the entire plant during even the most elementary extraction process. But not all, and not easily. To “release” the silica from horsetail (equisetum) many hours of boiling the plant are needed. The most reliable way to really work with a full contingent of the minerals is to burn the plant material and obtain the ashes of the plant. (The minerals can then, if desired, be filtered out from the ashes with the help of solutions of varying acidity. A combination of salts and ashes, or just ashes, can then be integrated into the final formula.)

The ashes of course have other qualities than “just” the minerals. Clearly, ashes are not identical to minerals since ashes contain mineral and carbonized organic substances, acids, bases, etc. Rudolf Steiner ascribes great significance to these ashes. As can be easily understood each plant has its own characteristic “ash signature”. This can be seen in the elemental analysis of ash table (Misra).

Wood ash composition

Table 4. Elemental analysis of ash at 600°C (wt% of ash)

Element	Pine	Aspen	Poplar	R. Oak	W. Oak	W. Oak Bark	D. F. Bark
Calcium	29.05	21.17	25.67	36.58	31.35	36.14	34.26
Potassium	16.24	11.25	7.93	6.08	10.25	0.97	2.78
Magnesium	7.03	3.55	9.09	5.20	7.57	0.34	0.37
Sulfur	1.07	0.70	1.02	1.80	1.21	0.40	0.52
Phosphorus	0.84	1.18	0.95	1.56	0.56	0.08	0.51
Manganese	4.04	0.14	0.45	1.49	0.14	0.16	0.37
Zinc	0.36	0.34	0.04	0.22	0.08	0.05	0.07
Iron	0.58	0.26	0.32	n.d.	0.09	0.01	0.26
Aluminum	0.47	0.14	0.35	0.68	<0.03	<0.03	0.59
Sodium	0.06	0.06	2.30	0.08	<0.06	<0.06	<0.06
Silicon	n.d.	0.11	n.d.	n.d.	0.13	0.12	0.24
Boron	0.06	0.05	0.05	0.08	0.04	0.007	0.07
Copper	0.04	0.03	0.03	0.07	0.02	<0.002	0.02

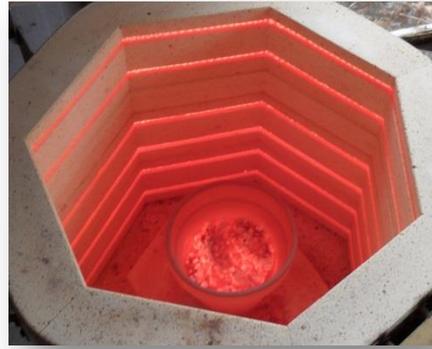
n.d.—not determined.

Incidentally, a point on the research into the making of the ashes should be made here.

As one can see in the table above the wt% of ash is given for 600°C. This highlights the fact that a “right” temperature must be found in order to obtain the most appropriate “signature”.



Drying and Ashing Oven



Experimental set up showing the ashing of the pueraria plant.



Elm tree ashes

An extremely high temperature might lead to volatilization of crucial components and thus distort the picture.

At True Botanica we have begun to do careful research into that direction and are utilizing drying and ashing ovens that will yield reproducible results every time a particular plant ash is being made.

Ashes can have an effect in various parts of the body including in the nervous system, the rhythmical system and the metabolic system. As an example one can look at the medical course of 1921 where R. Steiner characterizes the ashes from the point of view of the rhythmical system. He points out that during breathing a burning like process takes place in the human body which results in internal ash substances. These substances are imbued with extra-terrestrial forces, with imponderable forces, forces that are healing to the rhythmical system. They release the astral body and enable us to go to sleep. In an analogous fashion when plant materials are burned their ashes can be used as healing remedies to help the astral body loosen itself from the physical, help the person to go to sleep, but even more fundamentally help in a variety of health conditions that result in spasms, motor tics and other nervous irritations that point to an astral body that is too strongly connected to the physical.

We are making at True Botanica such a specific remedy called Cinis Radix Comp™ that is constituted from the ashes of the seven major trees – hornbeam, ash, cherry, oak, elm, maple, and birch.

There is an additional aspect however that we might want to consider in relationship to this topic.

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In a lecture given on June 25, 1922 Rudolf Steiner points out that the roots (and the vegetative part of the plant in general) are governed by the Moon forces. On the other hand the flower (and by extension the reproductive parts of the plant) stand under the influence of the Sun forces. By bringing together the Moon and the Sun Forces one obtains the true healing, mercurial forces of that particular herb. (The alchemical Mercury referred to here is the connecting force between the Moon and the Sun). The question arises of course how to get the so-called Sun forces into the Moon area. Rudolf Steiner reveals here that by subjecting the roots, for example, to burning - fire and light processes- one brings the equivalent of the Sun forces into the Moon area. Rudolf Steiner asks that after “burning the root of such a plant and bringing to it the element of light” we preserve the powder that has been made from these ashes in order to use this then for therapeutic purposes.

Practical Applications

As mentioned above we feel that such an indication of Rudolf Steiner’s has received less attention in the past than it deserved. At True Botanica we have attempted to work strongly – and will continue to do so into the future – to bring out an ever-increasing line of plant products that contain not only extracts of the generally acknowledged, active plant ingredients as such, but also to add into the final formulation the minerals inherent and native to that particular plant.

How are our remedies (dry capsule supplements, pellets or liquid herbal tinctures) made?

Practically speaking, for the liquid remedies, after obtaining a mother tincture we burn the “left over cake” of the plant and then add the resulting salts and ashes to the before mentioned mother tincture. This then becomes the final formulation in the commercially available product. In some of our powdered and capsule products, the pure plant material itself is burned and again the salts and ashes are then added back to the final product mix.

When potentized remedies are made the potentizing is made from the combined mother tincture of the plant to which its salts and ashes have been already added.

Here we mention only a few plants for which ashing has been done and ashes have been added to the final formula:

- **Angelica**
- **Arnica**
- **Astragalus**
- **Belladonna**
- **Berberine**
- **Chamomile**
- **Cinchona**
- **Curcumin**
- **Gentian**
- **Ginger**
- **Ginseng**
- **Goldenrod**
- **Iris**

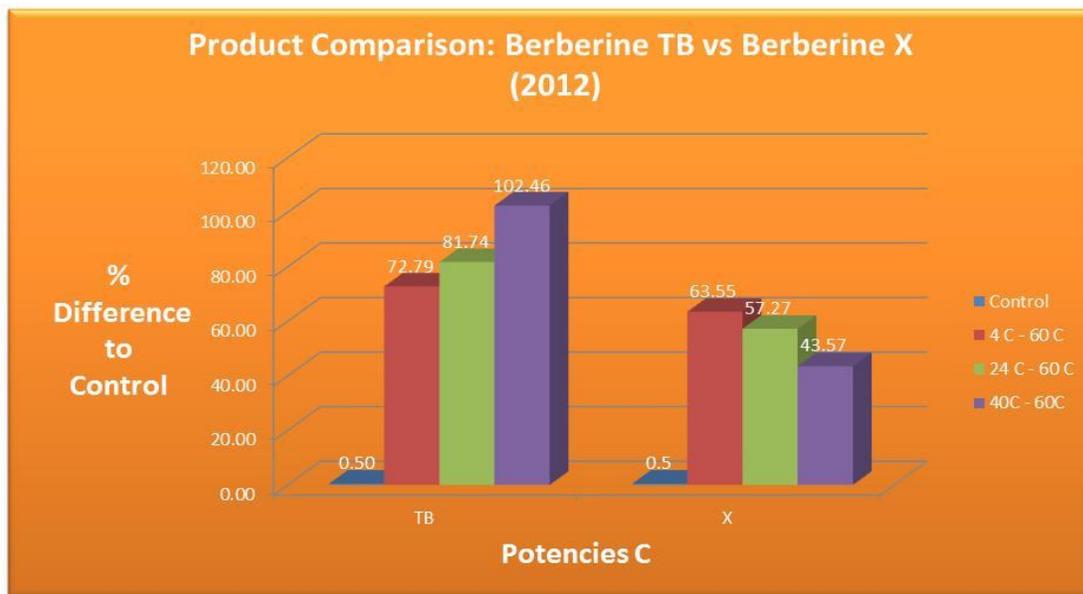
- **Lightroot**
- **Lovage**
- **Pelargonium**
- **Teucrium**
- **Tormentilla, and more.**

(To find out more about specific products containing salts and ashes, their use, dosages, etc, please visit the True Botanica website, www.truebotanica.com .)

Our clinical observations have indeed confirmed that this manner of formulating of the plant material ---
-with the addition of their native salts and ashes - seems to be indeed more efficacious than when the minerals were not specifically added to the final formula.

We have also compared our formulations to those of other companies through laboratory experiments.

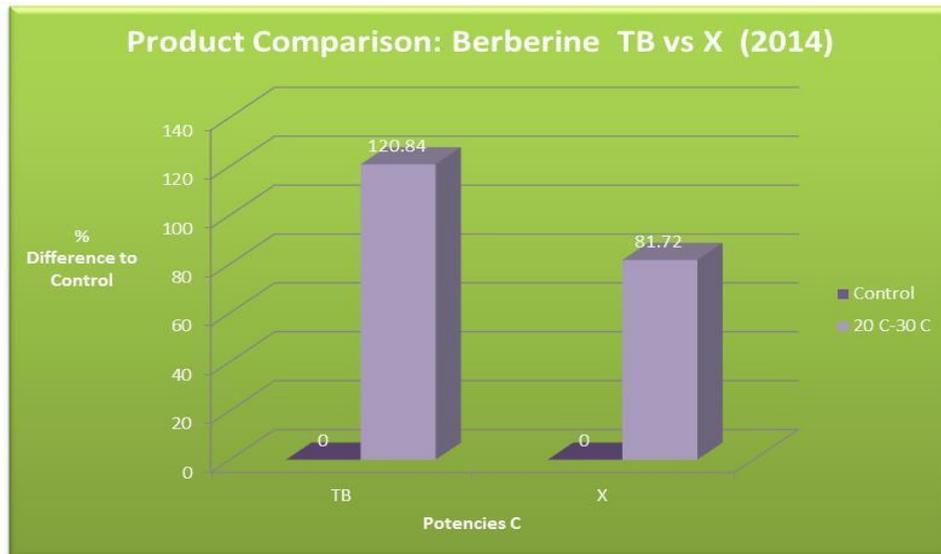
Below one can see an experiment where our Berberine Plus™ was compared to the commercially available Berberine Supplement of Company X.



We have subjected both formulations to the so-called Kolisko Validation™ test that is being performed at the Lili Kolisko Institute. (The detailed description of the test can be found in full at the Institute website at www.Koliskoinstitute.org .) Essentially wheat seeds are being exposed to sequential potencies of the formulas and the effect on the growth of the wheat seeds is being recorded. The greater the change that a potency causes in the growth of the seeds, in comparison to the control, the more active the substance is deemed to be in its effect on the biological system. A greater effect on the living system was considered to be beneficial by Rudolf Steiner (as indicated to Lili Kolisko while the two of them were working on the initial protocols.)

In the graph above (orange, 2012) it is evident that the True Botanica berberine product is significantly more active both in its lower as well as in its higher potencies than the berberine formula from Company X. That a product is expected to affect a living system as the actual substance goes without saying. But it
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is significant to be able to demonstrate that even at very high dilutions the activity continues. While the True Botanica berberine causes an over 100% enhancement of the growth of the wheat seeds, the company X berberine is nearly 40% below that level.



The experiment was repeated again two years later (see green graph above, 2014) and gave comparable results. The difference between the activity of the True Botanica and the compared company X is again approximately 40%.

It is hoped that these formulations will not only contribute to increasing people's health but also bring to light advances in therapy that are possible through anthroposophic thinking and experimentation. Continuing use of these remedies will also ensure that valuable indications of Rudolf Steiner do not die out. Additionally, when a person needs a more immediate effect on the etheric life- body (as mentioned above) and one would want to resort to a stronger, "tried and true" herbal extract that already has a good reputation in the desired direction, one can use the curcumin, the astragalus, etc with the confidence that this type of formulation has a cosmic component to it.

(We might note here R. Steiner's comments in his 1920 medical course to physicians. Rudolf Steiner points out the importance of recognizing the differences in the mineral and ash content of various plants. He adds: "in these different results of the same process of incineration, we have something I would describe as an external document of the plant's relation to the whole cosmic order, and not to forces ruling the earth alone.")

In today's culture where tragically the Ego of Human Beings is increasingly unable to fully take hold of the entire personality, especially to take hold of the physical body, the work with appropriately prepared salts and ashes is of inestimable importance. In a time such as ours, a time that is darker and darker -both literally and figuratively speaking – the ability to bring Sun forces into our remedies can perhaps not be overestimated.

One more comment...

In the Act of Consecration service of the Christian Community (the equivalent of the Mass) the incense is prepared at a certain moment during the ritual. A particular combination including frankincense is placed on hot coals and reduced to ashes. From the vessel, that the coals and ashes are in, arise the smoke and fragrance that result from the ashing process. It is important to hear the words that the priest speaks into this environment of transformed air, smoke, and aroma. He intones: "Come to us Spirit of the widths of space and of the depths of time, and hallow our offering with Your Holy Being. May our grounding in the Spirit fill the smoke with blessed Spirit, through Christ's living in our praying. Christ in us – out of the Christened soul may the smoke ascend, and upon us descend Your grace." Incense at the altar is used in the rituals of many other confessions essentially with the same intent of allowing the divine spiritual grace to descend upon the assembled community aided by the ascended sacrifice.

Ashes (together with water and salt) are also used in the sacrament of baptism as a means of helping the Ego to be able to fully incarnate into the physical body.

Potentizing the ashes for the remedies – in addition to putting them as actual substance into the formulas- is the equivalent of creating an "ash smoke". The potency brings the ash substance into higher spheres and connects it with cosmic forces that respond to it.

It is with these kind of insights in mind that we can be truly moved to realize the significance of Rudolf Steiner's impulse to work with ashes in remedies. The physician prescribing remedies containing ashes, or the person taking these kinds of remedies, can be filled with gratefulness that they participate in a deeply holy, esoteric act. Using f. ex. an ash containing curcumin product elevates this act from a mere attempt to fight, among others, inflammation (which is in itself of course a highly spiritual and significant healing act) to a completely new level. It allows the transformation of a seemingly mundane activity – seemingly just part of a "functional medicine" – into an act worthy of having a place in anthroposophic therapy.

As R. Steiner hoped often that it would happen, it transforms the "Laboratory table" into an "Altar Table".

(The True Botanica Company and the nonprofit 501(c)3 Lili Kolisko Institute are independent institutions. The bulk of the profits coming from the sale of the True Botanica Company's products goes to support medical research, education, and outreach by the Institute.)

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