MISHIMI TEETA, A unique herb of Arunachal Pradesh

-------------------------G. K. GHOSH

A small shrub grows wild in Mishimi hills of Arunachal Pradesh is unique in the sense that it is used for treatment of almost any disease or disorder we may name. it grows only on high hills where there is snow fall but in spite of many attempts it could not be grown. After its virtues are known its price went up in much extent thus depriving people of North Eastern India.

The plant is often referred to as Mamira in ancient Indian scriptures. But according to some scholars Mamira is not this plant but this plant was known as Propoundorik. In any case while this debate may continue, this is known as Mishimi Teeta in Assamese because it grows in Mishimi hills and having teeta or bitter taste. In botanical nomenclature it is known as Coptis teeta Wall., belonging to Ranunculaceae botanical family. While this plant is found growing in Mishimi hills, there is another plant of same genus and family that grows on high hills of China having identical virtues to lesser extent but can be grown. The plant is Coptis javonica Linn.

The rhizome of the plant contains: 7.7 to 8.9% moisture, 1.5 to 2.7% resin, 7.1 to 8.6% berberine and 3.1 to 3.3% ash. Root bark contains alkaloids coptine and berberine. The rhizome is used as medicine combining with many other items.

There are many references on this plant in ancient Indian scriptures. Charaka Samhita refers it as paste applied on head to cure diseases of head and brain. Its paste with sandal wood oil is applied to give relief in case of fever. Charaka also recommended its application to treat tuberculosis, to give reief for burning sensation in case of leprosy etc. Susruta Samhita did also discussed about it. Various Niguntoes too discussed on this herb elaborately.

According to Unani system the rhizome is useful for treatment of various diseases of eyes. It is also useful for treating problem of urine and sexually transmitted diseases. In China it is used for cure of diabetes since it rejuvenates pancreas.

The rhizome is considered as bitter in taste, tonic, good for stomach and appetizer. It is used for treating atonic dyspepsia, weakness, fever and for treating eye diseases.

The rhizome is exported for preparing ointment and surma for eyes.

---------------------------------------------