

RASADRAVYA VARGEEKARANA CONCEPT AND RELEVANCE

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ABSTRACT

Ancient *Acharyas* have classified the metals and minerals used in *Rasashastra* into different groups and have given different names. Most of the *dravyas* were grouped in different ways depending upon their usefulness towards Mercury and its various processes. *Parada* can attain the capacity to impart *Deha siddhi* (making the body healthy and strong) & *Loha siddhi* (Converting lower metals to higher metals) only with the help of *Maharasa*, *Uparasa*, *Sadharanarasa*, *Loha* & such other substances.

Key words: *Maharasa*, *Uparasa*, *Sadharanarasa*, *Loha*, *Ratna*.

INTRODUCTION

Rasashastra means the knowledge concerning to Mercury, metals and minerals, their processing techniques and uses. *Acharyas* classified these metals and minerals into different groups and has given different names. *Adhunikavargeekarana* (Modern classification) of *Rasadravyas* started from 8th century AD and was initially done in *Rasatarangini* which includes Lohadi Vijnaniya Taranga, Ratna Vijnaniya Taranga etc. Later YadviTrikamji *Acharya*, Siddinandan Mishra etc., contributed more. The *dravyas* are grouped in different ways depending upon their usefulness towards Mercury and its various processes. From this point of view following groups *Maharasa*, *Uparasa* & *Sadharanarasa* are mentioned. Certain *dra-*

vyas were grouped on the basis of their chemical and physical characteristics. The best example is *Loha varga* (metals). Certain *dravyas* were kept in various groups on the basis of their external appearance and the cost. *Ratnas* comes under this group.

Maharasa

Substances that are very useful in *Parada karma* is categorized under *Maharasa*. Most of them are nearer to *Parada*. All of them are having metallic contents. *Satwas* useful in *Parada karma* are extracted from *Maharasa*. *Acharyas* are having difference of opinion regarding the number & substances of *Maharasa*.

Maharasas according to Rasavagbhata;

Abhraka (Mica), *Vaikranta* (Tourmaline), *Makshika* (Chalco pyrite), *Vimala* (Iron pyrite), *Shilajatu* (Black bitumen), *Sasyaka* (Blue vitriol), *Chapala* (Bismuth), *Rasaka* (Calamine).¹

Here *Acharya* has given *Rasa samnja* for these 8 dravyas. *Acharya* has considered this *varga* as *Rasa* itself (so nearer to *Parada*). This group is generally considered as *Maharasa*. In another *sloka* he has given *Maharasa samnja* to another 8 dravyas i.e, *Rasaka*, *Vimala*, *Tapyas*, *Chapala*, *Tutha*, *Anjana*, *Hingula* & *Sasyaka*.² In the context of *Rasapoojadravayas*, has mentioned special place for these *Maharasas* in *Rasamandapa*.

Abhraka is given as *Grasa* to mercury, which alone is *naivedya* (offering).³ Herbal drugs merged in *Seesa* (lead), lead in tin & tin is merged in copper. Copper absorbed in silver, silver in gold & gold is absorbed in mercury. *Parada* which has taken *Abhraka grasa* attains the stability by absorbing all the metals.⁴ **Makshika** said to be the life of mercury, inevitable in various mercurial operations like *Dvandwamelapana*.⁵ **Shveta Chapala** which resembles silver is useful in mercurial operations especially *Rasa bandhana*.⁶ **Rasaka** and *Parada* are considered as best *Sidha rasas*.⁷ Those who can make *Rasa & Rasaka* sustainable to fire, can acquire & keep them in control – both *Dehasiddhi & Lohasiddhi*.⁸

According to *Rasahridayatantra*, *acharya* has enumerated eight *rasas* namely *Vaikrantha* (flour spar), *kanta* (magnetite), *Sasyaka*, *Makshika*, *Vimala*, *Shilajathu*, *Sasyaka*, *Hingula* and *Rasaka*.⁹ In *Gorakshasamhitha*, the author has included *Abhraka*, *Vaikrantha*, *Makshika*, *Vimala*, *Shilajathu*, *Rasaka* and *Hingula*. In the text, we can

find only seven. But the *sloka* ends as “*Daradoastamah*” which means that the eight one is “*darada*” (*hingula*). *Sailo* (*Shilajathu*) can be considered as *Saila* – duo, meaning *Shilajathu* and *Saila*, a synonym of *Capala*.¹⁰

In *Rasarnava*, *Makshika*, *Vimala*, *Silajathu*, *Rasaka*, *Sasyaka*, *Hingula* and *Srotonjana* (*Stybnite*) are considered as *Maharasas*.¹¹ In *Rasendra Chudamani*, *Ghana* (Mica), *Rajavartha* (*Lapiz lazuli*), *Vaikrantha*, *Sasyaka*, *Vimala*, *Silajathu*, *Tuttha*, and *Tapyas* (*Copper pyrites*) are enumerated as *Maharasas*.¹² According to *Rasapaddhati*, *Maharasa* are eight in number namely *Vaikrantha*, *Abhraka*, *Silajathu*, *Capala*, *Makshika* and *Tuttha*¹³ and according to *Rasaprakasha sudhakara*, *Abhraka*, *makshika*, *Vaikrantha*, *Vimala*, *Rasaka*, *Silajathu*, *Rajavarta* and *Sasyaka* comes under *Maharasa*.¹⁴

Uparasa

Uparasa group includes substances useful in *Parada karma* and potentiation. They are comparatively less useful than the minerals of ‘*Maharasa*’ group. *Uparasa* group of drugs are used as an adjuvant in the processing of *Rasa & Maharasas*. Most of them are supportive drugs. Most of them are *Gandhaka* & its compounds. No metals are included under this category & most of them are metalloids.

According to some *Acharyas* the minerals found used for *Parada karma* is grouped as *Uparasa*. These texts did not classify them as *Maharasa*, *Uparasa* and *Sadharana rasa* groups.

According to *Rasaratnasamuchaya* *Uparasas* includes *Gandhaka* (*Sulphur*), *Gairika* (*Red ochre*), *Kasisa* (*Green vitriol*), *Kankshi* (*Alum*), *Haratala* (*Orpiment*), *Manahshila* (*Realgar*), *Anjana* (*Collyrium*) & *Kankushtha* (*Rubharb*).¹⁵ Mythologically *Gandhaka* got its origin from

the menstrual flow of Goddess *Parvathi* (*Abhraka as Sukra*). As these are the products of Goddess hence can mix up with mercury which is claimed to be the *Retas* of Lord *Shiva*. **Gandhaka** & *Abhraka* are highly important and essential to potentiate *Parada* in many ways. *Gandhaka* is used for *Jarana* and *Murchhana*.¹⁶ *Gandhaka* is capable of increasing potency of *Parada*. **Gairika** *sattva* can readily mix with *Parada* and has better properties compared to *Gairika* itself.¹⁷ **Tuvari** is used for *Paradajarana* and *sattva* is useful in the *kramanasamskara* of *Parada*. **Talaka** *sattva* is used for attaining *Rasasiddhi*. **Anjana** when given seven *bhavana* in each of cowdung juice, cow's urine, ghee, honey & *vasa*; gains power of *Rasabandhana* very quickly.¹⁸

According to *Rasahridayatantra*, *Acharya* has enumerated *Gandhaka*, *Talaka*, *Manashila*, *Sphatika*, *Kasisa*, *Gairika*, *Kankushta*, and *Anjana* under *Uparasa*.¹⁹ The authors of *Rasahridayatantra*, *Goraksha samhitha*, and *Rasaprakasha Sudhakara* have same opinion as mentioned in *Rasaratnasamuchaya* regarding the drugs under *Uparasa*. *Gandhaka*, *Talaka*, *Sila*, *Saurastri*, *Khaga*, *Gairika*, *Rajavarta* and *Kankushta* comes under *Uparasa* according to *Rasarnava*.²⁰ The author of *Rasendra Chudamani* included *Gandhaka*, *Haratala*, *Sphatika*, *Manashila*, *Sauviranjana*, *Kankushta*, *Kasisa* and *Gairika* under this category.²¹ The author of *Rasapaddhati* included only three drugs under *Uparasa* namely *Gandhaka*, *Haratala* and *Manashila*.²²

Sadharana rasa

Sadharanarasa includes *Kampillaka* (*Mallotus philippinensis*), *Gauripashana* (*Arsenic oxide*), *Navasagara* (*Ammonium chloride*), *Kapardika* (*Cowry*), *Agnijara* (*Ambergris*), *Girisindhoora* (*Red oxide of Mercury*), *Hingula*

(*Cinnabar*) and *Mriddarashringa* (*Litharge*).²³ *Sadharana rasa* are helpful in attaining *Rasasiddhi*. **Gauripashana** has the ability to enhance the power of *Parada*.²⁴ **Varatika** is very useful in the process of *Parada Jarana*.²⁵ **Agnijara** apart from enhancing the potency of *parada*, useful in *Deepana* & *Jarana* processes²⁶. **Girisindhoora** is considered to be the best in doing *Paradabandhana* & is useful both in *Deha siddhi* and *Loha siddhi*.²⁷ **Hingula** is useful in *Jarana* of *Parada*.²⁸ **Mriddarashringa** is supposed to be the best in the process of *Paradabandhana*.²⁹

In *Rasendra Chudamani*, *Kampilla*, *Malla*, *Navasara*, *Kaparda*, *Agnijara*, *Girisindura*, *Hingula* and *Mriddarsringa* are included under this group.³⁰

Loha

The word *Loha* is derived from '*Luh*' which means extraction. The synonym *Dhathu* is due to the fact that the substance which helps to hold the body tissues in proper health for a long period of time (*Dharana*). *Dhathus* are therapeutically used since thousands of years. These substances which, when taken in *Bhasma* form, helps to get rid of grey hairs, wrinkles, weakness, old age & diseases.

Lohavarga includes *Swarna* (*Gold*), *Rajata* (*Silver*), *Tamra* (*Copper*), *Loha* (*Iron*), *Naga* (*Lead*), *Vanga* (*Tin*), *Yasada* (*Zinc*), *Pittala* (*Brass*), *Kamsya* (*Bronze*) & *Vartalooha* (*kaamsya+taamra+pittala+loha+sis*)

Different types of *Lohas* are mentioned by ancient *acharyas* which includes 4 *Sudhalohas* namely *Swarna*, *Rajata*, *Tamra*, *Loha*, 2 *Putilohas* *Naga*, *Vanga* and 3 *Mishra lohas* namely *Pittala*, *Kamsya* & *Varthaloha*.³¹ According to *Rasajalanidhi* two more types are mentioned.

- *Mandura (Lohakittam)*– Iron when heated red hot & hammered, small pieces out of it & scattered all around.
- *Triloha* (under *Mishra Loha*) which is prepared by melting 25 parts of Gold, 16 parts of Silver, 10 parts of Copper together.

The Swarna produced with the help of *Parada* after *Vedhasamskara* is called *Parada-vidhaSvarna*. It is an excellent rejuvenator.³² *Tamra* which is light, brittle, rough & layered is useful in various mercurial processes.³³ *Tamrabhasma* is also used in *Rasa karma*.³⁴ *Rakthaloha* variety of *Kanthaloha* is useful in making *Parada* inert (*Baddha*). *Karshaka&Dravaka* types of *kanthaloha* are said to be useful in *Rasa karma*. *Vanga* is also used in *Parada karmas*. *PittalaDruti* (liquid) is useful in *Rasakarmas*.³⁵ *Bhunaga sattva* enhances the radiance i.e., energy of both *Parada&Vajra*.³⁶

Rasatarangini and *Rasamrta* have included *Yasada* under *Loha varga*. Under the heading *upadhathus*, *Rasatarangini* has mentioned *Mandura*, *Makshika*, *Kasisa*, *Tuttha*, *Kharpara*, and *Naga sindhura*. Arsenic and Arsenic compounds are mentioned separately in *Rasamrta* by the name *Mallavijnaniyam*.

Ratnas (Gems/ precious stones)

Ratnas are very useful in *Parada-bandhana* as well as *Rasakarmas*.³⁷ According to Hindu belief *Ratnas* are capable of mitigating the bad effects of *Navagrahas*. Good quality *Ratnas* are used in *Parada karma*, for rejuvenation, for donation, in worshipping Deities etc. *Ratnas* are helpful in both *Bandhana&Marana* of *Parada* apart from enhancing its qualities. *Ratnas* include *Vaikrantha*, *Suryakrantha*, *Hiraka*, *Mauktika*, *Mani*,

Chandrakantha, *Rajavartha*, *Garudodgaraka*, *Pushparaga*, *Gomeda*, *Padmaraga*, *Pravala*, *Vaidurya&Nilamani*³⁸. *Vajra* is helpful in both *Bandhana&Marana* of *Parada* apart from enhancing its qualities.³⁹

According to *Rasajalanidhi*, *Samanya Pancaratna* (Common five gems) includes *Nila*, *Vajra*, *Padmaraga*, *Mauktika* and *Vidruma*.⁴⁰

Uparatna(Semi – precious stones)

According to *Rasatarangini*, *Vaikranta*, *Suryakanta*, *Candrakanta*, *Rajavarta*, *Perojaka* and *Sphatikamani* are categorised under *Uparatnas*.⁴¹

CONCLUSION

The basis of *Rasadravyavargeekarana* is their role in *Parada karma*. While explaining the need for *shodhana&marana*, *Rasavagbhata* says, *Parada* can attain the capacity to impart the *Deha siddhi&Loha siddhi* only with the help of *Maharasa*, *Uparasa*, *Loha&* such other substances; which have special qualities and are used after purification & processing.⁴²

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