

COLLOCATION OF RASA DRAVYAS – AN EXPLORATION

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ABSTRACT

Rasashastra is an ancient science that was in practice in the *samhita kala* itself. Even though the usage of *rasa dravyas* were mentioned in ancient classical texts their usage began after the Buddhist era, i.e. 8th century. The classification of *rasa dravyas* have been explained differently by different *acharyas*. *Rasa chikitsa* was recognised due to its therapeutic superiority to other *chikitsas*. Due to its quick effect, lesser dose and maximum therapeutic efficacy, the usage of *rasa dravyas* became quite common. The objective of this article is to review the opinions of various authors and the ideology behind these. From *maharasa* to *vishavarga* different *rasadravyas* have been explained which depict the practices of different era. This can throw light on importance of these classifications.

Keywords: *Rasa Dravya*, Classification, *Rasashastra*.

INTRODUCTION

Main aim of *ayurveda* is attaining long life span. And the ultimate goal is to attain *moksha*. For the fulfillment of this a separate science called *Rasashastra* began to develop. It has been mentioned in *Rasendra sara sangraha* that with the usage of small dosage of these *rasa* preparations, quick therapeutic action could be achieved.¹

Rasashastra is a science that has evolved from ancient times from *deha vada* to *chikitsa vada*. Though the prehistoric texts like *Rigveda* and *Atharvaveda* have mentioned some of medicinal values of *swarna*, *rajata* etc., the regular use in *Ayurvedic* therapeutics started from Buddhist era. During this time i.e. 8th/9th century A.D. procedures such as *shodhana*, *jaarana*, *marana*, *moorchana* and *rasa samskaras* were developed. In *Kautilya Artha Shas-*

tra, *Chanakya* has mentioned *rasavedhaja* i.e. gold prepared artificially with the help of mercury. *Rasashastra* evolved through *deha vada*, *dhatu vada* and *chikitsa vada*. *Dhatu vada* developed to transform lower metals into higher metals whereas *deha vada* concentrated on strengthening the body by using it internally mainly to achieve *moksha*. In the later years after 20th century, *chikitsa vada* began to develop where main focus was therapeutics.

Rasa word has various meanings contextual wise. In *Rasashastra* *rasa* refers to *parada*. *Rasa* ingests all types of *dhatu*s so it is called *rasa*. It is *shiva virya* and destroys *roga*, *jara*, *mrutyu*.² Based on *parada* the *rasa dravyas* have been mainly classified.

Broadly classified as:

1. *Maharasa*
2. *Uparasa*
3. *Sadharana rasa*
4. *Dhatu and Upadhatu*
5. *Ratna and Uparatna*
6. *Sudha, Sikatha and Kshara varga*
7. *Visha and Upavisha*

1. Maharasa

Dravyas in this classification are potent with metals. They are used for processing *parada* and for therapeutic purposes. They are: *Abhraka* (Mica; Double silicate of aluminium and Potassium or sodium), *Vaikranta* (Tourmaline; $K_2OAl_2O_3 \cdot 6SiO_2$), *Makshika* (Chalcopyrite/Copper pyrite; Cu_2S, Fe_2S_3), *Vimala* (Iron pyrite; Fe_2S_3), *Shilajatu* (Black bitumen or mineral pitch), *Sasyaka* (Copper sulphate/blue vitriol; $CuSO_4 \cdot 7H_2O$), *Rasaka* (Zinc ore; $ZnO, ZnS, ZnCO_3$), *Chapala* (Bismuth/selenium).³

Table 1: Maharasa

<i>Dravya name</i>	<i>Rasahrudayantra 9/4</i>	<i>Goraksha Samhita 2/20</i>			<i>Rasaratnasamuchaya 2/1</i>	
<i>Abhraka</i>	---	+			+	
<i>Vaikranta</i>	+	+			+	
<i>Makshika</i>	+	+			+	
<i>Vimala</i>	+	+			+	
<i>Shilajatu</i>	+	+			+	
<i>Sasyaka</i>	+	+			+	
<i>Chapala</i>	---	---			+	
<i>Rasaka</i>	+	+			+	
<i>Kantaloha</i>	+	---			---	
<i>Hingula</i>	+	+			---	

<i>Dravya name</i>	<i>Rasarnava 7/2</i>	<i>R.Cu. 10/1</i>	<i>R.P.Su 5/2</i>	<i>Rasop. 4/4</i>	<i>Rasapadhati 1/38</i>	<i>Ayu.Pra 2/347</i>
<i>Abhraka</i>	--	+	+	--	+	--
<i>Vaikranta</i>	--	+	+	+	+	--
<i>Makshika</i>	+	+	+	+	+	--
<i>Vimala</i>	+	+	+	+	--	--
<i>Shilajatu</i>	+	+	+	+	+	--
<i>Sasyaka</i>	+	+	+	+	+	--
<i>Chapala</i>	+	--	--	+	+	--
<i>Rasaka</i>	+	--	+	--	--	--
<i>Hingula</i>	+	--	--	--	--	--
<i>Anjana</i>	+	--	--	--	--	--
<i>Rajavarta</i>	--	+	+	--	--	--
<i>Parada</i>	--	--	--	+	--	+
<i>Tutha</i>	--	+	--	--	--	--

R.Cu - Rasendra Chudamani, *R.P.Su* - Rasa Prakasha sudhakara, *Rasop.* - Rasopanishat, *Ayu.Pra* - Ayurveda Prakasha

2. Uparasa

They have been explained after *maharasa*. It may indicate its usefulness in different procedures of

parada or its action towards *parada*. They are: *Gandhaka* (Sulphur; S), *Gairika* (Ochre; Fe_2O_3), *Kasisa* (Ferrous sulphate/ green vitriol; $FeSO_4 \cdot 7H_2O$), *Kankshi* (Potash alum; $K_2SO_4 \cdot Al_2(SO_4)_3 \cdot 24H_2O$), *Haratala* (Orpiment, yellow arsenic; As_2S_3), *Manahshila* (Realgar; As_2S_2), *Anjana* (Collyrium), *Kankushta* (Gambosse tree extract).⁴

According to *Anandakanda- Gandhaka, gairika, kasisa, kanksi, haratala, manashila, anjana, kankushta, abhraka, kharpara, tutha, swarna makshika, varatika, hingula, sankha, bhunaga, tankana, silajatu, sindura, sambuka, chapala, haridra, agnijara, girisindura, kacalavana,*

*kampillaka, visha, gouripashana, saurashtri, mruddarashringa, ahiphena, shukti, shambuka, sabuni, navasara, chinaksara, guggulu, laksha, kshara, lavana, gorochana, amlavetasa, vanopala, valuka.*⁵

Table 2: Uparasa

Dravya name	Rasarnava 7/56	R.H.T 9/5	Go.sam 2/29	R.Pr.Su 6/1	R.Cu 11/1	R.R.S 3/1	R.Paddhati 1/55	Rasop. 4/5
Gandhaka	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Haratala	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Manashila	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Sphatika	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+
Kasisa	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+
Gairika	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+
Rajavarta	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Kankushta	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	-
Anjana	-	+	+	+	-	+	-	+
Sauveera	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-

R.H.T- *Rasa Hridaya Tantra*, Go.sam- *Goraksha Samhita*, R.Cu - *Rasendra Chudamani*, R.Pr.Su - *Rasa Prakasha sudhakara*, R.R.S - *Rasa ratna samuchaya*, R.Padhati- *Rasa Padhati*, Rasop. - *Rasopanishat*

3. Sadharana rasa

It is explained only by *Rasaratna samuchaya*. They are *Kampillaka* (*Mallotus philippinesis* Muell-arg), *Gouripashana* (Arsenious oxide; As_2O_3), *Navasadara* (Ammonium chloride; NH_2Cl), *Kapardika* (Cowries), *Agnijara* (Amber), *Girisindura* (Red oxide of mercury; HgO), *Hingula* (Cinnabar; HgS), *Mruddarashringa* (Litharge; PbO).⁶

4. Dhatu varga:

Although the above 3 are important classifications, *dhatu varga* is also having its own significance. They are mainly *Shudha loha*, *Putiloha* and *Mishra loha*. *Shuddha loha*- *Swarna*(Gold), *Rajatha*(Silver), *Tamra*(Copper), *Loha* (Iron), *Putiloha- Naga* (Lead), *Vanga* (Tin), *Mishra loha- Pittala*(Brass), *Kansya*(Bronze), *Varta*(Bronze).⁷ *Rasa hrudaya tantra*⁸- has explained the classification as *Saraloha-Swarna*, *Rajatha*, *Satvaloha-Tamra*, *Pittala*, *Teekshna*, *Kanta*, *Abhraka satva*, *Putiloha- Naga*, *Vanga*. *Yoga Ratnakara-Parada* is considered as *loha*. But other texts do not consider it under this group because of its liquid state.

Table 3: Dhatu varga

Dhatu name	Rasarnava 7/97	Rasop.4/3	Ananda kanda 1/9	Sha.sam 11/1	Rasapadhati 1/11	R.T. 15/2	Ayu.pra 3/1
Swarna	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Rajata	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Tamra	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Teekshna	+	+	+	+	--	--	--
Vanga	+	+	+	+	+	+	+

<i>Naga</i>	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Abhraka satva</i>	--	+	+	--	--	--	--
<i>Loha</i>	--	--	(<i>kanta,munda</i>)	--	+	+	+
<i>Yashada</i>	--	--	--	--	--	+	+
<i>Pittala</i>	--	--	+	+	+	--	--
<i>Kansya</i>	--	--	+	--	+	--	--
<i>Varta</i>			+	--	+	--	--

Rasop. - *Rasopanishat*, *Sha.sam* - *Sharangadhara Samhita*, *R.T* - *Rasa tarangini*, *Ayu.pra* - *Ayurveda Prakasha*

Upadhatu:

These drugs are having similar qualities of *dhatu* or vary somewhat from *dhatu*. These can be used as *pratidinhi dravya* in the *abhava* of *dhatu*. In the *abhava* of *Swarna - Swarnamakshika* is used. Similarly *Rajata - Rajatamakshika*, *Tamra - Tutha*, *Vanga -Kamsya*, *Yashada - Riti*, *Naga - Sindura*, *Loha - Shilajatu*.⁹

5. Ratna Varga

They are of mineral & animal origin which are found in rocks and are formed during the crust formation of the earth. They are durable, colorful & rare and the most valuable entity. These are classified on the basis of; Structure, Relation to the planets, Opacity & Transparency, Beauty and scarcity. They are; *Manikya* (Ruby), *Mukta* (Pearl), *Pravala* (Coral), *Tarkshya* (Emerald), *Pushparaga* (Topaz), *Vajra* (Diamond), *Nilam* (Sapphire), *Gomeda* (Zircon / Hessonite), *Vaidoorya* (Cat's eye).¹⁰

Table 4: Ratna varga

Ratna names	R.R.S 4/5	R.Cu 12/1	Rasop. 4/9	R.P.Su 7/2	An.Ka 1/9	R. Padhati 88	R.T 23/2
<i>Manikya</i>	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Mukta</i>	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Pravala</i>	+	+	-	+	+	+	+
<i>Tarkshya</i>	+	+	-	+	+	+	+
<i>Pushpa</i>	+	+	-	+	+	+	+
<i>Vajra</i>	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Nilam</i>	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Gomeda</i>	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Vaidoorya</i>	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Vaikranta</i>	-	-	+	-	-	-	-

R.R.S - *Rasa ratna samuchaya* *R.Cu* - *Rasendra Chudamani*, *Rasop.* - *Rasopanishat*, *R.P.Su* - *Rasa Prakasha sudhakara*, *An.ka* - *Ananda kanda*, *R.Padhati*- *Rasa Padhati*, *R.T*-*Rasa tarangini*

Uparatna:

They are *Vaikranta* (Tourmaline), *Perojaka* (Turquoise), *Suryakranta* (Sun stone), *Sphatika* (Quartz/rock crystal), *Candrakanta* (Moon stone), *Rajavarta* (Lapis lazuli).¹¹

Table 5: Uparatna

Uparatna	An. ka 1/12	Ayu.Pra 5/8	R.T 23/145
<i>Suryakantha</i>	+	+	+
<i>Chandranantha</i>	+	+	+
<i>Vaikranta</i>	+	+	+

<i>Rajavarta</i>	+	+	+
<i>Perojika</i>	+	+	+
<i>Sphatika</i>	--	--	+
<i>Tarakanta</i>	+	--	--
<i>Kanta</i>	+	--	--
<i>Sasyaka</i>	+	--	--
<i>Vimala</i>	+	--	--
<i>Lalamani</i>	--	+	--
<i>Muktashukti</i>	--	+	--
<i>Shankha</i>	--	+	--
<i>Karpoorashma</i>	--	+	--
<i>Kaacamani</i>	--	+	--
<i>Nilamani</i>	--	+	--
<i>Pitamani</i>	--	+	--
<i>Vishaharamani</i>	--	+	--
<i>Agnistambhakamani</i>	--	+	--
<i>Jalastambhakamani</i>	--	+	--

An.ka - Ananda kanda, *R.T* - Rasa tarangini, *Ayu. Pra* - Ayurveda Prakasha

Lavana varga- consists of *Saindhava*, *Samudra*, *Vida*, *Sauvarchala*, *Audbhida lavana*¹⁵

6. Sudha varga

It was first categorized by *Rasamrita*. The main content is calcium. They are useful in *parada bandana*, *jarana* and *mrudukarana* of *rasa dravyas* along with liquefying metals like gold and in *shodhana* of *dravyas* like *haratala*. Drugs taken under this varga are: *Sudha* (lime/calcium), *Shambhuka* (pila), *Khatika* (chalk/pipe clay), *Samudraphena* (cuttle fish bone), *Godanti* (gypsum), *Kurmaprushta* (tortoise bone), *Svetanjana* (calcite), *Kukkutandatwak* (egg shell), *Mrugashringa* (hart's horn/deer horn), *Shukti* (pearl oyster), *Shankha* (conch shell).¹²

Sikta varga - consists of *Dugdhapashana* (talc/soft stone), *Kousheyashma* (asbestos), *Nagapashana* (serpentine), *Badaraashma* (silicate of lime).¹³

Kshara varga - consists of *Tankana*, *Yavakshara*, *Sarjakshara*.¹⁴

7. Visha:

- They are useful in *rasakarma* and *rasabandhana*.

- With its help *parada* can digest metals.

Rasarnava appears to be the first text to mention about *Visha* and *Upavisa* classification. After *Rasarnava*, *Rasendra Cudamani* and *Rasa Ratna Samucchaya* have mentioned five *Visas*. *Rasa tarangini*-¹⁶ *Sthavara-visha* and *upavisha*, *Jangama-sarpadi jantu visha*. *Rasa tarangini*, *Bhava prakasa* have enumerated nine *dravyas* as *Visha*. *Rasamanjari*, *Rasendrachintamani*, *Rasa jala nidhi* have explained 18 *kanda visha*. They are- *Kalakuta*, *Saktuka*, *Vatsanabha*, *Shringika*, *Mustaka*, *Halahala*, *Haridra*, *Mayura*, *Binduka*, *Sunama*, *Shankhanabha*, *Sumangala*, *Pushkara*, *Bhramara*, *Karkotaka*, *Shuklakanda*, *Raktashringi*, *Visha* or *Chakra*.

Table 6: Visha varga

<i>Visha names</i>	<i>Rasarnava</i> 5/33	<i>R.Cu</i> 9/11	<i>R.R.S</i> 10/82	<i>R.T</i> 24/8	<i>B.P(dhatvadi)</i> 191)	<i>Ayu.Pra</i> 6/12
<i>Kalakuta</i>	+	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Shringika</i>	+	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Saktuka</i>	+	+	+	+	+	+

<i>Vatsanabha</i>	--	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Pita</i>	--	+	+	--	--	--
<i>Halahala</i>	--	--	--	+	+	+
<i>Pradeepna</i>	--	--	--	+	+	+
<i>Haridra</i>	--	--	--	+	+	+
<i>Brahmaputra</i>	--	--	--	+	+	+
<i>Sourashtrika</i>	--	--	--	+	+	+
<i>Krishna visha</i>	+	--	--	--	--	--
<i>Sitamusta</i>	+	--	--	--	--	--

R.Cu- Rasendra cudamani, R.R.S- Rasaratna Samuchaya, R.T- Rasatarangini, B.P- Bhavaprakasha, Ayu Pr- Ayurveda Prakasha

Upavisha:

They are 7 according to *Rasaratna Samuchaya-Langali, Vishamushti, Karavira, Jayapala, Nilaka, Kanaka, Arka*.¹⁷ *Rasa tarangini* has explained 11 types- *Ahiphena, Vijaya, Bhallataka, Snuhi ksheera, Vishatinduka, Jayapala, Dhatura, Arka ksheera, Langali, Karavira, Gunja*.¹⁸

DISCUSSION

There is difference of opinion among different authors of *rasa granthas* about classification of *rasadravya* from *Rasarnava* to latest texts like *Rasatarangini*. Although main classification taken in practice is of *maharasa, uparasa, sadharana rasa* according to *Rasaratna samuchaya*, there are other *rasa dravyas* like *dhatu, upadhatu, ratna, uparatna, visha, upavisha* etc. There are no particular criteria explained for these classifications. We can see that one *dravya* is explained under the *maharasa* by some texts, but other texts may have included it under another group.

For ex- *Hingula* has been told as *maharasa* by *Rasa hridaya tantra, Goraksha Samhita, Rasarnava* but the same is told as *sadharana rasa* by *Rasa ratna samuchaya*. Similarly *Anjana* is *maharasa* according to *Rasarnava*, but *uparasa* according to *Rasa ratna samuchaya, Rasa hridaya tantra, Goraksha Samhita, Rasa prakasha sudhakara, Rasopanishat*.

Ananda kanda has included *guggulu, kshara, lavana, valuka, vanopala* etc under *uparasa*.

Vaikranta has been explained under *maharasa* and in *uparatna*. The same applies to all other *vargas* too. Some drugs among these are also controversial like *Chapala, Kankusta, Agnijara, Girisindura* etc. Looking at all these we can say that they may be classified based on

1. Availability, utility towards *parada* & properties of the substances. As the various classics date from different era, depending on the availability of *rasa dravyas* in their era the classification might have been done. Their role in various *murchana, bandha* or *jarana* procedures of *parada* and 16 *samskaras* of *parada* may have also been the basis.
2. As Therapeutic agents- These *rasa dravyas* are used in preparation of different formulations after undergoing purificatory procedures which are beneficial in treating many diseases. For *abhraka- sahasraputa bhasma* has more therapeutic properties when compared to *shataputa abhraka bhasma*.
3. Potency with metals and minerals. The *dravyas* have many minerals as their components which are responsible for their potency. For ex- In *maharasa- Abhraka* is having the components of aluminium, silica, sodium, potassium, rubidium, lithium, magnesium, hydrogen and other trace elements.
4. Physical and chemical components of the substances. The physical appearance of the *dravyas* and their chemical nature can also be one of the aspects for classification. Like *ratna* and *uparatna varga dravyas* are known for their at-

tractive appearance. *Sudha varga dravyas* have main component as calcium.

5. Belief & practices prevalent in those periods- *Dehavada, Dhaturvada, Chikitsa vada*. The earlier text books of *Rasashastra* like *Rasarnava* aimed at *dhaturvada* and *dehavada* whereas later texts of 20th century like *Rasa tarangini* gave importance to *chikitsa vada*. So in *Rasa tarangini, gandhaka* is explained first followed by other *rasa dravyas* owing to its therapeutic importance.

CONCLUSION

These classifications depict how *rasa dravyas* have evolved from ancient time. *Rasaoushadhies* containing purified and processed metals, minerals, other elements and herbs in small quantity provide quick relief from the disease. The introduction of *Rasaoushadhies* to *Ayurvedic* pharmacopoeia has revolutionized the treatment aspect of the system.

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