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DALHANA AND HIS CONTRIBUTION IN DRAVYAGUNA WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO FUNDAMENTALS

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ABSTRACT

In *Samhitas* the facts have been presented in *Sutra* form and in commentaries the same have been interpreted and elaborated in form of *Bhasya*. Thus the commentaries serve the purpose of *Bhasya* on the *Samhitas* which not only give meaning of words but also supplement the ideas by furnishing additional information on the subject. The commentator quotes the previous work and after critical verification gives his own conclusion based on either rejection or agreement on logical grounds. *Dalhana* commentary on *Sushruta Samhita* is *Nibandha Sangraha*. No other work than the commentary on *Sushruta Samhita* is known to the credit of *Dalhana*. It shows that he devoted his whole life in studying the earlier *Samhitas* and previous commentaries on the *Sushruta Samhita* and finally in giving shape to his commentary. Apart from study, he also devoted much time in field study which is shown by his casual observation in the field of *Dravyaguna* by mentioning the characters and local names of plants and also the regional traditions. Along with *Dalhana* has made notable contribution in the field of basic concepts of *Dravyaguna*. He has interpreted the *Sushruta's* view faithfully in the field of basic concepts of *Dravyaguna* (like *Rasa, Guna, Virya, Vipaka, Prabhava and Karma*). The aim of this paper is to put forward the valuable contribution of *Dalhana* in the field of *Dravyaguna* fundamentals.

Keywords: Commentary, *Dalhana*, *Sushruta Samhita*, *Dravyaguna* fundamentals.

INTRODUCTION

Dalhana, the celebrated commentator of the *Sushruta Samhita*, and the author of '*Nibandha Sangraha*' is one of the ancient luminaries of the Indian system of medicine. *Dalhana* wrote his commentary on *Sushruta Samhita* and the commentary name is *Nibandha Sangraha*. Not only this, no work other than this commentary ascribed to him. It shows that he devoted his whole life in studying the earlier *Samhitas*, various aspects of previous commentaries on the *Sushruta Samhita* and devoted much time in field study. *Dalhana*, in his commentary, has given clearly information about his place, genealogy and patron¹.

Accordingly *Dalhana* Belonged to a place named *Ankola* near Mathura in *Bhadanaka* Region where mostly *Vaidyas* lived. The place has not been identified but the word '*Bayana*' might be a derived form of *Bhadanaka* and now '*Bayana*' is situated in Bharatapur district in Rajasthan state. He belonged to a family of *Sauravansiya Brahmanas*. He has mentioned his father's name but has not given his mother's name. His father's name was *Bharatapala*².

In my opinion *Bhaskara*, the author of *Panjika* was teacher of *Dalhana* who has been referred to by the epithets '*Guru*', '*Acharya*' and also by his work '*Panjika*'. It is also to be noted that the *Dalhana* has followed totally the views of *Panjika* and has not gone against it³. *Dalhana* consulted *Nyayachandrika* of *Gayadasa* and *Panjika* of *Bhaskara* among other work while composing the commentary.

The *Kala* (period) of *Dalhana* is Last quarter of the 12th cent. AD. The important clue for the date of *Dalhana* is his intimate association with a king, *Sahajapaladeva* or *sahala*¹. The date of *Sahajapaladeva* is the last quarter of 12th cent. AD. *Dalhana* quotes *Chakarapanidatta*⁴ (11 cent. AD) and is quoted by *Hemadri* (13 cent. AD). Hence His date may be fixed conveniently in the Last Quarter of the 12th Cent. AD.

After going through the entire commentary one can easily find that *Dalhana* was a great scholar of *Ayurveda* and he studied all available *Samhitas* on different specialities of *Ayurveda*. Apart from *Ayurveda*, *Dalhana* was also well-versed in several other branches of learning like *Sruti, Smriti, Vyakarana, Darshana, Jyotisha, Tantra, Aswashastra, Gajashastra* etc. He has referred to these disciplines as '*Paratantra*'⁵ or '*Anyashastra*'⁶.

Paratantra- In *Dalhana* opinion *Paratantra* means the Ayurvedic text dealing with the specialities other than the *Sushruta Samhita*.

Anyashastra- In *Dalhana* opinion *Anyashastra* means other branches of learning some take it as other specialities of *Ayurveda* itself.

Dalhana has always recourse to his own critical study and that is why he said himself as '*Viveka-Brhaspati*' (Great in the discriminating faculty). Because of the rich tradition, long experience and independent judgement *Dalhana* has been able to contribute original ideas in several fields of Indian Medicine and owing to this he stands foremost among the commentators.

Dalhana's Contribution

Dalhana has made notable contributions in the field of *Dravyaguna* which may be summarize as follows.

- He has interpreted the *Sushruta's* view faithfully in the field of basic concepts of *Dravyaguna* like *Rasa*, *Guna*, *Virya*, *Vipaka* and *Prabhava* and *Karma*.
- He described the morphological characters of drugs which are not found in *Nighantus* and by which the Drugs can be identified easily. These drugs are *Vatama* (*Prunus amygdalus* Batsch.), *Akshoda* (*Juglans regia* Linn.) etc.

“*Akshodomadanaphalaakarphalomadhyekinchinidunnatarekhamvi taparvatapilu Akhrota iti loke.*”⁷

- He has given popular names (*Lok Prasiddha*) of the plants and drugs for easily identification. These names can be distinguished in two categories- one the Sanskrit names popular in learned circle and the other local names prevalently used by the common man such as *Falsa* for *Parushaka* (*Grewia asiatica* Linn.), (*Alsi*⁸ for *Atasi* (*Linum usitatissimum* Linn.), *Poi*⁹ for *Upodika* (*Basella rubra* Linn.) etc.

“*Parushakoalpaasthimriduphala Faalsa iti loke.*”¹⁰

- He has mentioned the popular use of plants and drugs prevalent in various regions and also preparation and mode of administration (part used, dosage, vehicle etc.) of the same.
- He has also mentioned some new synonyms for plant names such as *Kantakika*¹¹ or *Katayika* for *Vikankata* (*Flacourtia ramontchi* L. Herit).
- He has mentioned the habitat of plants in a no. of cases due to sufficient field study and observed plants in various regions such as *Pilu*¹² (*Salvadora persica* Linn.) in *Bhadnaka* region.

Basic concepts of Dravyaguna

Dravya

Acharya Charaka and *Sushruta* have given the definition *Dravyas* as, the substance, where in exist the properties and actions in an inseparable relationship is called *Dravya*^{13,14}. The properties (*Guna*) and actions (*Karma*) have no identity or existence without the substance and the substance has no recognition without the *Guna* and *Karma*. This coexistence of *Dravya*, *Guna* and *Karma* is known as *samavaya*.

Dalhana says - “*Dravyamaushadhamucchyate.*”¹⁵

Dalhana says that where *karma* (action) and *Gunas* (properties) are situated and which is *Samavayi Karana* (material cause) is termed as *Dravya*. Only *Dravya* is *Samavayi karana* just as thread in piece of cloth, clay particular in a pitcher etc.¹⁴ *Dravya* is *Ashraya* (substratum) and the *Gunas*, *Rasa* etc. are *Ashrayi* (dependent). In fact, the emergence of both *Ashraya* and *Ashrayi* is simultaneous and as such they are interdependent.

Dravya stays for a certain period and not *Rasa* etc. For example, the Mango fruit (*Mangifera indica* Linn.) at first in *Kashaya-Amla*, then *Amla* and finally becomes *Madhura* but still it always remains as Mango fruit and does not change into the fruit of *Amrataka* (*Spondias mangifera* Willd.) or *Koshamra* (*Schleicheria trijuga* Willd.). The word ‘*Nitya*’ in this context, has been interpreted rightly as one remaining for a certain period and *Anitya* which is destroyed even with this period¹⁴.

Guna

Acharya Charaka has explained the word *Guna*. The *Dravya* possesses *Karma* (action), whereas *Guna* stays in *Dravya* in the form of *nischesta* (in a passive or inactive state). This state is called as *samavayi sambhandha*. Here the *Guna* is present in an inactive state, which is known as *gauna*. Therefore this character is known as *Guna*¹⁶.

“*Gunashabdah Karmavachi.*”¹⁷

“*Gunashabdastatkaryephale vartate.*”¹⁸

According to *Dalhana* the word ‘*Guna*’ is ordinarily used for ‘*Phala*’ (result) as well as ‘*Karma*’ (action), it denotes properties like *Guru-Laghu* etc. which are situated in *Dravya*.

Gurvadi Guna:-

Gurvadi Gunas are twenty in number. *Sushruta* has accepted some more *Gunas* like *Vyavayi*, *Vikasi*, *Ashukari*, *Sugandha* and *Durgandha* in addition to twenty *Gurvadi Gunas*. According to *Dalhana* twenty *Gurvadi Gunas* are-

“*Gunashheetoshnasnigdharukshamandatiksahnagurulaghupichhi lavisadaslakshnaparushakathinamidudravasandrasthirsarasth ulasukshmaavinshati.*”¹⁵

Sheeta-Ushna: These are used in the sense of *Sparsha* (touch) as well as *Virya*.

Snigdha-Ruksha: *Snigdhta* means smoothness, *Ruksha* means roughness.

Guru-Laghu: These terms are used in three contexts- *Matra* (quantity), *Guna* (property), and *Vipaka* (digestion). *Laghutva* has been interpreted as opposite to *Gurutva* as property of *Aakasha*.

Picchila-Visada: *Picchila* is *uplepi* and has mucous touch. *Mritsna* is a synonym of *Picchila*. *Visada* is opposite to *Picchila*. *Visada* has been interpreted as *Ruksha*.

Slakshna-Parusha: In the *Sushruta Samhita*, *Karkasa* is in place of *Parusha*. *Slakshna* (smoothness) is opposite to *Karkasa* which is rough in touch like *Karkotaka phala* (*Momordica dioica* Roxb.).

Manda-Tikshna and Mridu-Kathina: Generally the pair is *Manda-Tikshna* and *Mridu* is a partner of *kathina* but *Sushruta* has not accepted *Kathina* as a separate entity but only a synonym of *Sandra* and *Manda* has been read with *Sara*. Hence in *Sushruta's* view, *Mridu-Tikshna* is the pair. *Mridu* is soft and delicate which does not exert devastating effect. Opposite to *Mridu*, *Tikshna* is a property which exerts immediate, strong and painful effect and also vitiates *Pitta*. *Manda* is mild which vitiates the *Vishama Dosh*. *Kathina* is hard which strengthen the body.

Sandra-Drava: *Sandra* has been interpreted by the words ‘*Bahala*’ (*Ghana*) and *Samhata* (compact). *Dravatava* indicates *Tanutva* or *Acchattva*. *Drava* relieves hunger and thirst.

Sthira-Sara: *Sushruta* does not accept *Sthira Guna* separately, but at various places he defines the word *Sthira* variously such as *Kathina* (hard), *Aviasarpi* (that which does not spread) and motionless. Opposite to *Sthira*, *Sara* is of spreading nature and *Anulomana*.

Sthula-Suksma: Regarding *Sthula*, *Dalhana* says that *Sthula* has gross parts like *Pistanna* etc. *Suksma* is that which penetrates even the minutest channels.

Vyavayi: *Vyavayi* is that which first circulates in the whole body and then goes to digestion like *Visha* (poisons) and *Madya* (alcoholic beverages)¹⁹.

Vikasi: By spreading in the body, produces Lassitude including joints²⁰.

Ashukari: This is also termed as *Ashu* or *Shighra* because of its immediate action.

Yogavahi: Yogavahi is that which acts like other partner with which it is combined²¹.

Paradi Guna:-

Acharya Sushruta has not described Paradi Gunas but Dalhana in his commentary has commented upon these terms.

Yukti or Yojana vishesha is defined in which all the relevant factors are considered.

“Yuktivisheshoyojanavisheshah
toyaagnisanskarvasnabhavnamatrakaladyapekshah.”²²

Samyoga is combination with one, two, or more drugs.

Vibhaga is disjunction.

Prithkta²³ is separateness as Sira, Snayu, Peshi, etc., are mutually separate individually and also as a group.

Rasa

“Rasomadhuradikah.”¹⁵

Rasa is interpreted by the synonym Aaswada. Rasas are six in number- Madhura, Amla, Lavana, Katu, Tikta, Kashaya, generally said as Madhuradi.

Regarding Bhautika composition of Rasa, some rasa like Lavana is composed of Jala and Agni which are quite opposite to each other. Dalhana says that opposition is only when they come from different direction but when they are produced together with a single purpose or due to Prabhava, Agni is not subdued by Jala in such cases.

Vipaka:

According to Acharya Vagbhata Vipaka is that, where in the basic substances or Dravya, by the action of Jatharagni, during the process of digestion, at the end a product will be formed as a special type of Rasa²⁴. This Vipaka is also known as Nisthapaka.

“Yadrdavyamparinamkaaleswabhavikamrasamparityajvarasant
arambhajte tatra Vipaka iti sangya.”¹⁵

Vipaka has been defined as ‘Visista Paka’²⁵ (particular transformation) in contrast to ‘Paka’ (general digestion). Dalhana said that Vipaka is the term used in Relation to a substance which during digestive process accepts another Rasa leaving its natural Rasa.

Sushruta has used the term Vipaka both for digestive and post digestive transformation. He says that Vipaka is important because the effect of the ingested substance depends upon whether it is digested properly or not. Dalhana explaining it further adds that if it is properly digested it would produce beneficial effect (Guna) otherwise Dosha. Dalhana has said two types of Vipaka- Guru and Laghu.

Virya

According to Acharya Charaka and Sushruta the active property or potency of a Dravya when performed is known as Virya²⁶. The term Virya is interpreted as Shakti (potency). It has been said that Virya is the Sara of the drug which is destroyed after a certain period and is accentuated by certain process.

“Dravyarasagunavipakairyata karma kartum na shakyate tat
karma kurvan prabhavo viryamuchayate,
tatahviryamshaktirupattivisheshah, samarthyam prabhava
ityanarthantaram.”¹⁵

Dalhana does not distinguish Virya from Prabhava. He has defined Virya (1) As a means of inexplicable action (2) As Prabhava producing action for which Dravya, Rasa, Guna and

Vipaka are incapable and having synonym Shakti, Utpattivisesa, Samarthyam and Prabhava. Dalhana has confused the issue by saying Virya as ‘Achintya Kriyahetu’²⁷ and making Virya and Prabhava as synonymous.

The number of Virya is two according to Sushruta though he has mentioned eight Viryas according to other’s view. Dalhana too follow the same. Although there is no third category but Sita and Ushna according to the predominance of Soma and Agni in principle, practically there is accepted a group on borderline which is termed as ‘Sadharana’²⁸ (common or intermediate), example- Kakmachi (Solanum nigrum Linn.).

Dalhana has distinguished Agneya from Ushna and clarify it with certain examples such as Prabha (lusture) is Agneya but not Ushna, Kshara is Ushna but not Agneya, Matsyas (fishes) are also Ushna but not Agneya²⁰. The examples of Agneya Dravyas are Tila (Sesamum indicum Linn.), Maasha (Phaseolus mungo Linn.), Sura (Liquor) etc.

Prabhava

Acharya Charaka says that Prabhava is considered as a special power or specific property of substance, because the Dravya having similar Rasa, Virya and Vipaka produce or exhibit special action. This specific action of the Dravya is known as Prabhava²⁹.

According to Dalhana, Virya and Prabhava have been mentioned as synonyms but Prabhava can be distinguished by the terms Swabhava, Prakriti or Shaktivisesha³⁰. Swabhava is ‘Sahaja Dharma’ (inherent activity) due to specific natural composition of the drug. Prabhava is actually a Shortened form of Dravya-Prabhava. It is also mentioned as Aadhara Prabhava because Dravya is Aadhara of all the properties. The effect of Mantra-Tantara, anti-poisons, emetics etc., is also due to this Achintya Shakti.

Certain actions of several drugs have been explained by Prabhava such as Samgrahi effect of Ghrita obtained from milk, Pachana effect of Sitavirya Saktu, Vrshya effect of washing the feet etc. The Tridoshaghna effect of drugs like Amalaki (Embllica officinalis Gaertn.), Kakmachi (Solanum nigrum Linn.), Guduchi³¹ (Tinospora cordifolia (Willd.) Miers ex Hook. F. & Jhoms.) etc., is also explained by Prabhava.

Karma

Acharya Charaka has given definition of Karma. The Karma or the action is responsible for the act of adhering and separation that is samyoga and vibhaga, of a Dravya, which is intimately associated with and independent in a substance. There cannot be any action without samyoga and vibhaga. The Dravyagata padhartha which produces effects on the body is known as Karma³².

According to Dalhana Karma denotes activities of Drugs such as Sodhana etc. Drug Treatment consists of Samsodhana and Samsamana. He also explained the difference between like Vinasana, Harana and Soshana.

Vinashanharanavishoshananaamarthabhedamaahu-
tatrakushthavinashanomulochedanah,
haranomehapandavadedsanshamanatvennirmulanatvenva,
shoshanahkaphamedsodravasnidghyo.”³³

According to Dalhana interpretation of some certain terms denoting action is given here:

Sukha: That which provide health.³⁴

Hladana: That which provide relief by subsiding thirst, sweat, burning sensation etc.³⁵

Ashwasajanana: Renovate the persons exhausted by overwork.³⁶

Kshapana: *Kshapana* is decreasing below the base level. While explaining the *Kshapana* effect of *Doshas* on *Dhatus*, *Dalhana* says- *Pitta* decreases *Dhatus* due to *Katu* and *Ushna* properties, *Vayu* because of absorbing nature and *Kapha* by causing obstruction in channels.³⁷

Sihapna: Which does not produce obesity or leanness but maintains the medium state of body bulk.³⁸

Anulomana: Which helps excretion of *Vata* (flatus), *Mutra* (urine) and *Purish* (faeces).

Dharana: Supporting in case of emergency.³⁶

Yatrakara: Which maintains the body.³⁹

Apyayana: which hastens recovery by replenishing memory, voice, strength and semen etc.⁴⁰

Samshamana: The substance which ingested pacifies *Doshas* without eliminating it is known as *Samshamana* (pacificatory) as said- that which does not eliminate *Doshas*, nor does aggravate the balanced ones but pacifies the aggravated ones is known as *Samshamana*. This is of two types- external and internal, the former such as *Aalepa*, *Parisheka*, *Avgahana*, *Abhayanga*, *Shirobasti*, *Kawala*, *Gandusha* etc. while the later such as *Pachana*, *Lekhana*, *Brihana*, *Rasayana*, *Vajikarana*, *Visha-Prasamana* etc.

Samshodhana: *Samsodhana* is that which purifies well, it is of two types- external and internal. The external such as sharp instrument (*Shastra*), caustic alkali (*Kshara*), cautery (*Agni*), paste (*Pralepa*) etc. while the internal is of four types- *Vamana*, *Virechana*, *Asthapana* and *Raktamokshana*.

Rasayana:

“*Rasanam rasaraktaadinnaamayanaamaapyayanam rasayanam.*”⁴¹

According to *Sushruta*, *Rasayana* is *Vayasthapana* (maintaining youth), promoting life-span, intellect and strength and eliminating diseases. Interpreting the word *Vayasthapana*, *Dalhana* says that it means maintaining life span up to 100 years of age while *Ayushkara* may go beyond this limit.⁴²

Dalhana has classified *Rasayana* in the following way⁴³:

- (1) *Kutipravesika* (indoor) (2) *Vatatapika* (outdoor)
- (1) *Kamyas* (specific) (2) *Naimittika* (curative) (3) *Aajasrika* (general)
- (1) *Samshodhana* (purifying) (2) *Samshamana* (pacifying)

Vajikaran

“*Yena strishu vishye vaajivanarahsamarthyam prapnoti tadvaajikaranam, yenyarthamvyajyate strishu tadvaajikaranam.*”⁴⁴

Vajikarana has been interpreted in both the senses.

- (1) Producing semen
- (2) Stimulating impulse and sexual potency.

“*Tatatrividham-janakam, pravartakam, janakpravartakamcheti. Tatrajanakammasghritaadikam, pravartakamuchhatachurnaadikamshukravairechanikam, janakpravartakamtugavyaghritagodhoomamaashakakandaphal adikam.*”⁴⁵

Explaining the action of *Vajikarana* in different conditions *Dalhana* says that⁴⁶:

- 1) *Alparetas*- means persons having congenital deficiency of semen. Its treatment is *Apyayana* (Replenishing).
- 2) *Dushtaretas*- means those having semen affected by vitiated *Doshas*. Its treatment is *Prasadana* (Purification).
- 3) *Kshinaretas*- means those having acquired deficiency of semen. Its treatment is *Upchaya* (Increasing).

- 4) *Vishushkaretas*- means those having deficiency of semen below base-level. Its treatment is *Janana* (Producing).

Dalhana also gives alternative interpretations according to age such as⁴⁶-

- 1) *Alparetas*- below 25 years of age
- 2) *Kshinaretas*- Middle age
- 3) *Vishushkaretas*- Old age

CONCLUSION

Dalhana, because of his profound knowledge, long professional experience and field study, stands topmost among the commentators and his contribution particularly in the field of *Dravyaguna* are awesome and helpful for everyone. He is one of the commentators who have become immortal by his single but unique and extra-ordinary work. *Dalhana's* contribution to the ancient Indian system of medicine as the author of '*Nibandha Sangraha*' is priceless. He has also evidently undertaken extensive tours throughout the country to get himself acquainted with the prevalent traditions and the systems of medicine. He was a versatile scholar and as such has contributed in discussing various allied topics which leads to clear understanding of the basic concepts. We can say that *Dalhana's* scholarship was not limited to *Ayurveda* only but covered a very wide field comprising of various disciplines which was necessary for proper understanding of *Ayurvedic* concepts.

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