



Review Article

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CONTROVERSIES SURROUNDING IDENTIFICATION OF RUDANTI: A REVIEW

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Received on: 14/11/16 Revised on: 17/12/16 Accepted on: 28/01/17

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DOI: 10.7897/2277-4343.08125

ABSTRACT

Ayurvedic texts encompass many herbal and mineral preparations that are used in curing and preventing diseases. One such remedial herb used was *Rudanti*. *Rudanti* is mentioned in some classics after the era of *Charka Samhita*. Only few *Acharya* mentioned clinical properties of *Rudanti* such as *Rasayani*, *Prameha naashan*, *Yakshmahara* etc. These clinical properties mentioned testify supreme importance of *Rudanti*. Except *Raj Nighantu* none indicated its morphological and identification features. This led to misleading and spurious identification by later *Acharyas*. Further no attempts were made to classically identify *Rudanti* according to *Raj Nighantu* and it is continued till date. Today *Capparis moonii* and *Cressa cretica* are taken as *Rudanti* but they also fail in meeting the identification criteria mentioned in *Raj Nighantu*. Thus, there is a need to critically evaluate, analyze, and conclude proper identification of a very useful plant named *Rudanti*. Keeping in view all the literary data collected, this article will help in identifying the species in approximation to classical *Rudanti*. This article concludes that *Capparis moonii* and *Cressa cretica* cannot be considered as classical *Rudanti* instead *Astragalus* and *Cicer* species could be taken. Purpose of this study is to re-evaluate and compare classical *Rudanti* with plant species identified in the name of *Rudanti*.

Keywords: *Astragalus species*, *Capparis moonii*, *Cicer species*, *Cressa cretica*, Controversial, *Rudanti*.

INTRODUCTION

The Ayurvedic literature describes herbs with synonyms, *guna-karma*, morphological and pharmacological properties. Later modern researchers successfully identified many Ayurvedic herbs. Modern identification criteria include genus, family, class, sub-class etc. There are many plant species in our lexicons which due to lack of probing are still in the line of controversial plants (*Sandigdha Dravya*). Classics include innumerable synonyms/metonyms for a single drug and single synonym for many herbs. Sometimes variation in the language and names prevalent in folklore also raised confusion in nomenclature. These synonyms have caused controversy in the identification and hence the correct plant species sometimes misleads with fictitious plants. Not only synonyms but also lack of proper field survey and classical review added to the controversial status of plants. One such controversial yet very important plant is *Rudanti*. Modern era workers never honestly attempted to identify *Rudanti* as per characters mentioned in *Raj Nighantu*. Thus, there is a strong need to identify such medicinally important plant as per classics. This will require proper compilation and evaluation of all relevant data available from classics and modern books. This article encompasses all the literal work available in classics and modern books. Comparing the characters mentioned in classics and data available in modern books clearly depicts that classical *Rudanti* and the plant species taken in resemblance to *Rudanti* differ in appearance, taste or in habitat. Thus, this study will try and provide a ground for further exploration of classical *Rudanti* and might help in depreciating the state of confusion on its identification by

1. Compiling all literal work on actions, morphology, pharmacology from classics and modern books.
2. Eliminating state of confusion on *Rudanti*.

3. By drawing a logical inference for further research on the basis of information gathered from classics and modern books.

DISCUSSION

Ayurvedic Classics

Rudanti first came into reference in *Shodhal Nighantu* as *Vridhupalitake*¹ Later a detailed description was mentioned in *Raj Nighanti*². Synonyms are given in Table 1.

Sravattoya : Dripping of water or any liquid.

Sanjeevani: which might be either a magical plant or impart infinite life to others, life giving.

Amritsrava: from which elixir drips or gives life to other plants through its secretion.

Romachika: species of small shrub or thrilling with joy or terror.

Mahamansi: deep root system.

Chanakpatri: leaves resembling that of chickpea.

Sudhasrava: secretion of sudha-beverage of God, nectar, good drink.

Pharmacological properties are given in Table 2.

Rudanti has *katu-tikta rasa*, *ushna virya*, anti-tubercular, anti-microbial, *raktapitta naashan*, properties, anti-asthmatic, expectorant, anti -diabetic and *Rasayan* actions.³

Morphological characteristics are mentioned in Table 3.

Raj Nighantu has described morphological characters as leaves resembling that of chickpea, small shrub, and dew drops dripping from shrubs during winter season.⁴

Rudanti is also important in *Ras Shastra* preparations. *Rudanti* is mentioned to have best *Parad bandhan* and *Abhrak jaran* properties. It was taken as a constituent and also as *Bhavna Dravya* in many medicinal preparations like *Trailokyevijaya*

rasa (Thailam), Kushthadi rasayan etc. Also, came in reference of *Ratnadruiti*.

Rudanti was used by saints in alchemy i.e. preparing gold from *Parad*.

Looking at all the references available in modern books it is noted that total four species of plants are mentioned as *Rudanti* are *Cressa cretica*, *Capparis moonii*, *Astragalus species*, *Cicer species*. Digging further and comparing their morphological character's proximity is found between *Astragalus species*, *Cicer species* and *Cressa cretica* as they all possesses *Chanakpatra* (leaves resembling that of chickpea) in appearance. Looking at other characters mentioned in synonyms of *Rudanti* *Astragalus* is more close to classical *Rudanti* in morphology. This further revalidated by the fact that *Astragalus* referred with the name of *Rudravanti* in folklore. Also, its use in folklore suggests that it is beneficial in tuberculosis and asthma which is pharmacological property of classical *Rudanti*.

Modern literature

Later researchers have re-named *Rudanti* as *Rudravanti* or *Rudranti* according to their convenience.

Pharmacographia indica⁵: mentioned *Rudravanti/Rudranti* as *Cressa cretica*. It is considered to be exhilarating, and to purify the blood and give tone to the system. It is believed to possess expectorant and antibilious properties.

Indian Materia Medica⁶: mentioned *Rudravanti* as *Cressa cretica*.

Uttarakhand ki vanaushadhiyan⁷: Mentioned *Rudravanti* as *Astragalus candolleanus*. It is of tremendous medicinal use such as Aphrodisiac, Nutritive, Anti-inflammatory, Analgesic, Neuro-disorders etc.

Medicinal plants used in Ayurveda⁸: Author described various plant species in the name of *Rudanti/Rudantika/Rudravanti* such as:

Rudanti Pratinidhi – Rudravanti – Astragalus candolleanus.

Rudanti Pratinidhi – Capparis moonii.

In this book *Rudanti* is also taken as *Cicer soongaricum* but marked it as doubtful.

Rudanti/Rudantika/Rudravanti–Cressa cretica.

Sharangdhar Samhita ki vanaspatiyan⁹: mentioned *Rudanti* under *Rasayan Dravya* as per *Sharangdhar Samhita*. Author took *Rudanti* as *Astragalus species* and *Capparis moonii* Wight. Author also added that fruit of *Rudanti/Rudravanti* is used in medicinal preparations.

Dravyaguna Vigyan¹⁰: *Rudanti* much known as *Rudravanti* in modern era is taken as *Capparis moonii*, *Cressa cretica*, *Astragalus species*.

Ladakh ki sanskriti evam paramparagat tibeti chikitsa pranali (Traditional Tibetan system of medicine & culture of Ladakh)¹¹: *Sadnak*, *Rudanti- Astragalus candolleanus*, *Astragalus munori*.

Rudanti, Rudravanti-Tibbet/ Ladakhi-Sadkar, Sadnak– Astragalus munori Benth.

- *Chin-san-karpo- Astragalus tibetanus Benth.*
- *Chin-san-kang-chava- Astragalus membranacus Beg.*
- *Saatkar– Astragalus yunnanensis Fr.*
- *Satsir- Astragalus floridus Benth.*
Astragalus candolleanus Royle.

Prevalent as *Chichharamo* in local dialects.

Rudravanti(Ladakhi/Baalati)- Thak-chut-kar- Sarigamo, Marmukhni – Cicer songaricum.

Author tentatively mentioned *Rudanti* as *Astragalus species* and *Cicer species*.

In folklore *Rudanti* root and whole plant is used in respiratory disorders.

Nighantu Adarsh¹²: Author has re-quoted *Raj Nighantu* synonyms, morphological and pharmacological characters of *Rudanti*.

Some controversial drugs in Indian medicine¹³: The latter writers of *Rasa Shastra*(chemistry) have praised it for its wonderful properties. Some call it a celestial herb. It is known as *Chanak-Patri* leaves like that of *Chana (Cicer arienium)* Linn. Gram, Bengal gram. So, it is a small plant, the ground is found wet (as the dew fallen on its leaves is converted into watery drops and that is why the ground is wet). Ants are staying beneath the plant. It is shining during the night. They say that *Rudravanti* is only found before the sunrise. After the sunrise, these plants disappear during the day time. In short it is tentatively taken as *Cressa cretica* (Convolvulaceae). It is growing in the barren soil which has become salty.

Ayurveda ki jaan vanaushadhivigyan¹⁴: *Rudanti* is mentioned as *Capparis moonii* and fruit (*Prayojyanga*) has been used as medicine. This suggests that it is a later research as reference of *Prayojyanga* is not mentioned in Ayurvedic lexicons.

Medicinal flora of Garhwal Himalayas¹⁵: Author through his survey identified *Rudravanti* as *Astragalus leucocephalus*, *Astragalus candolleanus* and *Astragalus himalayanus*.

Uttarakhand Himalaya ki vanaushadhi evam khanij¹⁶: Author brought in light a number of *Astragalus* species that can be taken as *Rudanti* such as *Rudanti – Astragalus leucocephalus* *Grah.* And *Astragalus chlorostachys Lindl*
Rudravanti – Astragalus candolleanus.

In folklore, its roots use is prevalent in tuberculosis, asthma and respiratory disorders.

Aushadhi vinishchayadigdarshana¹⁷: Author has re-quoted the reference of *Rasendra Chudamani*

Dravyaguna Sutramala¹⁸: mentioned *Rudanti* as *Capparis moonii*.

A report on medicinal plant of Kachchh (Gujrat)¹⁹: Taken *Rudanti* as *Cressa cretica* and plant is considered as tonic and aphrodisiac.

Table 1: Synonyms of *Rudanti* according to *Raj Nighantu*

<i>Sravattoya</i>	<i>Amsitsrava</i>
<i>Romanchika</i>	<i>Mahamansi</i>
<i>Chanakpatri</i>	<i>Sudhasrava</i>

Table 2: Pharmacological characteristics of *Rudanti* according to *Raj Nighantu*

Guna	Karma
<i>Rasa- Katu, Tikta</i>	<i>Kshayakrimivinishani</i>
<i>Virya- Ushna</i>	<i>Raktapittanaashan</i>
	<i>Kaphashwasnaashan</i>
	<i>Mehahari</i>
	<i>Rasayani</i>

Table 3: Morphological characteristics of *Rudanti* according to *Raj Nighantu*

<i>Chanakpatrasamampatram</i>	<i>Kshup</i>
<i>Amlapatram</i>	<i>Shishirejalvindoonaamsravanteeti</i>

CONCLUSION

By critically analyzing all the relevant data this article suggests that there is a no unanimous approach towards authentic and proper identification of *Rudanti*. This article suggests that *Capparis moonii* and *Cressa cretica* don't meet the morphological characters mentioned in *Raj Nighantu*. This article also suggests that *Astragalus species* is more morphologically similar to classical description. Thus, this article encompasses all the controversies regarding identification of *Rudanti*. Also, it suggests using *Astragalus species* as *Rudanti* due to its resemblance to classical *Rudanti* in morphology and pharmacology properties. Hence an inference can be drawn that *Astragalus species* can be taken as classical *Rudanti* till further clinical evaluation is done.

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Cite this article as:

Naveen Upadhyay, Neha Pundir. Controversies surrounding identification of Rudanti: A review. Int. J. Res. Ayurveda Pharm. 2017;8(Suppl 1):1-3 <http://dx.doi.org/10.7897/2277-4343.08125>

Source of support: Nil, Conflict of interest: None Declared

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