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COMPARATIVE STUDY OF RASAYANAS DESCRIBED IN BRIHAT-TRAYI: A REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

Ayurveda is the science of life that is a means to attain long and healthy life, and human beings have cherished it since antiquity, and the use of Rasayanas is one of the simplest means to attain it. A detailed description of Rasayanas has been done in our classical ayurvedic texts. Rasayana is one of the eight important branches mentioned in Ashtanga Ayurveda. Different Niruktis and definitions of Rasayanas have been quoted in different ways in ayurvedic texts. Various classifications have been done, which helps understand the concept of Rasayanas in a detailed manner. The use of Rasayanas is considered to help achieve the main aim of Ayurveda of maintaining health and treatment of the diseased. Description of Acharya Rasayana has been done, which is one of the means of rejuvenation of mind and soul. Rasayanas are a boon given to the world by Ayurveda to correct Dhatu vaishamya and attain Dhatu satmya.

Keywords: Rasayana, Dhatu vaishamya, Dhatu satmya.

INTRODUCTION

Rasayana is a well-known term heard in Ayurveda.^{1,2} This term is made of two words, i.e. 'rasa' means the first Dhatu among the 7 Dhatus and 'Ayan' means path or Marga through which Rasa reaches the targeted body tissues. The intake of Rasayana dravyas enhances Rasa's qualities and nourishes it to attain long and healthy life, free from diseases, full of youthfulness, memory, intelligence, and excellence. Consistent use of Rasayana dravyas promotes the formation of certain free radicals, which act as a tool to create premium Dhatus, thereby making individuals healthy and letting them lead a long life. It also helps in boosting up the immune system (i.e., Vyadhikshamatwa), Bala and Ojas, so we can say that it acts as an immunomodulator by improving immunity. Rasayana therapy is a part of preventive Ayurvedic health care. It helps to delay the process of ageing, thus helping to live longer with good strength and immunity. Rasayana is those medicines and non-medicinal conducts which help gain high-quality Dhatus in the optimum and desired quantity. Dhatus in good quality and quantity form the foundation of good immunity and paves the way for leading disease-free life. A detailed description of Rasayanas is there in almost all the ayurvedic texts. Rasayana chikitsa has both preventive and curative aspects. It has given the foremost place in the first four padas of Charaka chikitsa sthana and has been pushed back to chapters 27-30th of Sushruta chikitsa sthana. In contrast, in Ashtanga Hridaya, it has not been given any place in chikitsa sthana but is described briefly in the 30th chapter of Ashtanga Hridaya Uttara sthana. This variable description shows its importance since the Samhita period itself. In Charaka Samhita, the definition of Rasayanas and Vajikarana have been given in chikitsa sthana, giving Rasayana priority. Rasayana is the one that endows strength and immunity to the individual, which results in a long and disease-free life.³ Rasayana therapy has importance from preventive and curative aspects of diseases (primarily preventive elements). Its

description is most elaborated and precise in Charaka Samhita, whereas the definition of Rasayana tantra is not so elaborate in the Sushruta Samhita. However, one finds an appropriate classification of Rasayana in Dalhana commentary. Ashtanga Samgraha and Ashtanga Hridaya have incorporated many newer drugs of medicinal use such as Lashuna and Palandu, several more unique formulations like Shiva Gutika (by Ashtanga Samgraha). They have done an excellent description of the Rasayana.

Rasayana in Charaka Samhita

Deerghamāyah smritimedhā ārogyama tarunam vayah prabhā varna swaraudaryam dehendriyam balama param | Vāka siddhim pranati kāntim labhate nā rasāyanātā lābhopāyo hi shastānāma rasādināma rasāyanāma || (Ch.chi-1-1/7-8)⁴

A rejuvenation therapy person gains a longer life, good memory, intelligence, good health (free from diseases), youth, excellent aura and lustre, good skin complexion, good voice, physical strength, strong sense organs, good oration skills, respect and brilliance. How one gets the maximum utilisation of the end product of digestion is known as Rasayana or anti-ageing / Rejuvenation therapy.

Swasthorjaskarama yattu tadavrishyama tadarasayanāma || (Ch.chi-1-1/5)

It means the treatment or medicine that enhances the quality of health in a healthy person are aphrodisiacs and rejuvenation therapy.

There are two types of medication therapies, i.e.-

- Preventive (Swastha ojaskara)
- Curative (Artasva Roganuta)

The preventive aspect is meant for the healthy individual, whereas the curative element is intended for the diseased. Among these, Rasayana therapy falls under the category of the preventative method.

According to Acharya Charaka, there are two types of Rejuvenation therapy-

1. **Kutipraveshika**- In this method, the patient is confined to a cottage throughout the Rasayana treatment.⁵
2. **Vatatapika**- In this method, the patient is exposed to the wind and sun throughout the Rasayana treatment and not confined to the room.

In Charaka Samhita, mainly the description of Haritaki and Amalaki has been given and has emphasized the usage of various formulations as Rasayanas like Chyawanaprasha, Brahma Rasayana, Pippali Rasayana etc., rather than a single drug.

Rasayana in Sushruta Samhita

According to Dalhana commentary on Sushruta Samhita⁶
Rasādīdhātūnāmayanāmāpyāyanama athavā bheshajāshritānām
rasaveeryavipākaprabhāvānāmāyubalaveeryradradyānāma vayah
sthairyakarānāmayanama läbhōpāyo
rasāyānamavardhakamsthapakampraptaprapakam va ityarthā.
(Nibandha Samgraha. Chi.27/1-2)

Rasayana is the one that nourishes various dhatus of the body and also improves the Rasa, Virya, Vipaka and Prabhava, which affects the age, strength and stability of an individual.

Two types of rejuvenation therapy have been mentioned in Sushruta Samhita-

- Sadharana (Simple)
- Kutipraveshika (Special)

Again, the Kutipraveshika method is of two types-

- Kutipraveshika.
- Vatatapika.

Three types of Rasayana have been told by Dalhana commentary-

- Kamya (To achieve the desired purpose like youth, memory etc.)
- Naimaitika (To treat a particular disease)
- Ajasrika (To maintain an individual's health by using milk, ghee, etc.)

Description of 24 types of Soma Aushadha has been done in the 29th chapter of Sushruta Samhita chikitsa sthana. It has been said that the individual who uses Soma achieves a life of 10,000 years along with a new body and intelligence. The body of such an individual cannot be destroyed by fire, water, poison or any kind of weapon. Consistent use of Rasayana gives youthfulness, strength like a lion, beauty, sound, memory, and long life of 2000 years to an individual.

Rasayana in Ashtanga Hridaya

According to Vagbhatta⁷

Deerghamāyuh smritimedhā ārogyama tarunam vayah prabhā
varna swaraudaryam dehendriyam balodayama |
Vāka siddhim vrushatama kāntim labhate nā rasāyanāta
läbhōpāyo hi shastānāma rasādināma rasāyanāma ||
(A.h.u-38/1-2)

A person undergoing rejuvenation therapy gains long life, good memory, intelligence, good health (free from diseases), youth,

excellent aura and lustre, good skin complexion, good voice, physical strength, strong sense organs, good oration skills, have aphrodisiac properties, respect and brilliance. How one gets the maximum utilisation of the end product of digestion is known as Rasayana or Anti-ageing/ Rejuvenation therapy.

Lashuna kalpa is one of the specific and unique contributions of Vagbhatta in the field of Rasayana. Lashuna is one of the best medicine of Ayurveda and is known as Rasona because it has Pancharasa except for amla rasa. It is also known as Bhutagna as it can destroy the organism. It is well absorbed in the body and is a beautiful vegetable with medicinal properties and a potent drug.

Two types of Rasayana therapy have been mentioned-

- Kutipraveshika (main)
- Vatatapika

Similar to Charaka Samhita, a description of 'Medhya Rasayana' has been given in Ashtanga Hridaya. Among those, shankhapushpi is considered best having medhya properties. Use of bhallataka, kulaththa, tuwaraka, khadira, pippali, bakuchi as potent rasayana is described in Ashtanga Hridaya. Acharya Vagbhatta has emphasised the usage of a single drug rather than formulations. Lashuna kalpa is their specific contribution in the field of Rasayana. Shilajatu kalpa has also been mentioned.

CONCLUSION

Rasayana therapy has been practised as an important branch aiming at rejuvenation, geriatric care, mental health, increased and sustained immunity, etc., to achieve long and healthy life. Thus, it is considered the key to maintaining positive health and longevity. Hence, Rasayana indirectly deals with the aim of Ayurveda, i.e. preservation and promotion of health and vigour of a healthy individual, which means even the ordinary individuals can make use of it to increase body strength which provides resistance to protect them from any ailment as well as curing the disease of an unhealthy individual. The Rasayana given by Acharya Charaka and Vagbhatta are almost similar except that of a single term that says Rasayana to be 'pranati' according to Charaka Samhita, which means being respectful in the society and 'vrushta' according to Ashtanga Hridaya, which means having aphrodisiac properties. Description of soma aushadha (i.e. aushadhiraja) has been done in Charaka Samhita and Sushruta Samhita, but it was well explained in the 29th chapter Sushruta Samhita chikitsa sthana. In Charaka Samhita, only the name of soma aushadha have been mentioned under dronipraveshika Rasayana in 'Ayurvedasamutthaniya adhyaya' of Charaka chikitsa sthana. The importance of Rasayana therapy has been gradually reduced with time, and nowadays, only a few common Rasayanas are known and used by today's world. However, the need for rejuvenation therapy has been increasing day by day as the current lifestyle of human beings have made them immunologically weak. A comparative study of the literature on Rasayana mentioned in brihat-trayi shows that it had been elaborately described in Charaka Samhita. Rasayana has an important role in immunity enhancement. It is also helpful for longevity of life, delays ageing, improves intelligence and memory power, promotes health, provides youthful states of the body, betters the body lustre and voice and enhances natural health. It also slows down and reverses the disease process, and prevents its re-occurrence. Rasayana replenishes our body's vital fluids, thus keeping us away from diseases. The Rasayana treatment has been given more importance by describing it at the beginning of chikitsa sthana within four padas by Charaka. As a whole, it is observed that maintaining positive health and longevity through Rasayana therapy was the most popular therapy in the period of Charaka when the problem of disease in

the community was not so acute. With time, when the diseases become more frequent due to the urbanization of the population, more and more preventive and curative methods have been explored.^[8] It is seen that the kuti pravesika type of Rasayana therapy, particularly, i.e. indoor management, received less importance in later periods that it gradually lost its place as an independent speciality. Description of Rasayana in Sushruta

Samhita is unique about its explanation of soma aushadha (aushadhipati), whereas the Ashtanga Hridaya has contributed by defining lashuna kalpa. So, with the current comparative discussion, we can infer that Rasayana is a vital health care remedy given preventive aspects mainly. To achieve long and healthy life, one should use different Rasayanas according to their physical constitution.

List of Rasayanas mentioned in Brihat-trayi are-

Charaka Samhita	Sushruta Samhita	Ashtanga Hridaya
Prathama-Brahma Rasayana	Sarvopghatashamaniya rasayana	Bhallataka
Dwitiya-Brahma Rasayana	Vidanga-Tandula Yoga	Kulattha
Chyawanprasha.	Vidanga Kalpa	Tuwarakra
Amalaki Rasayana.	Gambhari Yoga	Khadira
Haritkyadi Rasayana	Medha ayushkamiya rasayana	Pippali
Haritkyadi Yoga	Drugs like citrakamula, haridra, mandukaparni, brahma, vaca etc.	Bakuchi
Amlaka Yoga.	Vaca churna+Suvarna bhasma+bilva churna	Medya Rasayana
Amlaka Ghrita	Amalki churna+Suvarna bhasma + madhu	Lashuna Kalpa
Vidangawleha	Satavari ghrita+Suvarna bhasma+madhu	Shilajatu Kalpa
Nagabala Rasayana	Swabhava Vyadhi pratishedhaniya rasayanam	-
Baladi Rasayana	Varahaikanada Rasayana Yoga	-
Bhallataka Rasayana	Vijayasaradi Rasayana Yoga	-
Bhallataka Ksheera	Niruttha santapanium rasayanam	-
Bhallataka kshaudra	24 soma aushadha	-
Bhallataka Taila	-	-
Amalakayasa Brahmara Rasayana	-	-
Kevalamalaka Rasayana	-	-
Lauhadi Rasayana	-	-
Aindra Rasayana	-	-
Medya Rasayana	-	-
Pippali Rasayana	-	-
Pippali Vardhamana Rasayana	-	-
Triphala Rasayana	-	-
Dwitiya-Triphala Rasayana	-	-
Trtiya-Triphala Rasayana	-	-
Chaturtha-Triphala Rasayana	-	-
Shilajatu Rasayana	-	-
Indroktta Rasayana	-	-
Droni-Praveshika Rasayana	-	-
Achara Rasayana	-	-

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