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Review Article

A REVIEW ON RASENDRA CHURAMANI: A PHARMACEUTICAL BOOK OF ANCIENT SCIENCE

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ABSTRACT

Rasendra Churamani is one of the important ancient texts on ancient Indian Alchemy written by Acharya Somadeva in circa 12th AD. Hindi commentary of this book is available, written by Arthabodhini Hindi Teekakar Vaidya Pravara, Rasagya Pandit Shree Rameshwar Dayal Bajpeyee. This book has a great upbringing, there is no doubt about it. In this book detailed knowledge of Rasa poojan, Rasashala nirman vidhi, Paribhasha prakarana, Musa, Puta, Rasa-aushadhi, Parada samskar, Bhasma prakarana are given. Rasendra Churamani containing the experiences of previous authors. In ancient time it has a great contribution in pharmaceutical science, by its process like bhasma nirmana, satva nirmana and purification methods of metals and minerals drugs.

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INTRODUCTION

The origin of 'Rasashastra' has its roots in the "Indian alchemy".⁽¹⁾ Rasashastra or the Ayurvedic alchemy is an important branch of Ayurvedic pharmacology. This branch deals with the use of metals, minerals, gemstones and their processing.⁽²⁾ Rasashastra is not counted among the eight branches of Ayurveda. This is indicative of the fact that "Rasashastra" in its initial days was developed as an independent pharmaceutical science.⁽³⁾

Rasendra Churamani is one among the books which has emphasized regarding both herbal and mineral medicines, shows the equivalence of both preparations. In the ancient time of period Rasendra Churamani is define as a unique pharmaceutical properties of drugs. Different types of Oil, Bhasmas, Herbal plants are explained in this book.

Prediction of Period

Rasendra Churamani is an ancient and authentic book in its time. There is no any specific time period is given in the book. But before the *Rasa ratna samucchaya* and after the *Rasa hrudaya tantra*, the composition of this grantha can definitely be confirmed. That time is around 12th century AD. Because the eastern part of *Rasa ratna samucchaya* is often taken from the *Rasendra Churamani*, which is around 12th Century AD.

Author Details and Commentaries

Acharya Somadeva is the author of the Rasendra Churamani. In Rasendra Churamani the author has not complete his special introduction. Therefore it is difficult to say something right about the time and place of creation of the text during their birth. The author's name is described at the end of the first chapter of the book, in the middle and the end of the book.

The hindi commentary of the Rasendra Churamani is described by the Arthabodhini hindi teekakar, Rasagya pandit Shree Rameshwar Dayal Bajpeyee. He was born in Kartik sudi Dashmi samvat 1947 vikrami in Seetapur (Awadh) janpad.

A Specific Description of the Book & Its Chapters

Rasendra churamani is divided into 16 chapters which contain total 1398 verses. Each chapter has its own importance. There is a detailed knowledge of Rasa shastra, Yantra's, Metals, Minerals, Samskar etc are explained clearly.

1st Chapter

This chapter is dedicated for *Parada* (Mercury). In this chapter firstly described the *Parada prasansha*. It is said to give a long life by winning the death of shiva from the likeness of *Rasendra* (Parada).⁽⁴⁾ In this chapter given the importance of *Sadehamukti*. Due to use of *Amar-varuni*, able to get *Deha siddhi* is described, and it is called *Khechhari mudra*. *Parada sevan* is described for the longevity and good health.⁽⁵⁾ The Bhasma of Parada is a type of *Parada mahamurcha*.⁽⁶⁾

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There are five types of Rasa pooja is described in this grantha, and that are Parada *Bhakshan*, *Sparshan*, *Daan*, *Dhyan* and *Poojan*. The gras of the Abhraka sata is used for Rasa poojan.⁽⁷⁾

2nd Chapter

In the second Chapter of Rasendra Churamani properties of Guru, Shishya and *Rasa-mandapa* are described.⁽⁸⁾ Then four important properties of Parada are described- first Malini shakti for the *Swarna nirman*, second Vajrini shakti for the *Deergha Ayushya*, third Kanthakya shakti for the *Hemaloha vidhayani*, fourth Abhrakhya shakti for the *Rasa bandhini*.⁽⁹⁾ Rasa parva is described in the *Astami* and *Chaturdashi*.⁽¹⁰⁾

3rd Chapter

In the third Chapter Rasashala is described. There are three types of *Chalni*, different names of Coal like *Angar aukar kokil* (Coal which is wasted without water) & *Kupika* (Kusiddha, Gola, Karandika) are described. Rasa sadhanartha samgrahniya padarth are described such as- *Kosthi*, *angar kosthi*, *bhatti*, *nalika*, *peszni*, *kharal*, *kandini* etc.⁽¹¹⁾

In this chapter it is said that after eighteen *Samskar* parad is called *Maharasa*.⁽¹²⁾

4th Chapter

Paribhasha prakaran is described in this chapter. *Chapala* has been described in this chapter, it has not been described in the chapter where maharasa is included.⁽¹³⁾ Parada *Samskar* is described shortly.

Mainly *Pinjari*⁽¹⁴⁾ (shiny yellowish alloy) & *Dhaut*⁽¹⁵⁾ (Black powder that get screwed by washing the earthworm's feces frequently in water is called Dhaut) are described. *Dwandan*, *Murchan*, *Patan*, *Rodhan*, *Shuddhavarta*, *Beejavarta*, *Vida*, *Druti*, *Ranjan* is defined. *Mukhikarana* of Parada is known as *Rakshas vakra Parada*.⁽¹⁶⁾

5th Chapter

Different types of Yantras, Musa and Puta are described in this chapter. Some specific yantra's namely *Khalbhali yantra*⁽¹⁷⁾ for the process of Parada swedana, *Tapika yantra*⁽¹⁸⁾ for the gandhak jarana, *Grasta yantra*⁽¹⁹⁾ for the Parada bhasma nirmana are described. *Kanduk yantra* has described as *Kundak yantra*⁽²⁰⁾.

Musa & puta are described as contemporary Acharya's.

6th Chapter

In this chapter 64 types of Divyaaushadh (Devine herbs) are described for the Parada *bandhan*, *marana* and *jarana* process. Due to the help of divya aushadh parada is ready to assimilate different metals and minerals in itself. Bandhan of parada with different *divya aushadh* is helpful for *Dehavada* and *Lohavada* of parada. The Divyaaushadhies namely- *Somavalli*, *Somavriksha*, *Sthalpadmini*, *Krushnalata*, *Rudanti*, *Saptapatri*, *Sarpini*, *Jyoti*, *Kshatrini* etc. Divyaaushadies increases the *Dehavada* and *Lohavada* siddhi.⁽²¹⁾

Unique contribution

- In this chapter Acharya Somadeva mentioned the Devine herbs which are mystifying herbs.
- These all Divyaaushadhies are used for increasing the *Dehavada* & *Lohavada* properties of Parada.

7th Chapter

In this chapter 68 types of *Rasa aushadh* are described for the Parada *bandhan*, *marana* and *jarana* process and also in *niyamana* and *dosha aharana kriya*. Rasa aushadh are described for the *rasa sadhana*.

The Rasaushadhies namely- *Jyotpala*, *Samanga*, *Jalini*, *Jalamoolak* etc.⁽²²⁾

8th Chapter

In this chapter different types of Aushadh gana are described. *Sarpakshyadi gana* (46 herbs) for *Rasaniyamaka*, parada shodhan and swedana karma. *Vyaghradi gana* (85 herbs) for Rasa nirjeevkarak (bhasma/marana). *Raktasnuhyadi gana* (40 herbs) for parade bandhan, marana and shodhan. *Kadalyadi gana* (8 herbs) for the kraman samskar of parada. *Kakmachyadi gana* for Dehavada (18 herbs), *Ekveeradi gana* for parada bandhan, dehavada and Lohavada of parada and also as Vajikarak aushadha. *Vajradandadi varga* (13 herbs) for Rasayana property. *Bhupatalyadi varga* (8 herbs) for parada bandhan.⁽²³⁾

In the end *kshmapala*, *indiri*, *somalata*, *mantrasihasi* and *kangalkhechari* is described as pancharatna.⁽²⁴⁾

Unique contribution

- Nearly 100 herbs have been included in different Gana & Varga.
- Different types of herbs are selected in different varga or gana by their properties.

9th Chapter

In this chapter different classifications like mutravarga (Urine of animals), madhurtray (3 types of sweet drugs), amlavarga (sour substances), Ksharvarga (15 plants of alkali group), Lavanavarga (8 types of salts), Taila varga, Dravaka gana, Shodhaniya gana, visha varga (5 poisonous plant) and upvisha (7 sub-acute poison) are described.⁽²⁵⁾

In dugdha varga animal milk and herbal milk both are described.

10th Chapter

In this chapter 8 drugs in Maharasa are described. Rasaka has not been counted in the original verse whereas its detailed description has given in the respective chapter later. *Abhraka*, *Rajvarta*, *Vaikranta*, *Sasyak*, *Vimala*, *Shilajeeta*, *Tutha*, *Tapya* are known as Maharasa.⁽²⁶⁾

11th Chapter

In this chapter 8 types of Uprasa and 8 types of Sadharana rasa are described. Regarding clarification of Kankustha, opinion of different scholars has been compiled by Somadeva. *Gandhaka*, *Hartal*, *Tuvari*, *Manahshila*, *Anjana*, *Kankustha*, *Kasisa*, *Geru* are known as Uprasa. *Kampillaka*, *Gauripashana*, *Navasadar*, *Kaparda*, *Agnijar*, *Girisindoor*, *Hingula*, *Mridarshring* etc are known as Sadharana Rasa.⁽²⁷⁾

12th Chapter

Ratna varga is described in this chapter. *Manikya*, *Mukta*, *Vidrum*, *Tarkshya*, *Pukhraj*, *Heera*, *Neel*, *Gomed* and *Vaidurya* are explained. There are 4 types of *Vajra* (Heera) bhasma is

described. Shodhana Vidhi (Purification method) of each Ratna.⁽²⁸⁾

13th Chapter

In this chapter detailed description of Rasayana yoga of nine Ratnas like *Manikya Rasayana, Mouktik Rasayana, Pravala Rasayana, Tarkshya Rasayana, Pushparag Rasayana, Vajra Rasayana, Neel Rasayana, Gomeda Rasayana* and *Vaiduryaka Rasayana*.

All Rasayana of this chapter is as unique contribution of Acharya Somadeva. All the Rasayana (Rejuvenating formulations) are the very important formulations of Rasashastra including Ratna.⁽²⁹⁾

14th Chapter

It has detailed description of origin, properties, types, posology and indication of 9 Lohas (Metals and alloys). They have been classified into 3 subtypes, suddha lauha (Pure metals-*Swarna, Rajat, Tamra, Lauha*), Puti lauha (*Naga, Vanga*) and Mishra lauha (Alloys- *Pittala, Kamsya and Varta*). Parameters for assessing purity of gold (*kapil, nirdala, snigdha, ravi virhit*) has been mentioned. Agniputa praman for the bhasma preparation is defined clearly. Toxic effects of improperly calcinated metals have been described by Acharya Somadeva in this chapter.⁽³⁰⁾

Unique contribution

- Bhrashta yantra for the *Naga Rasayana* (Calcination) is a unique contribution of Acharya Somadeva in Rasendra Churamani.
- Preparation of artificial *Kamsya* (Bronze) has been mentioned by melting and mixing 8 parts of Tamra (Copper) and 2 parts of Vanga (Tin) is also another contribution of the author.
- Acharya Somadeva has contraindicated consumption of all types of food materials kept in *Kamsya* (Bronze) utensils except *Ghruta*.
- *Ankola* (*Alangium salifolium* Linn.) fruits have been used for the preparation 5 types of *Ankola* oil (through extraction method), by the use of *Kanduka Yantra* *Ankola* oil is prepared either with or without application of heat.

15th Chapter

Description on origin, properties, incineration and *mukhikarana* of parada. Eighteen (Asthadash Samskar) of parada is described. Five types of Parada dosha *Visha, Vahni, Mala, Mada & Darp* are described. *Parada utpatti, sapta kanchuki dosha, mukhikarana* etc.⁽³¹⁾

Unique contribution

- Acharya Somadeva have been described 4 types of Parada and their etymology.
- Paradrassa is also define as a type of Parad.

16th Chapter

This chapter mainly described the Lohavada, whereby Abharaka sattva jarana from 1/4th part upto 8 times of Parada has been given. Properties of Sattva Jarana are also told.

Garbha druti, Paksha china parada etc have been explained. Charana has been also explained. Chinna paksha of parad and Charana has been also explained.⁽³²⁾

DISCUSSION

Methodical concise and rational way of explanation about the concepts of Rasashastra (Indian alchemy) is strongly rooted in this book. It deals with separate chapters for Parada prashansa (importance of mercury) in 1st chapter. The book has given full devotion towards Gurus, Mantras and Rasa vidyas. Each chapter is divided as there on respective specifications. In the 3rd & 4th chapter there is detail description about Rasa-shala, Rasa-mandap, Kajjali, Pishti, Dhalan, Patan, Murchan, Aavap, Nirvap etc. Most of different Aushadh (Divya-aushadh, Rasa-aushadh, many gana) are mentioned by the authors own experience. Some of the easy preparation of medicines and Bhasmas have been explained in 10th chapter. There is detailed description of Rasayana yoga of nine Ratnas written separately in 13th chapter. Maharasa, Uprasa, Sadharanrasa, Dhatu varga, Ratna varga are explained clearly in this book. All necessary subject related to Rasa-vidha is explained in Rasendra Churamani. First part of the Rasa ratna Samucchaya is influenced by Rasendra Churamani. The Rasendra Churamani is an important book in its contemporary time.

In Rasendra Churamani the Author Acharya Somadeva has included different types of Divya aushadhies (Devine herbs), Rasa aushadhies and their habitat and many Gana & Varga by his own experienced. There is no any doubt that Rasendra Churamani is one of the finest texts of its time. Which is also very important for the pharmaceutical method in its contemporary time.

CONCLUSION

This book can be taken as by the virtue of its practical usefulness. It has given contribution to Rasashastra preparations. This book is practically very useful. Chapters and its contents are well arranged. Rasendra Churamani is an important text on Ancient Indian Alchemy and therapeutics written after golden age of both the braches which were then well practiced. It is a compilation alchemy along with many important creations and modifications of its own. The subject matter of the text is focused on performance and alternative methods of experimentation.

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