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RASAYANA DRUGS IN BRIHATRAYI

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ABSTRACT

The problem of longevity has always intrigued man. Not only he wishes to live longer, but also desires to enjoy all pleasures of life. It is biologically possible for a man to live to the age of 125-150 years and there are records of persons who lived beyond the limits that exist today. The primary causes of ageing are genetic and these are unavoidable. Genetically one has a predetermined life span, morphological and physiological constitution and therefore an average rate of metabolism characteristic of given individual. The secondary causes are avoidable and they comprise of infections, diseases, deficiencies of vitamins, enzymes, hormones and other vital factors. These causes may not threaten life but affects the length of life span by producing irreparable damage to the tissues. *Rasayana Chikitsa* is one of the important branches of *Ashtanga* Ayurveda especially formulated to improve the health of the individual and at the same time cure the disease by promoting the strength and vitality. It contributes to the integrity of the *Rasadi Sapta Dhatus* and thus increases the longevity. The *Rasayana* by virtue of its capacity to modify the metabolic changes enable the man to fully utilise the possibilities, that nature has endowed him with. It not only prolongs the life but also improves the quality of life. A large number of drugs have been recommended for the use in *Rasayana Chikitsa*. Among them some drugs like *Soma* and its species *Vidanga* etc. are considered highly potent. Among the non-medicinal group, the regular use of ghee particularly the variety obtained from the milk but not from the curd and *Brahmacharya* is stated to prolong life. The lists of the drugs that can be used for *Rasayana Chikitsa* as advised by the *Brihatrayi* are discussed in main paper.

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INTRODUCTION

Ageing is a natural physiological process which is characterised by gradual weakening of the vital functions, lowering in the activity of metabolic process etc. People become old at different times and ageing is not necessarily accompanied by disease. Changes in the tempo of life which inevitably accompany all progress also have an adverse effect on man's health and life.

Rasayana Chikitsa is one of the important branches of *Ashtanga* Ayurveda, formulated to improve the health of the healthy people and at the same time to cure the disease by promoting the strength and vitality⁽¹⁾.

It promotes the assimilation and delivery of nutrients needed by the body tissues for optimum structure and function. *Rasayana Chikitsa* boosts the *Ojas* (vital force) and immune system helping a healthy person maintain good health or to re-establish impaired physical or mental health. Various measures comprehended by *Rasayana* Therapy conduce to the replenishment of *Rasa* and other *Dhatus*. *Rasayana chikitsa*

used properly will ultimately lead to the achievement of the ultimate effect as stated by Charaka⁽²⁾.

There are number of Single drugs *Yogas* and compound drugs mentioned as *Rasayana* drugs in various texts of Ayurveda. But the present paper is limited to elucidate and enumerate different *Rasayana* Drugs quoted in *Brihatrayi*.

Rasayana Drugs from *Charaka Samhita* (Chi. 1st Chapter)

Charaka Samhita, one the earliest texts of Ayurveda, gave extensive information on the subject of *rasayanas* and rejuvenation. In his volume on Medical Treatment of Disease (*Chikitsa Sthana*) he begins with an exhaustive chapter devoted to *Rasayana* therapy detailing the physiological, pharmacological, therapeutic and clinical aspects of *Rasayana* therapy. The knowledge appears to have been so much developed that *Rasayana* Therapy has to be designated as one of the eight major branches of Ayurveda.

Charaka has given '*Vayasthapana Varga*' consisting of ten drugs namely: *Amrita*, *Abhaya*, *Amalaki*, *Aparajita*, *Rasna*,

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Jeevanti, Shatavari, Mandukaparni, Sthira and Punarnava⁽³⁾. He has stated '*Amalaki*' to be the best among them⁽⁴⁾. Even though the best and potent *Rasayana Dravya* is *Soma*, *Amalaki* is considered best probably because of its procurability without difficulty and affordability (within the reach of every human being). Among the non-medicinal group, **Ghee** obtained from the milk and **Brahmarcharya** are considered as the best *Rasayana* measures.

A group of 9 drugs are also indicated by Indra stated to be highly potent and sustainable to *Rishis* only as the ordinary person will not be able to withstand the potency of these drugs. a) *Brahma Suvarchala* b) *Aditya Parni* c) *Nari* or *Ashwabala* d) *Kashthagodha* e) *Sarpa* f) *Soma* g) *Padma* h) *Aja* i) *Neela*⁽⁵⁾.

Of the above drugs *Soma* is considered the best. These drugs are used in the method of *Dronee Praveshika Rasayana*. Another *Rasayana* is also stated to be explained by Indra which contains mainly *Balya Varga*, *Jeevaniya Varga*, *Brimhaneeya Varga*, *Vayasthapana Varga* and some other drugs⁽⁶⁾.

Table no 1 Rasayana drugs of Charaka Samhita

S.no.	Single drugs	Compound preparations
1.	Abhaya	Achara Rasayana
2.	Adityaparni	Aindra Rasayana
3.	Aindri	Amalaka Avaleha (2)
4.	Aja	Amalaka Churna
5.	Amalaki	Amalaka Ghrita
6.	Aparajita	Amalaka Rasayana
7.	Ati-chatra	Amalakayasa Brahma Rasayana
8.	Brahma Suvarchala	Bhallataka Guda
9.	Brahmi	Bhallataka Ksudra
10.	Chatra	Bhallataka Kshira
11.	Guduchi	Bhallataka Lavana
12.	Haritaki	Bhallataka Palala
13.	Jeevanti	Bhallataka Saktu
14.	Kasthagodha	Bhallataka Sarpi
15.	Ksheera pushpi	Bhallataka Taila
16.	Maha Shrivani	Bhallataka Tarpana
17.	Mahameda	Bhallataka Yusha
18.	Mandukaparni	Brahma Rasayana (2)
19.	Meda	Chyavanaprasha Avaleha
20.	Naari	Haritaki Yoga (2)
21.	Nagabala	Indrokta Rasayana (2)
22.	Neela	Kevalamalaka Rasayana
23.	Padma	Lauhadi Rasayana
24.	Payasya	Medhya Rasayana
25.	Punarnava	Nagabala Rasayana
26.	Rasna	Pippali Rasayana
27.	Sarpa	Pippali Vardhamana Rasayana
28.	Shankhapushpi	Shilajatu Rasayana
29.	Shatavari	Triphala Rasayana (4)
30.	Shrivani	Vidanga Avaleha
31.	Soma	---
32.	Sthira	---
33.	Vacha	---
34.	Yashtimadhu	---

Rasayana Drugs from Sushruta Samhita (Chi. 27th - 30th Chapters)

Sushruta Samhita is next important text of Ayurveda. A critical study of this text in reference to *Rasayana* Therapy was almost same as described by Charaka. But the way of description of *Rasayana* in Sushruta Samhita is something different. He has described *Rasayana* in *chikitsa sthana* in four chapters i.e. from 27th to 30th, which indicates that *Rasayan* therapy was not emphasized much by *Acharya Sushruta*. This is probably due to the fact Sushruta Samhita is primarily dealing with surgical discipline.

Table no 2 Rasayana drugs of Sushruta Samhita

S.NO.	SINGLE	SIMPLE	COMPOUND
1.	Adityaparni	Amalaka with Svarna & Madhu	Ayurvedhaka Rasayana
2.	Aja	Bilva mula churna, Svarna bhasma along with Madhu & Ghrita-taken in Pushyami Nakshtra.	Bala Kalpa
3.	Ajagari	Go Chandana, Mohanika, Madhu & Svarna	Bijaka Kalpa
4.	Ajalomi	Ksheera, Svarna, Madhucchishta with Madhu.	Bilva Rasayana
5.	Ati-Chatra	Nilotpaladala ksheera paka along with Svarna bhasma & Tila beeja	Brahma Ghrita
6.	Brahma suvarchala	Padma, Nilotpala, Yashtimadhu, Svarna & Ghrita	Brahmi Rasayana
7.	Chakra	Shatavari ghrita with Madhu & Svarna	Daridryanashaka Rasayana Yoga
8.	Chatra	Svarna bhasma, Padmaka beeja, Priyangu, Laja, Madhu with Milk.	Kashmarya Kalpa
9.	Gambhariphala	Vacha, Ghrita, Svarna & Bilva	Krishna Bakuchi Rasayana yoga
10.	Ghrita	Vaasa mula, Yava, Pippali with Madhu	Mandukaparni Rasayana
11.	Golomi	(Out of 10 simple recipes explained, above, nine contain Svarna)	Masha Kalpa
12.	Gonasi	---	Nilotpala Kwatha Rasayana
13.	Kalamegha	---	Samartyaprad Yoga Rasayana
14.	Kanya	---	Shatpaka Vacha Ghrita
15.	Karavira	---	Vacha Rasayana
16.	Karenu	---	Varahi Kalpa
17.	Krishna Kapoti	---	Vacha Taila Rasayana
18.	Ksheera	---	Vidangadi Kalpa
19.	Madhu	---	Yavadi Yoga
20.	Maha Shrivani	---	---
21.	Maha Vedavati	---	---
22.	Sheetala Jala	---	---
23.	Shrivani	---	---
24.	Shwetaksha	---	---
25.	Adityaparni	---	---
26.	Aja	---	---
27.	Ajagari	---	---
28.	Ajalomi	---	---
29.	Ati-Chatra	---	---
30.	Brahma suvarchala	---	---
31.	Chakra	---	---
32.	Chatra	---	---
33.	Gambhariphala	---	---
34.	Ghrita	---	---
35.	Golomi	---	---
36.	Gonasi	---	---
37.	Kalamegha	---	---
38.	Kanya	---	---
39.	Karavira	---	---
40.	Karenu	---	---
41.	Krishna Kapoti	---	---
42.	Ksheera	---	---
43.	Madhu	---	---
44.	Maha Shrivani	---	---
45.	Maha Vedavati	---	---
46.	Sheetala Jala	---	---
47.	Shrivani	---	---
48.	Shwetaksha	---	---
49.	Shweta kapoti	---	---
50.	Varahi	---	---

Soma (Agnistoma, Amshavan, Amshuvan, Chandrama, Durva Soma, Garudahruta, Gayatrya, Jaagata, Kanaka-prabha, Kaniyan, Karaveera, Maha Soma, Munjavan, Pamkta, Pratanavan, Raivata, Rajata-prabha, Shakara, Svayam-prabha, Svetaksha, Talavrinta, Traistubha, Udupati, Yathokta) 24 varieties

Sushruta has omitted the philosophical aspects of subject and has given lesser importance to the physiological concepts. Sushruta has not given much importance to specialized regimen of *Rasayana* Therapy like *Vatatapika* and *Kutipravesika* procedure of Charaka. However, he has advocated the use of *Ahara* for *Rasayana* treatment similar to *Vranitagara* described for the use of the wounded persons in a different context.

Dalhana considered this context comparable to Charaka's *Kutipravesika* Procedure. The most important contribution of Sushruta and the great commentator Dalhana to the development of *Rasayana* therapy is the classification of *Rasayana* (7). They described that *Rasayana* therapy have two aspects - *Kamya Rasayana* for healthy person and *Naimitiika Rasayana* for diseased person. Sushruta has introduced a number of newer *Rasayana* drugs which have not been mentioned earlier in Samhitas like Charaka Samhita and Bhela Samhita.

Certain drugs like *Vidanga*, *Kashmiri*(8), *Mandukaparni*, *Brahmi*, *Vacha* (9), and the 24 types of *Somas* along with their distinctive features, mode of administration & their effect on the body (10) are described. But certain drugs like *Amalaki*, *Pippali*, and *Shankhapushpi* have found priority consideration in Charaka Samhita but not described in Sushruta Samhita.

Rasayana Drugs from Vagbhata (A. S. Chi. 49th & A. H. Chi. 39th Chapters)

The two later texts written by Vagbhata namely *Ashtanga Sangraha* (11) and *Ashtanga Hridaya* appear to have largely adopted Charaka Samhita. Of course some newer drugs have been introduced in this text.

Concepts of *Achara Rasayana*, *Vatatapika Rasayana* and *Kuti Pravesika Rasayana* are similar to Charaka Samhita. One distinct observation made by Vagbhata regarding the age factor in selection of subjects for the use of *Rasayana* therapy is indicated in younger or middle age groups. No such emphasis has been put on the use of *Rasayana therapy* in younger age groups in earlier texts. Vagbhata has also indicated the *Poorva karma* before the administration of *Rasayana* drugs (12).

The description of *Rasayana* Therapy in last chapters of *Uttara tantra* i.e. 49th chapter of *Ashtanga Samgraha* and 39th of *Ashtanga Hridaya* indicates the fact that at that time *rasayana* therapy was less admired, as aim of curing the diseases would have been more essential. The description of *Rasayana* resembles close to Charaka Samhita. Definition, types, modes of administration, age of administration and various *Rasayana yogas* have been described in detail.

Table no 3 Rasayana drugs mentioned by Vagbhata

S. No.	Sanskrit Name	Botanical Name	Dosage Form
1.	Ashwagandha	Withania somnifera	Churna
2.	Bhringaraj	Eclipta alba	Swarasa
3.	Guduchi	Tinospora cordifolia	Swarasa
4.	Lasuna	Allium sativum	Swarasa
5.	Mandukaparni	Centella asiatica	Swarasa
6.	Punarnava	Boerhaavia diffusa	Kalka
7.	Sankha Pushpi	Convolvulus pluricalis	Kalka
8.	Satavari	Asparagus racemosus	Ghrita
9.	Somaraji	Psoralea corylifolia	Churna
10.	Yashtimadhu	Glycerhiza glabra	Churna

Table no. 3a Compound Preparations

S. No.	Ashtanga sangraha	Ashtanga hridaya
1.	Aindra Rasayana	Abhayamalaka Rasayana

2.	Alambusha Rasayana	Amalaka Rasayana
3.	Amalaki Rasayana	Ashwagandha Rasayana
4.	Ashwagandha Yoga	Bhallataka Kashaya
5.	Bakuchi Rasayana	Bhallataka Leha
6.	Bala Rasayana	Bhallataka Rasayana
7.	Bhallataka Yoga	Bhallataka Swarasa
8.	Brahma rasayana (2)	Bhallataka Taila
9.	Chyavanaprasha Avaleha	Bhringa Pravala Rasayana
10.	Guggulu Kalpa	Bhringa Rasayana Yoga
11.	Haritaki Prayoga	Bhringa taila Kalpa
12.	Haritaki-Amalakyadi Yoga	Brahma Rasayana
	Kanchuki Mula Kanda	
13.	(Kanchuki & Somamrita Ghrita; Saptamrita Churna)	Brahmi Rasayana
14.	Kashmarya Rasayana	Chatush kuvalaya Ghrita
15.	Kukkuti Kanda	Chitramula Rasayana
16.	Lashuna Yoga	Chyavanaprasha Rasayana
17.	Lohadi Yoga	Dhatri Rasayana
18.	Madhwadi Avaleha	Dhatryadi Churna
19.	Medha Vardhaka Rasayana	Gokshuraka Rasayana
20.	Nagabala Rasayana	Haritaki Ghrita
21.	Narasimha Ghrita Rasayana	Haritakyamalaka Rasayana
22.	Narasimha Taila Rasayana	Krishna Tila Rasayana
23.	Palandu Rasayana	Langalyadi Gutika Yoga
24.	Pippali Rasayana	Langalyadi Rasayana
25.	Punarnavadi Yoga	Lasuna Rasayana
26.	Shankha Pushpi Ghrita	Lohadi Churna
27.	Shatavari Yoga	Mandukaparni Rasayana
28.	Sheetala jala	Mandukaparnyadi Rasayana
29.	Shilajatu Kalpa	Murvadi Rasayana
30.	Shilajtwadi Loha Rasayana	Nagabala Rasayana
31.	Swarna Makshika	Narasimha Ghrita
32.	Swarna Yoga	Pancharavinda Ghrita
33.	Takra Lashuna Yoga	Pippali Rasayana
34.	Triphala Ghrita	Pippalyayasa Lepana
35.	Triphala Rasayana	Punarnava Rasayana
36.	Triphala Yoga	Shankhapushpi Rasayana
37.	Tuvaraka Yoga	Shatavari Ghrita
38.	Vacha Rasayana	Shilajatu Kalpa
39.	Vidanga Rasayana	Shilajatvadi Rasayana
40.	Vidhara (Vridhdharu) Yoga	Shuntyayasa Lepana
41.	---	Shvadamstradi Rasayana
42.	---	Somaraji Rasayana
43.	---	Triphala Rasayana
44.	---	Tuvaraka Rasayana
45.	---	Tuvaraka Taila
46.	---	Tuvaraka Taila with Khadira
47.	---	Vacha Rasayana
48.	---	Varahikanda Rasayana
49.	---	Vardhamana Pippali Rasayana
50.	---	Vidangadi Churna
51.	---	Vidaryadi Rasayana

Table no 3b Mineral Preparations (13)

S. NO.	DRUG	YOGA
1.	Shilajith (Asphaltum / Black Bitumen)	Shilajith Yoga
2.	Loha (Iron / Ferrium)	Loha Bhasma along with other drugs like Vidanga

The Soma Species and certain other drugs are not mentioned in *Ashtanga Hridayam*. Vagbhata states that he had intentionally omitted those highly potent drugs which are difficult to procure (14).

The *Vata prakriti* people are advised to take MILK, *Pitta Prakriti* people the GHEE, the *Kapha Prakriti* individuals HONEY and the *Rakta Prakriti* people are advised to take COLD WATER regularly before meals only for producing desired *Rasayana* effect and to prevent Senile Decay.

DISCUSSION

Rasayana effect is not a specific pharmacological action but is a complex phenomenon operating through a comprehensive

holistic mechanism involving the fundamental factors of *rasa-samvahana* (circulation of nutrient juices), and *sapta dhatu*, *agni* and *srotasmi* optimization. In modern terms, some of the possible mechanisms by which we can interpret the actions of *rasayanas* include: antioxidant action, immunomodulatory action, hemopoietic effect, adaptogenic action, DNA repair action, anabolic action, nutritive function, neuroprotective action.

Rasayanas are nontoxic in normal doses and are *amphoteric*. The conventional meaning of this term is that a given substance can act as both acid and base. When using the term with reference to *rasayanas*, we mean that they won't over-tonify nor over-pacify the mind or body. By contrast, tonics are used to build up or stimulate the body towards normal health but can be over-tonifying. *Rasayanas* will also help normalize physiology, but do it through both gentle nutritive and eliminative functions that tend to simultaneously support several or more tissues or organs, so are quite different. Amphoteric herbs seem to have a built in buffer that will help the body to achieve homeostatic balance, building or eliminating as required to achieve physiological equilibrium.

It should be kept in mind that, though both Charaka and Sushruta, as well as later commentators, allude to their use in treating disease, *Rasayanas* have a decidedly more preventive intention than a curative one. This said, specific *rasayanas* can be used in the treatment of disease especially those of an autoimmune or systemically degenerative nature. It is also sometimes administered after the treatment of disease to prevent recurrence of that disease or to nourish the tissues that have been damaged by the disease. It can also be done in absence of a disease to prevent the occurrence of diseases.

CONCLUSION

The benefits of *Rasayana Chikitsa* (rejuvenation therapy) are truly comprehensive, improving the overall health anyone undergoing this treatment. Apart from promoting good health, increasing concentration and memory, giving the skin a radiant glow and alleviating stress from the mind, its most important effect is creating a greater resistance to diseases. So regardless if today we are indeed living in the most stressful of times or not, *Rasayana* therapy is an extremely useful strategy for remaining healthy.

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