

UNRAVELLING THE SECRETS OF RASASHASTRA: AN ANALYSIS OF THE BOOK *RASA CHANDAMSHU*

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ABSTRACT

Rasashastra is one of the branches of *Ayurveda* that plays a crucial role in *Ayurveda* practices. It has its roots in the *Vedic* period, where the effectiveness of drugs was often considered less appropriate unless reinforced by divine intervention. This science mainly focuses on the use of metals, minerals, and animal products for the preparation of medicines. One of the most important treatise in *Rasashastra* is *Rasachandamshu*, authored by *Shri Datta Vaidya Pada*. He had carefully reviewed all the available ancient scriptures to compile the effective formulation mentioned in the book. While much of the book contains compiled formulations, the author has also introduced new formulations, which he found effective. In *Rasachandamshu* we can find a diverse range of formulations as the author has done his compilation from treatises across different eras. This paper aims to present the novel formulations that have been discussed in "*Rasachandamshu*," with an emphasis on those that have proven practically effective. It also seeks to highlight previously unexplored

aspects of *Rasashastra*, particularly focusing on disease-specific medicines that could enhance the well-being of mankind.

KEYWORDS: *Ayurveda*, *Rasachandamshu*, *Rasashastra*, formulations.

INTRODUCTION

Rasashastra is unique science that combines alchemy with pharmaceutical preparation, representing the pursuit of immortality (*Amaratva*) and eternal youth (*Ajaratva*) sought by the ancient sages.

Initially, the primary focus of the subject was on *Loha vada* (conversion of lower metals into higher metals); however, over time, this has been shifted to *Deha vada* (therapeutic usage of metals and minerals). The vast literature in *Rasashastra* indicates that the ancient authors had a deep understanding of science, enabling them to create elixirs from metals and minerals.

Rasachandamshu is a treatise written in the 20th century by *Shri Datta Vaidya*, who focused primarily on *Rasaushadhi* (hebomineral formulations) rather than other formulations. In this work, the author introduces new formulations, such as *Sameerapannaga Rasa*^[1], while also compiling formulations from various texts, including *Rasa Ratnakara*, *Brihat Nighantu Ratnakara*, *Rasendra Sara Sangraha*, *Rasaratna Sammucchaya*, and *Yoga Ratnakara*. The book is also referred to as *Rasaratna Samgraha*. In the last chapter, there is a notable verse: “*Chandamshorbhramanam yavadakasho parivartate*,” which means that the popularity of this book will endure among physicians as long as the sun continues to shine. This verse underscores the significance of *Rasachandamshu* among Ayurveda practitioners.

ABOUT THE PERIOD AND AUTHOR

In the final section of the last chapter, the author discusses his family lineage. He was born into the *Borkar Vamsha*, belonging to the *Saraswatha Brahmana* community. His father was named *Ballaldeva*, the son of *Mukunda*, and his mother was *Lakshmi*, who hailed from what is now *Maharashtra*. The author came from the family of *Babadeva*, who was a relative of the king, and he belonged to the *Rasasiddha* school of *Acharya Bhairavanatha*, part of the *Guru Gorakshanatha Sampradaya*. The author's work can be dated to the 20th century, as he references *the Rasa Tarangini*.

The book was completed on *Shaka Samvat* 1841, which corresponds to April 15, 1919, during the month of *Vaishaka* on the *Shukla Panchami tithi*, a [Ravivar] Sunday.^[2]

SUBJECT MATTER OF RASACHANDAMSHU AT GLANCE

The primary focus of the book is *Rasasasthra*, specifically detailing *Raushadhis*. It describes approximately 700 *Aushadha yogas*, which include *Khaniya* (mineral origin), *Vanaspathika*

(plant origin), and *Pranija* (animal origin) types. The book is divided into two sections: *Poorva Khanda* (First section) and *Uttara Khanda* (Second section). The author has expanded the *Uttara Khanda* by adding additional chapters, referred to as *Uttara Khanda Dwitiya Paricheda*.

Before writing this book, the author reviewed all available *Rasagranthas* and compiled effective formulations for treating various diseases. However, the author did not provide context for the mentioned *Yogas* or include the full titles of the original texts from which these formulations were derived. There are nearly 19 references identifiable throughout the book.^[3]

In the *Poorva Khanda*, the author discusses topics such as *Parada* (Mercury), *Rasadravyas*, their *Shodhana* (Purification), *Marana* (Incineration), *Visha dravya* (Poisonous substances), and related subjects. Conversely, the *Uttara Khanda* offers a detailed description of various *Yogas* for specific diseases.

Most of the *Sanskrit* verses in the book appear to be quoted from reference texts, albeit with some modifications by the author. However, the verses of *Anubhuta Yogas* are original compositions created by the author.

The *Prathama Khanda* consists of 8 chapters, while the *Dwiteeya Khanda* includes 26 chapters along with an additional 45 chapters in the *Dwitiya Paricheda*. The first 8 chapters address topics such as *Parada*, *Maharasa*, *Uparasa*, *Sadharana Rasa*, *Mishraka Dravya*, *Ratnas* (Gems), *Visha Shodhana*, and *Marana*, as well as descriptions of *Dhatu*, *Upadhatu Shodhana*, and details concerning *Yantras*, *Putra*, and *Ganas*.

Overall, the *Uttara Khanda* consists of 26 chapters, with the *expanded Dwiteeya Paricheda* containing 45 additional chapters.

PRATHAMA KHANDA

1st Chapter – In this chapter, the author explains the concepts of *Rasavaidhya Sreshtatha* and *Rasa Mahatmya*, which pertain to two types of *Parada*: *Kupaja* and *Khanija Parada*. The chapter also outlines the four *Jatis* of *Parada*, detailing their *Varna* and *Karma*. Additionally, it discusses *Mukotpatana Karma*, *Murcchana*, and *Rasa Bandhana*, along with the preparation and use of *Chaturvidha Parada Bhasma*. The chapter covers *Rasa Sevan*

Pathyapathya and methods for alleviating the *Upadrava* that may arise from *Asuddha Parada*.

2nd Chapter - This chapter provides a comprehensive overview of *Shodhana*, *Marana*, and *Satvapātana*, along with the *Aushadhiya guna karma* of *Maharasa*, *Uparasa*, and *Sadharana rasa*.

3rd Chapter: "*Mishraka Dravya Nirupanam*," it focuses on the *Shodhana*, *Marana*, and *Guna* of various drugs, including *Rajavarta*, *Sindhura*, *Tankana*, *Shanka*, *Khatika*, *Shukthi*, *Shambuka*, *Samudraphena*, *Bola*, and *Guggulu*.

4th Chapter: "*Ratna Nirupanam*" offers a comprehensive analysis of the *Shodhana*, *Marana*, and *Aushadhiya Guna* of *Nava Maharatnas*, along with a discussion on the general *Shodhana* and *Marana* techniques applicable to all *Ratnas*.

5th Chapter: "*Vishoupavisha Nirupanam*" is divided into two sections. The first section focuses on *Visha shodhana* and *Marana*, detailing nine major poisons, including *Vatsanabha*, *Haridra*, and others, with a particular emphasis on *Vatsanabha*. The second section discusses the *Shodhana* of nine *Upavisha*, general *Shodhana practices*, the *Rasayana karma* of *Visha*, and procedures for *Visha sevana* related to *Pittaja* and *Vataja vikara*. Additionally, it addresses the eligibility criteria for *Visha* usage, the duration of its effects, and specific procedures for handling *Sarpa visha*.

6th Chapter: "*Pitta-Taila-Kshara Nirupanam*" outlines the *Pitta shodhana*, the method of *Taila nishkasana* using drugs like *Dattura* and *Arka*, as well as *Kshara nishkasana* procedures.

7th Chapter In "*Dhatu-Upadhatu Nirupanam*," the author elaborates on the *Shodhana* and *Marana* of all *dhatu*s, detailing their types, *Shodhana*, *Marana*, *Ashuddha dosha*, and *Dosha shamanopaya* for eight *dhatu*s. The chapter also discusses *Mishra dhatu*s such as *Kamsya*, *Pittala*, and *Vartaloha*.

8th Chapter: The section titled "*Yantra-Putra-Gana*" delves into various yantras and introduces two new types: the *Kavachi yantra* and the *Tejo yantra*. This chapter is divided into three parts.

The first part provides details about the *Yantras*. The second part describes five *Putas*, omitting the *Maha puta* and the *Lavaka puta*. The third part introduces a new *Gana* called *Jala Durbedya Gana*, which refers to water-resistant binders. The chapter concludes with an explanation of the concept of *Mana Paribhasha*.

DWITEEYA KHANDA

- * The "*Vamana Virechana Vidhana*" consists of two sections: *Vamana Vidhana* and *Virechana Vidhana*. The first section explores two types of *Vamana prayoga* and includes formulations such as *Neelakanta Rasa*. The second section focuses on the *Rasa yogas* for *Virechana*, featuring formulations like , *Rukmisha Rasa*, and *Pushparechani Gutika*, 2 types of *Ichhabedhi rasa* etc
- * ***Jwara Chikitsa***: The author presents two *Uddhulana yogas* for *Sheeta Jwara* and discusses various formulations, including *Ravisundara Rasa*, *Jalayaugika Rasa*, and *Ashtamurti Rasa*.
- * ***Vishama Jwara Chikitsa***: This section provides details on formulations for *Vishama Jwara*, including *Jwaryabhraka Rasa* and *Durjalajetha Rasa*.
- * ***Sarva Jwara Chikitsa***: The author discusses formulations such as *Ashtamurti Rasa*, *Sarvajwarahara Loha*, *Peeyushaghana Rasa*, and *Jwara Kesari Rasa* in this chapter.
- * ***Atisara Chikitsa***: Several formulations are presented, including *Purnachandrodaya Rasa*, *Sarvangasundhara Rasa*, *Rasayanamrutha*, and *Grahani Gajendra Vatika*, specifically focusing on those for *Grahani*.
- * ***Arsha Chikitsa***: This chapter mentions formulations like *Mahodadhi Rasa*, *Peeyusha Sindhu Rasa*, *Ashtanga Rasa*, and *Agnimukha Loha*.
- * ***Agnimandhya and Ajirna Chikitsa***: Formulations such as *Hutashana Rasa*, *Visha Tinduka Vati*, *Kravyada Rasa*, *Amrutha Kalpa Vati*, and *Bhasmakanashana Rasa* are discussed in this chapter
- * ***Krimi Chikitsa***: This section explains formulations like *Krimikalanala Rasa*, *Krimihara Rasa*, *Vidangadhi Loha*, and *Krimighna Rasa*.
- * ***Pandu Roga Chikitsa***: Various *churnas* are mentioned in this section, including *Tapyadhi Churna* and *Navayasa Churna*. It also includes *Loha* preparations like *Trikatrayadhi Lauha*, *Hamsa Mandura Rasa*, and *Rasa yogas* such as *Pandupanka Shoshana Rasa*, *Medhabhasimha Rasa*, and *Amrutasrava Rasa*.

- * **Raktapitta Chikitsa:** This chapter discusses various *Rasa yogas*, including *Bola Parpati*, *Raktapittantaka Rasa*, *Rasamrutha Rasa*, and *Amaladhi Lauha*.
- * **Rajayakshma Chikitsa:** The author highlights formulations such as *Hemagarbha Pottali Rasa*, *Pranada Parpati Rasa*, *Suvarna Parpati Rasa*, and *Lokanatha Rasa*.
- * **Urakshata Chikitsa:** Only one formulation, *Rasa Raja*, is noted in this chapter.
- * **Kasa Roga Chikitsa:** Formulations such as *Jaya Vati*, *Panchamruta Rasa*, *Naga Rasa*, *Mahahema Garbha Rasa*, *Tamra Parpati*, and *Sringabhra Rasa* are included.
- * **Hikka Shwasa Chikitsa:** This chapter outlines various *Rasa yogas*, including *Shanka Chula Rasa*, *Pippalyadhi Lauha*, *Hikka Nashana Rasa*, and *Shilaputa Rasa*.
- * **Shwasa Chikitsa:** Different formulations are compiled, including *Mahakaleshwara Rasa*, *Shwasakasakarikesari Rasa*, *Shwasa Hara Rasa*, and *Udayabhaskara Rasa*.
- * **Swarabheda Chikitsa:** Formulations like *Bhairava Rasa*, *Kinnarakanta Rasa*, and *Goraksha Vati* are discussed in this chapter.
- * **Arochaka Chikitsa:** Two types of *Yoga* are explained: *Sudhanidhi Rasa* and *Sutadhi Gutika*.
- * **Chardi Chikitsa:** The author discusses *Sutabhasma Prayoga*, *Manashiladi Leha*, and *Vamanamruta Yoga* in this chapter.
- * **Trishna Chikitsa:** *Paradadi Churna*, as explained by the *Ashwini Kumara*, is mentioned alongside formulations such as *Kumudeshwara Rasa* and *Tamrachakri Rasa*.
- * **Murcha Chikitsa:** Formulations including *Rasabhasma Yoga* and *Tamra Bhasma Yoga* are detailed.
- * **Madatyaya Chikitsa:** The author describes a unique formulation named *Kajjali Yoga*, where *Kajjali* is combined with *Amalaka Swarasa* and *Sharkara*.
- * **Daha Chikitsa:** Formulations like *Paradadi Gutika*, *Dahantaka Rasa*, and *Chandrakala Rasa* are discussed.
- * **Unmada Chikitsa:** This chapter explains formulations such as *Bhootankusha Rasa*, *Chaturbhuja Rasa*, and *Unmadabhanjani Vatika Anjana*.
- * **Apasmara Chikitsa:** Formulations like *Suta Bhasma Prayoga*, *Brahma Vati*, and *Nasya* with *Kalika Churna* and *Navasadara* are included.
- * **Vata Roga Chikitsa:** In this section, the author discusses *Yogas* such as *Mallapancharatna Rasa*, *Vyadhigajakesari Rasa*, *Palashadhi Vati*, and *Vijaya Bhairava Taila*.

- * **Pitta Rog Chikitsa:** In this chapter, the author outlines formulations including *Pittantaka Rasa*, *Pitta Prabhanjana Rasa*, and *Dhathri Lauha*.
- * **Kapha Roga Chikitsa:** This section covers formulations such as *Manthana Bhairava Rasa*, *Raktasuta Shekhar Rasa*, and *Kaphachintamani Rasa*.
- * **Tridosha Chikitsa:** In this chapter, only *Tridosha Shamana Rasa* is mentioned.

DWITEEYA PARICHEDA

- * In "*Dwiteeya Parichada*," the author presents various formulations for a range of diseases, including *Vatarakta*, *Urustambha*, *Amavata*, *Shula*, *Gulma*, *Hridroga*, *Mutraghata*, *Mutrakrichra*, *Ashmari*, *Prameha*, *Medoroga*, and *Udara Roga*.
- * Separate chapters are dedicated to formulations for conditions such as *Annadrava Shula*, *Parinama Shula*, *Antravridhi*, *Bhagandara*, *Amlapitta*, *Shitapitta*, and *Shotha*.
- * Additionally, this section provides detailed explanations of formulations for *Urdhwajatrugata Rogas*, spread across five chapters. It also includes six chapters on *Striroga Chikitsa*, covering topics ranging from *Pradara Chikitsa* to *Sutika Roga Chikitsa*. The author also discusses *Balaroga Chikitsa*, *Vishachikitsa*, and *Rasayana-Vajikarana* in this part.
- * Furthermore, he explains the formulations for *Rasa Vikara Chikitsa*.
Toward the end of the book, the author discusses the preparation of various *Dhatus*, including *Swarna* (gold), *Raupya* (silver), and *Pravala* (coral). The book concludes with a discussion on *Rasalabha*, the responsibilities of a physician, and emphasizes that *Rasashastra* is based on *Agama Siddha*, providing *Pratyaksha Anubhava* (direct experience), and therefore should not be doubted.

DISCUSSION

In the first chapter, the author introduces *Parada* and discusses the four *Jatis* of *Parada*, detailing their *Varna* (class) and *Prayojana* (purpose). For instance, the *Brahmana jati* is classified under the *Shweta varna*, with its purpose focused on preparing medicinal compounds (*Aushadha kalpa nirmana*). In "*Mishraka Dravya Nirupanam*," the author combines elements from *Sudha Varga*, *Kshara Varga*, and *Uparatna*, providing descriptions of their processes, including *Shodhana* (purification) and *Marana* (calcination). In "*Vishopavisha Nirupanam*," the author elaborates on the properties, *Sreshtatha* of *Sarpa visha* (snake venom), covers its purification methods (*Shodhana*), and explains the procedures for *Visha taila nishkasana* (extracting oil from *Visha dravyas*).

In the following chapters, the author offers explanations regarding the procedures for *Kshara nishkasana* (extraction of alkaline substances) and *Pitta shodhana* (purification of the pitta). In the *Yantra Puta Gana* chapter author has introduced two *Yantras*, namely *Kavachi Yantra* and *Tejo Yantra* where he has mentioned the use of *Kavachi Yantra* i.e., for *Rasadi pachana*. While concluding *Prathama Khanda*, the author states that he has compiled information from *Rasarnava* and several other sources.

The *Dwiteeya Khanda* opens with a salutation to *Lord Dhanvantari*, followed by an explanation of the significance of *Sharira shodhana* (Body purification) before any treatment. In the first chapter, various *Vaman* (Emesis) and *Virechana* (Purgation) *yogas* using *Rasaushadhis* are enumerated. For eg For *Vamana* : *Nimba kwatha* is administered with *Rasa sindhura* (1 ratti) as *Anupana* along with *Adamajja*. He also describes the *Yogas* for *Virechana sthambana* at the end of the first chapter, specifically *Dadhiodhana* (Food mixed with curd) with *Ghrita*, if needed, followed by *Shuddha Ahiphena* or *Anandhabhairava rasa*. In *Jwara Chikitsa*, two types of *Uddhulana yogas* (dusting powder)^[4] are described. The *Prathama yoga* is aimed at the *Nashana* of *shitajwara* and includes *Vatsanabha*, *Maricha*, and *Aranyopala Bhasma*, given *bhavana* in *Dhattura swarasa*. The *Dwiteeya yoga* addresses conditions like *Kanta rodha* and *Sandhimardana*, incorporating *Churnas* of herbs such as *Bhunimba*, *Katuka*, *Kushta*, *Indrayava*, *Shati*, and *Karavi*. In *Sarva Jwara Chikitsa*, many formulations share similar compositions with those in *Rasaratna Sammucchaya* and *Bhaishajya Ratnavali* but are referred to by different names. For instance, the *Nava jwararanya krushanumegha rasa* is like the fourth *Trilokya Sundhara Rasa* explained in *Rasaratna Sammucchaya*. In *Atisara chikitsa*, the author mentions *Chandraprabha Vati* in the context of *Tridoshaja atisara*^[5]; however, the ingredients differ from other authors, where *Shilajatu* is excluded, *Khadira* is included, and *Bhavana* is done with *Shalmali swarasa*. In this chapter, *Grahani chikitsa* is also explained, where the author describes *Vijaya Bhairava Rasa*, which is similar to *Neelakanta Rasa*, but instead of *Twak*, *Vidanga* is mentioned.^[6] In *Rajayakshma chikitsa*, a unique formulation named *Suvarna Pancha Dhatu Bhasma* is described which includes *Bhasmas* of *Swarna*, *Rajata*, *Vanga*, *Naga*, and *Yashada* were given *bhavana* in *Snuhi* and *Arka kshira* can cure all types of *Kshaya*, *Sutikaroga* etc.

In *Hikka Chikitsa*, *Suvarna Bhasamadi Yoga* is mentioned, which contains *Swarna Bhasma*, *Mukta Bhasma*, *Tamra Bhasma*, *Kanta Loha Bhasma*, and *Saindhava*, mixed with *Beejapura Swarasa* and *Madhu*. In the *Phala Sruthi*, there is a verse: “**Hanti hikka shatam satyameka**

matraadayatnata,” which explains that with just one dose, 100 types of *Hikka* can be cured, such effective formulations are mentioned throughout the book. In *Chardi Chikitsa*, an intriguing formulation called *Manashiladi Leha* is presented. The author recommends combining *Shuddha Manashila* with *Maricha* and *Pippali churna*, along with *Kapithamla*, *Laja*, and *Madhu*, to be consumed as a *Leha*. This straightforward formulation is easy to prepare and highly effective in *Teevra Vamana*.

In *Murcha Chikitsa*, the author discusses *Tamra Bhasma yoga*, where *Tamra Bhasma* is combined with *Ushira* and *Nagakesara*, followed by *Sheeta jala*. The effects of this *Yoga* were illustrated with the quote “*Vriksham indra ashanir yatha*.” When elaborating *Madatyaya*, the author describes *Kajjali yoga*, where *Kajjali* is mixed with *Amalaka swarasa* and *Sharkara*, effectively countering *Madatyaya*, much like *Garuda* conquering the serpent. In *Unmada chikitsa* author has mentioned *Unmada parpati rasa* where *Rasa parpati* is mixed with *Dhattura beeja* and taken along with ghee.^[7] In this book author has taken *Parpata rasa* as *Rasa parpati* while some authors have explained the meaning *Parpati rasa* as *Parpataka Kwatha*. While explaining *Yogas* in *Apsamara chikitsa* author has named a remarkable *Yoga* where *Sutabhasma* mixed with *Shanka pushpi*, *Vacha* and *Kushta*, taken along with *Ela Swarasa* which is beneficial in curing all types of *Apasmara*.

While discussing *Prameha chikitsa*, the author references several lesser-known formulations, including *Ruparasa vatika* for *Puti meha*, *Kandarpa rasa* for *Aupasargika meha*, *Vatamehantaka rasa* for *vataja prameha*, and *Rasendranaga rasa* for all types of *Prameha*.

CONTRIBUTION OF THE TEXT

Rasachandanshu is a textbook that exclusively concentrates on *Rasaushadhis*. The author has compiled formulations that he found beneficial in his practice. Throughout the book, the author explains formulations with multiple ingredients and simple formulations containing one or two ingredients, giving physicians the freedom to choose the formulation that best suits their convenience. In the *Prathama khanda* author has introduced new concepts like *Pitta shodhana*, *Naga(sarpa) Visha Shodhana* along with dosage of *Pitta* and *Visha*. The author has added *Yantras* like *Kavachi yantra* and *Tejo yantra*^[8] which are not seen in other classics.

DEMERITS OF THE TEXT

The book's main drawback is that the author has not provided, or has only mentioned in abbreviations, the titles of the texts from which he has compiled the formulations, making it challenging to understand the *Moola granthas*.^[9]

While describing the diseases, he did not follow any specific order but covered almost all *Rogas*, *Rasayana*, and *Vajeekarana yogas*.

Although the author has compiled most of the formulations from *Rasa shastra* classics, some phrases in the book have been refined. Being a resident of Maharashtra, the author has translated the Marathi names of drugs into *Sanskrit*, which makes it difficult to understand the identities of the drugs.^[10]

CONCLUSION

Rasa Chandamshu is a unique compilation found in *Rasashastra* which can be followed by budding new physiscians. This book provides deep insights into the basics of *Rasashastra* and offers in-depth knowledge of formulations that can be easily prepared and are highly effective. Although most of the book focuses on *Dehavada*, towards the end, there is a description of *Dhatu Nirmana*, showcasing the author's interest in *Dhatuvada*.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

None declared.

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