

RASADRAVYA VARGEEKARANA AND RATIONALITY BEHIND THE CLASSIFICATION

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ABSTRACT

Background: Rasashastra, literally meaning the "Science of Mercury," is a specialized branch of Ayurveda that primarily deals with Rasadravyas and their pharmaceutical processing and therapeutic applications. Rasadravyas include substances of mineral (Khaneeja), animal (Praneeja), and plant (Vanaspatieka) origin, which play varying roles in the purification, processing, and therapeutic use of mercury (Parada) and other herbo-mineral formulations. To facilitate their systematic study and application, these substances were classified into different groups. However, the criteria for classification vary among classical Rasashastra texts, often without explicit explanations. **Objective:** To critically review the classical classifications of Rasadravyas and analyze the rationale underlying their categorization in different Rasashastra texts. **Methods:** A comprehensive review of classical Rasashastra literature, including Rasamritham,

Rasarnava, Rasa Prakasha Sudhakara, Rasendra Chudamani, Rasa Ratna Samuchchaya, Anandakanda, and Rasatarangini, was undertaken. The classifications described in these texts were compared and critically analyzed with special emphasis on the principles adopted in Rasa Ratna Samuchchaya, which serves as the standard reference for subsequent texts. **Results:** The review revealed that although different authors proposed varying classifications, the underlying principles were based on the pharmaceutical importance of the substances,

their role in mercury processing, therapeutic utility, physicochemical properties, and practical applicability. The classification described in Rasa Ratna Samuchchaya emerged as the most systematic and widely accepted framework, influencing later Rasashastra literature.

Conclusion: Rasadravya Vargeekarana is a scientifically designed classification system developed to facilitate the identification, processing, and therapeutic application of Rasadravyas. Understanding the rationale behind these classifications enhances the interpretation of classical Ayurvedic literature and supports the standardization, safe utilization, and scientific validation of mineral-based formulations in contemporary Ayurvedic pharmaceuticals and clinical practice.

KEYWORDS: Rasashastra, Rasadravya, Vargeekarana, Parada, Rasa Ratna Samuchchaya, Ayurveda, Mineral Drugs, Classification.

INTRODUCTION

There is difference of opinion among different authors of Rasa granthas about classification of rasadravya from Rasarnava to recent text like Rasatarangini.

Adhunikavargeekarana of Rasadravya started from 8th century AD and it was later elaborated in texts such as Rasatarangini a text of 20th century which includes Lohadi Vijnaniya Taranga, Dathu Vijnaniya Taranga etc.

Later Acharya Yadhavji Trikamji, Siddinandan Mishra etc contributed more. The dravyas are grouped in different ways depending upon their usefulness towards Mercury and various processes.

Classification of Rasadravyas

1) MAHARASA VARGA

The word 'MAHA' denotes Big or More, here the amount of Sathva obtained from this vargadhravya is more compare to others.¹ Minerals are having direct effect on Parada Samskara. And majority of the drugs are having Rasayana, Yogavayi and Thridoshagna property can treat all kind of diseases means Mahavyadi's. And also drugs which requires complex procedure for internal administration and heating pattern as well as amount and duration of heat is more compare to others.

Classification According to Different Authors.^[2]

Drug	R.R.S	R.H.T	Rasarnava	R.P.Su	R.Cu	Go.Sam	Ay. Pra
Abraka	+	-	-	+	+	+	-
Vaikrantha	+	+	-	+	+	+	-

Makshika	+	+	+	+	+	+	-
Vimala	+	+	+	+	+	+	-
Shilajathu	+	+	+	+	+	+	-
Sasyaka	+	+	+	+	+	+	-
Chapala	+	-	+	-	-	-	-
Rasaka	+	+	+	+	-	+	-
Kanthaloha	-	+	-	-	-	-	-
Hingula	-	+	+	-	+	+	-
Srothonjana	-	-	+	-	-	-	-
Rajavartha	-	-	-	+	-	-	-
Parada	-	-	-	-	-	-	+

2) UPARASA VARGA

Minerals which acts as supportive role in Parada samskara are classified under Uparasavarga. The word 'Upa' means supportive or less, here the amount of Sathva obtained from this varga dravya is less compare to Maharasa varga. These drugs are mainly used for Dehavada but Anandakanda says Uparasas are used for Rasakarma. They contains Ari Lohas – helps in marana procedure.

Classification According to Different Acharyas.^[3]

Dravya	R.R.S	R.H.T	R.P.Su	Go.Sam	R.Cu	Rasarnava
Gandaka	+	+	+	+	+	+
Gairika	+	+	+	+	+	+
Kasisa	+	+	+	+	+	+
Kankshi	+	+	+	+	+	+
Haratala	+	+	+	+	+	+
Manashila	+	+	+	+	+	+
Anjana	+	+	+	+	+	+
Kankushta	+	+	+	+	+	-
Kankushta	+	+	+	+	+	+
Rajavartha	-	-	-	-	-	+

3) SADHARANA RASAVARGA

The word Sadharana refers to “Ordinary” the drugs which are comparatively less used in therapeutic purpose are classified under this varga. Acharya Nagarjuna has said these dravyas are used for Rasa siddhi. In Rasopanishath ‘Agnijara’ drug is useful in increasing the potency and appetite of mercury. It make the mercury “Sparshavedhi”.^[4,5]

4) LOHA OR DHATU VARGA

The term Loha is derived from the root “Luh” which denotes the extraction property of metals from its respective ores. Dhatu word suggest that they are the satwa of different ores and minerals. Rasopanishad adds Abhraka in this loha varga.

Classification According to different Acharyas.^[6]

Dravya	R.R.S	R.Ka	R.Pra.Su	R.Hr.T	Rasamrtha	Ay,Pr	R.T
Swarna	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Rajatha	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Tamra	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Loha	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Naga	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Vanga	+	+	+	+	+	+	-
Pittala	+	+	+	+	+	+	-
Kamsya	+	+	+	+	+	+	-
Vartaloha	+	-	+	+	-	+	-
Seesaka	-	-	-	-	-	-	+
Yashada	-	-	-	-	-	-	+

5) UPADHATU VARGA

First explained by Acharya Sharangadhara. These are the Dravyas which on Sathvapatana yield Dhatu vargadhravyas. E.g Swarnamakshika – Swarna, Tutta – Tamra.

Classification according to Different Acharyas.^[7,8,9]

Sharangadhara	Bhavaprakasha	Rasa Tarangini
Makshika	Swarnamakshika	Swarnamashika
Tutta	Tamramakshika	Rajathamakshika
Abhraka	Tuttha	Tutta
Nilanjana	Kamsya	Sindhura
Manashila	Pittala	Mriddarashruna
Haratala	Sindura	Kharpara
Karpara	Shilajathu	Kantapashana
		Kaseesa

6) RATNA VARGA

According to Anandakanda Rathna vargikarana is done based on Durbalatha (Spare Availability), Katoratha (Durability), Sundaratha (Elegance) Akarsharangi (Vibrant colour).^[10]

1) Classification based on source^[11]

Khanija	Manikya, Tarksya, Pushparaga, Vajra, Nilam, Gomeda, Vaidurya.
Pranija	Muktha, Pravala

2) Classification based on Graha relation^[12]

Rathna	Graha
Manikya	Surya
Muktha	Chandra
Pravala	Mangala
Tarkshya	Budha

Pushparaga	Guru
Vajra	Shukra
Nilam	Shani
Gomeda	Rahu
Vaidurya	Ketu

In Rasarathna Samucchaya – Shanka and Shukthika are explained after pravala.

7) UPARATHNA VARGA

According to CCIM total 19 drugs are present in the list of Uparathna.^[13]

- | | | |
|------------------|-------------------|-------------|
| 1) Vaikrantha | 9) Palanka | 17) Godanti |
| 2) Suryakrantha | 10) Puttika | 18) Akika |
| 3) Chandrakantha | 11) Rudhira | 19) Opal |
| 4) Rajavartha | 12) Badarasma | |
| 5) Perojaka | 13) Jaharmohara | |
| 6) Sphatika | 14) Kauseyasma | |
| 7) Vyomashma | 15) Dugdhapashana | |
| 8) Tranakantha | 16) Sugandhikam | |

8) SUDHA VARGA

In Rasa rathna samucchaya – Muktha and Pravala are explained in Rathna Varga. Rasarnava and Rasarathnakara mentioned these dravyas under the heading of Suklavarga dravya.

Classification Based on origin.^[14]

Mineral source	Animal source	Plant source
Badarashma	Ajasthi	Vamshalochana
Godanti	Kukkutanda twak	
Khatika	Mragasringa	
Sudha	Mukta	
	Pravala	
	Sambuka	
	Sanka	
	Sukti	
	Samudraphena	
	Varatika	

9) SIKATHA VARGA

In Purana kala, text like Shathapatha Bramhana of Prajapathi states, “the transformation of Sand(Sikata) to gold (Hiranya)” which infers the existence of concept of conversion of metals(Lohavada) since Vedic period.

Sikata varga was first mentioned in the text of Rasamritham by Yadavji Trikamji.^[15]

Classification

- 1) Badarasma
- 2) Kausheyashma
- 3) Nagapashana
- 4) Dugdapashana

RATIONALITY BEHIND THE CLASSIFICATION^[16,17,18,]

- 1) Effect of minerals toward the Parada. E.g Maharasa varga dravyas has direct effect on Parada Samskara and Uparasa dravya act as supportive(indirect effect) role in parada samskara
- 2) Based on properties and Karmukatha of the drug. E.g Majority of Maharasa dravyas are Balya, Rasayana, Yogavahi . Uparasa dravyas are Kushtahara and Sadharana rasa dravyas are Garavisha hara.
- 3) Based on amount of Sathva in the drug. E.g Maharasa dravyas yeild more sathva compare to Uparasa dravyas.
- 4) Utility in various mercurial process for Dehavada and Dhathuvada.
- 5) Based on physical and chemical properties of the drug. E.g Sudha and Sikatha varga dravyas.
- 6) Based on availability of the drugs
- 7) Based on hardness. E.g Loha and Rathna varga dravyas.
- 8) Based on external appearance and cost. E.g Rathna and Uparathna varga dravyas.

CONCLUSION

Rasashatra is a branch of Ayurveda which deals with Parada and other minerals. To understand the concept of this science, Acharya classified Rasadravya into several groups. Classification done mainly on the basis of their usefulness towards mercury and based on their chemical composition. Dravyas having similar properties are grouped under same group, which when studied as per guna karma can be helpful for treatment.

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