

## EXPLORING RASAMANJARI: AN IN-DEPTH REVIEW

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## ABSTRACT

Rasashastra, the ancient Indian science of alchemy, holds a central place in the broader framework of Ayurveda. In Rasashastra, various metals, minerals and poisonous substances are pharmaceutically processed and made into therapeutically useful forms for the treatment of wide range of diseases. *Rasamanjari*, is one of the significant textbooks of Rasashastra. This review article delves into *Rasamanjari*, a 15<sup>th</sup>-century Sanskrit text on Rasashastra written by *Acharya* Shalinath. The text, consisting of 10 chapters, offers profound insights into the principles and practices of alchemical transformation and the preparation of medicinal compounds. The review focuses on the content, structure, and significance of the original work, along with its importance in the context of traditional Indian alchemical knowledge.

**KEYWORDS:** Rasamanjari, Rasashastra, Ayurveda.

## INTRODUCTION

*Rasamanjari*, a seminal work on Rasashastra, was authored by *Acharya* Shalinath, son of Sri Vaidyanath, in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. The text, comprising 10 chapters, provides comprehensive insights into the preparation and application of various *Rasadravyas*. The book is known for its distinctive approach to alchemical practices, offering detailed methodologies for creating *Rasaushadhis* (medicinal alchemical compounds). The author describes his work as a collection of knowledge that resembles a group of bees creating honey from diverse juices. This metaphor symbolizes the variety and complexity of *Rasaushadhis* that *Rasamanjari* seeks to explain. Just as bees draw from various nectar sources, the text compiles a wide range

of alchemical processes and substances, each derived from distinct materials and transformations.

The Hindi translation of *Rasamanjari*, Siddhiprada, by Sidhinandan Misra, Published by Chaukambha Orientalia, Varanasi, has been instrumental in making this ancient work more accessible to contemporary readers. This review aims to explore the contributions of *Rasamanjari* to the field of Rasashastra.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

*Rasamanjari*, was authored by Salinath in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. The only available information about the author comes from his own introduction in the text, where he refers to himself as the son of Shri Vaidyanath, with the term “Vaidyanatha thanaya” meaning “son of Vaidyanatha.” Although the exact religious affiliation, clan, and time period of *Acharya* Shalinath remain subjects of debate, many scholars of Rasashastra agree that the text belongs to the 15<sup>th</sup> century.

## CONTENTS OF THE BOOK

*Rasamanjari* contains a total of 862 slokas (verses), which are systematically organized into 10 chapters. These chapters cover a wide array of topics, beginning with *Parada Prakarana*, followed by description on *Parada Jarana* and *Murchana*, *Uparasavarga*, *Vishaniroopana*, *Dhatu Shodhana Marana*, *Rasayoga Niroopana*, *Rasayanadhikara*, *Netranjana-Kesharanjana Vidhi*, *Baalaroga* and *Arishtavijnana*.

### Chapter 1: *Parada Prakarana*

The first chapter of *Rasamanjari*, titled *Parada Prakarana*, begins by emphasizing the significance of *Parada* (mercury) in Rasashastra. The chapter describes two crucial processes: *Parada Murchana* and *Parada Bandhana*, explaining their roles in enhancing the potency of mercury. *Murchita Parada* is believed to have the power to cure all diseases afflicting mankind, while *Badhita Parada* is said to possess the ability to elevate human beings to the sky with great speed. Both forms of mercury are worshipped by all Gods and sages.<sup>[1]</sup>

The chapter also explains the importance of *Parada* in treatment of diseases, highlighting that just as fire effortlessly burns dry fuel, *Parada* can eliminate the ailments caused by the imbalance of the *Tridoshas*.<sup>[2]</sup> Further, the chapter underscores the importance of *Rasajnana*

(knowledge of alchemy) and details the qualities required of both the *Guru* (teacher) and *Shishya* (student) for successful alchemical work. The chapter also lists several synonyms for *Parada*, including *Sivabeeja*, *Sootaraja*, and *Rasendraka*, associating mercury with the divine attributes of Lord Shiva.<sup>[3]</sup>

Additionally, the chapter describes the preparation of *Tapta Khalwa* and also explains the extraction of *Hingulotha Parada*, which is considered a pure form of mercury (*Suddha Parada*) that does not require further purification (*Shodhana*).

### Chapter 2: *Parada Jarana Murchana*

The second chapter of *Rasamanjari*, titled *Parada Jarana Murchana*, delves into the advanced processes involved in the preparation and transformation of *Parada* in Rasashastra. The chapter highlights the significance of *Rasajarana* (rejuvenation of mercury) through various processes, including: *Shadguna Bali Jarana* (*Parada Jarana* with 6 times of *Gandhaka* enhancing its potency) and *Suvarna Jarana* (*Parada Jarana* with gold to amplify its therapeutic effects). The preparation of *Parada Bhasma*, *Rasasindhoora*, *Rasakarpura* and *Rasaparpati* is explained, each process aimed at rendering *Parada* safe and effective for medicinal use. The chapter also discusses the preparation of *Sabeejabadha Parada* and *Nirbeejabadha Parada*. Additionally, *Pathyapathyas* during *Parada Sevana* along with description of *Kakarashtaka Gana*, is also found in the chapter.

### Chapter 3: *Uparasavarga*

Chapter 3 of *Rasamanjari*, titled *Uparasavarga*, details 20 *Uparasas* used in Rasashastra, each with specific properties and applications. The 20 *Uparasas* mentioned are: *Gandhaka* (Sulphur), *Hiraka/Vajra* (Diamond), *Vaikranta* (tourmaline), *Abhraka* (Mica), *Haratala* (Orpiment), *Manasila* (Realgar), *Kharpara* (Zinc ore), *Tuttha* (Copper sulphate), *Vimala* (Iron pyrite), *Swarnamakshika* (Iron pyrite and Copper pyrite), *Kasisa* (Green vitriol), *Kantapashana* (Magnetite), *Varatika* (Cowries), *Anjana* (Stibnite), *Hingula* (Cinnabar), *Kankushta* (*Garcinia morella*), *Sankha* (Conch shell), *Bhunaga* (earthworm), *Tankana* (Borax), *Silajatu* (Black bitumen).<sup>[4]</sup>

The chapter emphasizes *Gandhaka* as the most important *Uparasa*, describing four types of *Gandhaka* along with their uses. *Rakta* (for *Lohavaada*), *Pita* (for *Rasayana*), *Shweta* (for wound healing), and *Krishna* (superior form) are the four types of *Gandhaka* mentioned in the chapter. Further, the types of *Heeraka* (diamond) are explained, with classifications into

*Nara*(male), *Naari* (female) and *Napumsaka* (neutral) types. 4 types Of *Abhraka* (mica), superiority of *Vajrabhraka* among the 4 types of *Abhraka*, along with methods of preparation of *Dhanyabhraka* and *Abhraka Druti* are mentioned in this chapter. This chapter also gives description about *Bhunagasatvapatana*. *Ratna Shodhana* and *Marana* (purification and incineration of gems) is also discussed.

#### Chapter 4: *Vishaniroopana*

In Chapter 4, the author presents an extensive classification and analysis of various poisons (*Visha*), their properties, and their unique characteristics. The core of this chapter is the enumeration of 18 types of *Kandavisha*. These 18 poisons are: *Kalakuta Visha*, *Mayura Visha*, *Binduka Visha*, *Saktuka Visha*, *Valuka Visha*, *Vatsanabha Visha*, *Sankhanabha Visha*, *Sumangala Visha*, *Srunji Visha*, *Markataka Visha*, *Musta Visha*, *Kardama Visha*, *Pushkara Visha*, *Sikhi Visha*, *Haridra Visha*, *Haritha Visha*, *Chakra Visha*, *Halahala Visha*.<sup>[5]</sup>

Each poison is named on the basis of their specific features; for example, *Mayura Visha* Resembles a peacock (*Mayura*) in colour while *Binduka Visha* has Bindu (dot) like appearance. *Markataka Visha* resembles the colour of a monkey (*Kapivarna*) and *Chakravisha* is *Chakrakara* (resembles a wheel).

An Interesting and unique aspect of this chapter is the association of different types of poisons with the four *Varnas* (social classes). *Brahmana Visha* is *Pandu Varna* (pale) and used for *Roganasana*, *Kshatriya Visha* is *Rakta Varna* (red), *Vaishya Visha* is *Pita Varna* (yellow), and *Sudra Visha* is *Krishna Varna* (black) and is contraindicated. Additionally, the chapter explains the concept of *Vishasevana Kala*—the correct time and dosage for consuming purified poisons (*Suddhavisha*) in specific seasons. Author explains that during specific seasons such as *Sarat*, *Greeshma* and *Vasanta* (autumn, summer, and spring), *Suddhavisha* (purified poison) can be consumed in moderate quantities. The dosage is strictly regulated starting with 1 *Sarshapa Matra* (a mustard seed measurement) on the first day, and gradually increasing the dose each day until reaching 1 *Yavamatra* (size of a barley) on the seventh day. The chapter also discusses *Vishavegas* (the eight stages caused by poisons) with symptoms important for identifying their effects.

#### Chapter 5: *Dhatu Shodhana - Marana*

In this chapter, *Acharya Shalinath* discusses the *Shodhana* (purification) and *Marana* (incineration) processes of various *Dhatus* (metals and minerals). The *Dhatu Varga* includes

10 metals namely, *Swarna* (Gold), *Rajata* (Silver), *Tamra* (Copper), *Loha* (Iron), *Naga* (Lead), *Vanga* (Tin), *Yasada* (Zinc), *Pittala* (Brass), *Kamsya* (Bronze), *Varta* (Tin alloy).<sup>[6]</sup> He provides a detailed explanation of the *Shodhana* (purification) and *Marana* (incineration) processes for each of these metals. The general process of purification for these metals involves heating the metal and then immersing it in *Taila* (oil), *Takra* (buttermilk), *Gomutra* (cow urine), *Aranala* (fermented rice water) and *Kulattha Kwatha* (decoction of horse gram) for seven times. The author mentions that the *Shodhana* and *Marana* methods for *Pittala* and *Kamsya* are similar to those for *Tamra* (copper), and suggests using *Tamra Bhasma* as an alternative to *Pittala Bhasma* and *Kamsya Bhasma*.

### Chapter 6: *Rasayoga Niroopana*

The chapter begins with the *Dhanwantari Vandana* (prayer to Lord Dhanwantari) and emphasizes the importance of *Rasavaidya* (physicians skilled in Rasashastra). The chapter highlights that *Rasavaidya* are considered superior to other types of physicians due to their expertise in using *Rasaushadhi* (medications made from metals and minerals).<sup>[7]</sup> The author asserts that while formulations containing *Kashtaoudhadhi* (herbal and other natural remedies) are beneficial for treating various ailments, *Rasaushadhi* provides superior results when used intelligently. However, caution is advised regarding the correct dosage, as excessive use of these potent medicines can be toxic.

This chapter presents 81 different *Rasayogas* (formulations) for the treatment of various diseases, offering a wide range of therapeutic options. Notable formulations explained in this chapter include, *Navajwarabhasimha Rasa* for treating *Mahaghora Navajwara* (severe fever), *Bhasmeshwara Rasa* for *Sannipata Jwara* (fever caused by a combination of *Doshas*), *Meghadambhara Rasa* for *Hikka-Swasa* (hiccups and asthma) and *Jwara* (fever), *Amlapittantaka Rasa* and *Leelavilasa Rasa* for *Amlapitta* (acidic dyspepsia), *Indudhara Rasa* for *Sweta Kushta* (skin disease), *Unmattakhya Rasa* and *Sajnakarana Rasa* for *Manoroga* (mental disorders).

### Chapter 7: *Rasayanadhikara*

Chapter 7 of *Rasamanjari* begins with an explanation of *Kshetrikarana*, a process by which the body is prepared for the intake of *Rasadravyas*. *Acharya* Shalinath emphasizes that before consuming *Parada* (mercury), the individual should first take *Abhraka Bhasma* for one month. This preparatory step is crucial, as *Parada* consumed after this regimen is said to act as *Amrita* (nectar), offering life-enhancing benefits. Without this preparation, *Parada* can

have toxic effects and act as *Visha* (poison). In this chapter, the author explains four unique *Rasayana Yogas*, for promoting health, vitality, and longevity. They are *Gandhaamrita Rasayana*, *Hemansundara Rasa*, *Mritasanjeevani Gutika* and *Veeryavardhini Gutika*.

### Chapter 8: *Netranjana-Kesharanjana Vidhi*

Chapter 8, titled *Netranjana-Kesharanjana Vidhi*, delves into Ayurvedic treatments for eyes and hair. This chapter explains the principles of *Anjana Kala* (time of application) and *Anjana Vidhi* (methods of application), emphasizing their application based on the *Dosha* predominance.

Unique preparations like *Drushtiprada Anjana* which consists of *Krishnasarpa Vasa*, *Sankha*, *Kataka*, *Katphala* and *Neelanjana* macerated in *Maricha Kwatha* which cures blindness, *Dantadi Varti* prepared using *Dantas* of 7 animals along with *Sankha*, *Mukta* and *Samudraphena* cures *Savrana* and *Avrana Sukra*, *Kesharanjana Taila*, *Keshakrishneekarana Taila*, *Keshasukleekarana Prayoga* etc. are explained.

### Chapter 9: *Baalaroga*

This Chapter provides a comprehensive overview of various treatments for both adult sexual health and pediatric diseases. It begins with various *Yogas* (formulations) for *Veeryasthambhana* (preventing ejaculation), *Shandathakarana* (decreasing potency), *Shandathanashana* (treating impotency), *Sthreevasheekarana* (attracting women) etc. Author advises the application of *Varahavasa* (fat of pig) combined with *Madhu* (honey) for enhancing *Lingasthooleekarana* (toning the male organ). The chapter delves deeper into various formulations for *Sthree Vasheekarana* (attracting women) and *Sthana Drudeekarana* (firming body parts especially breasts).

On the pediatric front, the chapter offers valuable insights into various diseases affecting children, listing conditions like *Manda*, *Sunanda*, *Putana*, *Bidali*, *Nartaki*, *Sakuni*, *Sushkashiva*, *Grimbhika*, *Achintha*, *Kapalika*, *Lipthita*, *Peetali*, *Bhadrakali*, *Taara*, *Kumari* etc. It provides a mix of symptoms, causes, and suggested remedies for each condition, highlighting the breadth of pediatric care within this traditional framework.

### Chapter 10: *Arishtavijanana*

Various *arishta lakshanas* (symptoms of near death) are explained which includes *Dhoota Lakshana*, *Rogi Lakshana*, *Chaya Lakshana* etc.



## CONCLUSION

*Rasamanjari* is a comprehensive and profound work in the field of Rasashastra, covering a wide range of topics related to Rasashastra. The text begins with the *Parada Prakarana*, which introduces the core substance of Rasashastra, *Parada* (mercury), detailed descriptions of *Parada Jarana* and *Murchana* set the stage for deeper alchemical practices, for therapeutic administration of *Parada*. Moving forward, the book delves into topics such as *Uparasavarga*, *Vishaniroopana*, and *Dhatu Shodhana Marana* which are critical for the creation of effective alchemical preparations. *Rasayoga Niroopana*, offers a detailed exploration of various *Rasayogas*. It is followed by *Rasayanadhikara*, which addresses the rejuvenative properties of these alchemical compounds, emphasizing their therapeutic potential in prolonging life and enhancing vitality. The text also provides practical knowledge through the *Netranjana-Kesharanjana Vidhi*, detailing the preparation of eye and hair care formulations, a valuable contribution to Ayurvedic cosmetic treatments. Additionally, the chapters on *Baalaroga* and *Arishtavijnana* are unique, offering specific guidance on treating children's ailments and understanding signs of impending death.

In conclusion, *Rasamanjari* is a pivotal text that not only elaborates on the technicalities of alchemical processes but also offers profound insights into the therapeutic applications of Rasashastra. It remains a valuable resource for present day scholars, practitioners and students of Rasashastra.

## REFERENCES

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