

**A REVIEW ON RASANJANA- A MINERAL**

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**ABSTRACT**

Ayurveda pharmaceutics deals with two branches, Rasashastra and Bhaishajya Kalpana. Rasashastra is Indian alchemy where drugs of varied origin like minerals, metals, etc. are utilized in therapeutics after subjecting it to various processes and bringing it to a suitable dosage form. The minerals are classified into different groups namely maharasa, uparasa, sadharana rasa, etc. based on its utility in processes of mercury. Among the uparasa is mineral termed Rasanjana that is a type of Anjana. There is a controversy relating to rasanjana mentioned in classics and the one in practice. It is understood as a mineral ore i.e., yellow oxide of mercury with the references available in literature of rasashastra, but the one in practice is a concentrated form of *Berberis aristata*. As both are beneficial in eye disorders it has continued to be in usage till date.

**KEYWORDS:** Alchemy, Ayurveda pharmaceutics, Rasanjana, Mineral.

**INTRODUCTION**

Indian alchemy comprises of varied drugs like minerals, metals, gem stones, marine drugs, etc. Some of these minerals are controversial in nature to what is available now and what is mentioned in the authentic literature.

Anjana is a mineral explained in Indian alchemy under the group termed as Uparasa. Different treatises of Rasashastra (Indian alchemy) have classified different types of anjana among which Rasanjana is one that is said to be efficacious in eye diseases.<sup>[1]</sup>

**Table no. 1: Properties of rasanjana.**<sup>[2]</sup>

Attributes	Properties
Rasa (Taste)	Madhura (Sweet), Tikta (Bitter), Katu (pungent)
Guna (Property)	Hima (Cold)
Veerya (Potency)	Sheeta (Cold)
Vipaka	Madhura (Sweet)
Karma	Chakshushya (beneficial to eyes), Varnya (clears complexion), Vishaghna (anti- poisonous), Kustaghna (anti- pruritic), Drikprasadana (improves vision), Krimihara (anti- microbial), Vatanashana (alleviates vata dosha), Lekhana (scraping effect), Rasayana (rejuvenative)
Doshaprabhava (effect on tridosha)	Vatapittanashana (alleviates vata and pitta), Kaphaharana (alleviates kapha)
Vyadhiprabhava (indications in diseases)	Visharoga (poisonous condition), Mukharoga (oral disorders), Shwasaroga (asthmatic condition), Hikkaroga (hiccup), Raktaroga (diseases due to vitiation of blood), Akshiroga (eye diseases), Karnaroga (diseases of ear), Vrana (wound), Sthaulya (obesity), Asrigdara (menorrhagia)

**Types of rasanjana**

Rasanjana is said to be of three different varieties, of which the first is obtained in nature in the form of stone, whereas the second and the third are prepared artificially.

The first kind of rasanjana is obtained from rocks in Turkey. It is yellowish in colour, and it contains mercury as one of its constituents. It is pungent and bitter in taste,

and pacifies phlegm, poison, carbuncles, and eye diseases. It produces heat in the system, prevents and cures senile decay, and cures obesity.

The second kind of rasanjanam is an exudation or concentrated decoction of yellow sandal. It is yellowish in colour. It cures diseases pertaining to the mouth,

asthma, hiccough, and an excess of vayu, pitta, and blood.

The third kind of rasanjana is prepared by boiling daruharidra (*Berberis aristata*) with an equal quantity of milk and condensing the mixture into one fourth its original quantity. This rasanjanam is also very efficacious in eye diseases.

#### Controversy relating to it

Rasanjana was considered a controversial drug since samhita period. Now-a-days Ayurveda practitioners of India except bengal consider "Rasont" (darvi kwatha rasakriya) as Rasanjana. The artificially prepared variety which is described as 'Darvi Kwathodbhava' is being used in practice by almost all physicians in the name of rasanjana.<sup>[3]</sup>

In Sushruta sutrasthana, Rasanjana is included in anjanaadi paṇa and on its commentary Dalhaṇa opines that during the earlier period, two drugs were being used by the term rasanjana, one is Srotoanjana which is a blackish stone like mineral and another is Rasonta artificially made by daruharidra kwatha rasakriya (solidified decoction of *Berberis aristrata* Linn).

Also Rasanjana was considered as the synonym of Srotaanjana. And on this basis in Bengal even now-a-days, a black coloured mineral known as "Kala surma is used as Rasanjana.

Late Dr. Vamana Ganesh Desai considered peeta bhasma of Parada (Yellow oxide of mercury) as Rasanjana.

According to the texts it is of two types. One is shailaja i. e., the one derived from the mines, which means it must be a mineral drug. And on this basis prof. D. A. Kulkarni expressed his views that rasanjana is "yellow oxide of mercury" which is obtained from the mines in nature in small quantities. The colour of rasanjana is also described as yellow in the texts. But in practice nobody uses it in the name of rasanjana.<sup>[4]</sup>

#### DISCUSSION

As per a commentary on Rasaratna samucchaya that the drug prepared with daruharidra kwatha is a herbal product. While in Rasashastra texts how a herbal product not containing either mercury or any other metal could be included in uparasa group. Hence rasanjana should be such a drug in which mercury must be present in some form or other. This view is further supported by the synonyms mentioned for rasanjana i. e., rasa garbha, rasagraja, rasodbhava, agnisara, etc. Thus, on the basis of these synonyms it must be a mercury compound prepared with the help of heating and on that basis probably it is a mercury compound which is prepared from mercury in a crucible an open air by heating. Where, due to chemical reaction with oxygen, mercury converts into a yellowish powder form. It is also useful in eye diseases in the form of ointment.<sup>[5]</sup>

It is also mentioned that during the last few centuries due to ignorance and non-availability of proper preparation methods whatever drug was in use traditionally was accepted by the physicians in the name of Rasanjana i.e., a drug prepared with Darvi kwatha rasakriya. And fortunately its usefulness in eye diseases has further helped in accepting this view about Rasanjana.

But yet a few scholars do not accept it because yellow oxide of mercury is recommended only for external use in eye diseases. In Charaka and Sushruta Samhita, many preparations of Rasanjana are found recommended for internal use also.

In all the above mentioned references Rasanjana is used in the compounds which are recommended for kuṣṭha (skin disease), arsha (hemorrhoids), pittatisara (diarrhea) and pradara (menorrhagia) for internal use. Thus, the Rasanjana prepared with darvi kwatha rasakriya could only be used internally for medicinal purposes.

It is mentioned in Charaka that sauviranjana should be used daily in the eyes for netra Prasadana and for netra stavaṇa rasanjana should be used once between 5-8 days. In this context Yadavji acharya has again mentioned that according to his experience there is a secretion from the eyes by the application of Rasanjana prepared by Darvikwatha rasakriya. Further in this context Caraka did not advise to mix sneha dravyas with rasanjana while advocating its application in eyes while yellow oxide of mercury could be used only after mixing it with Vaseline or cream in the form of ointment. Thus, it may be said on the basis of above description that Rasanjana mentioned in Caraka and Suśruta is "rasonta" i. e., Darvi kwatha rasakriya only and not the yellow oxide of mercury.

Further the indications of Rasanjana for curing shwasa and hikka found in rasa granthas are also suggest that Rasanjana is that which is made with Darvi kwatha rasakriya and not a yellow oxide of mercury. As regards the synonyms of rasanjana only tarksya is found mentioned in Caraka and Suśruta, And it's other synonyms like Rasodbhava, Rasagraja and Rasagarbha, etc. are not found mentioned in classical texts of Ayurveda.<sup>[6]</sup>

#### CONCLUSION

Rasanjana thus remains a controversial drug. Synonyms like rasodbhava, rasagarbha, etc. and its mention in uparasa varga points it to be a mineral. But in practice Darvi kwatha rasakriya is still used as rasanjana. A lot more research and works need to be carried out to come to a conclusion.

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