

## A COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF RASAYANA AND ITS THERAPEUTIC APPLICATIONS

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### ABSTRACT

The pursuit of a long and healthy life has been a fundamental desire of humanity throughout history. *Ayurveda*, the ancient science of life, offers a pathway to achieve prolonged, happy, and healthy living. Central to this pursuit is the concept of *Rasayana*, which is elucidated extensively in classical Ayurvedic texts. As individuals age, they experience gradual declines, and the rejuvenation of these losses necessitates using different rejuvenating agents tailored to other age groups. Furthermore, using *Rasayana* enhances the *Satva Guna* of the mind, which can only be achieved through the simultaneous use of *Achara Rasayana*. In modern sciences, the ancient concept of *Rasayana* has been studied using innovative techniques and parameters, validating its efficacy as a rejuvenator and adding valuable insights to our knowledge.

Consequently, the use of *Rasayana* is pertinent for all and holds equal significance in the treatment of diseases and in the maintenance of health. Tailoring the use of different medicines according to specific diseases proves beneficial in correcting Dhatu Vaishmya and achieving Dhatu Samya. Considering this wealth of information, it is apt to consider *Rasayana* a gift bestowed upon the world by *Ayurveda*.

**Keywords:** Rasayana, Immunity, Ayurveda, Rejuvenation, Swasthya.

## INTRODUCTION

*Rasayana*, a distinct branch of *Ashtanga Ayurveda*, is important in treatment. The creators of *Bruhatrayi* and *Laghutrayi* have dedicated separate chapters to expound upon *Rasayanas*, and various definitions and interpretations have contributed to a comprehensive understanding of this concept. Commentators such as *Acharya Chakrapanidatta*, *Dalhana*, and *Arundatta* have further enriched the discourse on *Rasayana*, presenting diverse perspectives and facets. The ultimate goal of *Ayurveda* is the preservation of *Swasthya* (health) and treating the *Aatura* (diseased person). The practical application of *Rasayana* at both these levels serves this purpose effectively. The classification of *Rasayana* in various ways enhances our understanding of its applications in different health conditions.

**Material and Methods:** The study draws from the *Ayurvedic Samhita*, encompassing both *Vrihatrayee* and *Laghutrayee*, pertinent textbooks, online journals, and published works.

### Definition :

As described by *Acharya Charaka*, the concept of *Rasayana* pertains to the attainment of excellent *rasa* and other *dhatu*s. *Chakrapani's* interpretation emphasises that "*rasadi*" signifies physical and mental faculties, including memory<sup>1</sup>. *Gangadhara* defines *Rasayana* as a promoter of longevity, memory, and the production of excellent *dhatu*s<sup>2</sup>. The term "*shastanam*" denotes persistent youthfulness, while "*rasadi*" has been interpreted as *dhatu*s originating from *rasa*. In *Ashtang Hridaya*, the definition of *Rasayana* replaces "*shastanam*" with "*saptanam*," signifying all *dhatu*s from *rasa* to *shukra*<sup>3</sup>. Therefore, the word "*rasa*" in the quotation symbolises all the body constituents. According to *Acharya Sushruta*, *Rasayana* maintains youthfulness, enhances longevity, intellect, strength, immunity, and cures diseases<sup>4</sup>. The quotation attributed to *Sushruta* pertains to the *Rasayana Tantra*, representing the science or section, and holds significance in defining *Rasayana* as well. *Dalhana's* interpretation of *vayasthapana* denotes the

maintenance of *ayu* (life) up to 100 years and *ayushkarma* beyond 100 years. Other commentators perceive *vayasthapana* as a sustainer of youthfulness and *ayushhkaram* as a promoter of longevity. *Dalhana* defines *Rasayana* as measures responsible for the production of *rasa* and other *dhatu*s, contributing to longevity, immunity, strength, stability, and youthfulness. These effects are achieved through drug-based active principles, namely *rasa*, *virya*, *vipaka*, and *prabhava*. *Bhavaprakasa* and *Yogaratanakar* further emphasize that *Rasayana* aids in improving eyesight, providing nourishment, and acting as an aphrodisiac. Summarily, *Rasayana* encompasses measures for achieving excellent body tissues through nutrition, maintaining youthfulness, promoting longevity, enhancing cognitive functions, physical strength, stability, eyesight, and sexual potency, as well as curing diseases.

### Classification

#### 1. According to Method of Administration:

*Rasayana* therapy is classified by *Acharya Charaka* and *Vagbhatta* into two methods of administration: *Kutipravesika* and *Vatatapika* or *sauryamrutika*<sup>5</sup>.

The *Kutipravesika* method involves the individual residing inside a specially constructed cottage located in a secluded area, with specific orientations and features. This method requires the person to undergo purification and rejuvenation therapies while remaining inside the cottage until the completion of the treatment. On the other hand, the *Vatatapika* or *Sauryamrutika* method allows the individual to undergo the therapy while being exposed to the external atmosphere and continuing with their routine activities. The *Kutipravesika* method is suitable for individuals who can afford the necessary equipment and medicines, are free from any diseases, possess intellect, self-control, and have ample time to dedicate to the therapy. Those who do not meet these criteria are recommended to use the *Vatatapika* method, which is easier to accomplish. *Vagbhatta* has specified formulations for the outdoor method. While the indoor

method yields better results, it is also more challenging to carry out<sup>6</sup>.

## 2. According to range of application:

Acharya Charaka and Vagbhata did not classify *Rasayana* based on its action in the relevant chapters. However, Acharya Sushruta provided a clear description according to the scope of use and detailed the therapy in four chapters, with each chapter referring to a special kind of *Rasayana*. The nomenclature of each chapter is based on the special kind of *Rasayana* mentioned in it.

Dalhana categorized *Rasayana* as indoor and outdoor types based on the method of *administration*. His second classification is self-explanatory, as he categorized *Rasayana* as *Kamyasayana*, *Naimittika-Rasayana*, and *Ajasrika-Rasayana*<sup>7</sup>.

- a. **Kamyasayana** - The term 'kamyas' refers to intention or desire. These types of *Rasayana* are used with the intention or desire of attaining vitality, intellect, and physical beauty. Dalhana further divided this category into three:
  - i. **Prana kamyas** - These are used with the intention of promoting vitality and longevity. The *Rasayana* in this category retard the process of degeneration, thereby slowing the aging process and making the body energetic.
  - ii. **Medhya kamyas** - The *Rasayana* belonging to this group promotes cognitive functions. Acharya Sushruta has narrated a separate chapter 'Medhayushhkamiya' to fulfill these two desires.
  - iii. **Shri kamyas** - This category includes *Rasayana* that makes the body attractive by promoting complexion and luster. Apart from these three, many other types can also be included under *kamyasayana*, based on the subject matter of *Rasayana* in *Sushruta Samhita*.
    - i. **Sarvopghatasamaniya** (Pacifier of all diseases): This category encompasses dietary and medicinal regimens that boost immunity to prevent diseases<sup>8</sup>.
    - ii. **Swabhikavyadhipratishedhaniya** (Pacifier of natural diseases): These therapies aid in addressing natural disorders such as hunger, thirst, senility, and sleep<sup>9</sup>.

- iii. **Nivrittasantapiya** (Alleviator of supernatural diseases): This category involves the use of supernatural or divine *Rasayana* drugs to combat *adhyatmika*, *adhidaivika*, and *adhibhautika* types of disorders<sup>10</sup>.

- iv. **Kshinabaliya** and **Vrishyakamiya** (Enhancer of strength and potency): This category comprises *Rasayana* formulations that enhance sexual power, potency, frequency, and support the production of healthy and efficient offspring<sup>11</sup>.

- b. **Naimittika Rasayana** - It refers to a category of *Rasayana* that is beneficial in the treatment of specific diseases. In addition to addressing the ailment, these *Rasayanas* also enhance specific vitality. Various specific *Rasayanas* have been identified for particular diseases. For instance, the use of *shilajatu*, *tuvaraka*, *bhallataka*, etc., is recommended for specific ailments.

- c. **Ajasrika Rasayana**: It encompasses dietary and lifestyle practices that are integral to our daily routines, such as the consumption of milk and *ghrita*. This category serves to regulate the body's wear and tear, thereby maintaining homeostasis. Dalhana further categorizes *Rasayana* into two groups:
  - a. Purificatory (*Samshodhana*) - which, in addition to purifying *doshas*, sustains vitality and enhances strength, e.g., *sasya*.
  - b. Pacificatory (*Sanshamana*) - which, alongside pacifying *doshas* within the body, bestows the benefits of rejuvenation<sup>12</sup>.

## BENEFITS OF RASAYANA THERAPY

According to Acharya Charaka, *Rasayana* therapy has remarkable and diverse effects. Through the exploration and analysis of classical texts, the benefits and attributes of *Rasayana* can be summarized and categorized as follows:

1. Anti-geriatric benefits
2. Physical health benefits
3. Mental health benefits
4. Disease curing benefits
5. Supernatural benefits
6. Aphrodisiac benefits
7. Natural disease tolerance

- Anti-geriatric benefits :** The concept of *Rasayana* has gained significant recognition due to its renowned anti-geriatric effects. Notably, *Acharya Charaka* and *Acharya Sushruta* have highlighted their ability to promote longevity (*Dirghaayu*) and maintain youthfulness (*Vayasthapana*), respectively, among other attributes. The anti-geriatric effects of *Rasayana* encompass the promotion of longevity and the retardation of the aging process. According to *Dalhana*, *Rasayana* has the potential to enhance longevity for up to 100 years and beyond.
- Physical health benefits:** The *Rasayana* therapy provides numerous physical health benefits, including increased energy, improved constitution, balanced homeostasis, enhanced appearance and voice, better digestion and metabolism, nourishment, and strengthened immune function.
- Mental health benefits :** *Rasayana* therapy is known to enhance and fortify cognitive functions such as memory, intellect, and grasping power. This form of therapy is associated with an increase in mental strength (*satva*) and is believed to cultivate humility and politeness in individuals.
- Disease curing benefits:** Regular utilization of therapy serves to prevent disorders of the body and mind by bolstering the body's immunity. Additionally, it aids in the treatment of manifested diseases and serves as a preventive measure against their reoccurrence. Moreover, disease-specific therapy, known as "*naimittika Rasayana*," not only targets the cure of the disease but also reinforces the body. Furthermore, it exhibits anti-toxic and antioxidant properties.
- Supernatural benefits:** The individual possesses the extraordinary ability of *vakasiddhi*, wherein their spoken words manifest into reality. *Rasayana* treatments are believed to bestow immortality and facilitate the attainment of salvation, leading to union with *Brahma*.
- Aphrodisiac benefits:** *Rasayana* drugs have the added benefit of nourishing the *shukra* dhatu while simultaneously nourishing other bodily tissues. This dual effect not only enhances overall health but also contributes to increased sexual potency and the production of healthier offspring.
- Natural disease tolerance:** The practice increases tolerance to natural diseases and helps to ultimately prevent hunger, thirst, senility, morbid sleep, and death. It also aids in the timely cure of natural diseases<sup>13</sup>.

### Some important *Rasayana* mentioned in classics and their therapeutic uses:

S. No.	Name	Reference	Main component	Therapeutic uses
1.	<i>Brahma Rasayana</i>	Ch.Chi-1.1/42-57	5 types of <i>Panchamula</i> and <i>amalaka</i> and <i>haritaki</i>	Antigeriatric, intellect, general immunity and strength promoting, longevity enhancer.
2.	<i>Brahma Rasayana</i> 2 <sup>nd</sup>	Ch.Chi-1.1/58-61	<i>Amalaki</i> , <i>Nagbala</i> , <i>Bhasma</i> of gold, silver copper coal and iron.	Antigeriatric longevity enhancer, provides great physical and mental strength and promotes immunity of the body. It produces the capacity to combat any type of toxic substance.
3.	<i>Chyavanaprasha</i>	Ch.Chi-1.1/62-74	<i>Amalaki</i> , <i>dashmula</i>	Cough, dyspnoea, hoarseness of voice, chest diseases, <i>hridroga</i> , <i>vatarakta</i> , thirst and genito-urinary tract disorders. It is especially useful for the wasted, injured, old people and children (for their development).
4.	<i>Amalaka Rasayana</i>	Ch.Chi- 1.1/75	<i>Amalaka</i> , <i>haritaki</i> ,	Anti-geriatric, promoter of physical and men-

			<i>bibhitaka</i>	tal strength, intellect.
5.	<i>Haritaki Yoga</i>	Ch.Chi- 1.1/76	<i>Haritaki, amalaki, bibhitaka</i>	physical and mental strength enhancer, intellect promoter.
6.	<i>Haritaki Yoga</i>	Ch.Chi- 1.1/77	<i>Haritaki, amalaki, bibhitaka, lauha bhasma</i>	combats toxins if body comes in contact with.
7.	<i>Amalaka Ghrita</i>	Ch.Chi- 1.2/4-6	<i>Amalaki, punarnava, vidari, jivanti, shatavari, ghee.</i>	increases sexual vigor and progeny; provides great physical & mental strength, complexion & voice
8.	<i>Amalaka Avaleha I</i>	Ch.Chi- 1.2/7	<i>Amalaki, pippali</i>	longevity enhancer
9.	<i>Vidangavaleha</i>	Ch.Chi- 1.2/9	<i>Vidanga, pippali</i>	longevity enhancer
10.	<i>Amalakayasa Brahma Rasayana</i>	Ch.Chi- 1.3/3	<i>Amalaki, jivaniya, brahmaniya, stanayajanana, shukrajanana and vayasthapana group of drugs, lauha bhasma.</i>	Anti-geriatric, longevity enhancer, promotes strength and intellect, strengthens immune system.
11.	<i>Lauhadi Rasayan</i>	Ch.Chi- 1.3/15-23	<i>Lauha bhasma, amalaki</i>	great vitalizer, strength, intellect and immunity enhancer.
12.	<i>Aindra Rasayana</i>	Ch.Chi- 1.3/24-29	<i>Aindri, brahmi, vacha, brahmsuvarchala, shankhapuspi, rishabhaka, swarna</i>	Combats magic spells and toxins, useful in leucoderma, skin diseases, abdominal diseases, <i>gulma, pliharoga</i> , chronic intermittent fever, mental afflictions and <i>vatika</i> disorders.
13.	<i>Triphala Rasayana- I</i>	Ch.Chi- 1.3/41-42	<i>Haritaki</i> – 1 fruit after digestion of food, <i>bibhitaka</i> - 2 fruits before food <i>amalaka</i> – 4 fruits after food.	Anti-geriatric and immunity enhancer.
14.	<i>Triphala Rasayana- II</i>	Ch.Chi- 1.3/43-44	<i>Triphala</i> kept in iron vessel for 24 hours.	Anti-geriatric and immunity enhancer
15.	<i>Triphala Rasayana- III</i>	Ch. Chi – 1.3/45	<i>Triphala</i> mixed with <i>madhuka, tugaksiri</i> and <i>pippali</i> .	Anti-geriatric
16.	<i>Triphala Rasayana- IV</i>	Ch.Chi – 1.3/46-47	<i>Triphala</i> , all metals ( <i>sarvoloha</i> ) including gold, <i>vacha, pippali</i> and <i>lavana</i> .	Anti-geriatric, longevity and immunity enhancer
17.	<i>Indrokta Rasayana- I</i>	Ch.Chi 1.4/6	<i>Aindri, brahmi, payasya, krirapuspi, sravani, Mahasravani</i> etc	Anti-geriatric, longevity and immunity enhancer, intellect, memory and strength promoting.
18.	<i>Indrokta Rasayana II</i>	Ch.Chi 1.4/17-26	<i>Balya, jivaniya, brimhaniya, vayasthapana group of drugs; khadira, shatavari, pippali</i> etc	Life promoting, aphrodisiac; energy, strength, intellect, complexion and voice promoter; alleviates poison inauspiciousness and renders the words truthful.
19.	<i>Brahmi Ghrita</i>		<i>Brahmi, vidanga, vacha, guduchi, triphala, ghrita.</i>	Kushtha, intermittent fever, epilepsy, psychosis, poisoning and other severe diseases
20.	<i>Shankhapuspi Ghrita</i>	A.S.Ut- 49/84-	<i>Sankhapuspi, naleda,</i>	It bestows a person with great retention pow-

		85	<i>katorohini etc.</i>	er, voice and immunity.
21.	<i>Pancharavinda Ghrita</i>	A.H.Ut – 39/48	<i>Mrinala bisa, kesara, patra and bija; swarna, milk.</i>	Increases masculine power, strength and intelligence. .

### Single Rasayana Drugs and their therapeutic uses:

S.No	Name	Reference	Therapeutic uses
22.	<i>Haritaki</i> (Terminalia Chebula)	Ch.Chi – 1/37 and A.S.Ut- 49/20-30	Longevity enhancer: removes signs of ageing like wrinkles of the skin, baldness, graying hair and diseases, endows with good intellect, memory and digestive power.
23.	<i>Amalaki</i> ( <i>Emblica Officinalis</i> )	Ch. Chi- 1.3 /10-13	Longevity enhancer, intellect and strength promoting.
24.	<i>Nagabala</i> ( <i>Sida Veronicaefolia</i> )	Ch.Chi – 1.2/11	Longevity enhancer
25.	<i>Bhallataka</i> ( <i>Semicarpus Anacardium</i> )	Ch.Chi – 1.2 /13-21	There is no disorder of kapha and obstructive condition, which is not cured by bhallataka quickly. Moreover, it promotes intellect and agni.
26.	<i>Pippali</i> ( <i>Piper Longum</i> )	Ch. Chi – 1.3/32-40	Bulk promoting, longevity enhancer, beneficial for voice, anti-geriatric, intellect promoting, cures pliha and udraroga
27.	<i>Shilajatu</i>	Ch.Chi -1.3/50-65 and	Mucolytic, yogawahi (useful in every disease), desiccating and disintegrating. It is useful in hiccups, cough, urinary disorders, phthisis, dysuria, prameha, hemorrhoids and edema and kapha disorders
28.	<i>Gokshura</i> ( <i>Tribulus Terrestris</i> )	A.H.Ut- 39/56-57	Longevity enhancer, immunity and strength promoting, great aphrodisiac.
29.	<i>Varahikanda</i>	A.H.Ut- 39/58-61	intellect, immunity and strengthpromoting.
30.	<i>Chitraka</i> ( <i>Plumbago Zelanica</i> )	A.H.Ut- 39/62-65	complexion and digestive strength promoting. cures diseases caused by vitiated vata, leukoderma, diseases of rectum
31.	<i>Alambusha</i>	A.S.Ut. 49/173-175	Mitigates <i>vata</i> and <i>slesma</i> , very powerful carminative, increases digestive power, allays signs of ageing like wrinkling of skin, grey hairs.
32.	<i>Bakuchi</i> ( <i>Psoralea Corylifolia</i> )	A.S.Ut 49/176-211, Su. Chi 28/3	kushtha (Skin diseases) piles, fistula, dyspnoea, cough, anemia, worm infestations, abdominal tumors, spleen disorders, renal calculus, enlargement of scrotum, diabetes,anorexia, rhinitis, dyspepsia, emaciation,
33.	<i>Rasona</i> ( <i>Allium Sativum</i> )	A.H.Ut 39/111-129	Leucoderma, Skin disease, Gulma, Hemorrhoids , urinary disorders , worm infestation, hiccup, chronic coryza, dyspnoea, cough and <i>vata kapha disorders</i>
34.	<i>Palandu</i> ( <i>Allium Cepa</i> )	A.S.Ut. 49/272-280	provides unctuousness, white and bright complexion, strong digestive power, nourishment, sexual potency, immunity and longevity.
35.	<i>Guggulu</i> ( <i>Commiphora Mukul</i> )	A.S.Ut. 49/316-339	<i>Yogavahi</i> (synergist) benevolent, auspicious, destroyer of diseases and promoter of digestive capacity, intelligence, memory and keenness of sensory organs. It is purifier of channels ( <i>srotosodhaka</i> ), good for voice complexion & is <i>Rasayana</i>

## CONCLUSION

The concept of *Rasayana* as an approach to treatment is a significant aspect of *Ayurveda*. It emphasizes the establishment of *Dhatu Samya*, providing valuable insight into treatment objectives. *Rasayana* is considered essential for the comprehensive treatment of any disease. Specific *Rasayana* formulations tailored to individual diseases are detailed in each *Adhyaya* of the *Samhitas* and comprehensively explained in dedicated *Adhyayas*. A thorough comprehension and application of this concept in Ayurvedic practice are crucial for precise and effective treatment. Undoubtedly, *Rasayana* represents an important viewpoint expressed in classical treatises and offers substantial benefits to the world.

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