A CONCEPTUAL REVIEW ON KANAKASUNDARA RASA: UNTANGLING THE SUBTLE ASPECTS

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Abstract

Introduction: Ayurveda focuses on sensing and maintaining the rhythm of life. However, only a practitioner, who can imbibe the different bhavas of the temple that is unique to each individual, can do the successful treatment. The real rationale of the practitioner should be able to untangle the cryptic wisdom by reading between the lines. Such an approach will bring back Ayurveda to be the science which seamlessly intertwines with the natural flow of life. The yogas (formulations) dealt under Rasasatra are always an inevitable component in Ayurvedic therapeutics. Methodology: Considering the treatment of kushta formulations of different rasouashadhis are mentioned in 20\textsuperscript{th} chapter of Rasaratnasamuchaya. Among such formulations kanakasundara rasa, a nirgandharasayoga with a wide range of applicability was reviewed and analyzed for the present work. Review of the specific formulation was carried out in Rasaratna samucchaya as well as other classical textbooks of Rasasastra. Results & Discussion: Skin is a reflection of Koshta or Rasadhatu, which gives the superficial representation of...
Kushta. Gandhaka is explained as devyaraja. The term rajas as ‘rasajam’. The philosophical concept in between these lines explains direct relation of rasajaor twak with gandhaka. Though gandhakagives therapeutic excellence in kushta, its chronicity cannot be managed by this mineral alone. The potentiality of minerals like parada, abhraka, swarna, tamra etc can be imbided from multidimensional action on higher dhathus like majja, sukla etc. Here comes the relevance of mahayogas like arogyavardhinitioni, mahathaleswararasa etc; even use of nirgandhayogas are explained by Acharya. Target specific and alpamatra prayoga of rasoushadhis play a pivotal role in this concept. Holistic approach for selection and action of a rasayoga in Kusta can be analyzed through the example ‘kanakasundara rasa’.

Key words: Ayurveda, rasoushadhis, subtle aspects, kanakasundara rasa

Introduction:

Ayurveda focuses on sensing and maintaining the rhythm of life. However, only a practitioner, who can imbibe the different bhavas (aspects) of the temple that is unique to each individual, can do the successful treatment. The real rationale of the practitioner should be able to untangle the cryptic wisdom by reading between the lines. Such an approach will bring back Ayurveda to be the science which seamlessly intertwines with the natural flow of life. Rasashastra, a branch considered as Indian pharmaceutics of herbo-mineral preparations mainly. The principles associated with foundation and developments of Rasashastra are not clearly indicated and are scattered in various ancient classical texts. The formulations dealt under Rasasattra are always an inevitable component in Ayurvedic therapeutics. Rasaratna samucchaya is a systematic and comprehensive treatise in which scattered knowledge of Rasaśāstra is well compiled by RasaVāgbhaṭa and has its own specialty and consequence. Chapter 20 of Rasaratna samucchaya deals with the cikitsa of kushta visarpadi; by imbibing the sukshma tatwa(subtle aspects) in each yoga(formulation) mentioned here can clearly lead us to perfect management of kushta using rasoushadhis. The present paper is aimed to ascertain the approach towards rasoushadhis in a formulation with special reference to kanakasundara rasa mentioned in Rasasatra-Rasaratnasamacchaya and will through a light towards their subtle aspects.
Methodology:

A review of the disease *kushta* along with the treatment principles was carried out in the classical text of Ayurveda mainly Ashtanga Hridaya of Acharya vagbhata. Contextual review of basic principles like *dhatu* (tissue), *upadhatu* (subtissue) *dhatu pradoshaja vikaras* etc. were done in *Brihatrayees*. The treatise Rasaratna samucchaya was searched for formulations of mineral drug formulations in *Kushta chikitsa*. Among such formulations *kanakasundara rasa*, a *nirgandharasayoga* with a wide range of applicability was reviewed and analyzed for the present study. Review of the specific formulation was carried out in Rasaratna samucchaya as well as other classical textbooks of Rasasastra. *Sunti(Zingiber officinalis Roxb.),marica(Piper nigrum Linn.),pippali(Piper longum Linn.),citrika(Plumbago zeylanica Linn.),vidanga(Embelia ribes Burm.f.),ajasringi(Gymnema sylvestre R.Br.),devadaru(Cedrus deodara(Roxb.) Loud.)G.Don* and *vatsanabha(Aconitum chasmanthum Staff. ex. Holmes.*) were searched in monographs published in part-I of Ayurveda pharmacopeia of India in corresponding volumes. (Volume I, II, III, IV and IX.) Text books of *dravyaguna vijnana* were searched manually for collecting more information about these herbal origin drugs included in the specific formulation. Books written by recent authors and search engines including google scholar, Pub Med were also searched for information regarding the review of mineral drugs (*parada* (mercury), *swarna* (gold) and *abhraka* (mica)).

Results

(i) The disease *kushta* at a glance

Term ‘*kushta*’ is defined as *kaalena sarvm vapu:*-sariram, *kusnaati tasmaat tatkusthmi yatcyte*. Which depicts condition that affects the whole body on progression².

As explained in *nidana stana* of Ashtanga hridaya, the kushta nidanas include, *midhyaharadiviharerna* (unsuitable food and activities), *visheshena virodhina* (with foods which are incompatible), *sadhunindvadhadibhi*: (by sinful acts of the present life such as scolding/defaming or killing the pious; ascetics, elders, preceptors etc.), *papmabhi*: *karmabhi*: (sinful act of the previous life) etc.³

These *nidanas* lead to the aggravation of *doshasas* well as the *twak-lasika-asruk –amisha kopa* and by spreading the *bahya sarira desha*, produce signs and symptoms like *twak*...
vaivarnya. Based on the predominance of *doshas*, *kushta* is classified as *sapta mahakushtas* and given the explanations of eleven *kshudra kushtas* in classics⁴, ⁵, and ⁶. Then due to similar causative factors and mode of progression *switra* is mentioned next to *kushta*.

*Raktadoshaja vikaras* include *kushta visrpa pitakadi rogas*⁷ *Twak* is mentioned as *upadhatu* of *mamsa* and during explanation of *saptha twacha*, *kushta* and *visarpa sthanas* are mentioned(⁴ᵗʰ & ⁵ᵗʰ *twacha*). The same *twacha* comes as one among the *moola sthanas* of *mamsavahasrotas*.⁸ The disease 'kushta' is a widespectrum entity where the symptoms ranges from 'twakvaivarnya, dhathugastages....to swadaarapathyabadhana. References of *Galithakustarogalakshanas, switrakushtalakshanas* can be seen in comprehensive treatise of *Rasasastra-Rasaratnasamachaya*.⁹ Considering the treatmentformulations of different *rasouashadhis* are mentioned in 2⁰th chapter of *Rasaratnasamuchaya*. *Dhatugata kushta lakshanas* are given as¹⁰

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dhatu</th>
<th>Lakshanās</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Twak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Rakta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Mamsa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Meda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Asthi  Majja</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Sukra</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*(in commentary addsउपद्रवै* *स्वेदादिभः पीडनंस्यात्)*

*table 1*

Well-developed chronicity can be assessed in progressive stages of *dhatus*.

Acaryas have mentioned such stages in *vishavega lakshanās*¹¹ *dhatu gata jwara lakshanās*¹² etc.to analyze the *atyayika* stage of *prana*.

Considering the *dosha sthanas* Acharyas have mentioned *hrinnabhyoradhomadhyordhwa samsraya*. Another context mentioned that every *gati*(movement) is incorporated with *vata* (*ie.*, *dhatu*. The *samsraya* is associated with *vata* and *dhatu* to explain the various stages of disease progression in *kushta*.

⁴. *Vagdeva Pitaksanand*$^\text{ (1980)}^*$ \text{Ayurveda} $^\text{ (1990)}$.

⁵. *V. N. Sarma*$^\text{ (1980)}^*$ \text{Ayurveda} $^\text{ (1990)}$.

⁶. *S. N. K. Jena*$^\text{ (1990)}^*$ \text{Ayurveda} $^\text{ (1990)}$.

⁷. *S. N. K. Jena*$^\text{ (1990)}^*$ \text{Ayurveda} $^\text{ (1990)}$.

⁸. *S. N. K. Jena*$^\text{ (1990)}^*$ \text{Ayurveda} $^\text{ (1990)}$.

⁹. *S. N. K. Jena*$^\text{ (1990)}^*$ \text{Ayurveda} $^\text{ (1990)}$.

¹⁰. *S. N. K. Jena*$^\text{ (1990)}^*$ \text{Ayurveda} $^\text{ (1990)}$.

¹¹. *S. N. K. Jena*$^\text{ (1990)}^*$ \text{Ayurveda} $^\text{ (1990)}$.

¹². *S. N. K. Jena*$^\text{ (1990)}^*$ \text{Ayurveda} $^\text{ (1990)}$.

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va gati gandhnayo:). Within the body the five vayus are explained where the extremities ie, prana and apana are mentioned with movement directions pranaga and apanaga.

In the kushta cikitsa snehapanas is given with prime importance-kushtinam snehapanena purvam sarvamupacaret;  

In Rasaratna samucchaya galitakushtaroga lakshanas like पादयो: श्वयथुस्तॊदॊगलंत्यंगुलयॊयिद।नािसकास्वरयॊभंगॊगलकुष्ठस्यलक्षिम्॥(padayoswayathutodogalathyangulayoyati nasikaswarayorbhanga galakushtasya lakshanam) are explained.

Switra kushtasya lakshanas are also available in this context and mentioned that which will get worsened on progression.

In the explanation of kushta cikitsa about 90 formulations were mentioned by Rasavagbhata. Yogas for Vataja, pitaja, kaphaja, sannipataja conditions are mentioned, then mahayogas are mentioned according to increasing chronicity. As the synonym ‘kushtari’ indicates, gandhaka is coming under most of the preparations.

(ii) Yogavicharam-‘kanakasundara rasa’

In the name ‘kanakasundara rasa’ many references have been made available. kanakasundara rasa and brihat kanakasundara rasa are mentioned in Bhaishajya ratnavali jwarathisaracikitsaprakarana15 In Similar name ‘hemasundara rasa’ is another yoga mentioned in vajikaranaprakarana of Bhaishajya ratnavali16 In compiled textbooks of Rasasastra like Rasarajachinthamani mentioned kanaka sundara rasa in different chikitsa prakaranas likekshayaroga cikitsa, atisara cikitsa, grahani cikitsa, and vatavyadhi cikitsawith different ingredients.17

Kanaka sundara rasa18 mentioned by Rasavagbhata visarpakushtaswitradiroga cikitsadhyaya(Rasaratna samucchaya-20th chapter) differs by ingredients and by the method of preparation, it is this yoga that is being taught here.
* smtulknkotthymstovthpistin dvigaunrssmaan gaolmdhyevipaaky.

trikudhvellairvtsnaabhaardhhbhaagaai rssmnvshringgaidaaaruyktaiai: smstai: ||

ajsil vipistairgaunyjyaatulygaol: kupitkfsmutthn hntikusthangaristhm.
tdprmth vaatshlemjtvgavikaarao gaudgatmpi srnvhnimaanddn sunindddm||
tusten shmbhunaaid: so'ynknksundr: tvgavikaarvinaashaay kubaaymhaatmne||

(iii) Method of Preparation of Kanakasundara rasa

Equal parts of swarnapishti, vyomasa twotthapishti along with two parts of suddha parada were taken in a clean khalwayantra. Made them to bolus form by proper tri-turbation. Place the bolus in a sarava and another sarava of same dimension is kept inverted and the junction of two sarava was sealed by a mud smeared with kora cloth. Three such mud plasters were given to provide proper sealing and dried. Such a samputitha saravais subjected to putainvalukyantra. After self-cooling collect the incinerated material inside the sarava, then add the herbal drugs. The mentioned ratio of quantities of herbal drugs are

- **Trikatu** (sunti, maricha and pippali), citraka, vella - one part each
- **Suddha vatsanabha** - half part
- **Sringi, daru** - one part each

Then trituration with ajamutra (goat’s urine) in khalwayantra has to be done and finally prepare vati with a size of gunja thulya gola. Valuka yantra mentioned here for the preparation is to give uniform heat distribution during the process. Indication of this medicine is mainly in vata-sleshmaja twak vikara, gudagatavikara, sarvam vahni mandhyam sunindhyam. Mineral contents of the formulation include swarna pishti, abhraka satwa pishti and suddha parada. Kanakasundararasa is mentioned as a nirgandha rasa yoga in kushta.

(iv) Biological roles with appraisal of subtle aspects

Herbal drugs included in this yoga along with their properties and classically mentioned pharmacological actions are summarized in table 2.
### Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. no.</th>
<th>Herbal drug</th>
<th>Rasa</th>
<th>Guna</th>
<th>Virya</th>
<th>vipaka</th>
<th>Karma &amp; prabhava</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Sunti (Zingiber officinale Roxb.)</td>
<td>Katu-tiktam</td>
<td>Laghu-ruksha</td>
<td>Anushna</td>
<td>Katu-tiktam</td>
<td>Madhura</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Maricha (Piper nigrum Linn.)</td>
<td>Katu-ruksha</td>
<td>Laghu-snigdha</td>
<td>Anushna</td>
<td>Katu-ruksha</td>
<td>Kapha-vatahara, Kapha-vira, Pramehajit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Pippali (Piper longum Linn.)</td>
<td>Katu-ruksha</td>
<td>Laghu-snigdha</td>
<td>Anushna</td>
<td>Katu-ruksha</td>
<td>Rasayana, Sita prasamana, Deepana, Dartyakara</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Citraka (Plumbago zeylanica Linn.)</td>
<td>Katu-tiktam</td>
<td>Laghu-ruksha</td>
<td>Anushna</td>
<td>Katu-ruksha</td>
<td>Kapha-vatahara</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Vella(vidanga) (Embelia ribes Burm.f.)</td>
<td>Katu-ruksha</td>
<td>Laghu-snigdha</td>
<td>Anushna</td>
<td>Katu-ruksha</td>
<td>Kapha-vatahara</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Aja sringi (Gymnema sylvestre R.Br.)</td>
<td>Katu-tiktam</td>
<td>Laghu-ruksha</td>
<td>Anushna</td>
<td>Katu-ruksha</td>
<td>Rasayana, Kapha-vatahara</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Devadaru (Cedrus deodara(Roxb.) Loud.)(G.Don)</td>
<td>Tikta</td>
<td>Laghu-snigdha</td>
<td>Anushna</td>
<td>Tikta</td>
<td>Rasayana, Sita prasamana, Deepana, Dartyakara</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Vatsanabha (Aconitum chasmanthum Staff. ex. Holmes.)</td>
<td>Madhura</td>
<td>Laghu-ruksha-tikshna</td>
<td>Anushna</td>
<td>Madhura</td>
<td>Rasayana, Sita prasamana, Deepana, Dartyakara</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Table 2

_Bhavana dravya_ used in this formulation is _aja mutra_ which is _lavana-kashaya-madhura_ in _rasa_ and _tridoshaguna pathya_ in nature.

Properties of _rasoushadhis_ mentioned in _kanakasundara rasa_ can be summarized as in table 3.
Table 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. no.</th>
<th>Rasoushadhi</th>
<th>Rasa</th>
<th>Guna</th>
<th>Virya</th>
<th>Vipaka</th>
<th>Prabhava &amp; karma</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Abhraka (Biotite Mica)</td>
<td>Kashaya Madhura</td>
<td>Snigdha</td>
<td>Sita</td>
<td>Madhura</td>
<td>Rasayana, vajikarana, Varnya, ruchikara, Bala vridhidhikara</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Swarna (Gold metal)</td>
<td>Madhura, kashaya, tikta, katu</td>
<td>Sita, guru, snigdha</td>
<td>Sita</td>
<td>Madhura</td>
<td>Vrishya, balya, Brahmana, rasayana, Medhya, smritiprada, Balya, ayushya, kanthikara</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Parada (Mercury)</td>
<td>Shadrasa</td>
<td>Snigdha, sara, guru</td>
<td>Ushna</td>
<td>Madhura</td>
<td>Yogavahi, rasayana, amritha, sarvarogahara</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Swarnapishtinirmana is explained as suddha swarnapatra are cut in to small pieces. Suddha parada is taken in a clean khalwa yantra and after that suddha swarnapatra pieces are add one by one with proper trituration up to homogenous form. Nimbu swarasa is added for proper preparation. Thus semisolid, soft swarna pishti will be formed.

Properties of Swarna are mentioned as

- **Brahmana, snigdham rasapakayo Madhuram, sakashayam satikthakam, hridyam kanthi pradam, buddhi Medha smritikaram, vranakham.**

- Rasatarangini adds vrishyam, rasayana, pumsavanopayogiproperties.

- Rasavidbhata explained properties of swarna as akhilavyadhividwamsi, bhutavesa prasanthi.

Classical methods of abhraka satwapatana include,

- **Suddha abhraka** added with one fourth part of powder of suddha tankana (Sodium tetraborate decahydrate). Further do peshana with juice of musali (Curculigo orchoides Gaertn.) and subjected to puta to obtain satwa. (RT, RRS)

- Trituration of powdered Abhrak with kanji, soorana (amorphophallus paeniiifolius (Dennst.) nicolson.thoya, kadali kanda (Musa paradisiaca L.) thoya - add one fourth part tankana (Sodium tetraborate decahydrate), pippali (Piper longum Linn.) churna, kshudra matsya (fish of small size) and mahishee.
mala (excreta of buffalo). Made to bolus form and subjected to puta in dritagni. Thus satwa will evolved.

- Two more methods are available in Rasatarangini.  
- Satwavaishishtya is mentioned in Rasatarangini  
- Satwabhra rasayana is mentioned in Rasaratna samuccaya

*Suddha parada* is another major content of *kanakasundara Rasa*.

The given explanation is; It is peculiar extraordinary, most secret or with appropriate power with effectiveness.

As Rasasastra said it is supreme, the most required therapeutic form is *parada bhasma*.

*Nishkkampa Vega teevragnou ayurarogyato mrita: (RRS)*.  

*RRS - Rasaratna samuccaya.  
*RT - Rasatarangini.*
Discussion

On the basis of the results obtained we can approach Skin as a reflection of Koshta or Rasadhatu, which gives the superficial representation of kushta. Gandhaka is explained as devyaraja (devya rajo bhavet gandho). The term rajas as ‘rasajam’ (rasajam sravati tyaham.). Thenidanas lead to the dosha kopas as well as the twak-lasika-asruk – amisha kopa in case of the disease kushta. The linking in the dosha dushya samurchana will be more evident while checking these concepts. The term kushta also includes some other diseases of the skin as will be evident from details further on given in the context of explanation of diagnosis.

The philosophical concept in between these lines explains direct relation of rasaja or twak with gandhaka. Though gandhaka gives therapeutic excellence in kushta, its chronicity cannot be managed by this mineral alone. The potentiality of minerals like parada, abhraka, swarna, tamra etc can be imbibed from multidimensional action on higher dhathus like majja, sukla etc. Here comes the relevance of mahayogas like arogyavardhinivati, mahathaleswararasa etc; even use of nirghandhayogas are explained by Acharya. Target specific andalpamamraprayoga of rasoushadhis play a pivotal role in this concept. Holistic approach for selection and action of a rasayoga in Kusta can be analyzed through the example ‘kanakasundara rasa’. By analysing the indications of the formulation indications we can have the multidimensional action of rasoushadhis other than gandhaka (which act mainly at the level of rasa.. or rakta to an extent) on higher dhathus like majja, sukla etc along with the subtle aspect of mahayogas.

When searching the subtle aspect of vata the stages of vata (sthula), vayu (sukshma) and prana (sukshmatara) along with the thread in between is inevitable. Within the body the five vayus are explained where the extremities ie, prana and apana are mentioned as pranaga and apanaga which are having the gati beyond the panchabhotamakashareera or the dravyarupa. Importance of prana is clearly mentioned in these contexts. Description of treatment of kushta especially with importance to snehapana which is brahmana in turn prananulomana.

By examining the essence of the dhatus or rasoushadhis used here we can clearly see that Acharya has a holistic and subtle logic expressed in the mahayogas (compound formulations).

Rasadhatu transformed to other sariradhatu by perfect dhatuparinama and attains rasayanatwa. Swarna is a dhathu which is capable of giving ojovridhi and in turn act on
manovahasrotas. The perfection of dhathuparinama which is perfect for the subtle aspect of prana is chosen here. In kanakasundara Rasa, swarna is mentioned in pishtiRupa.

The next major content is abhraka.

- Abhraka: abhraka bhasma → abhraka satwa
- Sthula: sukshma → sukshmatara

By examining this transformation we will be able to understand the alterations that have been made in harmony with subtle prana. In the event that the body is struggling to maintain the rhythm of dhathuparinama, Acharya has applied logic to assimilate the sukshmamsha of oushadha. Acharya has explained abhraka as 'gouriteja: paramamamrutam' in classics. The exaggeration in the explanation of 'devisuklam', then comes to the logic of being the 'sarvadhatuteja' by reading in between. There lies the logic behind abhraka as the helmsman in maharasa group. Prajnapodhi, prasamitaruja, etc. are mainly pertained to the same abhraka. By mentioning sthanyasamvardhana we can make out the capability of abhraka leading to perfect dhatusuiparinama even in ksheerada.

Samskaritaparada can convert lower metals to higher metals. As an extension to this superiority, we can imbibe the sukshmatara tatwa of parada.

The person who has attained full, proper and actual knowledge of Rasasastra and techniques, procedures and methodology, really enjoys supreme power par excellence of trilokas.

Conclusion

This conceptual search can be concluded that Untangling the sukshmatara tatwa of rasoushadhisi along with the paths of trans logical thinking approach will lead a practitioner to the right track of perfect treatment, one example of Acharya’s clarification for this concept is the selected formulation, kanakasundara rasa. Every processes given for each rasoushadhi is with the alterations that have been made in harmony with subtle prana. Selection, deselection, processing as well as kalpana (main mode of preparation) of a
rasoushadhi in a formulation is imprinted with a subtle aspect of the science and holistic approach is the path finder. The obtained results will empower the statement-The person who has attained full, proper and actual knowledge of Rasasastra and its techniques really enjoys supreme power.

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**Conflicts of interest**

There are no conflicts of interest.

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