

RASAYANA THERAPY IN CLASSICAL LITERATURE OF AYURVEDA - A REVIEW

MOMIN ALI*

ABSTRACT

Ayurveda is a science of life, therefore it is the science, by the knowledge of which life may be prolonged. It is human nature to aspire for longevity and this desire is found practically among all the peoples of the world. Accordingly if longevity is desired, there must be a system of rejuvenation for one who keeps on remaining young. Rasayana therapy has been described for this purpose in Ayurveda as a systematic and scientific medical discipline and great results were claimed by this therapy. Hence the Rasayana therapy has been reviewed in the classical literature of Ayurveda and presented under the various headings giving its uses, definition, types and formulations etc.

Ayurveda is a science of life, therefore it is the science, by the knowledge of which life may be prolonged, It is human nature to aspire for longevity and this desire is found practically among all the peoples of the world. Accordingly if longevity is desired, there must be a system of rejuvenation for one who keeps on remaining young.

The span of life is the resultant of two factors, i.e. Destiny (Karma) and Effort (Dharma). There were two schools of thought on this subject. According to one view, Karma, the deeds done in the past life, determine the particular nature of our birth, the period of our life, time and nature of our enjoyments or sufferings and its effects are immutable. The second view holds that human will is all powerful and that there is no bond of

previous karma, destiny or fatality which cannot be controlled or overcome by it. Atreya follows a view based on commonsense eclecticism. After an analysis of the lives and practices of the ancients in the Krita, Treta and Dvapara Ages, he arrives at the conclusion that longevity or brevity of life is a function of Dharma. When Dharma flourishes and people walk in its path and practise it, they attain longevity and when Adharma flourishes and the people follow a path contrary to Dharma their span of life is shortened and brevity of life ensues, therefore, not Karma but Dharma is the determining factor in the span of life.

Other methods of attaining longevity than the practice of Dharma were also actively explored out. Rasayana therapy has been described for this purpose in

*Assistant Director I/C, Indian Institute of History of Medicine (CCRAS), OMC Buildings, Putlibowli, Hyderabad - 500195 (India).

Ayurveda as a systematic and scientific medical discipline. Ayurveda devoted one of its eight divisions, viz. Rasayana, to the subject of attainment of longevity, which shows that the Rasayana Karma was practised as a major speciality and there used to be specialist practitioners with special clinics and hospitals for this specialized treatment. Rasayanas are medicines which are capable of imparting superior Rasas and Dhatus to the body and toning up the system of healthy persons. They are elixirs of life for preserving and increasing vigour, restoring youth, improving memory and preventing disease. ¹

The Rasayana therapy has been classified as follows:-

(1) Kamyas Rasayana : Kamyas Rasayana is used to promote general, physical and mental health. This may be of three types (i) Prana Kamyas (ii) Medhas Kamyas (iii) Srikamyas. In this group Sushruta has described three Rasayanas:

(A) Medhayuskamiya Rasayana: to improve the memory and invigorate the mental faculties as well as to cause longevity. Some of the Rasayanas mentioned in this group are also used to effect a cure of some diseases.

(B) Swabhawa Vyadhi Pratishedhaniya Rasayana: to overcome come the diseases which by nature are inevitable, such as hunger, thirst, sleep, senility, and death etc. according to Dalhana. In this context these Rasayanas are said

to be divine, which are claimed to provide superhuman qualities to human beings. In this group there are the twenty-four soma-Rasayanas. All these twenty-four Soma-Rasayanas are to be taken as per indoor regimen. The dose of the milky juice of all these is one Kudava which is to be taken only once.

(C) Nivrieta Santapiya Rasayana: There are eighteen Rasayanas in this group, which are potent like the Soma. As the God being free from santapa or various kinds of agonies in the heaven feels pleasure so the mortals do over earth after receiving these remedies.

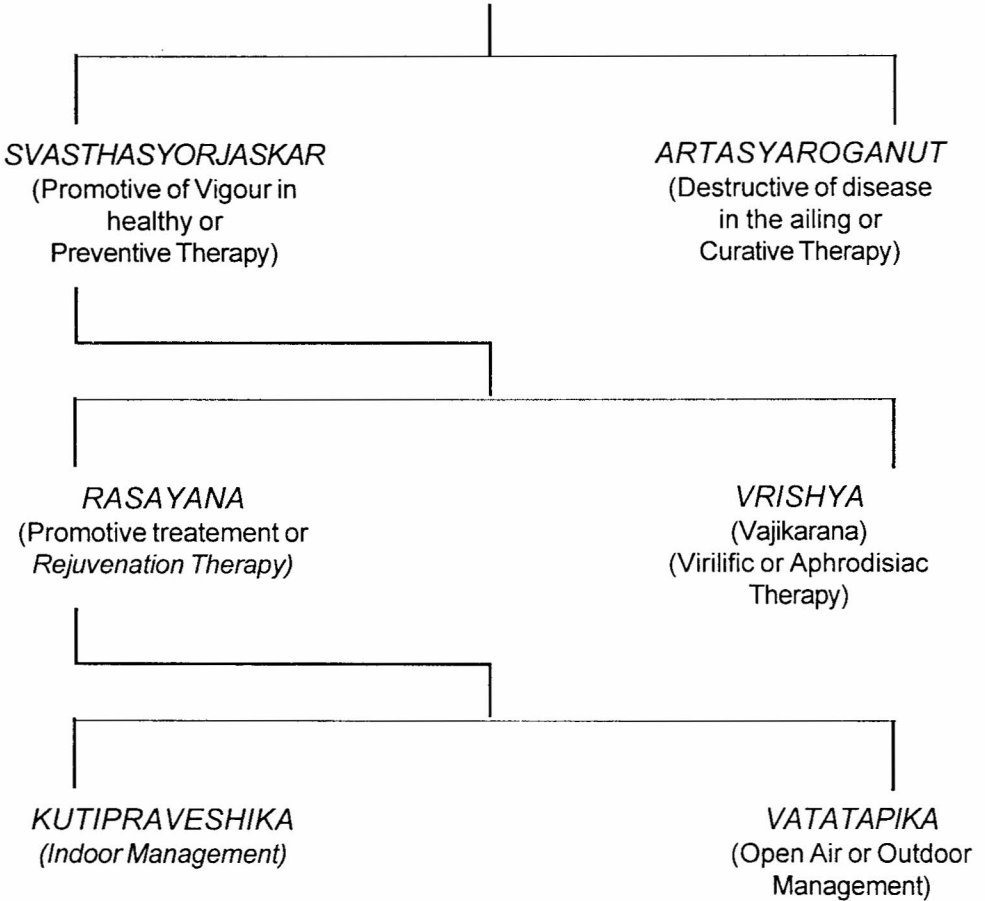
(2) Namittika Rasayana: Sushruta in this group has mentioned the Sarvopghata Shamaniya Rasayana. Besides imparting general Rasayana effects these are used to cure some particular diseases also.

(3) Aiasrik Rasayana: These are to be used in the daily routine of life to promote the general health, such as milk and ghee etc.

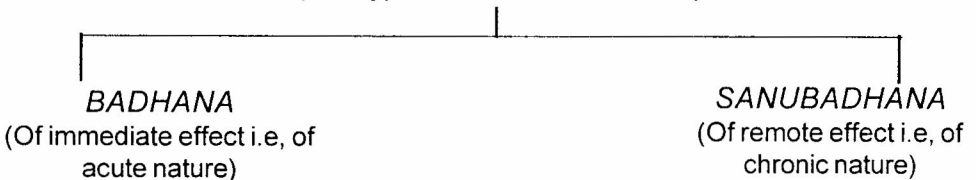
(4) Achara Rasayana: Practice of good conduct and desirable behaviour in every aspect of life is a sort of Rasayana therapy and provides an individual all benefits of the use of the Rasayana. ²

Hence, the Rasayana therapy, which is said to be a method of obtaining such great results has been reviewed in the classical literature of Ayurveda and presented under the various headings giving its uses, definition, types and formulations etc.

DVIVIDHA BHESHAJA
(TWO TYPES OF THERAPEUTICS)



DVIVIDHA ABHESHAJA
(Two types of the contra-medicine)



Importance of the procedure of vitalization

As is Ambrosia to the immortals, as is the Nectar to the serpents, so in the days of yore, was the procedure of vitalization to the great sages. These sages of yore, who were votaries of Rasayana, Lived for thousands of years, transcending oldage, infirmity, disease and even death itself. He who makes use of Rasayana in the Prescribed manner, not merely attains longevity on the earth but dying, goes by the auspicious way of the divine sages and reaches the immutable brahman itself.

(Charaka, Chikitsa, Chapter 1, pada 1/78-80).

Kutipravesika Vidhi

(Procedure of Indoor Management)

We shall set down the procedure regarding immurement therapy. In an area resided in by princes, physicians, the twice-born communities, saintly men and men of virtuous deeds, free from alarm,; salubrious, close to a city, where the necessary appurtenances may be had, one should, having selected a good site, cause a retreat to be built with its face towards either the east or the north. It should be of the following description:-

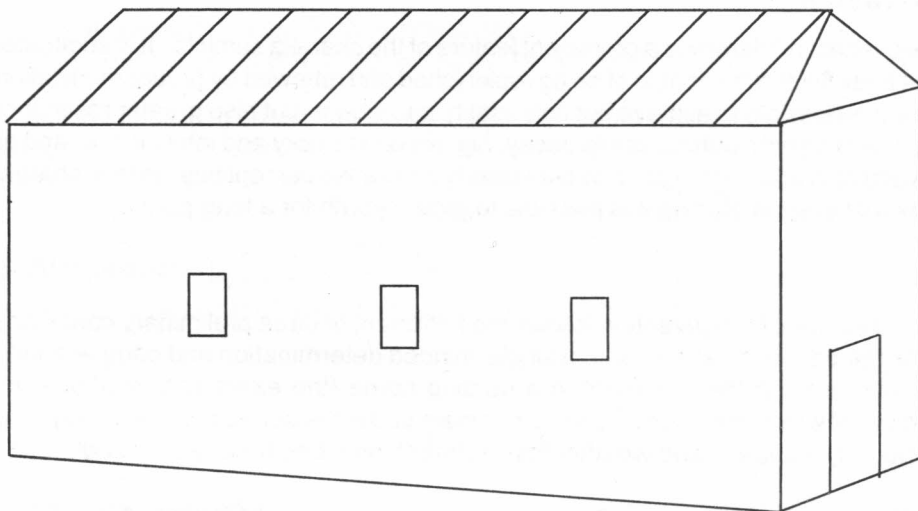
High roofed and commodious; built in three concentric courts; furnished with narrow ventilators; thick - walled; congenial in all weathers; well lighted; pleasing to mind; proof against noises and other distrubing agents; untenanted by women; equipped with all the requisite appurtenances; and having physicians, medicines and brahmanas ready at call. Thereafter, during the sun's northern course, in the bright half of the month when the day (tithi) and the constellation are propitious and the muhirta and karana are favourable, the man seeking rejuvenation should, being shaved, enter the retreat, having fortified himself in his resolution and purpose, full of faith and single-mindedness, having cast off all sins of the heart, cherishing good will for all creatures, having first worshipped the gods and then the twice - born, and having performed the circumambulation of the gods, the cows and the brahmanas.

[Charaka, Chikitsa, Chapter 1 pada 1/17-23]

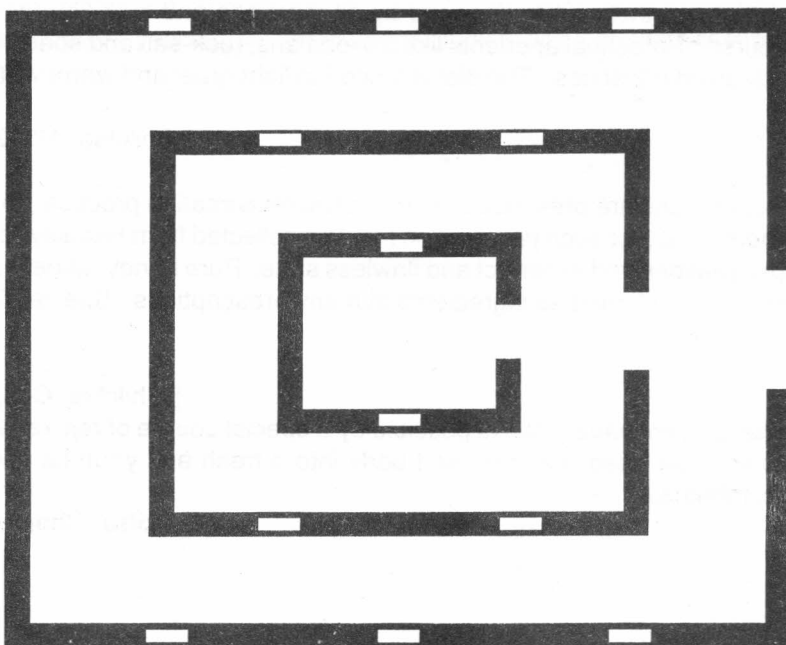
Therein, being cleansed with the purificatory measures and on having regained his happiness and normal strength, he should undergo the vitalization procedure. We shall first describe the cleansing procedure.³

[Charaka, Chikitsa, Chapter 1 pada 1/24]

A Kuti for Kutipravesika Rasayana
(Indoor Management)



Bird's Eye View



Rejuvenation

Rejuvenation Therapy is a prominent feature of the charaka samhita. It is suggested that the body fluids are capable of being replenished and renewed by proper medication; and that it is possible to achieve not only vitality and vigour, but also greater resistance to disease, longevity without senile decay, heightened memory and intelligence, and an improvement in bodily strength, personal beauty and sense perceptions. In fact, charaka asserts that even in old age it is possible to regain youth for a long period.

[Chikitsa, 1/1/6-8]

The treatment for rejuvenation follows the fulfillment of three preliminary conditions: namely, the patient must start with a single-minded determination and complete faith; he should undergo the treatment in a nursing home (the exact specifications and equipment of which are listed); he should remain under the constant supervision of his physician. The season and weather for treatment must be properly selected

[Chikitsa, 1/1, 17-23]

The body is then thoroughly cleansed by oil massage and sudation by various means. A course of intestinal aperients like myrobalans, rock-salt and special spices is given for cleaning intestines. The diet is limited to light gruel and warm water.

[Chikitsa, 1/1, 25-27]

Many preparations are prescribed for the actual rejuvenation process. the fruits, plants, and herbs used for such prescription must be collected from Himalayan forests in thier proper seasons and in perfect and flawless state. Pure honey, ghee, salts and minerals are also mentioned as ingredients in many prescriptions. Special diets are described in all cases,

[Chikitsa, Chapter 1]

Claims have been made that it is possible by a special course of rejuvenations to transform entirely an aged and diseased body into a fresh and youthful one in the course of six months.⁴

[Chikitsa, Chapter 1/47]

Importance of Shodhana

(Cleansed with the purificatory measures)

BEFORE PRESCRIBING THE VITALIZATION PROCEDURE

A wise physician should (invariably) prescribe some sort of Rasayana (vitalization procedure) for his patients in their youth and middle age after having their system (properly) cleansed (shodhana) by the application of sneha (oleation) and purifying remedies (emetics and purgatives). A person whose system has not been (previously) cleansed with proper purifying remedies should not, in any case have recourse to such rejuvenators/vitalizers in as much as they would fail to produce the wished - for result, just as the application of a dye to a piece of dirty cloth will prove non-effective.

[Sushruta, Chikitsa, Chapter 27/2]

Persons Unfit For The Use of Rasayana

The (following) seven classes of persons, viz, the intemperate, the lazy, the indigent, the unwise, the immoral (vyasani), the sinful and the triflers of medicine, are unfit to take these ambrosial (Rasayana) drugs on account of their respective ignorance, inactivity, poverty, vascillation, interperance, impiety and inability to secure the genuine medicine.

[Sushruta, Chikitsa Chapter 30/3]

Uses and Definition Of Rasayana

Long life; Hightened Memory and Intelligence, Freeddom from Disease; Youth; Excellence of Lustre, Complexion and of Voice; Optimum Strength of Body and Senses; Utterance that always gets Fulfilled; the Reverence of People; Body - Glow - All these does a Man obtain by the use of Rasayanas (Vitalizers). The Vitalizers are so called because they help to replenish the vital fluids of the body.

[Charaka, Chikitsa, Chapter 1 pada 1/ 7 & 8]

The Rasayana - Tantra (Science of Rejuvenation) has for its specific objects the prolongation of human life, and the invigoration of memory and the vital organs of man. It deals with recipes which enable a man to retain his manhood or youthful vigour upto a good old age, and which generally serve to make the human system invulnerable to disease and decay. 5

[Sushruta, Sutra, Chapter 1/10]

Drugs which ward off old age and disease are Rasayanas (Rejuvenators). For example Amrita, Rudanti, Gugglu, Haritaki.6

[Sharangadhara, Chapter 4/13 & 14]

TESTED RECIPES OF VITALIZATION ACCORDING TO CHARAKA SAMHITA

(Given in Four Quarters of Vitalization in the Section on Therapeutics)

1	2	3	4
Abhayamlakiya Rasyanapada (the virtues of the chebulic and emblic myrobalans)	Pranakamiya Rasayanapada (The urge to live)	Karaprachitiya Rasayanapada (Culled with the hand)	Ayurvedasamuthaniya Rasayanapada (the advent of the science of life)
Brahma - Rasayana (first) Brahma- Rasayana (second) Chyavana Prasha Amalaka Rasayana Haritakyadi Yoga (first) Haritakyadi- Yoga (second)	Amalaka Ghrita Amalaka Churna Vidangavaleha Apara Amalakavaleha Nagabala Rasayana Bala Rasayana Atibala Rasayana Chandana Rasayana Aguru Rasayana Dhava Rasayana Tinisha Rasayana Khadira Rasayana Shimshipa Rasayana Asana Rasayana Amrita Rasayana Abhaya Rasayana Dhatri Rasayana Mukta Rasayana Shveta (Aparajita) Rasayana Jivanti Rasayana Atirasa (shatavari- Rasayana Mandukaparni- Rasayana Sthira (shalparni) Rasayana Punarnava Rasayana Bhallataka Kshira Bhallataka Kshaudra Bhallataka Taila Bhallataka Guda Bhallataka Yusha Bhallataka Sarpi Bhallataka Taila Bhallataka Palala Bhallataka Sattu Bhallataka Lavana Bhallataka Tarpana	Amalakyasabrahma- Rasayana Kevalamlaka Rasayana Lauhadi Rasayana Aindra Rasayana Manduka Parni Medha- Rasayana Yashtimadhu- Medhya Rasayana Guduchi Medhya Rasayana Shankhapushpi - Medhya Rasayana Pippali Rasayana (first) Pippali Rasayana (second) Pippali Vardhamana- Rasayana Triphala Rasayana (first) Triphala Rasayana (second) Triphala Rasayana (third) Triphala Rasayana (fourth) Shilajatu Rasayana	Indrokta Rasayana (first) (18 drugs/ingredients) Dronipravesika Rasayana (9 drugs / ingredients) Indrokta Rasayana (second) Achara Rasayana ³

REJUVENATORS AND ELIXIRS

(According to Sushruta Samhita)

<p>Sarvopaghata Shamaniya Rasayana (Recipes and modes of using elixirs and rejuvenators of the human organism which will make it invulnerable to the inroads of any disease or of decay)</p>	<p>Medhayuskamiya Rasayana (the elixirs and remedial agents which tend to improve the memory and invigorate the mental faculties as well as to increase the duration of human life)</p>	<p>Svabhavika Vyadhi Pratishehaniya Rasayana (The restorative and the constructive agents which arrest innate morbid tendencies and decay)</p>	<p>Nivrieta Santapiya Rasayana (The tonic remedies which remove mental and physical distress.)</p>
1	2	3	4
<p>Vidanga Rasayana Vidanga Kalpa Kashmarya Kalpa Vala Kalpa Varahi Kalpa Shana (seeds)- Kshirapaka</p>	<p>Shvetavalguja Rasayana Manduka Parani Rasayana Brahmi Rasayana Brahmi Ghrita Vacha Rasayana Shatapaka Vacha Ghrita Vilva (root) powder (Consecrated a thousand times with vilva flowers, reciting sree-sukta (rig veda), mixed with gold(powdered) honey & clarified Butter) Mrinala Kvatha (mixed with honey and fried paddy and duly concentrated a hundred thousand times with oblations in fire) Cow's Milk (The use of a compound consisting of gold, padma seed, Priyangu and fried paddy mixed with honey and taken in a adequate quantity of cow's milk). Nilotpala (A portion milk cooked with the decoction of the petals (dala) of nilotpala in the manner of ksirapaka and mixed with gold and sesamum seeds). Cow's Milk (with gold, wax and makshika honey) Vacha, Gold and Vilva (The use of the pulverised compound of the three with clarified butter). Vasa Taila (A medicated oil prepared by duly cooking it with the decoction of a tula weight of vasa (roots). Yava Churna (A tula weight of barley grains should be</p>	<p>Soma (A kind of Amrita, known by the epithet of soma, which was created by the Gods, such as bramha etc., for the prevention of death and decay of the body)</p>	<p>1- Shveta Kapoti 2 - Krishna Kapoti 3 - Gonasi 4 - Varahi 5 - Kanya 6 - Chhatra 7 - Ati-Chchatra 8 - Karenu 9 - Aja 10 -Chakraka 11 - Aditya parnini 12 - Suvarchala 13 - Brahma-Suvarchala 14 - Shravani 15 - Maha Sharavani 16 - Golomi 17 - Aja -lomi 18 - Maha Vegavati -These are the names of the eighteen all healing different</p>
<p>[Chikitsa Chapter-27/1-11]</p>		<p>[Chikitsa, Chapter - 29/1-12]</p>	

1	2	3	4
	<p>Powdered. The preparations of this barley powder (gradually) to be taken with honey and powdered pippali.) Amalaki Churna (and gold with honey) Shatavari Ghrita (mixed with honey and pulverised gold) Gochandana, Mohanika (honey and gold-mixed together) Takra (cooked with an admixture of the pasted yashtimadhu and with the decoction of padma and nilotpala with gold) Further, constant study, disquisitions (on philosophical and scientific topics), discussions in other subjects, and residence with professors or men learned in the respective branches of knowledge are the best means for improving memory and expanding one's intellect. Eating after the digestion of a previous meal, non-repression of any natural urges of the body, annihilation of killing propensities, perfect continence, self-control and refraining from rash and hazardous undertakings, should be deemed the keys to a long life.</p> <p>[Chikitsa Sthana, 28/1-22]</p>		<p>kinds of drugs of mighty potency.⁵ [Chikitsa Chapter 30/1-4]</p>

REJUVINATORS AND ELIXIRS

(According to Ashtanga Hridaya)

Kuti Praveshika (Indoor Management)	Vatatapika (Out door Management)
<p>Brahma Rasayana Haritakyadi Rasayana Amalaki Rasayana Chyavana Prasha Triphala Rasayana Medhavridhi Kara Rasayanas:- 1- Mandukaparni Svarasa. 2 - Yashtimadhu Churna. 3 - Guduchi Rasa. 4 - Shankhapushpi (With mula & .Pushpa) Kalka A Prayoga (Naladi Ghrita) Pancharvinda Rasayana Chatushkuvalaya (Rasayana) Brahmiyadi (Rasayana) Nagabala Rasayana Gokshuraka (Rasayana) Varahikanda Rasayana Varahikandadi Rasayana Chitraka Rasayana Bhallataka Rasayana Bhallataka Svarasa Prayoga Amrita Bhallataka Paka Bhallataka Taila (Kushthanashaka) A Bhallataka Yoga Tugaraka Rasayana</p>	<p>Sheetodaka Sevana Haritaki Sevana Jaranashaka Lehas:- 1 - Amalaki Svarasa (With Madhu Sharkara and ghrita) 2- Amalakyadi Chruna (With Taila, Ghrita, Madhu and loha Bhasma). 3 - Loha bhasma and vidanga Churna kept in Asanasara samputra for one year with Ghrita and Madhu. 4 - Vidanga, Bhallataka and shunti with Ghrita and Madhu. 5 - Khadira and Asana Yusha (Kwatha) Bhavita Triphala with ghrita and madhu. 6 - Bijaka Rasa (Rasa kriya) taken out by a finger with sharkara, madhu ghrita and triphala kwatha. 7 - Nutana Punarnava Kalka with milk. 8 - Muraadi Kalpa. 9 - Shatavari ghrita with sharkara. 10 - Ashwagandha with dugdha, ghrita, taila or warm water 11 - Krishna Til with cold water 12 - Gokshura, Amalaki and guduchi churna with ghrita and madhu 13 - Krishana Til (pounded) with Amalaki, Bibhitaka or Haritaki</p>

Pippali Rasayana
A Pippali Yoga
Shunthyadi Prayoga
Vakuchi Rasayana
Lashun Prayoga
Shilajatu Rasayana

14 - Shilajatu, Madhu, Vidanga, Ghrita,
Loha Bhasma and swarna makshika-
bhasma
15 - Bhrngaraja Svarasa
16 - Vcha with dugadha, Taila or Ghrita
17 - Manduka Parni (Ghrita Bhrishta)
18 - Langlyadi Vati
19 - Narasimha Ghrita
20 - Narasimha Taila 7

[Ashtanga Hridaya, Uttarassthana, -
Chapter - 39]

Acharya Rasayana

One who speaks the truth, who is free from anger, who abstains from alcohol and sexual congress, hurts no one, avoids overstrain, is tranquil of heart, fair-spoken, is devoted to repetition of holy chants and to cleanliness, is endowed with understanding, given to alms-giving, diligent in spiritual endeavour, delights in reverencing the gods, cows, brahmanas, teachers, seniors and elders, is attached to non-violence, and is always compassionate, moderate and balanced in his waking and sleeping, is given to regular taking of milk and ghee, is conversant with the science of climate, season and dosage, is versed in propriety, devoid of egotism, blameless of conduct, given to wholesome eating, spiritual in temperament, and attached to elders and men who are believers and self-controlled and devoted to spiritual texts; such a one should be known as enjoying the benefits of vitalization therapy constantly. If one who is endowed with all these qualities makes use of vitalization therapy, that man will reap all the benefits of vitalization which have been described above. Thus has been described "The vitalization procedure through conduct." 3

[Charaka, Chikitsa, Chapter 1, pada 4/30-35]

REFERENCES

1. Kutumbiah, P. 1966 "The Chinese and the Indian views on longevity and Brevity of Life. A Comparative Study" published in Indian Journal of History of Medicine, Vol.IX, No.1, June, 1966 P.Nos. 8-9, brought out by the Indian Association of the History of Medicine, 497, Poonamalle High Road, Madras - 7 (India).
2. Shukla, M.P. 1971 "The Concept of Rasayana Therapy in Indian Medicine and a comprehensive Approach to its Evaluation," published in Indian Journal of History of Medicine, Vol. XVI, No.2, December, 1971, p.nos 43-44, broughtout by the Indian Association of the History of Medicine, 497, Poonamalle High Road, Madras - 7 (India).
3. Shree Gulabkunvarba Ayurvedic Society Jamnagar 1949 The Charaka Samhita Vol.III, P.Nos. 1279-1354.
4. Ray Priyadarajan & Gupta Hirendra nath. 1965 Charaka Samhita (a scientific Sunopsis) published by National Institute of Sciences of India, Bahadur Sha Zafar Marg, New Delhi. p.no.19.
5. Kunjalal Bhashagratna Kaviraj. 1963 The Sushruta Samhita (English Translation) Vol.II, Chikitsasthana, Chapters XXVII to XXX. P.Nos. 515-545, published by the Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series Office, Post Box No.8, Varanasi (India).

- | | | |
|------------------------|------|--|
| 6. Murthy, K.R.S. | 1984 | Sharangadhara Samhita, Prathama khanda, chapter - 4, p.nos. 18-19, published by Chaukhamba Orientalia Post Box No. 1032, Varanasi - 221001 |
| 7. Upadhyay Yadunandan | 1950 | Astanga Hridaya, Uttarasthana, Chapter - 39, P.nos 565-577, published by Chaukhamba Sanskrit series Office Banaras. |

सारांश

आयुर्वेदीय संहिताओं में रसायन चिकित्सा - एक समालोचना

- मोमिन अली

आयुर्वेद जीवन शास्त्र है अतः इस शास्त्र की जानकारी द्वारा दीर्घायु प्राप्त की जा सकती है। मानव स्वभाव से ही दीर्घायु प्राप्ति का अभिलाषी रहा है अतः संसार में सर्वत्र सभी मनुष्यों में यह अभिष्ठा व्यावहारिक रूप से दृष्टिगोचर होती है। इस इच्छा की पूर्ति हेतु एक कायाकल्प विधि की आवश्यकता होती है जिसके द्वारा तरुणावस्था को बनाये रखा जासकता है। इसी उद्देश्य से आयुर्वेद में एक चिकित्सा विधि का पूर्ण वैज्ञानिक आधार पर सुव्यवस्थित ढंग से प्रतिपादन किया गया है जिसके प्रयोग से प्राप्त उत्तम परिणामों के उद्घरण भी दिये गये हैं। यहां पर संहिताओं में उल्लिखित रसायन चिकित्सा का एक समालोचनात्मक विवरण विभिन्न शीर्षकों के अंतर्गत प्रस्तुत किया गया है।