



Elaboration of *Visha* in rasa classics with special reference to *Rasamanjiri*

1. **Dr. Sameeksha Gurav** MD(Ayu), PhD Scholar, Professor & HOD, Aarihant Ayurvedic Medical College & Research Institute, Gandhinagar, Gujarat, 382421.
2. **Dr. Santosh Gurav** MD(Ayu), PhD Scholar, Professor & HOD, Aarihant Ayurvedic Medical College & Research Institute, Gandhinagar, Gujarat, 382421.

Abstract

Ayurveda is a science of antiquity, still in the practice of unbroken continuity. It represents the totality of life and gives complete knowledge required to maintain the holistic balance of the functioning of mind and body.

Rasamanjari was originally written in Sanskrit. 75 years back it was translated to Hindi by Sri Krishnanath of Mathura and published at Lakshmi Venkateshwara press Mumbai by its owner Sri Ganga Vishnu Srikrishnadas Ji Acharya. Later, as a part of the rewriting of rare books, Chaukhamba Orientalia took this book, and Acharya Siddhi Nandan Mishra compiled and published it in 1995.

Visha plays a great role in the treatment and is described as nectar in certain classical texts. Acharya Charaka has also mentioned that if poison is taken in appropriate quantity and form then it can act as medicine, if the medicine is taken inappropriately it acts as a poison. Hence there is a need to understand about poisons in detail from various classical texts.

Identification of poisons along with their special characteristics has been described in detail in this book which is not found elsewhere. The method of reduction of potency or *tikshnatwa* of poisons is mentioned in the book along with the *shodhana* method. *Visha* is described in detail in *Rasamanjari*. The author has dedicated the complete chapter for the description of *Visha*. This article attempts to highlight the peculiarities related to poisons that are not mentioned in other texts. It will also help future scholars and pharmaceutical companies to use methods described in this book while formulating drugs with *Visha* as an ingredient.

Keywords – *Rasamanjiri*, *Visha*, *Visha matra*, *Visha tikshnatwa*, *Visha* identification.

Introduction

Ayurveda is a science of antiquity, still in the practice of unbroken continuity. It represents the totality of life and gives complete knowledge required to maintain the holistic balance of the functioning of mind and body.

The richness of Ayurvedic therapy is with the drugs of natural resources, lack of side effects, wide compatibility, elimination of vitiating body humor, and maintenance of normal metabolic activities, in addition to curative and preventive aspects. *Rasa sastra* is one of the chief branches of *Ayurveda* with a wide range of potent formulations and rich literary treasures. *Rasamanjiri* is one among them, which was written sometime in the medieval Indian era.

The author of this book has given his brief introduction as the son of Sri Vidyanath. He has not given any information regarding his caste or the place to which he belongs. But, modern scholars of *Rasa sastra* consider his time period to be the 15th century.

Although we cannot find Shalinath's name among the names of 29 *Siddhas*, but he can be considered as one of the *Siddhas* from *Nath sampradaya*, because of his suffix *Nath*, which is a common tradition among the followers of the *Nath* cult. A *Nath sampradaya* is an initiatory *Guru Shishya* tradition. The primary aim of *Natha Siddhas* is to achieve liberation (*jeevanmukti*) during the current life span. The author of this book has also given priority to this method of learning. It is also an established practice in *Naths* to deal with tradition. Indian alchemy practices, extensively use cinnabar, mercury, crystal preparations, and other minerals for ritual, spiritual and medicinal usage. As a follower of *Nath sampradaya*, the author also described them in this book.

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Visha plays a great role in the treatment and is described as nectar in certain classical texts. Acharya Charaka has also mentioned that if poison is taken in appropriate quantity and form then it can act as medicine, if the medicine is taken inappropriately it acts as a poison. (1) Hence there is a need to understand poisons in detail from various classical texts.

Rasa tarangini has described poison as *Sthavar* and *Jangam*. *Sthavar Visha* is again classified into *MahaVisha* and *UpaVisha*. But here no description of the appearance of each *Visha* is not provided which is provided in *Rasamanjiri*. *Rasamanjiri* has described in detail about poisons, their types, appearance, reducing their *tikshnatwa*, dose to be administered, *shodhana*, *ritu* for sevana of *Visha*, *mantra chikitsa*, *Vishaghna yoga*, and *pathya apathya* during intake of pure *Visha* is also described in detail.

Names of Vishes

The author has laid emphasis on *Visha* in this book and described them in detail. Eighteen types of *kanda Visha* are described in detail namely,

1. *Kalakuta Visha*, 2. *Mayurakhya Visha*, 3. *Binduka Visha*, 4. *Saktuka Visha*,
5. *Valuka Visha*, 6. *Vatsanabh Visha*, 7. *Shankhnabh Visha*, 8. *Sumangal Visha*,
9. *Shringi Visha*, 10. *Markat Visha*, 11. *Musta Visha*, 12. *Kardam Visha*,
13. *Pushkar Visha*, 14. *Shikhi Visha*, 15. *Haridra Visha*, 16. *Harit Visha*,
17. *Chakra Visha*, and 18. *Halahal Visha*.(2)

Appearance of Vishes (3)

Table no.1: Appearance of *Vishes*

Sr.No.	Names of poisons	Appearance
1.	<i>kalkuta Visha</i>	thick, dry, hard, and black like (<i>Anjana</i>) collyrium
2.	<i>MayurVisha</i>	looks like a peacock
3.	<i>Binduk Visha</i>	it looks like drop (<i>bindu</i>)
4.	<i>shaktuka</i>	looks like <i>shaktu</i> and <i>kamalkanda</i>
5.	<i>valuka Visha</i>	It has sand like grains in tuber (<i>kanda</i>).
6.	<i>Vatsanabh Visha</i>	<i>pandu varna</i> in appearance
7.	<i>Shankhnabh Visha</i>	looks like <i>shankha</i>
8.	<i>Sumangal Visha</i>	white in color
9.	<i>Shringi Visha</i>	is heavy, thick, black, and <i>shringa aakaar</i> in shape.
10.	<i>Markat Visha</i>	color of monkey.
11.	<i>KardamVisha</i>	white and yellow and like mud in color.
12.	<i>PushkarVisha</i>	the color of blue lotus.
13.	<i>ShikhiVisha</i>	color of a peacock's crown.
14.	<i>Haridra Visha</i>	yellow in color and has a tuber.
15.	<i>Harita Visha</i>	green in color.

16.	<i>Chakra Visha</i>	tuber has circular rings.
17.	<i>Halahal Visha</i>	blue in color

Types of *Visha*(4)

There are four types of *Visha* and each type of *kanda Visha* is classified into these four types. Namely,

- Brahman*
- Kshatriya*
- Vaishya*
- Shudra*

Brahman Visha is white in color. *Kshatriya Visha* is red in color, *Vaishya Visha* is yellow in color and *kshudra Visha* is black in color. *Kshudra Visha* is the least in qualities as compared to other *Vishas*.

Brahman Visha is used to cure diseases. If anyone has consumed poison then he must be given *kshatriya Visha*. *Vaishya Visha* can be given in all diseases. *Kshudra Visha* is to be used in snake bite poisoning.

Reduction in the potency of *Visha*(5)

The author has said in shloka that *Visha* becomes *mrita* after *trituration* with an equal quantity of purified *tankan*. The potency of poisons can be reduced by this procedure. Poison mixed with *Tankan* should be used for all diseases. *Kanda Visha* mixed with *tankan* does not cause any ill effects on the body.

Purification of *kandaVisha* (poison)(6)

Poison (*kandaVisha*) should be cut into small pieces and kept in a pot filled with *gomutra*. The pot should then be kept in bright sunlight. On the second day, *gomutra* is changed and the pot is again kept in the Sun. On the third day again *gomutra* is changed and the pot is kept on fire and boiled for 2-3 hours. Then *kanda Visha* is then dried, powdered, and filled in the bottle for further use.

Dose of pure *Visha*(7)

Pure *Visha* should be taken in quantity of one *sarshapa* on the first day, two *sarshapa* on day two, three *sarshapa* on day three, four *sarshapa* on day four, five *sarshapa* on day five, six *sarshapa* on day six and seven *sarshapa* on day seven. Then the quantity is reduced from 8 to 14 days daily reducing 1-1 *sarshapa*. On day 14 the quantity of *Visha* must be one *sarshapa*. In the third week, poison should be administered in the quantity of one *yava* in increasing order increasing one *yava* each day. From the fourth week quantity of poison should be decreased by one *yava* each day up to the 28th day. On the 28th day the quantity of *Visha* is one *yava*. A healthy person can take one *yava* of poison daily. The person suffering from leprosy (*kushtha*) should consume one *ratti* of *Visha* every day.

Favorable season for the administration of *visha* (*Visha sevan kala*)(8)

Purified poison can be consumed in *Sharad ritu*, *Grishma ritu*, *Vasant ritu* and *Varsha ritu*. If pure poison is consumed for four months, it alleviates leprosy (*kushtha*) and *luta Visha* (spider poison).

Contra-indication for the administration of *visha* (*Visha prayoga nishedh*)(9)

A person less than 8 years of age and over 80 years of age should not consume pure poison. If any *Vaidya* uses poison in a person above 80 and less than 8 years then it produces dangerous side effects.

Pathyas during poison consumption (10)

Pure *Visha* should be used in all diseases with the *anupana* of *goghrita* or *godugdha*. Its use produces rejuvenating effects on the body.

The person consuming pure *Visha* should follow celibacy. If he is not following it and taking poison with ill intentions it will not be beneficial for him.

Visha vega (11)

If anyone consumes poison in excess quantity then he develops eight *vegas*. The following table shows the *visha vegas*,

Table no.2: *Visha vega and symptoms*

Sr.no.	Visha vega	Symptoms
1.	First vega	<i>Udvega</i>
2.	Second vega	<i>sharir kampa</i>
3.	Third vega	extreme <i>daah</i>
4.	Fourth vega	person falls on the ground
5.	Fifth vega	there is the development of froth from the mouth
6.	Sixth vega	person becomes anxious
7.	Seventh vega	person develops stiffness
8.	Eighth vega	the person dies.

Vishahara mantra (12)

Mantra chikitsa should be done after a proper examination of the patient. The *mantra* should be recited seven times and water potentiated with the *mantra* should be sprinkled afterward. Once the person regains consciousness, the conch shell should be blown near his ear. This reduces the toxic effect of poison. If the intoxicated person stays far then also if the *mantra* reciter goes to his house reciting the *mantra* the effect of the poison is nullified. The person gets cured on seeing the *mantra* reciter even if thousands of attempts have been made to kill him.

Vishaghna yoga(13)

Two *Vishaghna yogas* are described in the chapter

1. *Vandhyakarkotaki* should be mixed with cow's milk it nullifies the effect of three types viz. *sthavar*, *jamgam* and *audbhid* poisons. *Gojihva* should be mixed with *parad* and administered with *godugdha*. This nullifies the effect of all types of poisons.
2. *Tuttha* should be mixed in equal quantity with *tankan* and administered it reduces the poisonous effect of poisons. (14)

If anyone has consumed poison in excessive quantity then *tankan* mixed with *ghrita* should be given to alleviate the effect of poison.

Conclusion

Rasamanjiri has given a detailed description of *Visha* and highlighted the importance of *tankana*. It is clearly mentioned in the chapter that *Visha* along with *tankana* becomes harmless and can be used for all diseases. The dose of *Visha* to be taken in increasing and decreasing order has been mentioned very precisely by the author. *Visha sevan kala* is also mentioned in the chapter. The importance of the *Vishaghna mantra* is also told. *Vishaghna yogas* mentioned in the text are simple and easy to administer. This article attempts to highlight the peculiarities related to poisons that are not mentioned in other texts. It will also help future *Ayurveda* scholars and pharmaceutical companies to use methods described in this book while formulating drugs with *Visha* as an ingredient.

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