

REVIEW ARTICLE

Shilajatu in Ayurvedic Literature

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ABSTRACT

From Vedic period to Samhita period there was less use of herbomineral drugs but, from the period of Nagarjuna compounds of herbo-mineral drugs are used profusely. It has been found by a careful survey of the original texts on Rasashastra that the subject covers the entire field of inorganic pharmaceutical materials like metallics, non metallics and organometallic compounds of Ayurvedic materia medica. Shilajatu is considered as the best therapeutic and Rasayan agent which makes the body strong, free from all the diseases and grant longevity to the human body. From the classification point of view most of the rasa texts placed it in the Maharasa group of the drug of mineral origin. Shilajatu among all drugs, having unique properties as it has been mentioned that Shilajatu having properties of all Maharasa, Uparasa, Parad, Loha and Ratna with their anti ageing & salvation properties. Efforts have been made to collect and compile all the related material in relation to Shilajatu from all possible ancient literary sources.

Key words: Shilajatu, shodhan, Anupan, Yoga.

INTRODUCTION

Shilajatu is considered one of the wonderful medicines of Ayurveda. Neither a plant nor animal substance, it is a mineral pitch that oozes from the rocks of Himalayas, as they become warm in the summer month. It is said to carry the healing power of these great mountains^[1]. Shilajatu is an exudation from rock during hot sunny days, though it may be occurring in many parts of the world but India was the first to highlight its tremendous therapeutic value for many centuries BC (era of ancient Indian physician Charaka & Sushruta). Shilajatu is an important drug of the ancient Hindu material medica and is to this day used extensively by the Hindu physicians for a variety of diseases. Early ayurvedic writings from the Charaka Samhita and Sushruta Samhita describe Shilajatu as a cure for all disease as well as rasayan (rejuvenative) able to increasing longevity from 100 to 1000 years.

It describes that shodhita Shilajatu after bhavana (addition of constituents of a drug to it for a disease to be cured in form of watery extract etc.) can cure even the asadhya diseases and disorders. Nearly all the ancient and medieval texts, which constitute the frame of Ayurveda strongly, upheld the curative action and therapeutic properties of

the drug. It is composed of humus and organic plant material that has been compressed by layers of rock mixed with microbial metabolites. Shilajatu has been in extensive use in the preparations of a number of medicines. Charaka says “there are hardly any curable diseases which cannot be controlled or cured with the aid of Shilajatu.”^[2] Traditionally considered a panacea and a strong kidney tonic, it increases the core energy responsible for the sexual and spiritual power. It is a powerful tonic and alternative useful in a variety of diseases. Traditional uses primarily focus on diabetes and diseases of the urinary tract, but also include edema, tumors, wasting, epilepsy, gall stones, jaundice, painful and bleeding piles and even insanities. Ancient Sanskrit holy texts over 3000 years old, make reference to a mysterious substance called Shilajatu which they describe as the “destroyer of weakness” There is some indication that “Shilajatu may have been the priceless soma of the Eastern alchemists.

Chronological Appraisal of Shilajatu

Shilajatu in Vedic Age

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Hindu culture is the most ancient culture in the world and is preserved in the treasure house of the Vedas but there is no inscription of Shilajatu at the time Vedic era.

Shilajatu in Pauranic Age

The author of Brihat Rasaraja Sundara mentions about Shilajatu, that during the time of Samudra Manthana, Mandarachala and Vasuki Naga were used for churning purpose by Gods and Demons. Due to friction some minerals were produced in Mandarachala Parvata, among these Shilajatu was one; the exact date was not known [3].

Shilajatu in Samhita Period

Charaka Samhita

Charaka in its chikitsa sthana [4] describes regarding origin of Shilajatu that when the mountain rocks, containing metallic elements in abundant quantity like gold, silver, copper and iron are heated up then the lac like exudates, soft in consistency oozes out.

Sushruta Samhita

Sushruta in its chikitsa sthana specifies the origin of Shilajatu that due to intense and bright scorching heat of sun in the month of jyeshtha and ashadha, a gelatinous substance is secreted from the side of the mountains and this substance is known as Shilajatu and it cures all distempers of the body.

Ashtanga Hridaya and Ashtanga Sangraha

In both these texts no specific origin of Shilajatu is mentioned as compared to the Charaka and Sushruta.

Table 1: Varieties on the basis of metallic content of Shilajatu according to different texts

Charaka	Sushruta	Vagbhatt	RT	RC	RK
Swarna	+	+	+	+	+
Rajata	+	+	+	+	+
Tamra	+	+	+	+	+
Lauha	+	+	+	+	+
—	Vanga	+	—	—	+
—	Sisaka	+	—	—	+

RT-Rasa Tarangini, RC-Rasendra Chudamani, RK- Rasa Kaumudi

Table 2: Shows the shodhan drugs and purification technique

S. No	Texts	No of Bhavana	Shodhan dravya
1	Charaka Samhita Ch.Chi.1/3/51	7	Vataghna, Pittaghna Kaphaghna drugs.
2	Sushruta Samhita Su.Chi.13/10	1	Salasaradi Gana.
3	Astanga Hridaya	7	Drugs according to Dosha & Vyadhi
4	Rasamava Rv 7/21	1	Cleaning with kshara amla and gomutra or with bhavana with triphala kvatha, goghrtta and each drug Bhmgaraja Svarasas
5	Rasa Ratna Samucchaya RRS 2/117-118	1	Cleaning with ksara, amla, gomutra and bhavana with each of the following: godugdha, Triphala kvatha, Bhmgaraja svarasa
6	Rasa paddhati		Separation of santanika from gomutra Gandhi pasana shilajatu & bhavana with asanadi ganas & salasaradi gana kvatha.
7	Rasendra Chintamani	7	Bhavana & tridosaghna drugs.
8	Ayurveda Prakash A.P 4/106		Cleaning with water to remove external impurities.
9	Rasa Tarangini R.T 22/ 79-80	Ext. purification 1Bhavana 3 each	Hot water & Triphala kwath. Gomutra or Bhmgaraja swaras
10	Rasajalanidhi Method 1	1	With Triphala, godugdha, bhmgaraj
	Method 2		Dissolve Shilajatu stones in water and collect the supernatant portion of fluid, then it is subjected to the dhuma of agurvadi gana and finally evaporate the liquid to get santanika with vataghna, pittaghna and kaphaghna dravyas.
	Method 3	7	Bhavanas with each drugs are selected according to disease.
	Method 4		Dissolve Shilajatu in the hot decoction made up of nimba, guduchi, ghrtta then evaporate the liquid to get santanika.
	Method 5	3 1	Triphala kwatha each of the following drugs: dashamula kwath, guduchi swaras, bala kwath, patola kwath and gomutra. Dry the above bhavita shilajatu and give bhavana with the following drugs as necessary, astavarga, satavari, Asvagandha, vidari, varahikanda, draksa, jiraka, salaparni, rasna, puskaramula dantimula, citraka, pippali, indrayava, cavya, sugandhi bala, katuki, srngi, patha, and salasaradi gana.
	Method 6	1	Shilajatu becomes purified when subjected to bhavana with ksara, amla and gomutra
	Method 7	1	1 Godugdha & Triphala kwatha or bhmgaraj swaras.
	Method 8		Take shilajatu with Guggulu, ksara, amla & put them in swedan yantra & give swedan for one year.

Test of genuiness of Shilajatu [5]

- When put on fire it must burn without smoke and should take shape of linga.

- When put in to water it spread like a thread up to the bottom without being dissolved
- It should look black.

Pure Shilajatu should contain the smell of cow's urine

Bad effect of Impure Shilajatu [6]

Impure Shilajatu if taken internally may produce daha shram, Pittaprakopa, raktavikara, murccha, agnimandya, and malabaddhata, hence it should be used after proper purification only.

Antidote for Shilajatu [7]

The disease caused due to the use of impure Shilajatu may be cured by taking maricha (pepper) in doses of ¼ tola mixed with ghee for seven days.

Properties [8]

Rasa, Guna, Virya, Vipaka, Karma can be considered as the properties of the drug. The texts like Rasa Ratna Samucchaya believed that Shilajatu possess all the properties of rasa, uprasa, parada, ratna and lauha together in itself.

Colour [9]

All the texts believed that the colour of Swarna Shilajatu is red like Japapushpa. Rajata Shilajatu having pale colour or white (pandu varna). Tamra variety possessing blue colour and lohaja type is of black colour like Guggulu.

Use of Purified Shilajatu and its dose [10]

Purified Shilajatu taken with milk in a suitable quantity or dose has the effect of increasing vitality, curing and preventing senility, strengthening the system and increasing memory. Shilajatu produces an appreciable effect. The dose play very important role in the action of the drug, If the dose is less than the mentioned one, then the drug fails to act and if the dose is more, then it causes hazardous effects.

Table 3: Dose of Shilajatu according to Charaka Samhita [11]

Types	Quantity	Duration
Uttama	1 pala (4 tola)	7 weeks
Madhyama	½ pala (2tola)	3 weeks
Avara	1 karsha (1tola)	1 week

Dose according to Sushruta Samhita [12]

In Sushruta Samhita dose of Shilajatu is 100 pala for achieving pushti, bala, varna, curing madhumeha and longevity up to 100 years (thousand pala for attaining the life upto one thousand years).

Table 4: Indication of different yogas of Shilajatu according to Bhaisajya Ratnavali

Indication	Yogas	Reference
Arsha	Agnimukha Loha	Arshorogadhikar 213-221
Arsha	Candraprabha Vati	Arshorogadhikar 223-233
Rajayakshma	Tapyadiloha	Rajayakshmadhikara 83
Rajayakshma	Yakshamantaka Loha	Rajayakshmadhikara 83
Rajayakshma	Shilajatvadi Loha	Rajayakshmadhikara 83
Hrida roga	Prabhakar Vati	Hridarogadhikar 42-43
Hrida roga	Cintamani Rasa	Hridarogadhikar 44-48

Mutrakriccha	Shilajatu with Eladi Kwath	Mutrakriccharogadhikar 32
Mutrakriccha	Eladi Curna	Mutrakriccharogadhikar 33
Mutrghat	Shilajatu with Madhu and Sharkara	Mutrghatrogadhikar 15
Mutrghat	Bhadraava Ghrita	Mutrghatrogadhikar 38-41
Ashmari	Pasan Bhinna Rasa	Ashmarogadhikar 34-36
Ashmari	Varuna Ghrita	Ashmarogadhikar 50-53
Ashmari	Kushadya Ghrita	Ashmarogadhikar 59-61
Ashmari	Varunadya Ghrita	Ashmarogadhikar 62-64
Prameha	Shudha Shilajatu with Madhu	Prameharogadhikar 8
Madhumeha	Shilajatu with Salsaradi Gana Kwath	Prameharogadhikar 56
Prameha	Candraprabha Vati	Prameharogadhikar 102-110
Prameha	Candraprabha Vati	Prameharogadhikar 96-105
Prameha	Sarveshwar Rasa	Prameharogadhikar 180-183
Medoroga	Loha Rasayan	Medorogadhika 35
Udara roga	Vari Shosana Rasa	Udararogadhikar 100-115
Plihayakrita roga	Yakritpliha Loha	Udararogadhikar 123-128

Therapeutic indication of Shilajatu is indicated for Rasayana and majority of disease. Shilajatu is frequently indicated in Prameha, Mutrakriccha, Ashmari, Kustha, Medoroga, Rajayakshma, Shotha Pandu etc.

Anupan [13]

Shilajatu has versatile therapeutic uses after administered with different anupan and are illustrated in table -5. Rasa Tarangini gave detailed description of different uses of Shilajatu.

Table 5: Indication and mode of administration of Shilajatu according to Rasa Tarangini [14]

S. No	Anupana	Disease
1	Honey	Mutrakricchra
2	Dashamula kvatha + sugar	Asthilika, vata basti
3	Varunadi kvatha	Mutrghata & asmari
4	Guduchi kvatha	Mutrghata & mutrakricchra
5	Sugar + camphor	Mutrtrita, mutra jathara
6	Gokshura kvatha	Mutrakricchra
7	Kakolyadi gana	Klaibya
8	Lauha bhasma, Svarna makshika bhasma Ghee, Haritaki, Vidanga	Rajayakshma
9	Viratarvadi gana kvatha	Mutrakricchra
10	Sugar + milk	Pain due to prameha
11	Guggulu + Sunthi + Pippali + Gomutra	Uruh stambha
12	Lauha + Svarna makshika bhasma	Rakta vridhhi
13	Arjuna kvatha for 2 months	Hrid roga
14	Agnimantha svarasa for 2 months	Sthaulya
15	Bhavana with Salasaradi gana kvatha for 21 days and use with same decoction for 2 months	Madhumeha Asmari Mutrasarkara
16	Pippali, Pashanabheda	Prameha
17	Ela churna + washings of rice	Mutrghata, Mutrakricchra
18	Kapoor (Ext. Appl.)	Wounds / Bruise
19	Haridra churna	Kumbha kamala
20	Lauha + Svarna bhasma bhavana with Sarjaka kvatha (1ratti).	Masurika Jvara etc.

Table 6: Shows the Shilajatu containing important yogas

Yoga	Uses	Reference
Yakshhari Lauham	Rajyakshma	Bhai. Rat.Ch 14/83
YakshamantaLauham	Swarabhanga, Kshayaja kasa, kantikarak, Agnideepak	Bhai. Rat.Ch 14/ 84-85
Shilajatwadi lauha	Kshayaroga (TB)	Bhai. Rat.Ch 14/86
Eladi churnam	Prameha, Mutrakriccha	Bhai. Rat.Ch.33/34
Chandrakalagutika	All types of Prameha	Bhai. Rat.Ch.37/67-68
Pramehakulantak ras	Prameha, Mutrakriccha, Ashmari, Mutraghat, Aruchi, Pandu, Kamala, Halimaka	Bhai. Rat.Ch.36/78-83
Vedavidhavati	Prameha	Bhai. Rat.Ch.37/84-88
Mehavajra ras	Severe Mutrakriccha, Prameha	Bhai. Rat.Ch.37/94-97
Silajatuka prayoga	Madhumeha, Sarkara, Ashmari	Bhai. Rat.Ch.37/58-61
Chandraprabha Vati	For all 8 types of Mutrakriccha	Bhai. Rat.Ch.37/102-110
Chandraprabha gutika	4 types of Ashmari, Mutraghat, Pandu, Kamala, Halimaka, Kasa, Swasa, Kustha	Gada Nigraha I. Khand P.248
Meghanadirasa	Prameha	Bhai. Rat.Ch.37/146-148
Sarveshwariras	Prameha Madhumeha,	Bhai. Rat.Ch.37/180-183
Lauha Rasayan	Vata sleshma vikara,kustha,jwara, Prameha, Pandu, Kamala,shotha, Rasayan,Vajikarana, Kantivardhak	Bhai. Rat.Ch.39/33-42
Dadimadhyam Ghritamahat	Prameha Mutraghat, Ashmari Mutrakriccha, Raktapitta, Sannipatik vastigatavikar, Balavardhak	Bhai. Rat.Ch.37/216-221
Murcchantak Rasa	All types of Murccha	Bhai. Rat.Ch.21/13-14
Vataraktantak Rasa	Alltypes of Vataroga ad Vatarakta	Bhai. Rat.Ch.27/43-47
Shilajau prayoga	Vatarakta	Bhai. Rat.Ch.27/67
Shilajatyadi Yoga Chatusayam	Urustambha	Bhai. Rat.Ch.28/7
Prabhakar Vati	All types f Hridya roga	Bhai. Rat.Ch.33/42-43
Chintamani Rasa	Hridya roga, Prameha, Swasa, kasa, Balavardhak, Pustikarak	Bhai. Rat.Ch.33/44-48
Shilajatwadi Prayoga	Udara roga	Bhai. Rat.Ch.40/40-64
Varishoshan Ras	Kaphavikar, Agnimandya, Pleehavridhhi, Pandu, shoola, Udara, Kustha roga	Bhai. Rat.Ch.40/100-115
Yakrit Pihari Lauham	Pleha & Yakri vridhhi, Udara roga, Pandu, Kamala, Halimaka, shotha, Mandagni, Aruchi	Bhai. Rat.Ch.41/123-127
Branhghritam	Pleehodar, Dushyodar,Udara roga	Bhai. Rat.Ch.42/231-233
Lankeswara ras	Kustha	Bhai. Rat.Ch.54/138-140
Kusthakuthar ras	All types of Kustha	Bhai. Rat.Ch.54/145-148
Galit Kusthahari rasa	Kustha	Bhai. Rat.Ch.54/157-159
Sarvatobhadra lauha	Amlapitta, Arsha, Bhagandar, Agnimandya, Amavata, Shotha, Kamala, Halimaka, Rajyakshma, Raktapitta, Vatarakta, Vrishya	Bhai. Rat.Ch.56/42-53
Chandraprabha rasa	Prameha, Vatayadhi, pittaja kaphaja roga	Bhai. Rat.Ch.60/158-167
Amritankar vati	Ksudraroga, All typesof Raktaja & pittaja roga, Prameha, Jirna jwara, Agnimandya	Bhai. Rat.Ch.60/162-164
Rasendra vati	Mukharoga, Vataroga, Prameha, Jwara	Bhai. Rat.Ch.61/117
Mukharogahari vati	Mukhapaka,danta, talu, jivhagata roga	Bhai. Rat.Ch.61/118-121
Saptamrit rasa	Muharoga nashak	Bhai. Rat.Ch.61/126
Indu Vati	Kamanada, Prameha	Bhai. Rat.Ch.62/78-81
Shilajau Vatika	Pandu, Kustha, Pleeha, Tamak swasa	Bhai. Rat.Ch.66/68-73
Indushekha rasa	Prasuti jwara, Swasa, kasa,Vaman, Agnimandya	Bhai. Rat.Ch.66/68-73
Purnachandra Rasa	Vrishya	Bhai. Rat.Ch.71/74
Ksirodadhi rasa	Kshya, Raktapitta,Prameha, Pandu, Kamala, Halimak	Bhai. Rat.Ch.78/10-13
Chaitanyodaya rasa	Hridya & Mastishkagata roga	Bhai. Rat.Ch.80/5-6
Swarnasindur rasa	Snayugata roga	Bhai. Rat.Ch.82/6-9
Maharajat vati	Snayugata roga	Bhai. Rat.Ch.82/13-15
Makshikadi vati	Ikshumeha	Bhai. Rat.Ch.88/25-26
Sarvatobhadra vati	Brikkagata, vastivikara	Bhai. Rat.Ch.93/17-18
Shilajatyadi churna	Yonikandu roga	Bhai. Rat.Ch.10/3-8
Jwarakunjarapaindra rasa	Jwara,kasa,swasa,prameha.pandu	Bhai. Rat.Ch.5/1070-1076
Jwarantak lauham	Jwara,prameha,pandu,kamala,grahani	Bhai. Rat.Ch.5/1193-1203
Purnakala vatika	Grahani,shula,Amaroga,sangrahani	
Chandraprabha gutika	Granthi roga, Prameha, Mutrakriccha	Bhai. Rat.Ch.9/223-233
Krimikasthanal rasa	Kriminashak	Bhai. Rat.Ch.11/26-29
Yogaraj	Pandu,Kamala,Prameha,Kustha	Bhai. Rat.Ch.12/109-115
Kushadha ghritam pittashmaryam	Pittashmari	Bhai. Rat.Ch.36/59-61
Pashanabhinnorasa	Ashmari	Bhai. Rat.Ch.36/34-37
Indukala vati	Masurika, Visphot	Bhai. Rat.Ch.59/59-60
Yogaraja yoga	Rasayan, Pandu	Ch.Chi.16/80-86
Shilajatu vatak	Pandu, Hridayaroga, Prameha	Ch.Chi- 16/88
Shilajatwadi vati	Shukrameha, Pandu, Madhumeha, Ikshumeha	Chakradutta siddhayoga sangraha
Shilajit	Rasayan, Prameha, Madhumeha	Su. Chi-13/6 A.H.U.39/261 Ch.Chi-6-26/99
Bhallatak oil yoga	Kustha nashak	A.H.U 39/79
Tapyadi lauha	Prameha, Pandu, Kamala	A.P
Shilajatu Rasayan	Pandu, Sotha, Prameha, Kshaya, Yoniroga	RRS Ch.2/114-115
Kusthanashan rasa	Kustha	RRS Ch.20/22
Kusthakuthar rasa	Kustha	RRS Ch.20/126
Arogyavardhani gutika	Pandu, Kamala, Prameha	-do-Nagarjuna
Vrihat shivagutika	Uttam Rasayan	Gadanigraha Vol.I/p 254
Laghu shivagutika	Pandu	Gadanigraha Vol.I/p 254

Kustha vajragutika	Kustha	Gadanigraha Vol.I/p 254
Kustha swayam bhuvo	Kustha	Gadanigraha Vol.I/p 264
Rasayan triphaladhaya Vatak	Rasayan, Plihavridhi, Bhagandar	Gadanigraha Vol.I/p 291
Shilajatwadi yogatyam	Kumbhakamala	Gadanigraha Vol.II/p 283
Shilajatwadi leha	Kshaya	Gadanigraha Vol.II/p 321
Medhwadi leha	Kshaya	Gadanigraha Vol.II/p 322
Shilajatu yoga	Kshaya, Prameha	Gadanigraha Vol.II/p 327,674

Abbreviations

Bhai. +**Rat**-Bhaishajya Ratnavali, **R_v**- Rasarnava, **Ch.Chi**-Charaka Chikitsasthana, **RRS**-Rasa Ratna Samuchhaya, **Su. Chi**- Sushruta Chikitsasthana, **A.P**- Ayurveda Prakash, **A.H.U**- Astanga Hridaya Uttartantra

CONCLUSION

Discussion of Conceptual study is an important part of any work, as conceptual aspect of the particular subject reveals the hidden facts which one should not have to ignore. In the present study the following topics have been discussed under the heading of conceptual study regarding its origin, varieties shodhana, antidote, properties, colour, anupana etc.

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