CONTROVERSIES SURROUNDING IDENTIFICATION OF RUDANTI: A REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

Ayurvedic texts enumerate many herbal and mineral preparations that are used in curing and preventing diseases. One such remedial herb used was Rudanti. Rudanti is mentioned in some classics after the era of Charaka Samhita. Only few Acharyas mentioned clinical properties of Rudanti such as Rasayani, Prameha naashan, Yakshmahar etc. These clinical properties mentioned testify supreme importance of Rudanti. Except Raj Nighantu, none indicated it’s morphological and identification features. This led to misleading and spurious identification by later Acharyas. Further no attempts were made to critically identify Rudanti according to Raj Nighantu and it is continued till date. Today Capparis moonii and Cressa cretica are taken as Rudanti but they also fail in meeting the identification criteria mentioned in Raj Nighantu. Thus, there is a need to critically evaluate, analyze, and conclude proper identification of a very useful plant named Rudanti. Keeping in view all the literary data collected, this article will help in identifying the species in approximation to classical Rudanti. This article concludes that Capparis moonii and Cressa cretica cannot be considered as classical Rudanti instead Astragalus and Cicer species could be taken. Purpose of this study is to re-evaluate and compare classical Rudanti with plant species identified in the name of Rudanti.

Keywords: Astragalus species, Capparis moonii, Cicer species, Cressa cretica, Controversial, Rudanti.

INTRODUCTION

The Ayurvedic literature describes herbs with synonyms, gana-karma, morphological and pharmacological properties. Later modern researchers successfully identified many Ayurvedic herbs. Modern identification criteria include genus, family, class, sub-class etc. There are many plant species in our lexicons which due to lack of probing are still in the line of controversial plants (Sandigdiha Dravya). Classics include innumerable synonyms/metonyms for a single drug and single synonym for many herbs. Sometimes variation in the language and names prevalent in folklore also raised confusion in nomenclature. These synonyms have caused controversy in the identification and hence the correct plant species sometimes misleads with fictious plants. Not only synonyms but also lack of proper field survey and classical review added to the controversial status of plants. One such controversial yet very important plant is Rudanti. Modern era workers never honestly attempted to identify Rudanti as per characters mentioned in Raj Nighantu. Thus, there is a strong need to identify such medicinally important plant as per classics. This will require proper compilation and evaluation of all relevant data available from classics and modern books. This article encompasses all the literal work available in classics and modern books. Comparing the characters mentioned in classics and data available in modern books clearly depicts that classical Rudanti and the plant species taken in resemblance to Rudanti differ in appearance, taste or in habitat. Thus, this study will try and provide a ground for further exploration of classical Rudanti and might help in depreciating the state of confusion on its identification by:

1. Compiling all literal work on actions, morphology, pharmacology from classics and modern books.
2. Eliminating state of confusion on Rudanti.
3. By drawing a logical inference for further research on the basis of information gathered from classics and modern books.

DISCUSSION

Ayurvedic Classics

Rudanti first came into reference in Shodhal Nighantu as Vridhalapalita1 Later a detailed description was mentioned in Raj Nighantu2. Synonyms are given in Table 1.

| Sravatveya | Dripping of water or any liquid. |
| Sanjeevani | which might be either a magical plant or impart infinite life to others, life giving. |
| Amritsrava | from which elixir drips or gives life to other plants through its secretion. |
| Romachika | species of small shrub or thrilling with joy or terror. |
| Mahamansi | deep root system. |
| Chanakpati | leaves resembling that of chickpea. |
| Sudhasrava | secretion of sudha-beverage of God, nectar, good drink. |

Pharmacological properties are given in Table 2.

| Rudanti has katu-tikta rasa, ushna virya, anti-tubecular, anti-microbial, rakupitta naashan, properties, anti-asthmatic, expectorant, anti-diabetic and Rasayan actions.3 |

Morphological characteristics are mentioned in Table 3. Raj Nighantu has described morphological characters as leaves resembling that of chickpea, small shrub, and dew drops dripping from shrubs during winter season.4 Rudanti is also important in Ras Shastru preparations. Rudanti is mentioned to have best Parul bandhan and Abhrak jaran properties. It was taken as a constituent and also as Bhavna Dravya in many medicinal preparations like Trailokyevijaya

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rasa (Thaiam), Kashtadhi rasayan etc. Also, came in reference of Ramadhatu.

Rudanti was used by saints in alchemy i.e. preparing gold from Parad.

Looking at all the references available in modern books it is noted that total four species of plants are mentioned as Rudanti are Cressa cretica, Capparis moonii, Astragalus species, Cicer species. Digging further and comparing their morphological character’s proximity is found between Astragalus species, Cicer species and Cressa cretica as they all possesses Chanakpatra (leaves resembling that of chickpea) in appearance. Looking at other characters mentioned in synonyms of Rudanti Astragalus is more close to classical Rudanti in morphology. This further revalidated by the fact that Astragalus referred with the name of Rudravanti in folklore. Also, its use in folklore suggests that it is beneficial in tuberculosis and asthma which is pharmaceutical property of classical Rudanti.

Modern literature
Later researchers have re-named Rudanti as Dravdravanti or Rudranti according to their convenience.

Pharmacographia indica: mentioned Rudravanti/Rudanti as Cressa cretica. It is considered as exhilarating, and to purify the blood and give tone to the system. It is believed to possess expectorant and antibilious properties.

Indian Materia Medica: mentioned Rudravanti as Cressa cretica.

Uttarakhand ki vanausahidhiyian?: Mentioned Rudravanti as Astragalus candolleanus. It is of tremendous medicinal use such as Aphrodisiac, Nutritive, Anti-inflammatory, Analgesic, Neuro-disorders etc.

Medicinal plants used in Ayurveda: Author described various plant species in the name of Rudanti/Rudrantika/Rudravanti such as:

Rudanti Pratinidhi – Rudravanti – Astragalus candolleanus.
Rudanti Pratinidhi – Capparis moonii.
In this book Rudanti is also taken as Cicer soongaricum but marked it as doubtful.
Rudanti/Rudrantika/Rudravanti–Cressa cretica.

Sharangdhar Samhita ki vanaspatayan?: mentioned Rudanti under Rasayan Dravya as per Sharangdhar Samhita. Author took Rudanti as Astragalus species and Capparis moonii Wight. Author also added that fruit of Rudanti/Rudravanti is used in medicinal preparations.

Dravyaguna Vigyan(Rudanti much known as Rudravanti in modern era is taken as Capparis moonii, Cressa cretica, Astragalus species.

Ladakh ki sanskriti evam paramparagat tibeti chikitsa pranali (Traditional Tibbetan system of medicine & culture of Ladakh): Sadan, Rudanti- Astragalus candolleanus, Astragalus munori.
Rudanti, Rudravanti-Tibbet/ Ladakhi-Sadkar, Sadan–Astragalus munori Benth.

- Chin-san-karpo- Astragalus tibetanus Benth.
- Chin-san-kang-chava- Astragalus membranacucus Beg.
- Saatkar- Astragalus yunnanensis Fr.
- Satsir- Astragalus floridas Benth.
- Astragalus candolleanus Royle.

Prevalent as Chichharamo in local dialects.
Rudravanti(Ladakhi/Baalatl)- Thak-chut-kar- Sarigamo, Marmukh – Cicer soongaricum.

Author tentatively mentioned Rudanti as Astragalus species and Cicer species. In folklore Rudanti root and whole plant is used in respiratory disorders.

Nighantu Adarsh: Author has re-quoted Raj Nighantu synonyms, morphological and pharmacological characters of Rudanti.

Some controversial drugs in Indian medicine: The latter writers of Rasa Shastra(chemistry) have praised it for its wonderful properties. Some call it a celestial herb. It is known as Chanak-Patri leaves like that of Chana (Cicer arietum) Linn. Gram, Bengal gram. So, it is a small plant, the ground is found wet (as the dew fallen on its leaves is converted into watery drops and that is why the ground is wet). Ants are staying beneath the plant. It is shining during the night. They say that Rudravanti is only found before the sunrise. After the sunrise, these plants disappear during the day time. In short it is tentatively taken as Cressa cretica (Convolvulaceae). It is growing in the barren soil which has become salty.

Ayurveda ki jaan vanausahadhivigyan: Rudanti is mentioned as Capparis moonii and fruit (Prayojyang) has been used as medicine. This suggests that it is a later research as reference of Prayojyang is not mentioned in Ayurvedic lexicons.

Medicinal flora of Garhwal Himalayas: Author through his survey identified Rudravanti as Astragalus leucocephalus, Astragalus candolleanus and Astragalus himalay anus. Uttarakhand Himalaya ki vanausahadi evam khani: Author brought in light a number of Astragalus species that can be taken as Rudanti such as Rudanti – Astragalus leucocephalus. And Astragalus chlorostachys Lindl Rudravanti – Astragalus candolleanus.

In folklore, its roots use is prevalent in tuberculosis, asthma and respiratory disorders.

Aushadhi vinishchayadigdarshana: Author has re-quoted the reference of Rasendra Chhadamani Dravyaguna Sutramala: mentioned Rudanti as Capparis moonii.

A report on medicinal plant of Kachchh (Gujrat): Taken Rudanti as Cressa cretica and plant is considered as tonic and aphrodisiac.

Table 1: Synonyms of Rudanti according to Raj Nighantu

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sravatoya</th>
<th>Amiśtrava</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Romanchika</td>
<td>Mahamansi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chanakpatri</td>
<td>Sudhavara</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Pharmacological characteristics of Rudanti according to Raj Nighantu

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Guna</th>
<th>Karma</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rasa-Kaṭa-Tik副教授</td>
<td>Kābra-kāmavānasahāni</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vīrṣa-Ushna</td>
<td>Kāpaṭiṭivānasahāni</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarīgarāni</td>
<td>Mahāhari</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rasavāni</td>
<td>Kābra-kāmavānasahāni</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: Morphological characteristics of Rudanti according to Raj Nighantu

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chanakpatrasamampratram</th>
<th>Kihap</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amlapatram</td>
<td>Shishirejalvindoonsaravanteeti</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CONCLUSION

By critically analyzing all the relevant data this article suggests that there is no unanimous approach towards authentic and proper identification of Rudanti. This article suggests that Capparis moonii and Cressa cretica don't meet the morphological characters mentioned in Raj Nighantu. This article also suggests that Astragalus species is more morphologically similar to classical description. Thus, this article encompasses all the controversies regarding identification of Rudanti. Also, it suggests using Astragalus species as Rudanti due to its resemblance to classical Rudanti in morphology and pharmacology properties. Hence an inference can be drawn that Astragalus species can be taken as classical Rudanti till further clinical evaluation is done.

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