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DALHANA AND HIS CONTRIBUTION IN DRAVYAGUNA
WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO FUNDAMENTALS

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Abstract
In Samhitas the facts have been presented in Sutra form and in commentaries the same have been interpreted and elaborated in form of Bhasya. Thus the commentaries serve the purpose of Bhasya on the Samhitas which not only give meaning of words but also supplement the ideas by furnishing additional information on the subject. The commentator quotes the previous work and after critical verification gives his own conclusion based on either rejection or agreement on logical grounds. Dalhana commentary on Sushruta Samhita is Nibandha Sangraha. No other work than the commentary on Sushruta Samhita is known to the credit of Dalhana. It shows that he devoted his whole life in studying the earlier Samhitas and previous commentaries on the Sushruta Samhita and finally in giving shape to his commentary. Apart from study, he also devoted much time in field study which is shown by his casual observation in the field of Dravyaguna by mentioning the characters and local names of plants and also the regional traditions. Along with Dalhana has made notable contribution in the field of basic concepts of Dravyaguna. He has interpreted the Sushruta’s view faithfully in the field of basic concepts of Dravyaguna (like Rasas, Gunas, Viryas, Vipaksas, Prabhavas and Karmas). The aim of this paper is to put forward the valuable contribution of Dalhana in the field of Dravyaguna fundamentals.

Keywords: Commentary, Dalhana, Sushruta Samhita, Dravyaguna fundamentals

INTRODUCTION

Dalhana, the celebrated commentator of the Sushruta Samhita, and the author of 'Nibandha Sangraha' is one of the ancient luminaries of the Indian system of medicine. Dalhana wrote his commentary on Sushruta Samhita and the commentary name is Nibandha Sangraha. Not only this, no work other than this commentary ascribed to him. It shows that he devoted his whole life in studying the earlier Samhitas, various aspects of previous commentaries on the Sushruta Samhita and devoted much time in field study. Dalhana, in his commentary, has given clearly information about his place, genealogy and patron1.

Accordingly Dalhana Belonged to a place named Ankola near Mathura in Bhadanaka Region where mostly Vaidyas lived. The place has not been identified but the word ‘Bayana’ might be a derived form of Bhadanaka and now ‘Bayana’ is situated in Bharatapur district in Rajasthan state. He belonged to a family of Sauravansiya Brahmanas. He has mentioned his father’s name but has not given his mother’s name. His father’s name was Bharatapala2.

In my opinion Bhaskara, the author of Panjika was teacher of Dalhana who has been referred to by the epithets ‘Guru’, ‘Acharya’ and also by his work ‘Panjika’. It is also to be noted that the Dalhana has followed totally the views of Panjika and has not gone against it3. Dalhana consulted Nyayachandrika of Gayadasa and Panjika of Bhaskara among other work while composing the commentary.

The Kala (period) of Dalhana is Last quarter of the 12th cent. AD. The important clue for the date of Dalhana is his intimate association with a king, Sahajapaladeva or sahala4. The date of Sahajapaladeva is the last quarter of 12th cent. AD. Dalhana quotes Chakarapanidatta5 (11 cent. AD) and is quoted by Hemadri (13 cent. AD). Hence His date may be fixed conveniently in the Last Quarter of the 12th Cent AD.

After going through the entire commentary one can easily find that Dalhana was a great scholar of Ayurveda and he studied all available Samhitas on different specialities of Ayurveda. Apart from Ayurveda, Dalhana was also well-versed in several other branches of learning like Sruti, Smriti, Vyakarana, Darshana, Jyotisha, Tantra, Aswashastra, Gajashastra etc. He has referred to these disciplines as ‘Paratantara’ or ‘Anyashastra’.6

Paratantara- In Dalhana opinion Paratantara means the Ayurvedic text dealing with the specialities other than the Sushruta Samhita.

Anyashastra- In Dalhana opinion Anya Shastra means other branches of learning some take it as other specialities of Ayurveda itself.

Dalhana has always recourse to his own critical study and that is why he said himself as ‘Viveka-Bhraspati’ (Great in the discriminating faculty). Because of the rich tradition, long experience and independent judgement Dalhana has been able to contribute original ideas in several fields of Indian Medicine and owing to this he stands foremost among the commentators.
Dalhana’s Contribution

Dalhana has made notable contributions in the field of Dravyaguna which may be summarize as follows.
- He has interpreted the Sushruta's view faithfully in the field of basic concepts of Dravyaguna like Rasa, Guna, Virya, Vipaka and Prabhava and Karma.
- He described the morphological characters of drugs which are not found in Nighantu and by which the Drugs can be identified easily. These drugs are Vatama (Punarnu amygthalas Batsch.), Akshoda (Juglanis regia Linn.) etc.

“Ahkhodamadanapalakaaparaphalodhayakinchidunataraekhavi taparvatapilu Akkrota iti loke.”

- He has given popular names (Lok Prasiddha) of the plants and drugs for easily identification. These names can be distinguished in two categories- one the Sanskrit names popular in learned circle and the other local names prevalently used by the common man such as Falsa for Parushaka (Grewia asiatica Linn.), (Als for Atasi (Linum usitatissimum Linn.), Poi for Upodika (Basella rubra Linn.) etc.

“Parushakoalpaasthimirdphala Faalsa iti loke.”

- He has mentioned the popular use of plants and drugs prevalent in various regions and also preparation and mode of administration (part used, dosage, vehicle etc.) of the same.
- He has also mentioned some new synonyms for plant names such as Kantakika or Katiyika for Vikankata (Placocurta ramontchi L. Herit.).
- He has mentioned the habitat of plants in a no. of cases due to sufficient field study and observed plants in various regions such as Pili(Salvadora persica Linn.) in Bhadnaka region.

Basic concepts of Dravyaguna

Dravya

Acharya Charaka and Sushruta have given the definition Dravyas as, the substance, where in exist the properties and actions in an inseparable relationship is called Dravya11,14. The properties (Guna) and actions (Karma) have no identity or existence without the substance and the substance has no recognition without the Guna and Karma. This coexistence of Dravya, Guna and Karma is known as samavaya.

Dalhana says - “Drayamaushadhamuscnyate.”

Dalhana says that where karma (action) and Guna (properties) are situated and which is Samavayi Karana (material cause) is termed as Dravya. Only Dravya is Samavayi karana just as thread in piece of cloth, clay particular in a pitcher etc. Dravya is Ashraya (substratum) and the Gunas, Rasa etc. are Ashrayi (dependent). In fact, the emergence of both Ashraya and Ashrayi is simultaneous and as such they are interdependent.

Dravya stays for a certain period and not Rasa etc. For example, the Mango fruit (Mangiferas indica Linn.) at first in Kashyapa-Amla, then Amla and finally becomes Madhura but still it always remains as Mango fruit and does not change into the fruit of Amrataka (Spindias mangifera Willd.) or Koshanara (Schleiehera trigua Willd.). The word ‘Nitya’ in this context, has been interpreted rightly as one remaining for a certain period and Anitya which is destroyed even with this period14.

Guna

Acharya Charaka has explained the word Guna. The Dravya possesses Karma (action), whereas Guna stays in Dravya in the form of nischetra (in a passive or inactive state). This state is called as samavayi sambhandha. Here the Guna is present in an inactive state, which is known as guna. Therefore this character is known as Guna15.

“Gunashabdhah Karmanavachi.”

“Gunashabdastatkaryephale vartate.”

According to Dalhana the word ‘Guna’ is ordinarily used for ‘Phala’ (result) as well as ‘Karma’ (action), it denotes properties like Guru-Laghu etc. which are situated in Dravya.

Gurvadi Guna:

Gurvadi Gunas are twenty in number. Sushruta has accepted some more Gunas like Vayavay, Vikasi, Ashukari, Sugandha and Dhuragunda in addition to twenty Gurvadi Gunas. According to Dalhana twenty Gurvadi Gunas are-

“Gunaskheetshasangidharkshumandatikshagnagarulaghipchhivi lavishadaskhnaparushahakinamridudravasandrasrasthulasukshavinshathi.”

Sheeta-Ushna: These are used in the sense of Sparsha (touch) as well as Virya.

Snigdha-Ruksha: Snigdha means smoothness, Ruksha means roughness.

Guru-Laghu: These terms are used in three context- Matra (quantity), Guna (property), and Vipaka (digestion). Laghutva has been interpreted as opposite to Gurutva as property of Aakasha.

Picchila-Visada: Picchila is uplepi and has mucous touch. Mritosna is a synonym of Picchila. Visada is opposite to Picchila. Visada has been interpreted as Ruksha.

Slakshna-Parusha: In the Sushruta Samhita, Karkasa is in place of Parusha, Slakshna (smoothness) is opposite to Karkasa which is rough in touch like Karkotaka phala (Momordica dioica Linn.).

Manda-Tikshna and Mrida-Kathina: Generally the pair is Manda-Tikshna and Mridu is a partner of kathina but Sushruta has not accepted Kathina as a separate entity but only a synonym of Sandra and Manda has been read with Sara. Hence in Sushruta’s view, Mridu-Tikshna is the pair. Mridu is soft and delicate which does not exert devastating effect. Opposite to Mridu, Tikshna is a property which exerts immediate, strong and painful effect and also vitiates Pitta. Manda is mild which vitiates the Vishama Dosha. Kathina is hard which strengthen the body.

Sandra-Draiva: Sandra has been interpreted by the words ‘Bhala’ (Ghana) and Samhata (compact). Dravatava indicates Tanutva or Acchattva. Drava relieves hunger and thirst.

Shiira-Sara: Sushruta does not accept Shiira Guna separately, but at various places he defines the word Shiira variously such as Kathina (hard), Avisarpini (that which does not spread) and motionless. Opposite to Shiira, Sara is of spreading nature and Anulomana.

Shhula-Suksmam: Regarding Shhula, Dalhana says that Shhula has gross parts like Pitsamna etc. Suksmam is that which penetrates even the minutest channels.

Vayavay: Vayavay is that which first circulates in the whole body and then goes to digestion like Visha (poisons) and Madya (alcoholic beverages)15.

Vikasi: By spreading in the body, produces Lassitude including joints.

Ashukari: This is also termed as Ashu or Shigra because of its immediate action.
Yogavahi: Yogavahi is that which acts like other partner with which it is combined.

Paradi Gunas:
Acharya Sushruta has not described Paradi Gunas but Dalhana in his commentary has commented upon these terms. Yukti or Yojana visheshva is defined in which all the relevant factors are considered.

“Yuktiyoshoyavanavisheshah
toyaagnisanskarvasnabhavamatrakaladyapekshah.”

Samyoga is combination with one, two, or more drugs. Vibhaga is disjunction. Pritihktna is separateness as Sira, Snyay, Pes hi, etc., are mutually separate individually and also as a group.

Rasa

“Rasamadhumadikah.”

Rasa is interpreted by the synonym Aaswada. Rasas are six in number- Madhura, Amla, Lavana, Katu, Tikta, Kashaya, generally said as Madhuradi.

Regarding Bhautika composition of Rasa, some rasa like Lavana is composed of Jala and Agni which are quite opposite to each other. Dalhana says that opposition is only when they come from different direction but when they are produced together with a single purpose or due to Prabhava, Agni is not subdised by Jala in such cases.

Vipaka:
According to Acharya Vagbhata Vipaka is that, where in the basic substances or Dravya, by the action of Jatharagni, during the process of digestion, at the end a product will be formed as a special type of Rasa. This Vipaka is also known as Nisthapaka.

“Yaddravyanparinamkaaleswabhavikamrasamparityajyarasant arambhajate tatra Vipaka iti sangya.”

Vipaka has been defined as ‘Visista Paka’ (particular transformation) in contrast to Paka (general digestion). Dalhana said that Vipaka is the term used in Relation to a substance which during digestive process accepts another Rasa leaving its natural Rasa.

Sushruta has used the term Vipaka both for digestive and post digestive transformation. He says that Vipaka is important because the effect of the ingested substance depends upon whether it is digested properly or not. Dalhana explaining it further adds that if it is properly digested it would produce beneficial effect (Guna) otherwise Dosh. Dalhana has said two types of Vipaka-Guru and Laghu.

Virya

According to Acharya Charaka and Sushruta the active property or potency of a Dravya when performed is known as Virya.

The term Virya is interpreted as Shakti (potency). It has been said that Virya is the Sara of the drug which is destroyed after a certain period and is accentuated by certain process.

“Dravyarasagunavipakairyata karma kartum na shakhyate tat karma – karvan prabhavo viryumuchayate, tathahviryamshaktirupattivisheshah, samarthym prabhava ityantarhantaram.”

Dalhana does not distinguish Virya from Prabhava. He has defined Virya (1) As a means of inexplicable action (2) As Prabhava producing action for which Dravya, Rasa, Guna and Vipaka are incapable and having synonym Shakti, Utpattivisesa, Samarthyam and Prabhava. Dalhana has confused the issue by saying Virya as ‘Achintya Kriyakhetu’ and making Virya and Prabhava as synonymous.

The number of Virya is two according to Sushruta though he has mentioned eight Viryas according to other’s view. Dalhana too follow the same. Although there is no third category but Sita and Ushna according to the predominance of Soma and Agni in principle, practically there is accepted a group on borderline which is termed as ‘Sadharana’ (common or intermediate), example- Kskamachi (Solanum nigrum Linn.). Dalhana has distinguished Agneya from Ushna and clarify it with certain examples such as Prabha (lustre) is Agneya but not Ushna, Kshara is Ushna but not Agneya, Matsyas (fishes) are also Ushna but not Agneya. The examples of Agneya Dravyas are Tila (Sesamum indicum Linn.), Maasha (Phaseolus mungo Linn.), Sura (Liquor) etc.

Prabhava

Acharya Charaka says that Prabhava is considered as a special power or specific property of substance, because the Dravya having similar Rasa, Virya and Vipaka produce or exhibit special action. This specific action of the Dravya is known as Prabhava.

According to Dalhana, Virya and Prabhava have been mentioned as synonyms but Prabhava can be distinguished by the terms Swabhava, Prakriti or Shaktivesha. Swabhava is ‘Sahaja Dharm’ (inherent activity) due to specific natural composition of the drug, Prabhava is actually a Shortened form of Dravya-Prabhava. It is also mentioned as Aadhar Prabhava because Dravya is Aadhar of all the properties. The effect of Mantra-Tantara, anti-poisons, emetics etc., is also due to this Achintya Shakti.

Certain actions of several drugs have been explained by Prabhava such as Samgrahi effect of Ghrita obtained from milk, Pachana effect of Sitavirya Saktu, Vrshya effect of washing the feet etc. The Tridoshaghna effect of drugs like Amalaki (Emblica officinalis Gaertn.), Kskamachi (Solanum nigrum Linn.), Guduchi (Tinospora cordifolia (Wild.) Miers ex Hook. F. & Jhoms.) etc., is also explained by Prabhava.

Karma

Acharya Charaka has given definition of Karma. The Karma or the action is responsible for the act of adhering and separation that is samyoga and vibhaga, of a Dravya, which is intimately associated with and independent in a substance. There cannot be any action without samyoga and vibhaga. The Dravyagata padhadrha which produces effects on the body is known as Karma.

According to Dalhana Karma denotes activities of Drugs such as Sodhana etc. Drug Treatment consists of Samsodhana and Samsamana. He also explained the difference between like Vinasana, Harana and Soshana.

Vinashhanaranavishoshananaamarthahbhedamahu-
tatracsvahinavishoshanamolochhedanah,
haranomehapiwayahehansamannvatvemirmanatenva,
shoshanahkapahmedodravasvasinigalo.”

According to Dalhana interpretation of certain terms denoting action is given here:

Sukha: That which provide health.
Hladana: That which provide relief by subsiding thirst, sweat, burning sensation etc.
Ashawasajana: Renovate the persons exhausted by overwork.
Kshapana: Kshapana is decreasing below the base level. While explaining the Kshapana effect of Doshas on Dhatu, Dalhana says- Pitta decreases Dhatu due to Katu and Usana properties, Vayu because of absorbing nature and Kaptha by causing obstruction in channels. 37

Sthapana: Which does not produce obesity or leanness but maintains the medium state of body bulk. 38

Anulomana: Which helps excretion of Vata (flatus), Mutra (urine) and Purish (faeces).

Dharana: Supporting in case of emergency. 36

Yatrakara: Which maintains the body. 39

Apyayana: which hastens recovery by replenishing memory, voice, strength and semen etc. 40

Samshamana: The substance which ingested pacifies Doshas without eliminating it is known as Samshamana (pacificatory) as said- that which does not eliminate Dosha, nor does aggravate the balanced ones but pacifies the aggravated ones is known as Samshamana. This is of two types- external and internal, the former such as Aalaepa, Parisha, Ayvahana, Abhayanya, Shirobasti, Kavala, Gandusha etc. while the later such as Pachana, Lekhana, Rasayana, Vajikarana, Vishra-Prasamana etc.

Samshodhana: Samshodhana is that which purifies well, it is of two types- external and internal. The external such as sharp instrument (Shastra), caustic alkali (Kshara), cautery (Agni), paste (Pralepa) etc. while the internal is of four types- Vamana, Virechana, Asthapana and Raktamokshana.

Rasayana:

“Rasanaam rasaraktaadinnamaamanamaayapayanam rasayanam.”

According to Sushruta, Rasayana is Vyayasthapana (maintaining youth), promoting life-span, intellect and strength and eliminating diseases. Interpreting the word Vyayasthapana, Dalhana says that it means maintaining life span up to 100 years of age while Ayushkara may go beyond this limit. 41 Dalhana has classified Rasayana in the following way:

1. Kutipriveshika (indoor) 2. Vatatapika (outdoor)

(V) (II)

(Kamya) specific (Nalinirika) curative (Aajasrika)

(1)Samshodhana (purifying) (2) Samshamana (pacifying)

Vajikaran

“Yena strishu vishye vaajivanarahsamarthya prapnoti tadvaajikanaranam, yenanayathamayajyate strishu tadvaajikanaranam.”

Vajikaran has been interpreted in both the senses.

(1) Producing semen

(2) Stimulating impulse and sexual potency.

“Tatatritividham-janakam, pravartakam, janakaprarvatakamchethi, Tatrajakamkamagrittaadikam, pravartakamuchhatahuradikamshrukavairaechanikam, janakaprarvatakamugayogritagodhoomamaashakakandaphal adikam.”

Explaining the action of Vajikarana in different conditions Dalhana says that:

1. Alparetas- means persons having congenital deficiency of semen. Its treatment is Apyayana (Repulshishing).

2. Dushkaretas- means those having semen affected by vitiated Doshas. Its treatment is Prasadana (Purification).


Dalhana also gives alternative interpretations according to age such as:

1) Alparetas- below 25 years of age

2) Kshinaretas- Middle age

3) Vishushkaretas- Old age

CONCLUSION

Dalhana, because of his profound knowledge, long professional experience and field study, stands topmost among the commentators and his contribution particularly in the field of Dravyaguna are awesome and helpful for everyone. He is one of the commentators who have become immortal by his single but unique and extra-ordinary work. Dalhana’s contribution to the ancient Indian system of medicine as the author of ‘Nibandha Sangraha’ is priceless. He has also evidently undertaken extensive tours throughout the country to get himself acquainted with the prevalent traditions and the systems of medicine. He was a versatile scholar and as such has contributed in discussing various allied topics which leads to clear understanding of the basic concepts. We can say that Dalhana’s scholarship was not limited to Ayurveda only but covered a very wide field comprising of various disciplines which was necessary for proper understanding of Ayurvedic concepts.

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