

# INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF UNANI AND INTEGRATIVE MEDICINE



E-ISSN: 2616-4558  
P-ISSN: 2616-454X  
IJUIM 2021; 5(3): 09-12  
Impact Factor (RJIF): 6.3  
Peer Reviewed Journal  
Received: 05-06-2021  
Accepted: 12-08-2021

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## Exploring potentials of Ayurveda for longevity W.S.R. to Agastya Haritaki Rasayana: A review article

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**DOI:** <https://doi.org/10.33545/2616454X.2021.v5.i3a.197>

### Abstract

Ayurveda being an established system of medical science that evolved to a comprehensive health care management system, gives equal importance to maintenance and promotion of health by preventing ailments and by curing them. For achieving this, a unique concept of *Rasayana* was introduced in the Ayurveda classics. *Rasayanas* being immuno-modulatory in their action are both health promoter as well as medicine in the diseased conditions. They are complex formulations containing multiple *Aushadha dravyas*, that shows a collective as well as personal effects according to their *rasa panchaka*. Agastya Haritaki Rasayana, a *rasayana aushadha yoga*, has been proved to be quite useful in multiple disorders of *pranavaha srotas* as well as other systems of the body at various stages of a disease. Being *kapha* and *vata* pacifier, its utility in disorders pertaining to vitiated *kapha* and *vata* is of great use for the mankind. Also, being *Rasayana*, it has potential to increase the quality and longevity of life.

**Keywords:** Ayurveda, Agastya Haritaki Rasayana, longevity, Rasayana, health

### Introduction

Ayurveda is an established system of medicine; whose purpose is to heal and to maintain the quality and longevity of life. For serving the purpose of Ayurveda viz promotion of health and prevention & cure of disease, the unique concept of *Rasayana* has been formulated to serve the both purposes at a time. As per Charaka Samhita, the substance which invigorates a healthy person by producing best quality of *Rasa, Raktadi Dhatus*, is called *Rasayana*.

Agastya Haritaki Rasayana or Agastya Rasayana is an *avaleha* kind of preparation propounded by Maharishi Agastya and described in Charaka Samhita- *Kasachikitsaadhyaya*, Sushruta Samhita *Uttaratantra Kasapratishehadhyaya* and Ashtanga Hridayam *Kasachikitsaadhyaya*. It is indicated mainly in the *pranavaha-srotas vikaras* (respiratory disorders) like five types of *kasa, shwasa, hikka, kshaya* etc. Moreover, the regular usage of this *Rasayana* is also mentioned for the medical conditions of *Vishama-jwara, meha, gulma, grahani, arshas, hridroga, aruchi, peenasa* etc. Also, the usage of Agastya Rasayana has been indicated in condition of *Vali* and *Palita* (wrinkles and untimely greying of hair). Agastya Rasayana bestows one with *Varna* (complexion), *Bala* (vigour and strength) and *Ayushya* (longevity of life). Hence has been attributed as the "*Shreshtha-Rasayana*"<sup>[1]</sup>.

### Objective

The present writeup aims at exploring the spectrum of bodily conditions where Agastya Haritaki Rasayana could be utilised for preventing diseases along with promoting and maintaining quality and longevity of life as per the reference of Charaka Samhita.

### Materials and Methods

An in-depth literary study of the ancient treatises to rediscover the intricacies of Agastya Haritaki Rasayana was done. An attempt is made to explore the *Rasa Panchaka*, probable *Karma, Prabhava* and utility of Agastya Haritaki Rasayana in various conditions. For analyzing the fundamentals; Ayurvedic classics majorly Charaka Samhita along with Sri Chakrapani Dutta's Ayurveda Deepika Commentary, Textbooks of clinical & community medicine, scientific journals, internet publications were consulted and reviewed for carrying out the present work.

### Analysis of Rasa Panchaka of Agastya Haritaki Rasayana

*Rasa Panchaka* defines the *rasa, guna, veerya, vipaka* and *karma* or *prabhava* of a *Aushadha dravya*. Considering the Agastya Haritaki Rasayana reference of Charaka Samhita

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*Kasachikitsaadhyaya*, a total of twenty-seven *dravyas* are combined together to formulate this *Aushadha yoga*. The knowledge of *Rasa Panchaka* is necessary to define the sub total effect of the drug when administered to patients, suffering from different diseases. Moreover, to define the

correct usage of drug in fore given indications, it is necessary to have a complete *rasa panchaka* overview to understand its utility in a specific condition. *Rasa, guna, veerya, vipaka, karma* and *prabhava* (if any) are discussed in the Table number 1.

**Table 1:** *Rasa Panchaka* of Drugs mentioned in the Formulation

No.	Dravya	Botanical Name	Rasa	Guna	Veerya	Vipaka	Karma
1.	<i>Bilwa</i>	<i>Aegle marmelos</i> Linn.	Ks T	L R	Us	K	KV ↓↑
2.	<i>Agnimantha</i>	<i>Premna mucronata</i> Roxb.	T K Ks M	R L	Us	K	KV ↓
3.	<i>Shyonaka</i>	<i>Oroxylum indicum</i> (L) Benth ex Kurz.	M T Ks	L R	Us	K	KV ↓
4.	<i>Patala</i>	<i>Stereospermum suaveolens</i> (Roxb) DC	T Ks	L R	Us	K	KV ↓
5.	<i>Gambhari</i>	<i>Gmelina arborea</i> Roxb.	T Ks M	G	Us	K	KV ↓
6.	<i>Shalaparni</i>	<i>Desmodium gangeticum</i> DC	M T	G Sn	Us	M	VPK ↓
7.	<i>Prishniparni</i>	<i>Uraria picta</i> Desv	M T	L Sn	Us	M	VPK ↓
8.	<i>Brihati</i>	<i>Solanum indicum</i> Linn.	K T	L R Tk	Us	K	KV ↓
9.	<i>Kantakari</i>	<i>Solanum surattense</i> Burm.	T K	L R Tk	Us	K	KV ↓
10.	<i>Gokshuru</i>	<i>Tribulus terrestris</i> Linn.	M	G Sn	Sh	M	VP ↓
11.	<i>Swayamgupta</i>	<i>Mucuna prurita</i> Wight	M T	G Sn	Us	M	V ↓ KP ↑
12.	<i>Shankhpushpi</i>	<i>Convolvulus pluricaulis</i> Chiosy.	T	Sn Pc	Sh	M	VP ↓ (Medhya)
13.	<i>Shati</i>	<i>Heduchium spicatum</i> Sm in A Rees	K T Ks	L Tk	Us	K	KV ↓
14.	<i>Bala</i>	<i>Sida cordifolia</i> Linn.	M	L Sn Pc	Sh	M	VP ↓
15.	<i>Gajapippali</i>	<i>Piper chaba</i> Trel & Yunck	K	L Sn Tk	AnUs Sh	M	KV ↓
16.	<i>Apamarga</i>	<i>Achyranthes aspera</i> Linn.	K T	L R Tk	Us	K	KV ↓
17.	<i>Pippalimoola</i>	<i>Piper longum</i> Linn.	K	L Sn Tk	AnUs Sh	M	KV ↓
18.	<i>Chitraka</i>	<i>Plumbago zeylanica</i> Linn.	K	L R Tk	Us	K	KV ↓ P ↑
19.	<i>Bharangi</i>	<i>Clerodendron serratum</i> Linn.	T K	L R	Us	K	KV ↓
20.	<i>Pushkaramoola</i>	<i>Inula racemosa</i> Hook	T K	L Tk	Us	K	KV ↓
21.	<i>Yava</i>	<i>Hordeum vulgare</i> Linn.	M T Ks	R Pc	Sh	K	KP ↓ V ↑
22.	<i>Haritaki</i>	<i>Terminalia chebula</i> Retz.	Ks Pradhana, Pancharasa Alavana	L R	Us	M	VPK ↓
23.	<i>Guda</i>	-	M	Sn G	Sh	M	VP ↓ K ↑
24.	<i>Ghrita</i>	-	M	Sn G	Sh	M	VPK ↓
25.	<i>Taila</i>	-	M T (Ks Anurasa)	G Tk	Us	M	VK ↓
26.	<i>Pippali Choorna</i>	<i>Piper longum</i> Linn.	K	L Sn Tk	AnUs Sh	M	KV ↓
27.	<i>Madhu</i>	-	M Ks	R L	Us	M	VPK ↓

### Key to Abbreviations

<i>M- Madhura</i>	<i>R- Rooskha</i>	<i>Tk- Teekshna</i>
<i>T- Tikta</i>	<i>L- Laghu</i>	<i>Pc- Picchila</i>
<i>K- Katu</i>	<i>Sn- Snigdha</i>	<i>Us- Ushna</i>
<i>Ks- Kashaya</i>	<i>G- Guru</i>	<i>Sh- Sheeta</i>
<i>AnUs- Anaushna</i>	↓ - <i>Shamana</i>	↑ - <i>Vardhana</i>

On the detailed study of all the *dravyas* of *Agastya Haritaki Rasayana*, a consensus could be formulated to understand the *yoga* at gross level.

- *Rasa: Katu* (Primarily), *Madhura* (Secondarily)
- *Guna: Laghu, Snigdha* and *Teekshna* dominant
- *Veerya: Ushna* dominant
- *Vipaka: Katu* (Primarily) *Madhura* (Secondarily)
- *Karma: Kapha-Vata* Dominant *Tridosha Shamana* (Pacifier)

### Guna based analysis of Indications as per Charaka Samhita

**Vali (wrinkling of skin):** *Vali* is a condition defining the process of ageing of skin tissue which is indicative of *Vata* dominant stage. Hence *Madhura rasa* and *Madhura Vipaka* of *Agastya Haritaki Rasayana* helps in *dhatu poshana* (nourishment) and *Tikta Katu rasa, Katu vipaka* and *ushna veerya* causes *srotoshuddhi* (clearing the blocked channels of body) in turn doing the *dhatu poshana*.

**Palita (greying of hair):** Greying of hair may be due to ageing but could be seen in early ages of life. According to

Acharya Vagbhatta, the greying of hair is due to *Kapha* vitiation and dry hair due to *Vata* vitiation [2]. Hence *Agastya Haritaki Rasayana* being *Kapha Vata shamana Aushadha yoga* helps in controlling *palita*. *Ushna veerya; Teekshna, Laghu, Rookshaguna; Katu vipaka* does the *kapha shamana* while *Madhura rasa, Ushna Guna* and *Madhura vipaka* does the *vata shamana*, hence helpful in *palita roga*.

**Varna Vardhana (improves the complexion):** Complexion is the *karma* of *Bhrajaka Pitta*, whose seat being the skin tissue [3]. *Ushna veerya* and *katu vipaka* of *Aushadha* in *Agastya Haritaki Rasayana* act *deepana* and *pachana* which enhances *agni (pachaka pitta)* which in turn enhances the *bhrajaka pitta* hence *varna prasadana* could be achieved.

**Ayu-varhdhana (Longevity of Life):** *Agni* and *Deha bala* are responsible for maintaining the longevity and health of an individual's life. The *kapha* in its optimum state (*prakriti* state) is defined to be the strength that sustains life [4]. Moreover, *Agni* is said to be the *moola* (basic cause) of all life forms [5]. Hence, the *Guru, Snigdha guna* and *Madhura rasa* sustains *kapha* leading to *dhatu poshana* hence

formation of best quality *ojus* (the copious form of all *dhatu*s). *Ushana veerya* and *katu vipaka* are *deepana* and *pachana* in nature hence sustain the optimal level of *agni* in an individual and maintains health and promotes longevity of life.

**Bala-Vardhana (strengthening):** three types of *bala* are mentioned in the Ayurveda classics as *Sahaja*, *kalaja* and *yuktikrita* [6]. The *bala* gained by utilization of *Agastya Haritaki Rasayana* is *yuktikrita bala*. *Madhura rasa* along with *guru* and *snigdha guna* are responsible for *dhatu poshana* and *ojus*. Furthermore, the *katu rasa*, *teekshna* and *laghu guna* keeps *Srotas* patent (*srotoshuddhi*) for *dhatu poshana* hence, in turn lead to formation of refined *ojus*.

**Kasa (cough disorders):** while analysing the *rasa Panchaka*, it is evident that *Agastya Haritaki Rasayana* being a *kapha vata* dominant pacifying *yoga*, it could be utilised in *kapha* dominant *vata* associated or *kapha-vata* type of *kasa*. *Laghu guna* is *Lekhana* and *ropana*, *rooksha* is *shoshana* and *kaphahara*, *teekshna* is *shodhana* and *kapha-vatahara*; and *lagu teekshna* act antagonist to *kapha*. Hence their cumulative effect could be observed as *Kapha-Vata* pacifier.

**Hikka-Shwasa (respiratory disorders):** Respiratory disorders majorly occur due to vitiation of *vata* along with the *kapha* (the seat being the respiratory system) [3]. Hence, the *katu rasa* that is *kaphahara* and *sroto-shodhaka*; *tikta rasa* that is *lekhana* and *kantha* (throat) *shodhaka*; *Kashaya rasa* that is *kapha-pitta shamana* and *ushna veerya* that is *kapha vilayaka* (mucolytic action) and *shamaka* (pacifier); being the component of *Agastya Haritaki Rasayana* are helpful in medical management of *hikka* and *shwasa rogas*.

**Vishama Jwara (fevers):** *agni mandyam* and *Ama* are the basic etiological factors behind and *jwara samprapti*. *Vishma jwara* have involvement of *tridoshas* in it [7]. Hence primarily *ama pachana* with *deepana* and *dhatu balyakara* (strengthening) *Aushadha* is required. Being *Tikta katu rasa*, *Ushna veerya* and *Katu vipaka* *Agastya Haritaki Rasayana* act as *ama pachana* and *deepana*. Also, *madhura rasa* and *snigdha guna* are *agnideepana* and *balya* in nature. A special care is to be taken while administration of *Agastya Haritaki Rasayana* in *jwara* cases as, usage of any *Aushadha yoga* in *taruna jwara* is prohibited [7]. Hence *Agastya Haritaki Rasayana* should be used in a state when the *tarun jwara* has subsided and *dhatu kshaya lakshanas* are evident in a patient. To overcome *dhatu kshaya* and remove the underlying *leena doshas*, *Agastya Haritaki Rasayana* should be advised.

**Arshas (haemorrhoids):** *Arshas* has been categorised into two types as *shushka arshas* (*vata kapha* dominant- non bleeding) and *sravi arshas* (*pitta* and *rakta* dominant-bleeding) in *Charaka Samhita* [8]. Hence *Agastya Haritaki Rasayana* being *kapha* and *vata* pacifier *yoga*, it could be utilised only in *shushka* or *Asravi arshas*. *Teeksha guna*, *Ushana veerya* and *katu vipaka* have their cumulative effect on *Srotas* causing the *srotoshodhana* hence reducing the pile mass. *Gadanigraha* and *Vangasena* consider *Agastya Haritaki Rasayana* as *arshas-nashaka* if used for four months continuously.

**Grahani (disorders pertaining to stomach and intestine):** *Grahani* being the *pitta* seat is dominant in *pitta dosha* [9]. If a *grahani* disease condition has its association with *vata kapha* *Agastya Haritaki Rasayana* could be advised. In *kapha* and *vata sheeta guna* is dominant, that is opposite to *agni*. Hence *ushna veerya* and *katu vipaka* helps in *deepana*, *pachana* and enhances the status of *agni*. Also, *teekshna guna* enhances *pitta*, stimulate *jatharagni* and does the *srotoshuddhi*; if *pitta* is vitiated. Moreover, the *Kashaya rasa* in *Agastya Haritaki Rasayana* being *stambhana*, *ropana* and *shodhana* is useful in any diseases causing damage to the GIT mucosal lining.

**Hridroga (cardiac spectrum disorders):** *Srotorodha* is said as the major causative factor for *hridroga* [10]. Hence a *srotoshodhaka*, *vata anulomaka*, *vata shamaka* along with *agni deepana* and *pachana Aushadha yoga* is needed in *hridroga* spectrum disorders. *Agastya Haritaki Rasayana* being *Tikta katu rasa*, *Ushana veerya* and *madhura katu vipaka* dominant could be utilised in *hridroga*.

**Aruchi (aversion towards food):** Aversion to taking food could be classified into two as, due to *dosha* vitiation (primarily *kapha*) and *dwishta samyoga* (contact to odious things) [11]. *Agastya Haritaki Rasayana* is useful in *doshic* vitiation kind of *aruchi*. Where *katu rasa* causes *deepana*, *pachana*, *sroto shodhana* and is *ruchya* (pleasing, giving a appetite); and *Tikta rasa* removes *aruchi*, cause *deepana pachana* and increases liking towards other *rasas* (tastes).

**Peenasa (rhinorrhea):** *Peenasa* being *kapha* dominant condition, *katu rasa* in *Agastya Haritaki Rasayana* is *kaphahara* and *srotoshodhana*; *tikta rasa* is *lekhana*, *kantha shodhana* and *sroto shodhana* and *ushna veerya* is *kapha vilayanakara* and *vata kapaha shamaka*.

**Rasayana (immuno-modulator):** Mentioning *Agastya Haritaki Rasayana* as the *Shreshtha Rasayana*, *Acharya Charaka* defined the properties of a *rasayana aushadha yoga* in *Chikitsasthana*. *Rasayana* is not only a vitiated *dosha* pacifier but also a promoter and regulator of health, that could be utilised at all stages of life and disease [12]. *Rasayana* maintains the optimal balance between the three *doshas* and strengthens the seven *dhatu*s. In *Agastya Haritaki Rasayana madhura rasa* is *balya* and *dhatu poshaka*. *Katu rasa* is *agni deepana*, *pachana* and *srotoshodhana* while *tikta rasa* is *srotoshodhaka* and *ama pachaka*. *Teekshna guna* is *srotoshodhaka*. *Laghu* and *ruksha guna* is *lekhana* and *ropana*. *Guru* and *Snigdha guna* are *brimhana* and *vatashamaka*. *Sheeta veerya* is *stambhana* and *pitta shamaka* while *ushna veerya* is *deepana*, *pachana*, *vata-kapha shamaka* and *agni vridhdhikara*. *Madhura vipaka* is *dhatu poshana* and sustains optimal *kapha* and *katu vipaka* is *srotoshodhaka* and *Vata-Pitta samyakara*. Hence, the cumulative action of the *Agastya Haritaki Rasayana* could be said to be having multiple immuno-modulatory properties hence described as the *shreshtha Rasayana* among the *Rasayana yogas*.

## Results

The cumulative analysis of cumulative *rasa*, *guna*, *veerya*, *vipaka* and *karma* of the *Agastya Haritaki Rasayana*, being primarily *kapha-vata shamaka Aushadha yoga*, shows its

utility in *Kapha-Vata* dominant disease conditions of *vali, palita, varna-ayu-hani, kasa, hikka-shwasa, peenasa, aruchi, grahani, arshas* and *vishama jwara*. Being a *shreshtha Rasayana*, it could be utilised for both prevention of disease and promotion of health.

### Discussion & Conclusion

Agastya Rasayana contains *Haritaki (Terminalia chebula)* as one of the main ingredients (100 in number) which is *Ruksha, Laghu, Kashaya Pradhana Pancharasa* (except *lavana*), *Madhura vipaka, ushna veerya, Rasayani* and *Vata-kaphahara* <sup>[13]</sup>. Most of the *dravyas* in Agastya Rasayana are *tridosha-shamaka* and of *Vata* and *kapha* pacifying in nature hence is utilised in *kapha-vataja* dominant conditions.

Agastya Rasayana, a popular *avaleha* preparation works at various levels of *Dhatus* including *agni* and *srtotas* hence improving the *Vyadhi-kshamatva* (the body defence mechanism) and the *sarva-roga-vighatakara-bhava* (immunity) of the body. The Wide spectrum of areas where this can be utilised are still to be looked for, apart from its usage in *prana-vaha sroto-vikaras*. Hence using Agastya Haritaki Rasayana as *Naimittika Rasayana* regularly could help both in preventing and curing diseases with providing longevity of life i.e., *deerghayu* as a return gift to all the *Ayushkaamis* (seekers of the happy and healthy life).

### Acknowledgements

I thank Dr. Devika D. Shetty, MD (Ay), Assistant Professor, Department of Samhita Siddhanta and Sanskrit, Shiva Ayurvedic Medical College and Hospital, Bilaspur, Himachal Pradesh 174004 for her unsurmountable support and guidance for carrying out this work.

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