



ISSN 2456-3110

Vol 5 · Issue 2

Mar-Apr 2020

Journal of
**Ayurveda and Integrated
Medical Sciences**

www.jaims.in

JAIMS

An International Journal for Researches in Ayurveda and Allied Sciences



Charaka
Publications

Indexed

A review on the citations of *Ratnas* in *Garuda Purana*

Dr. Niveditha BM¹, Dr. Amrita Raveendran², Dr. Malathi K³, Dr. Vikram S.⁴

^{1,2}Post Graduate Scholar, ³Professor, ⁴Professor & HOD, Department of Rasashastra and Bhaishajya Kalpana, Sri Sri College of Ayurvedic Science and Research, Bangalore, Karnataka, INDIA.

ABSTRACT

In Ayurveda, one can get various references regarding *Yuktivyapashraya Chikitsa* (a treatment modality which is based on logic) and *Daivavyapashraya Chikitsa* (a modality of treatment based on past deeds and pleasing of God). Ayurveda has always utilised plant and mineral origin for the purpose of *Chikitsa*. Scholars all over the world are searching for new ideas, concepts, processes, products by looking backward for getting the knowledge from the ancient books and traditions. Indian epics and ancient scriptures like *Puranas* contain majority of knowledge accumulated during past thousands of years. Gem stones are very amply discussed in Hinduism scriptures. Especially in the *Puranas*, we find many descriptions on gemstones, embedded in its Sanskrit verses along with fascinating mythological origins. Hence the present article aims to review regarding origin, identification and test of genuineness for gems as described in *Garuda Purana*.

Key words: *Garuda Purana, Grahya Ratna, Ratnapariksha.*

INTRODUCTION

Garuda Purana is one of the important scriptures, primarily centered on Hindu god *Vishnu*. It is in the form of a dialogue between *Vishnu* and *Garuda* - his divine vehicle and King of Birds. It is supposed to be composed sometimes in the 1st millennium of the Common Era. The first version of the text appeared only between the 4th CE and 11th Century.^[1] However, the text is likely from about 900 CE, given that it includes chapter on Yoga and Tantra techniques that likely developed later. Other scholars

suggest that the earliest core of the text may be from the first centuries of the common era, and additional chapters were added there after through the sixth century or later.^[2] The text exists in many versions, with varying numbers of chapters. Some *Garuda Purana* manuscripts have been known by the title of *Sauparna Purana* and *Tarkasya Purana*. In the late 19th century, a text called *Garuda puranasaroddhara* was published, then translated by Ernest Wood and SV Subrahmanyam.^[3] The earliest translation of one version of *Garuda Purana*, by Manmatha Nath Dutt, was published in 1908.

Garuda Purana is one of total eighteen Mahapurana, in which description of some of the valuable gem stones, their test of genuineness, characteristics and testing methodologies has been told in detail in form of dialogue between Suthamahamuni and Saunaka in 68th chapter of *Achara Khanda* (*Agastya Samhita*).

AIM AND OBJECTIVE

To screen and enumerate the number of *Ratnas*, their identification and associated mythological origin, their *Grahya Lakshana* as revealed in the treatise.

Address for correspondence:

Dr. Niveditha BM

Post Graduate Scholar, Department of Rasashastra and Bhaishajya Kalpana, Sri Sri College of Ayurvedic Science and Research, Bangalore, Karnataka, INDIA.

E-mail: niveditha.bm12@gmail.com

Submission Date: 14/03/2020 Accepted Date: 12/04/2020

Access this article online

Quick Response Code



Website: www.jaims.in

Published by Maharshi Charaka Ayurveda Organization, Vijayapur, Karnataka (Regd) under the license CC-by-NC-SA

METHODOLOGY

A literary research was conducted from available literature of Rasa Shastra and texts pertaining to astrology. Information was collected from electronic media from open access journals.

The treatise and its significance

The *Garuda Purana* text is known in many versions, contains 16000 verses. Its chapters encyclopaedically deal with a highly diverse collection of topics on Grammar, Metrics, Ethics, Smritis and various aspects of nature. The text contains cosmology, mythology, relationship between gods, ethics, good versus evil, types of minerals and stones, testing methods for gems for their quality, list of plants and herbs.

The contents of *Garuda Purana* are broadly divided into three: Achara Kanda - 240 chapters; Preta or Uttara Kanda - 49 chapters; Brahma Kanda - 29 chapters.

Among the important topics covered in Achara Kanda (Agastya Samhita) of *Garuda Purana*, 68th chapter, there is a description of origin of gems under the heading of Ratna Pariksha. The test of genuineness of gems, the rules to wear them etc. Has been explained in detail in form of story told by Suthamahamuni to Saunaka, which is as follows:

Bali, the grandson of Prahlad was a great king of demons. With a resolution of dethroning Indra, Bali organized a hundred Ashwamedha Yagyas. On the appeal of Indra, Lord Vishnu decided to stop the 100th Ashwamedha Yagya of Bali and arrived there in the form of Vamana (a dwarf Brahmin) and begged him to donate land measuring three steps. In two steps, Lord measures entire earth and heaven. Since there was no room then to put the third step, Bali offered his head for the Lord to put his third step. Thus, Lord Vishnu sent Bali to Paatala. With the touch of the Lord's foot, Bali's earthy body converted into Gem stones.

Thus, the mythological origin of different gems took place which is depicted in Table no. 1.

Table 1: Brief description of origin of Ratnas and source of procurement in ancient India.

<i>Ratnas</i>	<i>Ratna originated from</i>	<i>Region where Ratnas were found (source of procurement)</i>
Vajra or Diamond	The least particle of the bone of Indrayudha, along with severed limbs and head of Bali, were converted into Vajra.	The eight regions or divisions of the country in which diamond-crystals of varied shapes germinates - are the Himalayas, the Matangas, the provinces of Anga, Saurashtra, Pundra, Kalinga, Kosala, the basin of the river Venva, and the country of the Souveras.
Pearl	The teeth of Bali lay scattered and perched up over the wide expanse of heaven like the galaxy of stars, and dropped down one by one into the oceans, and originated the seeds of gems with the beams of the full moon, and the rainbow tint of a peacock's feathers in colour. Some of these seeds entered into the inner organisms of oysters that lay in the deep beds of oceans and gave rise to pearls.	Pearls are divided into eight different species according to the places of their origin, such as the Sainhalika (off the coast of Ceylon), the Paralaukika (heavenly) the Sauashtrika (born in the country of Shaurashtra), the Tamraparna (off the coast of modern Tamluk), the Parashava (Persian), the Kauvera, the Pandyahataka and the Hemaka.
Manikya or Ruby	The sun-god, having collected the gem from blood of Bali, attempted to stealthily fly away by	On its banks girdled with a belt of Arecanut trees, originated the bright Padmaragas (Ruby)

	scaling the expanse of akasha, when Ravana, the king of Lanka, the conqueror of the celestials, obstructed his path in heaven like Rahu, the sun-god, afraid of his dreadful presence, dropped that blood in dismay into the sea shore of Lanka.	and crystals of Kuruvindas in the country of Saugandhika resembling the flowers of Vandhuka, Gunja and Kinshuka trees in colours, some are coloured like the human blood, while several of them resemble the colour obtained from the insects known as the Indragopas.
<i>Padmaraga</i>	Vasuki, the lord of the serpents, carried away gems from the bile of Bali. The body of Vasuki, illuminated with the glowing of gems on his thousand hoods, when chased by mighty Garuda, in fear dropped it on.	The mount of Manikya, shaded with forest of resinous Turaksha trees, and perfumed with the scents of the forests of Nalika.
<i>Indranila</i> or Blue Sapphire	Originated from the eyes of the King Bali.	His dismembered eyes fell on isle of Simhala where abundant ketaki is found.
<i>Vaidurya</i> (Lapis lazuli)	Originated from the <i>Yagyopavita</i> (sacred thread) of Bali. The heart of the primordial ocean was violently agitated by the thundering war cry of lord of demons which frenzied waters, then began to madly lash the jagged faces of its rock-bound coast and hence, turning them into beds of shining <i>Vaidurya</i> of	The hill of Vidura was transformed into a mine of <i>Vaidurya</i> (quoted in Mahabharata)

	varied colours and matchless brilliance.	
<i>Pushparagas</i> (topaz)	Originated out of the perched skin of that dismembered body of Bali.	Which fell on the summits of the Himalayas
<i>Bheeshmantaka</i>	Originated from the head pieces of Bali.	Was cast in a country situated to the north of the Himalayas, and was transformed into the mines of that excellent gem which is known as the stone of Bhisma.

Ratna Pariksha

Of the gems and precious stones, some are having the virtues of eliminating all sins or acting as a prophylactic against the effects of poison, snake bites and diseases, while there are others which are possessed of contrary virtues.^[4]

Gems, such as *Padmaraga*, *Emerald*, *Indranila*, *Vaidurya*, *Pushparaga*, *Karketana*, *Pulaka*, *Rudhirakhya* (blood stone) and the coral, should be carefully collected, subject to the advice of experts on the subject. First the shape, colour, defects or excellences of a gem should be carefully tested and then its price should be ascertained.^[5]

Table 2: Description of characteristics of Ratnas – Grahya and Agrahya Lakshanas.

Ratnas	Description of qualities and Grahya Lakshana	Agrahya
<i>Vajra</i>	Diamonds found in the region of the Gods are supposed to dwell in a particle of diamond, which is possessed of a clear, light shade and is smooth and even at the sides, and devoid of the traits such as scratches, dot like impressions, marks of crowds feet, or clouding	Eight seeds of white sesamum equal a Tandulam in weight, and the use of a diamond weighing less than standard-measure, is prohibited.

	<p>impurities in its interior.</p> <p>A diamond, weighing twenty tandulam in weight, should be regarded as double in value of the standard. Fractions such 1/3, 1/6, 1/10, 1/15, 1/80 or 1/100 should respectively be used in computing the price of a diamond.^[6]</p>	
Pearl	<p>The process of cleansing and perforating the pearl seeds, is as follows:</p> <p>First, all the pearls should be collected and kept in a bowl of boiled rice, previously saturated with the expressed juice of the Jamverafruits. Then the whole contents of the bowl, should be kept simmering for a while, after which the pearls should be taken out and rubbed with the liquid extract of boiled rice. Thus, softened they should be pierced through as desired. The process of cleansing consists in gently heating the pearl seeds placed in a covered crucible, known as the Matsyaputa and covered over with a plaster of clay, after which they should be boiled in milk, water or wine, according to the process known as the Vitanapatti. Then the pearls should be gently rubbed with a piece of clean linen, until they would begin to shine with their characteristic lustre, which would indicate the</p>	<p>A pearl weighing a Mashaka and a half, should be valued at 350 silver coins. The price of a pearl weighing 6 Gunjas, should be laid at 200 silver coins, while a pearl, weighing half as much as the former, should be valued at 100 silver coins only. A pearl, weighing less than the preceding one by 16 Dharanas, is called a Darvikam as regards its weight, and can fetch a price of 110 coins only from the hands of the ignorant.</p>

	<p>completion of the process of cleansing.^[7]</p>	
Ruby	<p>Flawless garnets, coloured like the petals of the red lotus are considered the rarest and most beautiful and possess the mystic virtue of increasing both the wealth and progeny of their owners. These members, illuminated by the light of the sun, shoot forth rays of wonderful colour and brilliancy from their sides which lighten up the surrounding space and are refracted in all directions.</p>	<p>A gem, if found to be stained, or sandy or cracked in the inside, or rough, dull and lustreless.</p> <p>In case of doubt, the gem should be subjected to the test of a testing stone, or examined by scratching it with a gem of the same species. Except diamond and Kuruvinda, no other gem can cut or scratch a bit of Padmaraga.</p>
Emerald	<p>An emerald, possessed of a colour resembling the tint of the neck of a parrot, or that of a Shirisha flower, or tinged like the blade of a green grass, or a new grown moss, or glowing with a hue that marks the feathers of a peacock or the back of a fire-fly, should be deemed as possessed of the virtue of bringing good luck to its possessor.</p>	<p>An emerald, blackish (dark blue), lustreless, looking sand-grained, dry and hard, and encrusted with Shilajatu (bitumen) should be deemed as of a very inferior sort.</p> <p>An emerald coloured like a Putrika or a Bhallataka, should be deemed as not belonging to the genuine type (vijati).</p>
Vaidurya (Lapis)	<p>That are tinged like the breast-feathers of a</p>	<p>A Vaidurya, possessed of a</p>

lazuli)	peacock, or coloured pale green like the leaves of a bamboo, are the best as regards price and quality.	blended hue like that of the primary or the exterior feathers of the wings of a Chasa (bird) occupies the lowest place in the list as regards value and intrinsic virtues, and accordingly its use is forbidden.
---------	---	--

DISCUSSION

Agastya Samhita, a part of *Garuda Purana*, deals with the formation, crystallisation traits of the different precious gems and enumerates the names of the countries from which ancients used to collect these gems. The cutting, polishing, setting of several kind of gems and diamond as they were practiced in ancient India are also mentioned. The *Garuda Purana* describes around fourteen gems in different chapters, their varieties and how to test their quality. The gems discussed include the ruby, pearl, yellow sapphire, hessonite, emerald, diamond, cats' eye, blue sapphire, coral, red garnet, jade, colourless quartz and bloodstone. The technical discussion of gems in the text is woven with its theories on the mythical creation of each gem and its astrological significance.

CONCLUSION

Ayurveda has faith in the principle of '*Yat Pinde Tat Bramhande*' and therefore, all these naturally occurring metals, minerals and gems have a major role in the restoration of human health and treatment of any kind of illness adopting *Yuktivyapashraya* and *Daivavyapashraya Chikitsa*. *Garuda Purana*, which

encompasses topics of Ayurveda, Veterinary Science, Lapidary Science (artistry of gems into decorative items), Grammar, Metrics, Ethics, Smritis and astrological concepts also contain several references for the use of gems in ceremonial rituals and everyday life. Hence an attempt was made in this review to provide a brief but comprehensive coverage of different aspects related to *Ratnas* described in *Garuda Purana*.

REFERENCES

1. Lead beater, Charles Webster. The Chakras. Theosophical Publishing House. 1927.
2. Dalal, Rosen. Hinduism: An Alphabetical Guide, Penguin Books India, Delhi, India. 2014.
3. The Garuda Purana, Translated by Ernest Wood and S.V. Subrahmanyam (1911).
4. Manmath Nath Dutta (1908). Garuda Mahapuranam, Sanskrit Text with English Translation, chapter 68, sloka 8, pg.181.
5. Manmath Nath Dutta (1908). Garuda Mahapuranam, Sanskrit Text with English Translation, chapter 68, sloka 9,10, pg.181.
6. Manmath Nath Dutta (1908). Garuda Mahapuranam, Sanskrit Text with English Translation, chapter 68, pg.184.
7. Manmath Nath Dutta (1908). Garuda Mahapuranam, Sanskrit Text with English Translation, chapter 69, pg.190.

How to cite this article: Dr. Niveditha BM, Dr. Amrita Raveendran, Dr. Malathi K, Dr. Vikram S. A review on the citations of Ratnas in Garuda Purana. J Ayurveda Integr Med Sci 2020;2:175-179.

Source of Support: Nil, **Conflict of Interest:** None declared.

Copyright © 2020 The Author(s); Published by Maharshi Charaka Ayurveda Organization, Vijayapur (Regd). This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0>), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.