

Review



Review of Suvarna (Gold) in Tantratmak Ravana Samhita

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ABSTRACT:

Background - The *Ravana Samhita* is an important ancient Indian text that explores various aspects of life through a *Samvada* (Dialogue) between *Ravana* and his wife *Mandodari*. While *Ravana* is often portrayed negatively in mythology; historical and literary evidence highlights his exceptional intellect and mastery in multiple disciplines, including *Jyotisha* (Astrology), *Vastushastra* (Architecture), *Sangita* (Music), *Yoga*, *Nadipariksha* (Pulse diagnosis), and *Ayurveda*. His contributions to *Rasayana Tantra* are particularly noteworthy, with an extensive discussion on the therapeutic applications of *Suvarna* (Gold) in the fifteenth section of this text. **Objective & Method** – On literature search and study, it was found that *Ravana* provides a detailed classification of different types of *Suvarna* (Gold), their *Guna* (Properties), and their *Samskara* (Purification and preparation methods), surpassing the descriptions found in other *Ayurvedic* texts. Among these preparations, *Suvarna Bhasma* (Gold ash) is emphasised as the most potent and rapidly effective formulation. He elaborates on its properties - *Rasaguna*, *Balya* (Strength), and *Medhya* (Cognitive properties), highlighting its role in *Vyadhipratibandhaka* (Disease prevention) and *Ojasvardhaka* (Enhancing vitality). **Result and Conclusion** - The insights underscore the necessity of studying *Dhatu* for its *Chikitsaprayojana* (Therapeutic applications). The *Yukti* (Scientific approach) of *Ravana Samhita* in utilising *Suvarna* (Gold) in *Chikitsa* (Treatment) continues to be a subject of interest in contemporary research. This study aims to analyze these text contributions with special regard to gold and bridge the gap between ancient *Ayurvedic* wisdom and modern advancements in pharmacology, thereby enhancing the potential of *Suvarnakalpa* in *Ayurvedic* and integrative medicine.

KEYWORDS: *Ravana Samhita*, *Suvarna*, Gold, *Ayurveda*, Treatment.

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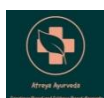
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1. INTRODUCTION

Ravana Samhita is said to be written by *Ravana*. He was the grandson of *Pulastya*, one of the *Saptarishis* as in Indian Mythology. He was born to Sage *Vishrava* and *Asura's* mother *Kaikashi*. As and hence he is considered half *Asur* (Demon) and half *Brahmin* (Sage). *Ravana* is also the supreme antagonist in the ancient *Hindu* epic *Ramayana*. He is depicted as a *Rakshasa* (Demon) and significantly the great king of Lanka. He is known as a demon with ten heads, which represents his big brain and the ten emotions - *Kama* (Lust), *Krodha* (Anger), *Moha* (Delusion), *Lobh* (Greed), *Mada* (Pride), *Maatsarya* (Envy), *Manas* (Mind), *Buddhi* (Intellect), *Chit* (Will), and *Ahamkara* (Ego).

The ten heads of *Ravana* symbolizes the six *Shastras* (sacred scriptures of Hinduism consisting of four categories: the *Sruti*, *Smriti*, *Purana*, and *Tantra*) and the four *Vedas* that his mastery of *Ravana* made him one of the most brilliant people of his era and a distinguished scholar. He possessed 64 different sorts of knowledge and was an expert in all weapon techniques. He is also known to have compiled *Veda* with the relevant musical *svara* (Notes) and his *Shiva Tandava stotra* is yet the most popular hymn ever sung in praise of Lord *Shiva*.

Ravana was also a great follower of Lord *Shiva* – *Baidya Nath* (Literally means pioneer *Vaidya* and originator of *Rasa Shastra*). *Ravana* as history was an inordinate scholar, an excellent ruler, and the maestro of the veena (Plucked string instrument). He was also well-versed in *Ayurveda*. He is said to have written the text *Arka Prakasham* (Book of *Siddha Ayurveda* medicine) which is part of *Ravana Samhita* only. The other book said to be written by him is *Kaumara Tantram* (A book on paediatrics).

The *Ravana Samhita* is a significant ancient Indian text that uses a *Samvada* (Dialogue) between *Ravana* and his wife *Mandodari* to examine many facets of life. Although the precise time period of this text is unknown, historical and literary evidence points to *Ravana's* extraordinary intelligence and proficiency in a variety of fields mentioned here including *Ayurveda*, *Jyotisha* (Astrology), *Vastushastra* (Architecture), *Sangita* (Music), *Yoga* and *Nadi Pariaksha* (Pulse diagnosis). *Ravana Samhita* although considered the primary text of many subject is a *tantra*, a resource of much knowledge. [1]

The *Ravana Samhita* available has two *Khandas* with fourteen and four chapters respectively, chapters having respective *Patalas* (topic) a brief of it is given in the table below:

Table 1: Chapters of *Ravana Samhita*

(Volume 1) <i>Bhoomika khand - Shivstuti, Samhita - Vishayay swaroop.</i>	
Respective Chapter	Respective <i>Patalas</i> (topic)
(Chapter 1) - <i>Ghyan Khandam</i>	<i>Shrushti rahsyam , Kundalin rahsyam</i>
(Chapter 2) - <i>Shakti sadhna rahsyam</i>	<i>Dhyan rahsyam, Mahakali dhyan swaroopam</i>
(Chapter 3) - <i>Upasanabhidhanam</i>	<i>Guru mahatyam , Bhram vidhya mahatyam, Mantra priksha chakram</i>

(Chapter 4) - Shodasikala Mahavidhya	Panchamkar Darshanam, Panch tatva mahatyam
(Chapter 5) - Ras Kameshawari Divya Chikitsa khandam	Surakalpa Amrityog, Strinaam kayakalpa vidhanam
(Chapter 6) - Divya Aushadhi kalpa	Divya Aushadhi varanam , Divya yog baal Chikitsa Tantram , Arka prakarnam, Aushadhi gana, Uttam dravya lakshanam
(Chapter 7) - Rasayan Khandam	Parad Prakarnam , Divya Gutika Siddhi, Rasayan sevnyasy divya vidhi
(Chapter 8) - Tantabhichar prayog vidhi	Shatkarm prakarnam, Vashikaran vidhi
(Chapter 9) - Mayajaal Khandam	Mahabhichar kautukam , Divya shakti sadhnam
(Chapter 10) - Shodas Mahavidhya	Shodas Mahavidhya swarupam , Kaalratri Sadhnam
(Chapter 11) - Mahavidhya: Gaupya tantra Sadhanam	Shiv parvati Samvaad, Guru Nirdesham
(Chapter 12) - Anadinaath Tantra (Shiv tantra)	Anadinaath sadashiv rahsayam, Kamyaa prayog
(Chapter 13) - Ganapati Rudra Sadhanam	Ganapati Sadhanam
(Chapter 14) - Ganapati Rudra Sadhanam	Putali Tantrabhicharam, Shav-shamshan sadhan
(Volume 2) - Jyotish Khand - Dasanan phalit jyotish – Rashi vichar	
Adhyaya (Chapter) name	Shree Vinayak Stuti – Patal (Topic) name
(Chapter 1) Shree Vinayak Stuti	Graah prakarnam, Lagna Phalam
(Chapter 2) Dwadash bhava Graha phalanyah	Suryaphala, Chandra phalam
(Chapter 3) Vihishta yoga	Rajju, Nala
(Chapter 4) Graha phalam	Shukra phalam, Ketu phalam

2. METHODOLOGY

A thorough study of Literature – *Ravana Samhita* was done with regards to Gold – *Suvarna* and related *Ayurveda* topics, also from relevant databases – research articles, *Ayurveda* granthas and books, as discussed further.

This database article review employed a qualitative research approach, focusing on textual analysis and thematic categorisation. Primary data included the *Ravana Samhita*. Secondary sources were done using electronic database search engines like PubMed, Google Scholar and Cochrane

Library for the articles published from the date of inception till June 2025 for historical and philosophical

insights. The study systematically examines the text's view on *Suvarna* Gold.

The search terms *Ravana Samhita* AND *Suvarna*, *Ravana Samhita* OR *Suvarna* & Gold, NOT Metals as in PubMed, Google Scholar and Cochrane Library. The screened title and the abstract, and the full text for the final were accessed for inclusion.

Gold in Ancient time

Hindu mythology has always associated gold with something inseparable. *Brahma*, the creator, was born from the golden cosmic egg, as the *Rigveda* affirms, hence his name, "*Hiranyagarbha*." From the story of Lord *Shiva's* golden seed, in which *Sita* emerges from the golden city of *Hiranyapura*, to the epics, in which

women without golden jewellery are viewed as unlucky or "*Mangala*," gold has always been associated with divinity or purity. Of all the metals, it is thought to be the most "*sattvic*," and it most likely defends its own deity.

Golden Lanka

Ravana's golden Lanka '*sone ki Lanka*' is the most striking incident in *Hindu* mythology or Indian history. One may be surprised to learn that *Lanka* wasn't always '*Ravan's Lanka*; *Lanka* was known as '*Savarna*' or '*Ratna Bhumi* because it was golden and flower-bespangled like the gem-bespangled sea. It is said that *Parvati*, fed up with leading a life of austerity, asked *Shiva* to construct a home. *Vishwakarma*, the 'Principle Architect of the universe' and *Kuber* were given the task and they created a stunning gold palace. *Ravana's* father was invited to carry out the '*Grihapravesha*' (House warming ceremony), but instead he and *Ravana* asked the palace in the form of '*Dakshina*' (Donation) Consequently, *Ravana* acquired the golden castle of *Lanka*.

Ravana Samhita and Gold

The fifteenth section of his text contains a lengthy discussion of the therapeutic uses of *Suvarna* (Gold), making the contributions to *Rasayana Tantra* especially noteworthy.

Beyond the descriptions found in other *Ayurvedic* texts, *Ravana Samhita* offers a thorough classification of the various types of *Suvarna* (Gold), their *Guna* (Properties), and their *Samskara* (Purification and preparation methods). *Suvarna Bhasma* (Gold ash) is highlighted as the most powerful and quick-acting formulation among these preparations. The text goes into detail about its

Rasaguna (Pharmacological properties), *Balya* (Strength), and *Medhya* (Cognitive properties), emphasizing its function in *Ojasvardhaka* (Improving vitality) and *Vyadhipratibandhaka* (Preventing disease). Observations in this text highlight how important it is to research *Dhatu*– Gold for its *Chikitsaprayojana* (Therapeutic uses). [2]

Types of gold as mentioned in Ravana Samhita

Fifteen types of gold (*Svarna*, *Suvarna*, *Kanak*, *Hrinay*, *Hemhataka*, *Tapaniya*, *Gangey*, *Kaldhaut*, *Kaanchan*, *Chamikar*, *Shatakaumbha*, *Katisvara*, *Jambunad*, *Jatarupa*, *Maharajat*).[3]

Signs of Good Gold or Suvarna

The gold which turns red on heating in fire, appears white on cutting, turns saffron in colour on testing on the touchstone, is smooth and soft, has no adulteration of silver and copper and is heavier than other metals, is called good gold. [4]

Suvarna Types as per origin - Its quoted in *Ravana Samhita*, 'After this, I tell you about the best *Hem Rasayan*, listen! I have already talked about the origin of gold, yet there are three types of them. 1. *Rasvedh*, 2. *Kshetrasambhav* (Originating from mines), 3. *Lohsankarja* (Separation of gold mixed with iron) These three golds are of the best, medium and inferior category. These are respectively red colour mixed with yellow or yellow or red in a different colour. By rubbing them on touchstone and heating them, they leave white colour like saffron or red colour lines respectively.' [5]

Suvarna Purification

It is said, 'In this way, convert the divine gold into a sheet. Take the following substances- *Kalihari* (*Gloriosa*

Superba), *Kanchuki Kand* (Indian night shade), *SnuhiKsheer* (Euphorbia caducifolia Haines), *Arka Ksheer* (Calotropis gigantea), *Chitrak* (Plumbago zeylanica), *Karanja* (Indian beech), *Dhatura* (Dhatura metal), *Gunja* (Rosary pea), *Ingudi* (Indian almond), *Chir* (Swertia), *Talmooli* (*Shweta musli*), *Ashwagandha* (Withania somnifera), *Indravaruni* (Bitter apple), take the roots of all these in equal quantity and grind them in a mortar-like paste with buttermilk and apply it on the gold leaf. Hold the gold leaf with tongs, heat it in a fire and soak it separately in cow urine, buttermilk, sesame oil, *kulath kwath* (Horse gram), *kanji* (Indian beech tree), *jambhiri* lemon juice and *Aak* milk seven times each. Each time, apply the paste of the above medicine on the gold leaf and soak it. Do this for a total of fifty-six times.'

The second method of purification

It is said, taking equal parts of *Valmik Mrittika*, *Gruhadhoom*, brick powder, rock salt and ochre is called *Panchamruttika*. Grind them in *Jambhiri* juice (Rough lemon juice), apply on both sides of the gold leaf and cook in a small pot. Take four colours of mica (white, red, yellow, black), *Savarnmakshik* (Chalcopyrite), *Hingul* (Cinnabar), *Haratal* (Arsenic Trisulfide), *Manashila* (Arsenic Disulfide), *Kantaloha* (Magnetite), *Kankustha* (Garcinia Morella), *Rasak Vimal* (Iron pyrite), *Parad* (Mercury), earthworm and grind them in *Jambhiri* juice (Rough lemon) and make a tablet of one *Nishka* (Three grams) each. O *Mandodari*! Gold ash should not be made in less than one pala and more than four pala. Put this pure gold and pure copper in a *mousha* and melt it. After melting, put the *gati* (Movement) of above mentioned *Kanta* etc. Substances one by one in that

musha containing gold and blow it. Keep adding ten times more gold to the garden gradually. Keep blasting till the copper is destroyed. When only gold is left, divine gold will be ready, which destroys old age, death and disease. [6]

Method of refining and processing Gold

It is said to, make seven sheets of the metal used for purification and heat them in the fire. Wrap them in a cover, heat them and put them in oil (heat them in nine types of oil in sequence, each time. Then heat them separately in the oil group, grain decoction, urine group, oil group, juice of *katuka*, acid group, flower group, blood group, fruit group, milk group and extract group ten times each and extinguish them. [7]

Metal Coating of Gold

Geru (Red ochre), *Sajjikshar* (Sodium carbonate), *Vidanamak*, *Kanchnamak* (Black salt), *Navsadar* (Ammonium Chloride), *Gwarpatha* (Aloe Vera) and *Gunja* (*Ratti*) are all wrapping materials of seven metals such as gold.

Soak the metal sheets in *Kanji* or cow urine water three times and then extinguish it. After that, put the equal quantity of *Kajjali* (*Kajjali* made by mixing mercury and sulphur) on the sheets and cook them in a fire using *Baluka yantra*. Different metals should be heated for twelve hours using *Deepagni* (*Mandaagni*). By doing this, metals like gold etc. get purified. In this way, after purifying the metals, put them in the prescribed method as per your wish and make ashes. [8]

Different properties of Suvarna Bhasma gold ash due to the combination of substances

Giving gold ash with *Matsyapita* (Kedar Kutki) soothes the burning sensation quickly. Giving it with the juice of *Punarnava* (*Boerhavia diffusa*) is beneficial for the eyes. The combination of *ghee* forms a chemical. Using it with *Vacha* enhances memory and adding saffron enhances the glow of the body. Giving it with milk cures tuberculosis, poison with non-poisonous and madness caused by *tridosha* (*Vata, Pitta, Kapha*) is cured by giving it with dry ginger, cloves and chillies.

Gold ash which is not burnt properly, destroys strength and semen and causes many types of diseases. It can even cause death. Therefore, one should make pure ash with great effort. [9]

The golden ashes method

Make thin and small pieces of gold leaf like tamarind leaf and take one *pala* (48 grams). Take one *pala* of purified mercury. Grind both of them in a mortar and make a paste. Again add lemon juice and grind. Mix two *palas* of pure sulphur and pure gold *makshika* ash in that paste and grind again. Keep the paste in *Musa Yantra*, tie the joint and burn it in a strong fire. Add one-sixteenth part of mercury ash to this paste. Then keep this purified gold in a mortar grind it hard with the juice of *Jambhiri Nimbu* (Rough lemon) and cook it in *Bhudharput*. Do this sixteen times and add mercury ash every time. In this way, the *Niruttha* (Irrecoverable) ash of gold is prepared, which gives all the *siddhis*. [10]

Other Metals discussed in Ravana Samhita

It is to be noted that *Ravana Samhita* has also mentioned of other metals and *dravyas*.

Dhatu varga (Metal group)

Fifteen types of gold, eight types of Silver (*Raupyam*, Silver (*Rajat*), Tring (*Taar*), Moonshine (*Chandrakanti*), White (*Shitprabha*), Heavy-greasy (*Guru-snigdha*), Soft-white (*Mridu-shweta*), wealthy (*Ghanksham*, *Varnadhya*), five types of copper (*Ravi Priya*, *Mlechha*, *Mukh Surya*, *Paryayanami* and *Jaya* flower-like), two types of *Vang* (Tin) (*Ranga* and *Vang*), three types of Zinc, six types of Lead (*Naag*), eight types of Iron (*Lauh*) – these are the seven metal groups. [11]

Upadhatuvarga (Semi metals group)

Sonamakhi from gold, Tarmakshik from silver, Tritiya from copper, *Kankustha* from copper, *Rasak* from *Jasad*, *Sindoor* from *Naga*, *Loh-kitta* from iron - these are the seven semi-metals. [12]

Rasa varga

Four types of mercury (Red, Yellow, White and Black), four types of sulphur (red, yellow, white and black), two types of orpiment, two types of eye black (*Srotoanjana* and *Sauviranjana*), *Kasis* (Ferrous sulphate), and Ochre (*Geru*) - all these are groups of substances of *rasa* class. [13]

Uprasa varga

Singarph is produced from *Parad* (Mercury), Borax from Sulphur, Chalk from Mica, *Manashila* (Arsenic Disulfide) from *Haratal* (Arsenic Trisulfide), *Shukti* (Oyster shell), *Shankh* (Conch shell) etc. from *Anjan*, *Shankhamurva* from *Kasis* (Ferrous sulphate), *Mrittika* (Plain Ochre) from *Garrika*. [14]

Ratna varga (Gems groups)

Diamond, Pearl, Coral, Onyx, Sapphire, Emerald, Topaz, Indraneel and Ruby (*Padmarag*) - all these are nine gems in sequence. [15]

Upratna varg (Semi gem groups)

Vaikranta (Tourmaline), *Mauktika* (Pearl), *Shukti* (Oyster shell), *Rakshat*, *Emeralds*, *Garlic* (Lahsuniya), *Laja* (*Mimosa pudica*), *Garudaka* and *Sphatika* (Crystal) are all sub-gems. [16]

3. DISCUSSION

It is said that attraction of human towards Gold is as old as the birth of the human race. Since then it has also remained the most sought-after substance, a noble metal after all! Gold being more precious, auspicious and lustrous has been use as wealth-currency, trading material, ornament, food utensils, etc. Our ancestors might have understood by careful observation that Gold is the only metal that does not got affected by any of the environmental factors and remains unchanged in the composition. There are *sutras* (Aphorisms) in *Vedas* which stand proof for usage of Gold (*Suvarna*) in the Vedic time. *Yajur Veda*, *Atharva Veda*, *Upanishads* have references as 'Haem'. In *Shatpath Brahman*, an age old treatise Gold is named as 'Agniveya' most pure metal. The medicinal value and its use in medical treatment is seen from our early history. The *Samhita* period treatise records gold medical uses. *Charaka Samhita*, *Sushruta Samhita*, *Ashtanga Samgraha* and *Hridaya* have references, followed by the *Rasa Shastra* book.

Ravana Tantra Samhita probably belonging to around 5000 BC seems to be a regardful account on *Suvarna*. It provides a profound insight into the medicinal applications of *Suvarna* (gold), reflecting the advanced understanding of *Rasayana Tantra* and *Dhatuvada* in ancient *Ayurveda*. Gold has been revered not only for its spiritual and cultural significance but also for its potent

therapeutic effects. The text meticulously classifies *Suvarna* into fifteen types, each with distinct properties and applications in medicine.

Purification (*Shodhana*) plays a crucial role in making *Suvarna* (Gold) biologically safe and effective for therapeutic use. The process involves subjecting gold sheets to sequential heating and quenching cycles in various herbal decoctions, oils, and natural extracts. These repeated treatments enhance the assimilation and therapeutic potency of *Suvarna* (Gold), ensuring it is free from toxic impurities.

Once purified, gold undergoes incineration (*Marana*) to produce *Suvarna Bhasma* (Gold ash), a fine ash that is highly bioavailable and therapeutically potent. The *Ravana Samhita* emphasises the diverse health benefits of *Suvarna Bhasma* (Gold ash), including its *Balya* (Strength-promoting), *Medhya* (Intellect-enhancing), *Jivaniya* (Rejuvenating), *Vyadhipratibandhaka* (Disease-preventing), and *Ojasvardhaka* (Vitality-boosting) properties. The efficacy of *Suvarna Bhasma* is further enhanced when combined with specific herbs and substances—*Matsyapita* (Fish bile) (*Kedar Kutki*) alleviates burning sensations, *Punarnava* (Boerhavia diffusa) improves vision, *Vacha* (*Acorus calamus*) boosts memory, and *Dugdha* (Milk) enhances its *Rasayana* effects.

However, improper preparation of *Suvarna Bhasma* may lead to adverse health effects, as emphasized in the *Ravana Samhita*. This highlights the need for precise formulation and adherence to *Ayurvedic* principles. The structured approach outlined by *Ravana* aligns with *Yukti* (Scientific reasoning) and *Chikitsaprayojana*

(Therapeutic applications), making it a subject of continued relevance in modern pharmacological research.

Today there are many modern studies regarding Gold, and *Suvarna* medicine. About pharmacology, it is accounted as Gold (Au) with Atomic number 79, element category transition metal bright yellow appearance, soft, malleable, dense and ductile. Modern science has studied therapeutic uses of Gold Salts seen in treating Rheumatoid Arthritis and some skin conditions. Additionally gold nanoparticles are being researched for their potential in various applications, including diagnostic, drug delivery and cancer treatment. We are seeing in this contemporary time, scientific studies are exploring the immunomodulatory, neuroprotective and anti-ageing potential of *Suvarna Bhasma* (Gold ash). And bridging *Rasa Shastra* and *Ravana* insights with modern medical advancements may open new avenues in integrative medicine, reinforcing the relevance of *Suvarnakalpa* (Gold preparation) in holistic healthcare.

4. CONCLUSION

The *Ravana Samhita* presents a sophisticated understanding of *Suvarna* (Gold) and its therapeutic applications, highlighting the advanced knowledge of *Ravana* in *Rasayana Tantra* and *Dhatuvada*. The text provides detailed classifications, purification (*Shodhana*), incineration (*Marana*), and medicinal applications of *Suvarna Bhasma* (Gold ash), demonstrating its efficacy in promoting *Bala* (Strength), *Medha* (Intellect), *Vyadhipratibandhaka* (Disease prevention) and *Ojasvardhaka* (Vitality enhancement).

These insights underscore the significance of properly processed gold in *Ayurvedic* therapeutics.

Modern research continues to explore the pharmacological properties of *Suvarna Bhasma* (Gold ash), particularly its immunomodulatory, neuro protective, and anti-ageing effects. The meticulous methods described in the *Ravana Samhita* align with contemporary scientific approaches, emphasising the need for standardised preparation techniques to ensure efficacy and safety. By integrating these ancient formulations with modern advancements, *Suvarna* (Gold) can play a pivotal role in *Ayurvedic* and integrative medicine.

Further research and clinical validation are essential to fully realise the potential of *Suvarna Bhasma* (Gold ash) in modern healthcare. Understanding the traditional principles outlined in the *Ravana Samhita* alongside contemporary pharmacology can bridge the gap between ancient wisdom and evidence-based medicine, fostering a holistic approach to wellness and therapeutic innovation.

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