



Review Article

Gandhashastra: A Book Review

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INTRODUCTION:

Gandha (smell) is one of the five senses, the most important characteristic of the nose (*Gandh Indriya*). Smelling as the sense of smell, which extends into the realm of sensory impressions and sense knowledge and into the realm of external experiences in your soul. *Sugadha* (aroma) is a very unique phenomenon that gives immense pleasure and satisfaction. *Gandha dravyas* (aromatic substances) are the main source of volatile and essential oils. In today's era, due to their impressive ingredients and therapeutic riches, herbal medicines are very popular in cosmetics. *Gandha Shastra* (the science of fragrances) includes various *Gadha Dravya* (aromatic substances), procedures for various fragrance creations, and its documentation, which is evolving with time.

In ancient times, '*Gandhashastra*' was one of the most important 64 *kalas* (art forms) in Indian culture. References to cosmetics and perfumes are found from the Vedic period to the present, and the commercial importance of this science gradually discovered in ancient India. The context of '*Gandha shastra*' mainly focused on the worship of Gods and sacrifices in rituals, and its modern use in dressing people. Aromatic oils and powder preparations are mentioned for the treatment of *Vajikaran* (aphrodisiac therapy) and *Vaat vyadhi* (diseases caused by vitiated *Vaata Dosha*) along with cosmetic purpose, in Ayurveda. Since ancient times, especially in the Medieval Ages, there was a special community that was famous for trampling the *Gandha Dravyas*. The ancient industry of cosmetics and perfumes was a very

rich, famous and developed in terms of trade & marketing.

Through this book, author Dr. Sanket Ponkshe has opened to us a vast treasure of '*Gandhashastra*'-knowledge of *Gandhashastra* based on '*Gandhasara*' manuscripts evaluated by '*Gandhasar Nighantu*' by Acharya 'Gangadhar'. The book contains all aspects of *Gandhashastra* (the ancient science of fragrance). Thus, this book, written by Dr. Ponkshe combines excellent knowledge, remedies, procedures and aromatic medicinal knowledge with Ayurvedic principles related to *Gandha Dravya* (aromatic plants and substances) and various *Gandha karmas* (aroma therapies and procedures). The original *Gandhasara* script was written in the 12th century.

The original '*Gandhasara*' manuscript was edited by Dr. R. T. Vyas of Badoda. This book is based on original book *Gandhasara*. The author of this book has a PhD in *Gandhasara*, the ancient Indian science of perfumery and cosmetics. The *Gandhashastra* book is based on this thesis.

The *Gandhasara* book is divided into three main chapters and has a total of 603 verses. The original author of this book is 'Gangadhar'. Apart from this author's name, in the original book, author has not revealed any other information about himself. Each chapter begins with the glorification of '*Shivstuti*' (Praise of Hindu God Lord Shiva).

The first chapter, titled *Paribhasha* means terminology. This chapter contains *shadkarma* or six procedures related to *Gandha Dravya*. *Bhavana*, *Pachana*, *Bodhana*, *Dhupana*, *Vasan* and *Vedhan* are the six basic procedures to begin with. In the *Pachana* procedure, medicines are heated using various instruments and medicines. This procedure helps to get the right amount of aroma in each *Sugandhikalpa*. *Bodhan* procedures give the experience of two or three smells at the same time from one preparation. *Vedhan* method adds liquid aromas to liquid *Bodhan Dravya*, like *Kapur* and *Kasturi*.

Dhupan procedure is divided into three types such as *Shar*, *Tivra* and *Madhya* in different seasons. Preserving fragrances with flowers to produce a floral fragrance is a *Vasan* procedure. In addition to these basic procedures, *Shuddhikaran* or purification of various aromatic medicines is given. Where *Dhupa Shuddhikaran* is useful in every *Kalpa*.

The author further explains the three different qualities of *Gandha Dravya Mitra* (compatible with each other), *Shatru* (incompatible with each other) and *Udasin* (neutral). A mixing ratio corresponding to these characteristics is mentioned mainly to achieve a high-quality aromatic combination. In the *Paribhasha* chapter, the next point is explains about the replacement of *Gandha Dravya*, i.e. *Javadi Kasturi* instead of the original *Kasturi*, because the original *Kasturi* is difficult to obtain.

The qualities of an expert in making fragrance is called '*Gandhadnya*' (Expert in perfumery), he should be aware of the body component and he should be interested in it and likes-dislikes of the person for whom he is making the fragrance.

The title of Chapter two is '*Gandhodakadinanagandhopayogiprakaranam*' which is self explanatory that it provides information on different flavourings. *Gandhodak* (aroma water), *Gandhataila* (Aroma oil) *Mrugraj*, *Mukhvaas*, *Parijaat* (scented mouth freshener), *Udvartan* (scrub powder) or *Uti* etc., *Snana jala* (bath water), *Jalavaas*, *Patavaas*, *Dhoopa*, *Varti*, *Deepavarti*, *Uuddhulanam*, *Niryas*, *Syanda*, *Kusumadi Druti*, *Gandhasankraman*, *Krutrim Dravyani* (artificial aromatic substances). They are

different combinations of different methods of aromatics in a particular proportion. These doses are mentioned in a very unique method called *Bhutasankhya paddhati*. *Bhutsankhya paddhati* has traces of Indian culture. There is only one moon in the universe, so *Chandra* (moon) terminology denotes number one. Another special aromatic combination is more than 50 different varieties of *Dhoopa*. The names given to fragrances are also unique and self-explanatory. *Chandramo* etc. *Dhoops* are mentioned to glorify lord *Shiva Shivvallabh*. For focus, the study mentions *Sarswat dhoop*. For *Rajniti* (politics) *Janmohan* (ability to attract people) is mentioned. *Tantravidya Vaitali Varti* is mentioned to control an elephant *Hastivashikaran Dhoop*. The strange procedure explained in *Gandhasara's* book is also the artificial creation of *Kasturi*.

The third chapter has *Ashtavarga* or eight different classes of aromatics based on the useful part and its means. When the leaves are used as an aromatic, it is classified as *Patravarga*. And similarly, flowers belong to *Pushpavarga*, roots belong to *Moolavarga*. Examples of these substances also belong to classification. Another special category is *Jeev Varga*, which contains substances collected from living musk deer, *Kasturi* from animals, honey from bees, etc. Several criteria are given to achieve the quality of these aromatics to ensure the best collection. E.g. the sandalwood should be heavy, aromatic, pale amber, the dough should be soft.

The main cover page is attractive silver container for fragrances and photographs of aromatic plants are printed on colour pages specifically. The summary of this book gives an overview of the use of fragrances since man began to live as a community until the present day. A total of nine tabular appendices consist of Sanskrit name, English name, Sanskrit synonyms and Marathi name of the aromatic substance.

From a bird's eye view.- The technical terminologies explained are very similar to the *Ayurvedic* terminologies. Structure of *Dolayantra* is different from *Ayurvedic Dolayantra* though basic principle of instrument is same. Different instruments are also used in various natural chemical methods.

From botanical identification of point of view some plant names in Sanskrit interpreted as *Surpushpika* is translated as *Dhavada* (*Anogeissus latifolia* Wall. Ex. Bedd) but morphologically it can be *Kutaj pushpa*. *Sushrut Samhita* (book of Ayurveda literature) recommends reading related Shastra (science) to understand Ayurveda better. *Gandhashastra* (the science of aromatic substances) is closely related to the science of Ayurveda.

This book can be used to develop natural aromatic preparations with using some modern instruments and techniques. Which could be beneficial for the perfume and aromatic preparation industries in the current era.

Book name - *Gandhashastra*

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Pages-211

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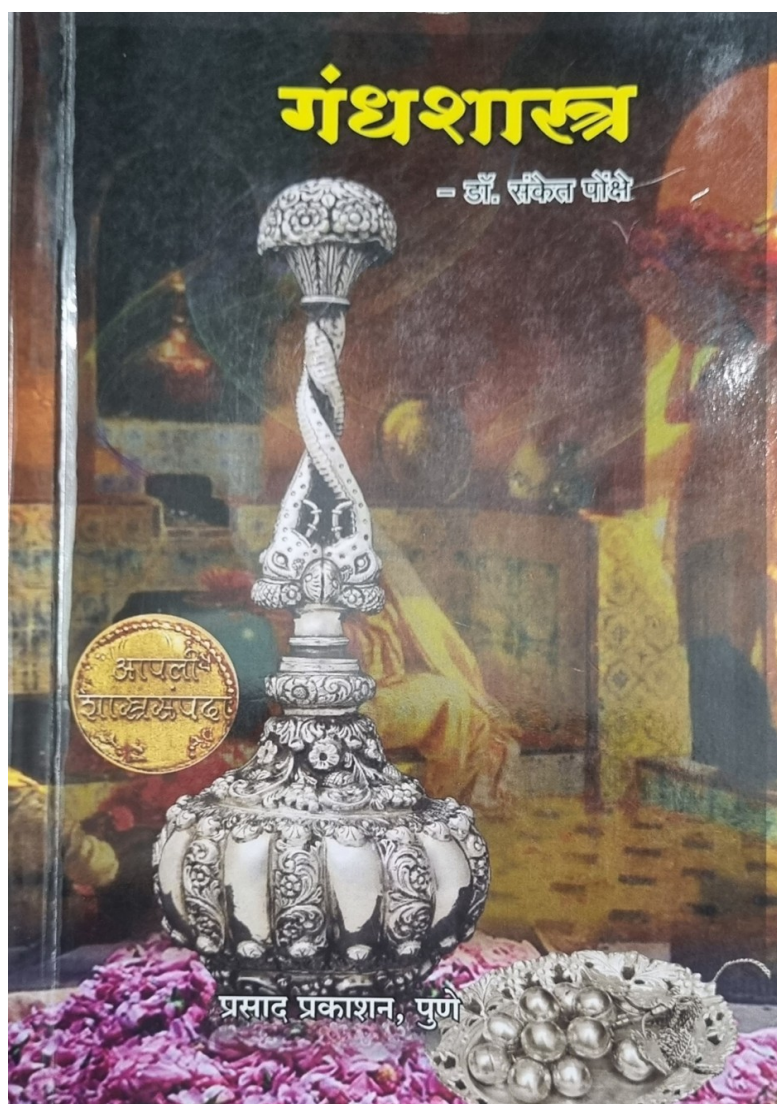


Figure No. 1: Gandhashastra Book cover page