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Rice Water in Modern Skin and Haircare

Recently, rice water has become popular in the beauty industry as a natural skin and haircare remedy. It is a simple treatment that is known to promote hair growth, strengthen hair follicles, and enhance skin health. Rice water has gained popularity as an essential ingredient in beauty today because of the influence of clean beauty products. However, the use of rice water has been around for many years, originating in the ancient Asian cultures where it was used for centuries. In this paper one will explore the contemporary use of rice water, why it resurfaces in the beauty industry, and its historical connection to traditional practices in Asia.

Rice water resurfaces in the beauty industry and is a popular ingredient in major beauty brands for skincare and haircare. Rice water is a popular haircare ingredient because it is rich in vitamins, amino acids, and minerals to strengthen and grow hair while adding shine. It also has many antioxidants and anti-inflammatory properties to help soothe irritated skin, and brighten and improve the skin (Li et al., 2021). Social media, such as TikTok and Instagram, played a big part in the uses of rice water treatments, showing its preparation methods, uses, and results.

The clean beauty movement helped the popularity of rice water in the beauty industry because consumers wanted alternatives to products with chemicals. The market liked that rice water was accessible and affordable for effective beauty solutions. Scientific studies have confirmed its benefits, reinforcing its credibility in the modern beauty industry (Zhao & Kim, 2020). Therefore, rice water went from a home remedy to a major ingredient in beauty products.

Rice water is not only known for its topical benefits but is also used in holistic wellness for additional health benefits. People claim that the consumption of rice water can help aid

digestion, boost energy, and promote hydration due to its nutrients. This supports the movement of beauty from within, where skincare works with healthy eating and lifestyle.

Even though it has recently regained popularity, rice water has been used for centuries in Asian cultures as a beauty and wellness remedy. The most well-known use of rice water comes from the Heian period in Japan, where court women used fermented rice water to maintain long, healthy hair (Watanabe, 2018). This helped create the famous "Komenuka Bijin" (rice bran beauty) tradition, which focused on using rice-derived ingredients for youthful skin and shiny hair.

Similarly, China's Huangluo Yao village which was called the "Long Hair Village", for centuries the women would use fermented rice water as a hair rinse, which helped them gain the reputation of having some of the longest and healthiest hair in the world. The women of the village credited rice water for preventing gray hair and maintaining hair strength even throughout old age (Chen & Liu, 2019). The tradition was passed down to generations, and the village women continue to use rice water in their beauty routines today.

In Ayurvedic, India rice water holds significance, where it was used to soothe inflamed skin and treat dry skin. Ancient texts from India show rice water as a natural toner for skin and a remedy for blemishes, which would be combined with turmeric and other spices for a better effect (Sharma & Patel, 2022). It was also used for hair in treatments that got rid of dandruff and irritations of the scalp, which shows it is multi-purposeful in their self-care uses.

History also shows that rice water was used in other cultures too. For example, through history you can see ancient Korean and Thai beauty rituals that rice water was used to moisturize and brighten skin. Women in Korea part of the Joseon Dynasty were known to wash their faces with rice water to get a "glass skin" look, which was smooth and bright skin without blemishes.

Rice water coming back in today's beauty industry shows an appreciation for ancient natural remedies. Rice water's popularity today is due to social media trends and the clean beauty movement, its historical significance in beauty traditions emphasizes its effectiveness. Understanding the culture and history of rice water makes it more interesting and shows how ancient traditions still influence current trends in skincare and haircare. While the market continues to look for sustainable and traditional solutions in the beauty industry, rice water will likely stay a staple for years.

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