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Review Article

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Processing and Therapeutic Significance of *Parada* in *Rasashastra*

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Abstract

Metals and minerals have also been utilized as medicines under the umbrella of *Rasashastra* and *Bhaishajy Kalpana* though proper purification. India is rich in metals that range from arsenic to mercury. *Parada* (mercury) is found in a semi-fluid form and is very mobile. It is the most commonly used metals in many Ayurvedic medicines, especially *Rasayoga*, in which it is converted to *Bhasma*. *Parada* is unique among metals by virtue of its uncommon semi-fluid state, shining and properties. It is also called "*Rasa*" since it possesses the characteristic of amalgamating with other metals. *Shuddha Parada* is said to be non-toxic, with therapeutic qualities and being a very effective medicine. Contemporary issues regarding the toxicity of *Parada* mainly arise from its unpurified state. This article presents an overview of *Parada* including its clinical significance.

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1. Introduction

Parad is one of the most promising metals in Ayurvedic medicine; it is used very widely in the preparation of different formulations. *Parad* is said to have divine origin in ancient texts and mentioned as an important substance in *Rasa* literature, especially in *Rasa Chikitsa*. Since purification plays a crucial role in *Rasashastra*, certain techniques have been evolved to purify metals, minerals, and even poisonous substances. These techniques utilize for the processing and purification of *Parad*. It is one of the essential ingredients in *Rasaushadhi* formulations, has special characteristics like *Rasayana* and *Yogavahi*. It is a mandatory ingredient in the majority of metallic and herbo-mineral drugs [1-3].

2. Types of Parada

1. *Rasa*
2. *Rasendra*
3. *Suta*
4. *Parada*
5. *Mishraka*

Ayurveda described two types of *Shodhana* for the purification purpose of mercury which includes *Samanya Shodhana* and *Vishesh Shodhana*. For *Samanya*

Shodhana different purification methods are used. One is triturating *Parad* with certain medicinal drugs. *Ghratakumari Swarasa* is added and the mixture is well processed. Then it is washed with fermented liquid to eliminate natural and acquired impurities resulting in purified mercury. For removal of impurities from *Parad*, purification process is done for 3 to 7 days with ingredients like *Sudha*, *Lashoona*, *Saindhava*, *Ghratakumari Swarasa*, *Chitraka Kwatha*, *Brahati Kwatha*, *Triphala Kwatha*, *Ardraka Swarasa*, *Yavakshara*, *Tankana* and *Sarjikshara*, etc. The purification is done by means of *Astadasha Samskaras* for increasing and intensifying *Parad*. Mercury gets loss during the processing and purification by various means as depicted in **Figure 1** [3-6].

As mentioned in figure mercury in *Rasashastra*, experiences five different modes of loss during the processing. *Jala Gati* means the loss that takes place during washing of mercury with water, while *Mala Gati* indicates loss related to impurities separating from mercury during the processing. *Hamsa Gati* is loss that takes place when mercury is from one vessel to another transferred. Besides, *Dhuma Gati* refers to loss in vapors during processing; *Jiva Gati* represents the loss similar to the departure of soul from the body.

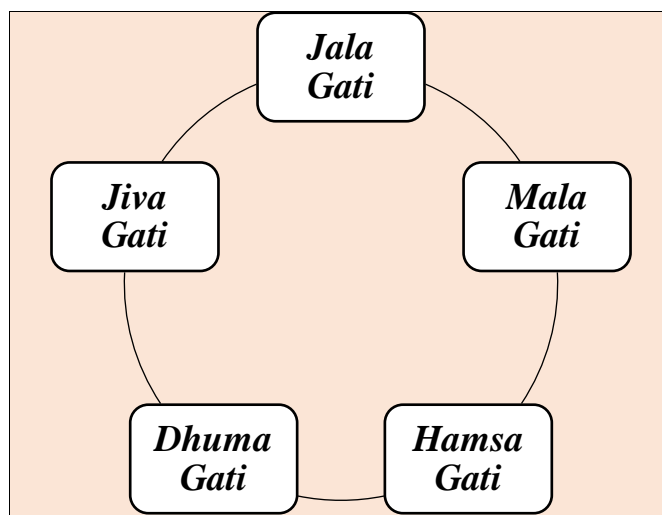


Figure 1. Loss of Mercury during Processing

3. Ayurvedic Properties of *Parad*:

- ❖ *Rasa*: *Shadarasa*
- ❖ *Guna*: *Snigdha*
- ❖ *Virya*: *Ushna*
- ❖ *Vipaka*: *Madhura*
- ❖ *Prabhava*: *Yogavahi*

The good quality *Parad* has a dazzling outside with a faint blue color within, as if the appearance of sunlight in the middle of the day. On the other hand, smoky grayish, dull white or irregularly mixed *Parad* is not to be utilized in *Rasa Karmas*. Recent science also depicts mercury as a silver-white liquid metal with a pale blue tint, releasing violet light when in thin films [6-9].

4. Therapeutic Importance

Refined *Parad* in Ayurveda is famous for its therapeutic and rejuvenating values. It works as a *Yogavahi*, *Rasayana*, *Balya* and *Vrishya* (sex health enhancer). When properly refined, it is said to destroy diseases and promote overall well-being.

The Ayurvedic texts such as *Bhavprakasha* describe *Parad* as having anti-inflammatory, *Tridoshaghna* and *Sarvarogahara* values. The *Rasendra Sara Sangraha* also describes that purified *Parad* increases intelligence, memory, complexion, luster, and power. These advantages are achieved only when *Parad* is purified properly. Mercury in medicine has been traditionally employed as a disinfectant, purgative and diuretic, and for the cure of syphilis.

Mercury is industrially utilized in thermometers, barometers, fluorescent lamps, explosives, and electrical devices. It is also used in electroplating, photography, insecticides, and fingerprint powders. Mercury is used as an ingredient of dental amalgams and has also been employed in vaccines as thimerosal, a preservative.

Some *Rasayogas* of Ayurveda, such as *Kajjali*, *Agnitundi Vati*, *Bruhat Vata Chintamani Rasa* and *Arogyavardhini Rasa*, etc. have purified mercury. The *Vyadhi Prabhava* of mercury adheres to the purification principles of *Rasa*

Tarangini, making it safe for use in Ayurvedic preparations.

Pharmaco-therapeutically, *Shuddha Parada* is *Rasayana*, *Vajikarana*, *Dipana*, *Pushtikara* and *Shodhana*. It is utilized in Ayurveda for anemia, fever, digestive ailments, jaundice, urinary issues, dermatological diseases, diabetes and neurological disorders, etc. In the modern medical world, mercury-containing preparations are still in use as topical antiseptics, although its use has decreased due to toxicity [8-10].

5. Conclusion

Parada or mercury is an inorganic metallic substance found naturally that has been both interesting and hazardous to humans for centuries because of its unusual liquid form and toxicity. Mercury occurs naturally everywhere in the combined form, not as a pure form, except in its natural rocks. *Parad* is a very important drug in Ayurvedic medicine, especially in *Rasa Shastra*, where it is regarded as a divine material with enormous therapeutic value. Purification of *Parad* by *Samanya* and *Vishesh Shodhana* is required to remove impurities and augment its medicinal action. Purified *Parad* possesses *Rasayana* and *Yogavahi* properties and is an important ingredient in many *Rasaushadhi* preparations. Ayurveda scriptures point to its effectiveness in managing numerous health conditions, such as neurological, gastrointestinal, and skin diseases. Modern science may identify its industrial uses and toxicity, but Ayurveda focuses on appropriate purification for its effective therapeutic use.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article.

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