



SIGNIFICANCE OF CONTEMPORARY KNOWLEDGE OF PARADA DOSHA AND PARADA SHODHAN IN RAS-SHASTRA

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ABSTRACT

The ancient practice of *Rasashastra* identifies *Parada* as a divine gift and Vedic traditions also attribute a unique attribute to this subtle element of creation as a gift from Mother Nature. The ancient science recognized the healing ability of *Parada* and documented it in the classical works of *Rasaratna Samuccaya*. *Ashuddha Parada* can be more poisonous than a poison, due to the inherent impurities in *Parada*, it needs to undergo a process of *Samanya* and *Vishesha Shodhana* to make it fit for internal consumption. Therefore, the *Rasa Acharyas* have created detailed procedures regarding the several different purification methods available for removing adverse components or *Doshas* of *Parada*. Mercury exists in three different states: elemental, inorganic, and organic. The safe and methodical usage of these resources is the basis of the practice of *Rasashastra*. This article focuses on the *Doshas* of *Parada* and the various techniques used to purify it.

KEYWORDS: Ayurveda, Parada, Rasashastra, Shodhana, Mercury.

INTRODUCTION

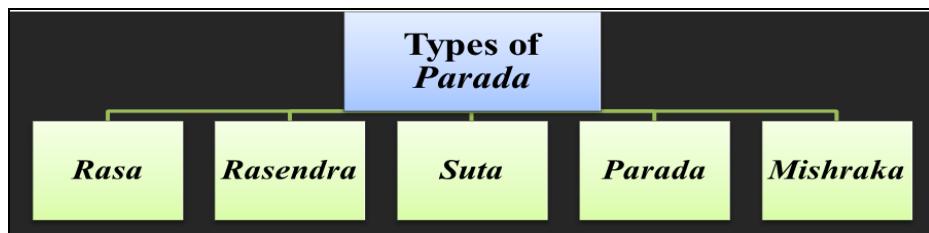
Parada (mercury) is a naturally occurring element in Cinnabar (mercuric sulphide). According to Vedic literature, *Parada* holds spiritual and medical importance. Ayurveda has consistently recognized the value of *Shuddha Parada* for treating many illnesses. However, due to the potential dangers posed by *Parada*, it has to be purified carefully. Classical Ayurvedic texts such as *Rasaratna Samuccaya* highlight this healing power when properly processed using *Samskara*.^[1-3]

Parada used for its medicinal properties and rejuvenating effect, also used in alchemical application for spirituality and transforming metals. As per Ayurveda, the *Ashta Samskara* are necessary for rendering *Parada* safe and therapeutic. The classical

Ayurvedic texts describe how to extract *Parada* from *Hingula* using distillation techniques such as *Adhaha Patana*, *Urdhva Patana*, and *Tiryak Patana Yantras*. Mercury extracted using *Adhaha Patana* is considered the purist form of mercury, requiring no further processing and is free from all *Kanchuka Doshas*. Therefore it can be used for both therapeutic and alchemical purposes. The properties of this type of *Parada* are similar to the properties of *Ashta Samskarita Parada*.^[2-5]

Types of Parada

Based on origin and therapeutic or alchemical use, *Parada* is classified in *Rasashastra* into five types as mentioned in **Figure 1**.

Figure 1: Various types of *Parada*.

These categories distinguish the different forms of mercury employed for medicinal formulations and alchemical practices, each possessing specific characteristics and applications. When performing *Parada Kalpana* and *Shodhana*, five distinct types of *Gati* of mercury observed. These *Gatis* are clinically important because if left unregulated during the preparation process, they may result in mercury loss through processing. These are *Jala Gati*, *Hansa Gati*, *Mala Gati*, *Dhooma Gati* and *Jeeva* or *Adrushya Gati*.^[4-6]

Parada Shodhana

According to the *Rasashastra*, all medicinal substances must go through a *Shodhana* process before they can be used medicinally, and this includes mercury (*Parada*) also. Because mercury typically has many impurities (*Doshas*), it is necessary to conduct both *Samanya Shodhana* and *Vishesha Shodhana* before it can be taken internally. If Mercury is ingested without undergoing purification, it's likely that the poisonous qualities of the *Doshas* will cause side effects ranging from mild fevers to severe systemic illnesses, or death; therefore classical texts provide a number of different methods for carrying out the *Parada Shodhana* purification process.

The purpose of performing *Samanya Shodhana* on mercury is to remove the *Naisargika* and *Kanchuka Doshas* from the Mercury. The *Rasatarangini* states that when Mercury has been thoroughly purified (*Shuddha Parada*), it will exhibit the same qualities as *Piyusha*, or nectar. As such, *Rasa Vaidyas* are therefore instructed to always purify *Parada* before administering it.

The *Rasaratna Samuccaya* details numerous methods of *Shodhana* and *Samskara* of mercury, with the amount of mercury used for these processes ranging from 2000 *Pala* to $\frac{1}{2}$ *Pala*, according to each method. On the other hand, the *Rasatarangini* states that when purifying Mercury (*Parada*), the quantity used must be between 100 *Pala* and 1 *Pala*, and further clarifies that no amount smaller than $\frac{1}{2}$ *Pala* should be considered for *Shodhana*. Based on these guidelines about the quantities of Mercury to use for purifying, the proper amount of Mercury must be present to ensure suitable purification.^[7-9]

Parada Dosha

According to the classical texts of *Rasashastra*, *Parada* has inherent *Doshas* that create an unsafe or potentially dangerous substance. The toxicity caused by these

Doshas can be removed from *Parada* as part of the purification process. If these *Doshas* remain in *Parada*, they can have negative effects on the body, including serous skin conditions, burning sensations, ulceration, loss of consciousness, impairments related to the reproductive system, and even death. The eight *Naisargika Doshas* described in the text have specific negative effects associated with each *Dosha*; therefore, the *Doshas* must be removed from *Parada* to be used safely as a medicine. The *Vanga*, *Naaga*, mineral or earth contaminants, toxic agents, and unstable natural characteristics assisting in the creation of these negative effects when used unpurified from the natural *Doshas*. So the importance of removing the *Doshas* completely before using *Parada* in medical therapies is paramount.

Classification of Parada Doshas

Parada that is purchased through commercial channels or straight from natural sources may be naturally or intentionally contaminated. Ancient scholars meticulously recorded the mercury contaminants since they were well aware of this type of adulteration. Three general categories can be used to classify *Parada doshas* as follows:

1. *Naisargika Doshas* are naturally occurring pollutants present in raw mercury.
2. *Yougika Doshas*, are intentional or artificial pollutants produced during processing.
3. *Aupadhi Doshas*; resulting from exposure to air or ambient elements and chemical processes.

Classical sources list these *Doshas*, which include *Visha*, *Vahni*, *Mala*, *Naaga*, *Vanga*, *Parpati*, *Patani*, *Bhedi*, *Dravi*, *Malakari*, *Andhakari*, and *Dhwankshi*. The consideration of *Parada Dosha* is important in order to ensure *Parada*'s efficacy and safety in *Rasashastra*.^[8-10]

Pharmaco-therapeutic Properties of Parada

According to classical sources, *Shuddha Parada* has a broad range of medicinal activities. It acts as *Dipana*, *Pushtikara*, *Ayushkara*, *Rasayana*, *Vrishya* and *Vajikarana*. Additionally, it promotes physiological and alchemical perfection, enhances eyesight and support in reaching *Purushartha Chatushtaya*. It also possesses *Ropana*, *Shodhana* and *Krimighna* qualities.

Jwara, *Raktapitta*, *Kasa*, *Pandu*, *Atisara*, *Pravahika*, *Visuchika*, *Ajirna*, *Arsha*, *Hikka*, *Vamana* and *Mutrakriccha* are among the illnesses for which purified mercury is recommended. *Shotha*, *Kamala*, *Vatarakta*, *Gridhrasi*, *Krimi*, *Kustha*, *Kilasa*, *Apasmara*, *Unmada*

and *Prameha* are among the other languages that utilize it. Mercury and its derivatives are rarely used in modern medicine. While some compounds, such as merbromin, have been used as topical antiseptics for small wounds, elemental mercury is also used in dental amalgams.^[8-10]

CONCLUSION

The extraction of Mercury from *Hingula* by means of (*Satva Patana*) reflects some advanced classical techniques that yield highly purified forms of Mercury for medicinal and alchemical purposes. *Shuddha Parada* has a wide range of actions as a medicine and is clinically applicable for a large number of diseases and is used to assist in the attainment of a long life. *Parada* has a special relationship to *Rasashastra* because of the physiological, healing, and rejuvenative effects. *Dosha*, *Gati*, *Shodhana* and *Samskara* are examples of the scientific knowledge of the ancient *Acharyas*, who were responsible for developing the concepts of using Mercury safely. By following the principle of *Samanya* and *Vishesha Shodhana*, along with the guidelines of *Ashta Samskara*, physician becomes able to purify the toxic form of Mercury into its *Shuddha* or pure form, which is as valuable or similar to *Piyusha*. In order to safely and successfully utilize Mercury in Ayurvedic practice, a proper understanding of its types, movements, impurities and dosages prescribed for purification is critical in order to avoid potentially toxic effects and to obtain a therapeutic outcome.

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