

RATIONALE OF ASHTASAMSKARAS OF PARADA – A REVIEW

(Part 1)

Dr. Mona S. Mashru^{*1}, Dr. Rajesh G. Baravaliya² and Dr. Mita S. Mashru³

¹Associate Professor, Government Akhandanand Ayurveda Mahavidyalaya, Ahmedabad, Gujarat, India.

²Professor & I/C Principal, Department of RS & BK, State Model Institute of Ayurveda Sciences, Kolavada, Gujarat, India.

³Associate Professor, Parul University, Parul Institute of Ayurveda, Department of RS & BK Tal. Waghodia, Dist. Vadodara, Gujarat, India.

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Corresponding Author*Dr. Mona S. Mashru**

Associate Professor,
Government Akhandanand
Ayurveda Mahavidyalaya,
Ahmedabad, Gujarat, India.

ABSTRACT

Ayurveda is the repository of safe and therapeutically efficacious remedies and Ayurvedic physicians handle diseases with great success. Ayurvedic recipes are formulated only after centuries of trial and experience and these are well known to be free from toxicity. In Ayurvedic therapeutics, three categories of drugs are used viz. (1) Herbal products, (2) Animal products and (3) Metals including minerals, gems and precious stones. Apart from their therapeutic efficacy in minute doses, Rasasaukhya were found very effective for the preservation and promotion of positive health and prevention of diseases which is the primary aim of Ayurveda. **Samskara** literally

means a process or procedure by use of which there is enhancement in properties. Samskara is the qualitative alteration done for improvement, enhancement, modification, lowering the bad effects or any such procedure. Parada due to its mystical importance in Ayurveda and Rasashastra is briefly used for two purposes; **Deha-vadha** (Medicine, body rejuvenation) and **Loh-vadha** (Occult, Alchemical and Spiritual upliftment). To completely attain all the purposes, Ayurveda texts inform about **Ashtadash-Sanskara** (Eighteen process) required to purify mercury. Of these, only the **first eight** are recommended for **Deh-vadha** (medicinal purposes) while the remaining ten steps, which are obscure and have occult overtones, are used only for purifying mercury in such a way that it can transform vulgar

metals into gold (Loh-vadha). So in this current article we attempted to do the practical aspects of first four samskaras starting from Swedana samskara to Uthapana samskara.

KEYWORDS: Samskara, Parada, Ashtasamskara, Loha vadha, Deha vadha etc.

INTRODUCTION

Word '**AYURVEDA**' consists of two words 'AYU' and 'VEDA' where 'AYU' means "Life" and 'VEDA' means "Wholeness of knowledge". Wholeness of Ayurveda can be considered in two ways.

1. Theoretical
2. Practical

By this it is very clear that theory and practical are essential part of the knowledge. Only theoretical knowledge cannot make a Physician perfect. Physician fights against the disease with the weapon named drug and result of any drugs always depends upon the way of its preparation. Acarya Caraka has given four qualities of a physician viz:-

- i) A sound theoretical knowledge
- ii) Wide practical experience
- iii) Skill and
- iv) Purity of body as well as mind (Ca.Su. 9/16-18). This also indicates toward pharmaceutical proficiency of a physician. The practical aspect of Rasa (Parada) and related substance is having much more importance in comparison to their theoretical aspect in Rasasastra. Validity of this branch of science totally depends on the successful completion of its practical aspect. A pharmaceutical process called Samskara adopted by ancient Indian Alchemists forms the basis principle of Rasasastra which has got its own place and importance in it. In this article we are concentrating on Ashtasamskar of Parada in detail with Rasa Hrudaya Tantra reference, this will be helpful to all Ayurveda persons.

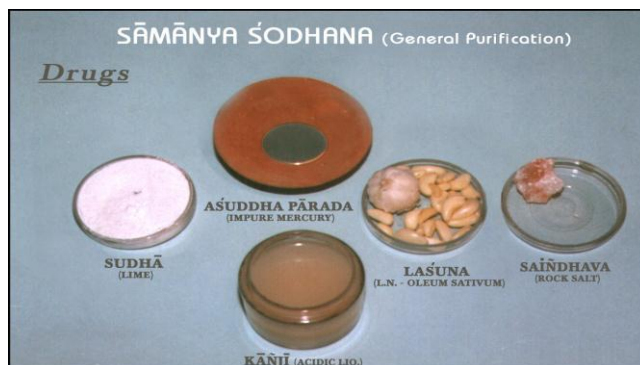
Kanji was prepared as per Reference: Y.T./D.V.- Paribhasa Khanda.

PRACTICAL NO. – 1: SAMANYA SODHANA Of PARADA For ASTASAMSKARA

Name of the Practical	Reference	Date of Starting	Date of Completion
Samanya Sodhana of Parada for Astasamskara	: R.T. 5/36-37	25 - 04 – 2000	10 – 05 - 2000

Materials

Sr. No	Name of Drug	Weight
1.	Asuddha Parada	1.25 kg
2.	Sudha (Lime powder)	1.25 kg
3.	Lasuna	950 gm
4.	Saindhava Lavana	475 gm
5.	Hot water	100 ml



Apparatus

- Electric weigh machine, Khalva yantra, Steel vessels, Spatula, Cloth, measure glass etc.

Procedures

- Asuddha Parada and Sudha (lime powder) were mixed and triturated for 36 hours.
- Then the mixture was washed with warm water until Parada remained.
- To this Parada equal quantity of Lasuna paste with half the quantity of Saindhava Lavana were added and triturated for 36 hours.
- Then Parada was collected from this paste by washing with hot water.

Observations

- After one hour of trituration Parada started to disintegrate into small globules and got mixed up with Sudha (lime powder). So lime powder became heavy.
- When Sudha was triturated with Parada for about 5 hours, the mixture turned to light grey colour.
- After triturating for 36 hours the mixture of Sudha turned to dark grey colour and no free Parada globules were seen in the mixture.

- When the trituration was over, mixture of Parada and Sudha was washed with hot water, it became light grey in colour but on repeated washing it gradually become colourless and Parada settled at the bottom of vessel.
- When Parada was triturated along with lasuna paste and Saindhava Lavana, after 30 minute the Parada started disintegrating into small globules and paste turned to light black colour.
- After 36 hours of trituration, the paste completely turned into black colour and small globules of Parada completely mixed with the paste.
- On continuous washing of this paste with hot water, Parada globules started to mix with each other and regained its original state.

Precautions

- Mardana should be done very carefully as Parada may spill out of Khalva yantra
- Washing of the paste with hot water should be done with utmost care otherwise Parada will be lost through Jalagati and Malagati.

Result

No. of days taken	16 days
Total time taken for Mardana	36 hours
With Sudha	36 hours
With Lasuna + Saindhava Lavana	36 hours
Asuddha Parada taken	1250 gm
Samanya Sodhita Parada obtained	1000 gm
Weight loss	250 gm

Cause of weight loss

- Impurities removed during Shodhana.
- Spilling of Parada during Mardana process

PRACTICAL NO. –2 SWEDANA SAMSKARA

Name of the Practical	Reference	Date of Starting	Date of Completion
Swedana Samskara	R.H.T. 2/3	08-05-2000	15-05-2000

Materials

Sr. No	Name of Drug	Weight
1.	Samanya Sodhita Parada	1 kg
2.	Rajika	62.5 gm
3.	Saindhava lavana	62.5 gm
4.	Katutraya	187.5

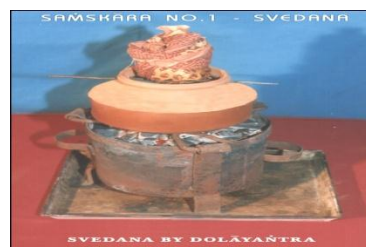
5.	Citraka	62.5 gm
6.	Ardra	62.5 gm
7.	Mulika	62.5 gm
8.	Kanji	Q.S.

Apparatus

- Electric weigh balance, Dolayantra, Khalva yantra, Kadali patra, Cloth, Spatula, thread, Gas stove, Steel vessels, Thermometer, measure glass, etc.

Procedures

- Each of the above ingredients (except Mulika tuber) were made into fine powder and Mulika tuber was cut in to very small pieces, made into paste form and added to fine powder and triturated with Kanji, to make its paste (Kalka).
- A four folded cloth was taken and kept on tray. On this cloth banana leaf (Kadali patra) was placed and it was smeared with above mentioned paste in a thickness of 1¼” and it has to be dried properly to withhold parada in it.
- Parada (mercury) was carefully placed in the paste and folded into pottali form.
- Pottali was placed in Dolayantra filled with kanji and subjected to heat. Proper care should be taken during heating, as the pottali should not touch the bottom of the container.
- Throughout the heating process only mild fire was given. When the kanji started boiling, its temperature was maintained between 90⁰C-100⁰C. This heating process was continued for 36 hours and the level of kanji in the Dolayantra was maintained by adding additional kanji to it. After 36 hours of heating, Dolayantra was kept for self cooling. Pottali was transferred in a tray and it was opened very carefully. Free Parada was first procured from the pottali and parada mixed in paste was regained through washing it thoroughly with hot water. Finally all the regained Parada was filtered through a four folded cloth.



Observations

- On trituration mulika tuber along with the above mentioned powdered drugs and kanji, a smooth paste was formed.
- Initially volume of kanji taken for Swedana Samskara was 5 liters.
- Initially Mrdu agni was given for 30 minutes, then the temperature noted inside the kanji was 70⁰C
- After one hour of heating the temperature raised to 90⁰C
- Each day, quantity of Kanji decreased as the heating process was continuous and a thick layer was formed on upper surface of Kanji.
- After continuous heating, the colour of Kanji became dark brown and its consistency became thick.
- After completion of process, the pottali was opened and it was found that most of the Parada remained in the inner side of the paste and few quantity of Parada was found mixed with paste on Banana leaf. Any traces of Parada was not found in the Kanji.
- On washing the paste with hot water it became brown in colour but on repeated washing it gradually became colourless and Parada settled at the bottom of the vessel
- Then the Parada was collected from vessel and was dried with a blotting paper/cloth.

Precautions

- Samputa prepared out of the paste of fine powdered drugs has to be dried properly, otherwise the spillage of parada will occur.
- During preparation of pottali, Parada must be kept inside the paste.
- Pottali should be remain dipped in kanji and should not touch to the bottom and side wall of the container.
- Swedana process should be carried out on Mandagni in a temperature ranging between 60⁰C to 70⁰C.
- During the entire process the vessels should be left as such undisturbed.
- Washing of the paste with hot water should be done carefully otherwise Parada will be lost through Malagati and Jalagati.
- After washing the Parada should be filtered through a four folded cloth.

Result

No. of days taken	8 days
Total time taken for Swedana	36 hours
Weight of Samanya Sodhita Parada taken	1000gm
Weight of Swedita Parada obtained	984 gm
Weight loss	16 gm
Total quantity of Kanji consumed	23 liters

Cause of weight loss

- Impurities will be removed during Sodhana
- Fine particles of parada remain adhered to Sodhana dravyas and vessels
- Parada may spill out during the Mardana process
- Parada will be lost during washing process through Jalagati.

PRACTICAL NO. – 3 MARDANA SAMSKARA

Name of the Practical	Reference	Date of Starting	Date of Completion
Mardana Samskara	R.H.T. 2/4	17-05-2000	23-05-2000

Materials

Sr. No	Name of Drug	Weight
1.	Swedita Parada	984 gm
2.	Guda	61.5 gm
3.	Dagdhorna	61.5 gm
4.	Lavana	61.5 gm
5.	Grhadhuma	61.5 gm
6.	Istika curna	61.5 gm
7.	Rajika	61.5 gm
8.	Kanji	Q.S.

Apparatus

- Electric weigh machine, Khalva yantra, Hot plate, Plate, Spatula, Tray, Cloth, Steel vessels, Measure glass etc.

Procedures

- All the ingredients should be made to fine powder (except Guda)
- Swedita Parada along with fine powders, Guda and Kanji were triturated in hot plate and paste was prepared.
- Trituration was carried out for 36 hours. Through out the process the temperature was maintained at 60⁰C.

- As the kanji gets evaporated during trituration on hot plate, additional kanji has to be added to it.
- Once the entire process is over the paste along with Parada was washed with hot water and the retrieval of Parada was done.
- Then the regained Parada was dried by using a cloth / blotting paper and filtered through a four folded cloth.



Observations

- **After trituration for 10 minutes, Parada started to disintegrate into small globules.**
- When the temperature inside the Taptakhalva got raised, the Parada globules started to reunite again.
- The temperature of hot plate was maintained at 60°C.
- The initial colour of paste was brown which turned to dark brown colour after trituration
- Once in 90 minutes 250 ml of Kanji was required for further trituration
- While trituration once the quantity of kanji reduced, the paste started to become solid and sticky.
- On trituration for 10 hours, Parada gradually started to mix up with the paste.
- After 36 hours of trituration paste was washed with hot water, initially it became brown in colour but on repeated washing, it gradually became colourless and Parada settled at the bottom of vessel.

Precautions

- Mardana process should be done on Tapta khalva yantra or Hot plate.
- Mardana process should be carried out at 60°C temperature.
- Trituration should be done with adequate speed, uniform motion and pressure.
- Extra kanji should be added as and when the paste gets dried on trituration.
- Washing of the paste with hot water should be done with care otherwise Parada will be lost in Jalagati and Malagati.

Result

No. of days taken	7 days
Total time taken for Mardana	36 hours
Weight of Swedita Parada taken	984 gm
Weight of Mardita Parada obtained	960 gm
Weight loss	24 gm

Cause of weight loss

- Parada might have spilled out during the Mardana process.
- During washing, Parada particles flow along with water.
- Minute particles of parada remain adhered to the vessels and were difficult to regain.

PRACTICAL NO. – 4 MURCCHANA SAMSAKARA

Name of the Practical	Reference	Date of Starting	Date of Completion
Murcchana Samsakara	R.H.T. 2/4 -5	20-06-2000	27-6-2000

Materials

Sr. No	Name of Drug	Weight
1.	Mardita Parada	960 gm
2.	Haritaki	60 gm
3.	Bibhitaki	60 gm
4.	Aamalaki	60 gm
5.	Citraka mula	60 gm
6.	Kumari Swarasa	Q.S.



Apparatus

Electric weigh machine, Khalva yantra, Measure glass, Plate, Spatula, Knife, etc.

Procedures

- Triphala, Citraka mula were made to powder and Kumari Swarasa was added, then triturated until a paste was formed.
- Mardita Parada was added to it and gradually triturated.

- Kumari Swarasa was added as the kalka got dry.
- Trituration was continued, till Parada was completely disintegrated and until Nastapista form was achieved.

Observations

- After adding Kumari Swarasa, it was triturated for 15 minutes to get small globular formation of Parada.
- Some globules were found mixed with paste while remaining was seen beneath the paste.
- After trituration the paste became dry and sticky.
- After 18 hours of trituration, Parada got mixed with paste but was not completely in Nastapista form.
- After 36 hours of trituration, Parada completely disintegrated into Nastapista form.
- The entire paste was turned into black colour.

Precautions

- Kumari Swarasa should be added frequently as the paste gets dry.
- Trituration should be done carefully otherwise it may cause loss of parada
- For Mardana process, fresh Kumari Swarasa has to be added frequently.

Results

No. of days taken	8 days
Total time taken for Murcchana	36 hours
Weight of Murcchita Parada taken	960 gm.
Total quantity of Kumari Swarasa consumed	1300 ml.

PRACTICAL NO. – 5 UTTHAPANA SAMSKARA

Name of the Practical	Reference	Date of Starting	Date of Completion
Utthapana Samskara	R.H.T. 2/7	29-06-2000	07-07-2000

Materials

Sr. No	Name of Drug	Weight
1.	Murcchita Parada with paste	1.750 gm.
2.	Hot water	Q.S.

1. Apparatus

Electric weigh machine, Khalva yantra, Patana yantra, steel vessels, cloth, chulika, cork, tray, knife, Measure glass etc.

2. Procedures

- Murcchita Parada was kept in hot water in Khalva yantra for 3 hours.
- After 3 hours, Murcchita Parada was washed with hot water, but in this process loss of Parada was more.
- So the paste was allowed to dry in sunlight for 6 days (36 hours). There after the dried paste was strained through a piece of cloth to get free Parada from it.
- The remaining Parada containing paste was subjected to Patana and Parada was collected.
- Due to Jalagati, excessive loss of Parada was seen during washing, hence this method was not carried out further.
- Instead Parada containing paste was dried under sunlight and remaining Parada was collected.

Observations

- On keeping Murcchita Parada in hot water for 3 hours, very tiny particles of Parada was seen at the bottom of Khalva yantra.
- Due to Jalagati, excessive loss of Parada was seen during washing.
- The quantity of Parada obtained after washing was 100 gm.
- During drying process of paste, free Parada separated from paste was 500 gm.
- 400 gm of Parada was obtained from dry paste strained through cloth.
- 125 gm of Parada was obtained after Patana of paste.
- The colour of residual paste was brown.

Precautions

- To prevent the loss of parada it is better to dry the paste under sunlight, rather than washing it in hot water.
- Paste should not be dried in excessive sunlight as it may result in evaporation of Parada
- Necessary care should be taken during filtering of Parada.
- If there is excessive loss of Parada during the process, the Parada should be collected by Patana process.

Results

No. of days taken	8 days
Total time taken for Utthapana	39 hours
Atapa	36 hours
Patana	3 hours
Weight of Murcchita Parada with paste	1.750 gm.
Weight of Uthapita Parada obtained	825 gm
Weight loss of Parada	135 g.

Cause of weight loss

- Loss of Parada in Murcchana Sansakara during trituration.
- During washing of Kalka containing Parada.
- Due to adherence of Parada in condenser of Patana yantra.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Practical No. 1 deals with Samanya Sodhana of Parada, as per reference of R.T. 5/36-57. Samanya Sodhana was done with Sudha (Lime powder), Saindhava Lavana and Lasuna. Due to presence of Ksariya Dravyas having highly alkaline properties in Sudha (Lime powder) it may absorb alkaline soluble impurities along with trace elements present in Parada. During trituration of Parada along with Lavana and Lasuna some watery and oily secretions are seen in the mixture. Lavana having Ksariya property, dissociates the molecules of Parada and absorbs watery and oily soluble impurities and thereby purifies Parada.

Practical No.2

Deals with Swedana Samskara of Parada. Here the Kalka dravyas taken for pottali preparation are mostly having Amla and Ksariya property. In Swedaniya drava Kanji is used which is also having Amla rasa. Thus by Ksariya and Amaliya nature of Swedaniya dravyas and on mild heating the impurities of Parada may be loosened, due to Ksarana, Dahana, Pacana and Bhedana properties of Ksariyadravya and Usna, Tikсна guna of Amla Dravyas. And the loosened impurities are removed by washing with Kanji.

Practical No.3

Deals with Mardana Samskara. During Mardana the surface area of Parada is more exposed to the dravyas having Ksara and Amla drugs. It may be possible that these are removing the external impurities of Parada. In this process trituration is done with carbonic drugs like Grhadhuma, Dagdhorna, Guda and silica drugs like Istika Curna, on hot plate. Carbon acts as

reducing agent and silica acts as adsorbent agent, there by making Parada pure from its blemishes. Pressure and heat produced, as a result of trituration acts as an important factor in reaction between Parada and Dravyas used in Mardana Samskara.

Practical No. 4

This practical deals with Murcchana Samskara of Parada. Kumari Swarsa, Triphala curna and citraka mula curna are the drug used for Murcchana Samskara. Parada was triturated with all these three drugs for 36 hours i.e. till “Nastapista” laksana of Parada was achieved. It was observed during Astasamskara that on using Kumari Swarasa as Bhavana Dravya, Parada immediately dissociates into small molecules. I.e. Comparing with other drugs, Bhavana with Kumari Swarasa achieved “Nastapista Swarup” of Parada easily and quickly. All the three Dravyas used in this Samskara are having Katu and Kasaya Rasa. Due to Bhedana, Sosana, Ksalana, Lekhana properties of Katu and Kasaya Rasa present in these three dravyas may be removing Visa, Vahni and Mala impurities of Parada. The time limit for this Samskara is given up to the achievement of “Nastapista Swarupa of Parada” i.e. the physical state of Parada is completely changed.

Practical No. 5

This practical deals with Utthapana Samskara of Parada. It is performed just to retain Parada from dissociated form or Nastapista Swarupa into original state.

For this references Parada should be either washed with hot Kanji or hot water and should be kept in Atapa (sunlight) for drying or Parada should be obtained by Patana as per textual references available. In this practical study, hot water was used for washing of Parada. Nastapista Parada was washed with hot water but due to the Jalagati of Parada, the loss of Parada could not be prevented and that's why it was kept in sunlight for 6 days (6 hours per day) for drying. After drying Parada was obtained form paste by Patana method. In short, all the three methods were utilized to regain Parada in original form. The loss of Parada found in this Samskara was 135gm. This Samskara should be performed carefully as it is the main Samskara where Parada loss could not be prevented and there is maximum chance of losing Parada.

As per opinion of some experts, loss of Parada could be prevented by performing just drying in sunlight and Patana. It should not be washed with any of the liquids to avoid its loss due to Jalagati.

Practical	Wt.taken	Wt. obtained	Loss in wt.	Loss in %
Samanya Shodhita parada	1250 gm.	1000 gm.	250 gm	20 %
Swedana	1000gm	984gm	16 gm	1.6%
Mardana	984 gm	960 gm	24 gm	2.43%
Murcchana &Utthapana	960 gm	825 gm	135 gm	14.06%

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