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Role of *Haratala* in *Agada Yogas*: A Review

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ABSTRACT

Ayurveda is an ancient healthcare system with eight specialties. Agada tantra is a specialized branch of ayurveda that offers meticulously detailed information about animate and inanimate poisons and methods of eliminating these poisons from the body. Many formulations have been explained in the samhitas (treatise of Ayurveda) for the management of poisons. Herbal, mineral, and herbo-mineral preparations are used to treat visha. Haratala (Arsenic trisulphide) is one of the mineral used in formulations of agada tantra. In this article a review has been done through the bruhathrayee (treatise of Ayurveda) to find out the agada yogas which contain Haratala.

Key Words *Haratala, Arsenic trisulphide, Agada, Visha*

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INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda is a frequently practiced form of traditional medicine originating in India. It uses a combination of remedies to treat diseases and maintain health. Ayurvedic medicines, known as bhasmas, commonly incorporate adjuvant heavy metals into primary herbal formulations, usually for their ascribed therapeutic properties and to enhance potency. Heavy metals often found in ayurvedic remedies include lead, arsenic, and mercury¹. Processed metals including mercury, gold, silver, lead etc. were widely used very frequently by seers of the Indian tradition in different disease conditions with great authority.

These metals are detoxified during the highly complex manufacturing process described in ayurvedic, especially rasashastra texts².

Agadayogas that contain Haratala:

Mrutasanjeevana Agada³ has 43 drugs, in that, two drugs are mineral and 41 drugs are plant in origin. It is indicated in all types of visha, makes a person victorious, revives a person who is apparently dead because of poisoning and cures fever. Sprikka (*Trigonella corniculata*), Plava (*Cyperus sacrius*), Sthauneyaka (*Taxus baccata*), Kantakari (*Solanum xanthocarpum*), Saileya (*Parmelia perlata*), Ankola (*Alangium salvifolium*), Tagara (*Valeriana wallichii*), Dhyamaka (*Cymbopogon*



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martinii), Kumkuma (*Crocus sativus*), Mamsi (*Nardostachys jatamansi*), Surasa (*Ocimum sactum*), Ela (*Elettaria cardamomum*), Haratala (Orpiment), Khadira (*Acacia catechu*), Bruhati (*Solanum indicum*), Sirisha (*Albizia lebbeck*), Sriveshtaka (*Pinus roxburghii*), Padma carati (*Nervilia aragoana*), Visala (*Citrullus colocynthis*), Suradaru (*Cedrus deodara*), Padma kesara (*Nelumbo nucifera*), Sarala (*Pinus roxburghii*), Manahsila (Realgar), Renuka (*Vitex negundo*), Jati (*Jasminum grandiflorum*), Arka (*Calotropis gigantea*), Haridra (*Curcuma longa*), Daruharidra (*Berberis aristata*), Hingu (*Ferula foetida*), Pippali (*Piper longum*), Laksha (*Laccifer lacca*), Hribera (*Plecthranthus vettiveroides*), Mudgaparni (*Phaseolus trilobus*), Chandana (*Santalum album*), Madhuka (*Madhuca longifolia*), Madana (*Xeromphis spinosa*), Sinduvara (*Vitex trifolia*), Aragwadha (*Cassia fistula*), Lodra (*Symplecos racemosa*), Apamarga (*Achyranthes aspera*), Priyangu (*Callicarpa macrophylla*), Rasna (*Pluchea lanceolata*) and Vidanga (*Embelia ribes*).

It prevents untimely death; it endows a person with wealth and longevity. If inhaled, applied externally as anointment, carried in the body as a amulent, smoked or kept in the house, it annihilates the afflictions by the evil spirits, poisons, germs, inauspiciousness, black magic, fire, thunder bolt and enemies.

Mahagandhahasti Agada⁴: Tejapatra, Agaru, Musta (*Cyperus rotundus*), Ela (*Elettaria cardamomum*), Rala, Guggulu, Ahiphena, Shilajatu (*Asphaltum punjabinum*), Lohavan,

Shwetachandana, Sprikka (*Trigonella corniculata*), Twak, Jatamamsi (*Nardostachys jatamansi*), Nalada, Utpala, Bala, Harenu, Ushira, Nakha, Devadaru (*Cedrus deodara*), Nagakesara (*Mesua ferrea*), Dhyamaka (*Cymbopogon martinii*), Kushta (*Saussurea lappa*), Priyangu (*Callicarpa macrophylla*), Tagara (*Valeriana wallichii*), Shirisha (*Albizia lebbeck*), Trikatu (*Piper nigrum*, *Piper longum* and *Zingiber officinale*), Haratala (Orpiment), Manahshila (Realgar), Jeeraka, Shwetakatabhi, Karanja, Sarshapa (peeta), Sinduvara (*Vitex trifolia*), Haridra (*Curcuma longa*), Tulasi, Rasanjana, Gairika (Red ochre), Manjishta, Nimbaniryasa, Vamsha Twak, Ashwagandha, Hingu (*Ferula foetida*), Amlavetasa (*Garcinia pedunculata*), Laksha (*Laccifer lacca*), Madhu, Madhuka (*Madhuca longifolia*), Bakuchi (*Psoralea corylifolia*), Vacha (*Acorus calamus*), Durva (*Cynodon dactylon*), Gorochana and Tagara (*Valeriana wallichii*). All these drugs are powdered and bhavana is given with go-pitta and rolled into pills. It is used as pana, anjana, and pralepa.

It is indicated in sarpavisha (snake bite), Mushikavisha (rat poison) and lutavisha (spider poison). Other than these it is also indicated in many other ailments.

Sanjeevana Agada⁵: Chandana, Kesara, Kushta (*Saussurea lappa*), Kankshi, Laksha (*Laccifer lacca*), Priyangu (*Callicarpa macrophylla*), Musta (*Cyperus rotundus*), Sthauneya (*Taxus baccata*),



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Shailaya, Gorochana, Madanaphala, Sriveshtaka (*Pinus roxburghii*), Vidanga (*Embelia ribes*), Ela (*Elettaria cardamomum*), Vishala, Haratala, Manshila, Tulasi (*Ocimum sanctum*), Sprukka, Haridra (*Curcuma longa*), Daruharidra (*Berberis aristata*), Netrabala, Hingu (*Ferula foetida*), Sarshapa, Padmasharini, Kamalakesara (*Nelumbo nucifera*), Jatipushpa and patra (flowers and leaves of *Jasminum grandiflorum*), Arka (*Calotropis gigantea*), Shirisha (*Albizia lebeck*), Lodhra (*Symplocos racemosa*)-black and white variety, Bruhati (*Solanum indicum*), Kaunti (*Vitex negundo*), Madhuka (*Madhuca longifolia*), Gandhanakuli, Mudgaparni (*Phaseolus trilobus*), Pippali (*Piper longum*), Shyamaka, Dhyamaka (*Cymbopogon martinii*), Nalada, Tagara (*Valeriana wallichii*), Sindhuvara (*Vitex trifolia*), Amlavetasa (*Garcinia pedunculata*), Devadaru (*Cedrus deodara*), Apamarga (*Achyranthes aspera*).

It is said to be useful in garavisha (artificial poison).

Sugandhakhya Agada⁶: Sriveshtaka (*Pinus roxburghii*), Manashila (Realgar), Haratala (Orpiment), Sarjarasa (*Vateria indica*), Netrabala, Nagakesara (*Mesua ferrea*), Ela (*Elettaria cardamomum*), Harenu, Kutannata, Shatahva (*Peucedanum graveolens*) is indicated in both plant and animal poisons. It is also said to be useful in cases of unmada, grahabadha, balagraha, etc.

Chandrodaya Agada⁷: Anjana (Antimony), Tagara (*Valeriana wallichii*), Kushta (*Saussurea lappa*), Haratala (Orpiment), Manashila (Realgar),

Priyangu (*Callicarpa macrophylla*), Trikatu, Sprukka, Nagakesara (*Mesua ferrea*), Harenu, Madhuka (*Madhuca longifolia*), Jatamansi (*Nardostachys jatamansi*), Gorochana, Krishna tulasi (*Ocimum tenuiflorum*), Sriveshtaka (*Pinus roxburghii*), Sarjarasa (*Vateria indica*), Shatahva (*Peucedanum graveolens*). It is indicated in all types of poison.

Mandara agada⁸: Apamarga (*Achyranthes aspera*), Manashila (Realgar), Haratala (Orpiment), Daruharidra (*Berberis aristata*), Gandhatruna, Gairika (Red ochre), Tagara (*Valeriana wallichii*), Ela (*Elettaria cardamomum*), Kushta (*Saussurea lappa*), Maricha (*Piper nigrum*), Yashti (*Glycyrrhiza glabra*) with honey and ghee is said to be useful in Spider poison.

In amayikaprayoga, it is indicated in scorpion bite to be applied as lepa (anointment) along with navasada (ammonium chloride).⁹

DISCUSSION

Chemically Haratala is identified as Orpiment (As_2S_3). Being an arsenical mineral; it should be administered with great caution. It is advocated externally as well as internally since the period of Charaka Samhita. It is used as a component in formulations of topical application like *Lepa*, *Taila*, *Anjana*, etc. Acharyas recommended its formulations for internal administration to treat diseases like *Hikka* (hiccup), *Shvasa* (respiratory distress), *Kasa* (cough) and *Visha* (poisoning). The therapeutic dose mentioned for Haritala Bhasma is 30-60 mg¹⁰. Its properties like katu rasa



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(pungent taste), snighdha (unctuous) and guru (heavy) guna (property), ushnaveerya (hot potency) will help to counteract the effects of poison. It has mruthyuhara (wins over death), vishaghna (anti- poisonous), ojaskara and balakakara (strengthens body), properties that help in tolerating the ill effects of poison¹¹.

Acharya Charaka explains that animal poison is situated below, and vegetable poison is situated above and hence one counteracts the other. This mutually antagonizing nature is made use of in the treatment and one acts as an antidote to the other, hence it can easily neutralize the snake envenomation¹².

CONCLUSION

Screening of bruhathrayee reveals that haratala has significant role in the management of visha. Fine powder of haratala is used in the yogas after doing sodhana. It will help in easy and quicker absorption. It will enter even into minute channels hence it counteracts visha quickly. Haratala has antagonizing properties to that of visha and hence act as antagonist to the visha, so have a major role in the treatment of venomous conditions.



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