

## PLANT BASED RASAYANA DRUG FROM AYURVEDA - BHALLATAKA

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### ABSTRACT

Bhallataka (*Semecarpus anacardium* Linn.), a potent plant-based Rasayana drug described in Ayurveda, exemplifies the principle that even toxic substances, when properly processed, can yield profound therapeutic and rejuvenative benefits. Classified as an *Upavisha Dravya*, Bhallataka is renowned for its multifaceted pharmacological actions including *Kaphavatashamak*, *Medhya*, *Agnideepana*, *Vrishya*, and *Bruhana* properties. Though considered an irritant poison in modern toxicology, Ayurvedic detoxification techniques—such as rubbing the nut with brick powder and washing with warm water—render it safe for medicinal use. The *Brihatrayi* texts, especially *Charaka Samhita*, elaborate ten Rasayana formulations of Bhallataka, including *Bhallataka Ghrita*, *Ksheera*, and *Taila*. These preparations are said to enhance

vitality, intellect, and longevity while addressing disorders such as *Arsha*, *Kushta*, *Grahani*, and *Jwara*. Bhallataka's *Ushna Veerya*, *Laghu Guna*, and *Katu-Tikta-Kashaya Rasa* stimulate *Agni*, purify *Srotasas*, and promote effective nourishment of *Dhatu*s, thereby producing Rasayana effects at both physical and mental levels. Textual review of classical Ayurvedic literature and modern research indicates that Bhallataka's rejuvenative action arises from its capacity to enhance metabolism, support tissue regeneration, and strengthen immunity. Despite its toxicity, when administered judiciously, Bhallataka acts as a potent Rasayana—rejuvenating body and mind, delaying ageing, and improving overall vitality—

thus reflecting the Ayurvedic wisdom of transforming poison into potent medicine through proper processing.

**KEYWORDS:** *Bhallataka*, *Semecarpus anacardium*, *Rasayana*, *Ayurveda*, *Upavisha*, Rejuvenation, Detoxification.

## INTRODUCTION

*Rasayana* forms a significant branch of Ayurvedic science.<sup>[1]</sup> The *Brihatrayi* texts mention several *Rasayana* formulations containing *Bhallataka*, with *Acharya Charaka* highlighting its *Rasayana* properties and describing ten distinct preparations.<sup>[2]</sup>

In *Ayurveda*, *Bhallataka* (*Semecarpus anacardium* Linn) is classified as *Upvisha Dravya*.<sup>[2]</sup> In modern toxicology, it is categorized as an irritant vegetable organic poison.

Government rules state that the 1940 Drugs and Cosmetics Act governs this toxic medicinal herb. Even though *Bhallataka* is poisonous, it must first undergo a detoxifying procedure that entails rubbing the nut with brick powder and then washing it with warm water.<sup>[3]</sup>

Ayurvedic properties of *Bhallataka* are *madhur*, *kashay ras*, *ushna virya*, *madhur vipak* and *laghu*, *snigdha*, *tikshna*, and *ushna guna*. It exerts multiple pharmacological actions such as *Kaphavatashamak*, *Bhootanashan*, *Pittashodhan*, *Medhya*, *Vanhikar*, *Vrishya*, *Chedana* and *Bhedana*, and *Bruhan*.

Due to these wide-ranging effects, *Bhallataka* is therapeutically indicated in disorders such as *Arsha*, *Udar*, *Grahani*, *Shotha*, *Krumi*, *Kushtha*, *Vran*, *Shwitra*, *Gulma*, *Jwara*, and *Adhman*.<sup>[4,5]</sup>

In addition to its other therapeutic benefits, *Bhallataka* supports the nervous system by acting as a natural brain tonic. It is believed to improve intellect and promote physical vitality throughout the body.<sup>[6]</sup>

## AIM AND OBJECTIVES

1. To Discuss, Evaluate, and Elaborate on the Properties of *Bhallataka*
2. To Discuss, Evaluate, and Elaborate on the *Rasayana* Effects of *Bhallataka*

## MATERIAL AND METHODS

The present article is based on a textual review. Literature pertaining to the *Rasayana* effect

of *Bhallataka* was compiled from the *Charaka Samhita*, contemporary texts, and relevant online sources.<sup>[7]</sup>

The Sanskrit term *Rasayana* is derived from two words: *Rasa*, which denotes the finest essence, vital fluid, or essential juice of the body, and *Ayana*, which signifies movement, circulation, or path.

*Rasayana* is understood as the rejuvenative essence responsible for maintaining vitality within the body. Therapeutically, it involves interventions designed to slow down ageing, extend life expectancy, strengthen memory and physical capacity, and increase resistance to disease processes.

*Rasayana* is not limited to medicinal preparations; it may be attained through *Rasayana* food, a wholesome lifestyle with rejuvenative effects, *Rasayana* drugs, or a combination of these. Such remedies work by enhancing the quality of body cells and tissues through improved nourishment, better digestion and metabolism, as well as by promoting microcirculation and tissue perfusion.<sup>[8]</sup>

From a therapeutic perspective, *Visha* and *Upavisha Dravyas* are regarded as highly valuable due to their rapid effectiveness even in small doses. However, they are equally dangerous, as improper use or administration in higher doses may prove fatal to humans.

Therefore, it is essential to understand *Visha Dravyas* in terms of their important uses, medicinal applications, benefits, toxic manifestations, and their management. The history of *Visha* (poison) and its treatment can be traced back to ancient times, spanning several centuries.<sup>[9,10]</sup>

An ideal *Rasayana* is one that prolongs life, enhances memory and intellect, promotes overall health, and strengthens immunity against diseases, thereby enabling an individual to lead a vigorous and energetic life. It also improves complexion and luster of the body, refines voice and speech, and sharpens the functions of sensory and motor organs while enhancing vitality and vigor. *Bhallataka*, despite being classified as a poisonous drug, possesses these remarkable qualities and acts as an effective *Rasayana* with restorative and promotive actions. Through its *Medhya* properties, it supports the development of *Prasasta Rasadi Dhatus* in a healthy individual. The fruit is particularly beneficial in managing *Kapha* disorders, offering therapeutic effects ranging from relieving constipation to improving

digestion, metabolism, and cognitive functions.<sup>[11]</sup>

### PROPERTIES OF *BHALLATAKA*

<i>Characters/ Nighantu</i>	<i>Bhavaprakasa Nighantu<sup>[12]</sup></i>	<i>Dhanvantari Nighantu<sup>[13]</sup></i>	<i>Raj Nighantu<sup>[14]</sup></i>	<i>Kaidev Nighantu<sup>[15]</sup></i>	<i>Madanapal Nighantu<sup>[16]</sup></i>
<i>Guna</i>	<i>Laghu</i>	-	-	<i>Laghu</i>	<i>Laghu</i>
<i>Rasa</i>	<i>Kashaya Madhura</i>	<i>Katu, Tikta, Madhura</i>	<i>Katu, Tikta, Kashaya</i>	<i>Tikta, Kashaya, Madhura</i>	<i>Kashaya Madhura</i>
<i>Veerya</i>	<i>Ushna</i>	<i>Ushna</i>	<i>Ushna</i>	<i>Sheeta</i>	<i>Ushna</i>
<i>Vipaka</i>	-	-	-	<i>Katu</i>	-
<i>Karma</i>	<i>Shukrala</i>	-	-	<i>Grahi, Deepana</i>	<i>Shukrala</i>
<i>Doshghanata</i>	<i>V-K</i>	<i>V-K</i>	<i>V-K</i>	<i>P-K</i>	<i>V-K</i>
<i>Rogagnata</i>	<i>Udara, Aanaha, Kushta, Arsha, Grahani, Gulma, Jwara, Kshiwtra, Agnimandya, Krimi, Vrana</i>	<i>Krimi, Gulma, Arsha, Grahani, Kushta</i>	<i>Prameha, Arsha</i>	<i>Raktavikar, Kushta, Arsha, Gulma, Shopha</i>	<i>Udara, Aanaha, Kushta, Arsha, Grahani, Gulma, Jwara, Kshiwtra,</i>

Ten yoga of *Bhallataka Rasayana* described by *Charak chikitsa*<sup>[17]</sup>

1. *Bhallataka ghrita*
2. *Bhallataka-ksheeram*
3. *Bhallataka-kshaudra*
4. *Guda-bhallataka*
5. *Bhallataka-yusha,*
6. *Bhallataka-taila*
7. *Bhallataka-palala*
8. *Bhallataka-saktu,*
9. *Bhallataka-lavana,*
10. *Bhallataka-tarpana*

#### **Bhallataka ksheeram**

भल्लतका (यनुपहता) यनामया (यापूण 1 रस 4 माणवीया) िण प 8 जा: बव 4 काशा िन शुचौ शु?े वा मासे  
सAगृD यवप#ले माषप#ले वा िन्धापयेत्, ता िन चतुमा 1 सिHथता िन सहिस सहHये वा मासे  
4योKुमारभेत शीतिLMधमधुरोपHकृतशरी रः।

पूव० दशभ#लातका(यापोQयारगुणेनाःभसा साधु साधयेत्, तेषां रसमRभागावशेषं पूतं सपयHकं िपबेत्  
सTपषाS(तमु1 खमWयXय|

ता(येकैकभ#लातकोZकषा1पकष[ण दशभ#लातका(या\शतः 4योXयांिनि, नातः परमुZकष1ः|  
4योगिवधानेन सह^पर एव भ#लातक4योगः|

जीण[ च ससTपषा पयसा शांिलषिRकाशनमुपचारः, 4योगा(ते च ि Hतावत् पयसैवोपचारः|

तZ4योगा ष1शतमजरं वयिHतातींिति समानं पूव[ण||१३||च िच १/२, (इति भ#लातक1ीरम्)|

The fruits of *Bhallataka*, which are undamaged, disease-free, and fully matured in taste, size, and potency, resembling ripe *Jambo* fruits, are recommended to be collected during the months of *Jyeshtha* and *Ashadha*. For preservation and maintenance of their efficacy, they are traditionally stored in granaries containing barley or black gram.

After four months, during the months of *Agrahayana* or *Pausha*, the fruits are to be taken out for use by an individual whose body has been properly prepared through the intake of cold, unctuous, and sweet substances.

To begin with, ten fruits of *Bhallataka* are crushed and boiled in ten times their quantity of water. The decoction is reduced to one-eighth of its initial volume, filtered, and then administered with milk, after lubricating the oral cavity with ghee.

The dose is gradually increased by adding one fruit daily, up to a maximum of thirty fruits. In this manner, the total intake reaches approximately one thousand fruits. Once the drug is properly digested, the diet should consist of *Shali* and *Shashtika* rice taken with milk and ghee.

Upon completion of the treatment, the patient should subsist on a milk-based diet for a duration twice that of the treatment period. This regimen is believed to promote a stable lifespan of one hundred years, free from senility.

### **Bhallataka kshaudram**

भ#लातकानां जज1रीकृतानां िपरHवेदनं पूरियZवा भूमावाकृठं िनिखातHय LेहभांितHय  
दृढHयोपुंर कुःभ Hयारोकयोडुपेनािपिधाय कृमणमृिंकाविलों गोमयािपिभिपHवेदयेत्; तेषां यः

हवरसः कुःभं 4पाेत, तमR भागमधुसः4युKं िगुणघृतमाात्; तZ4योगाष1शतमजरं वयिHतातीित समानं पूव[ण॥१४॥ च िच १/२ (इित भ#लातकफौुम्)|

The fruits of *Bhallataka* are to be crushed and placed in a heating vessel, which is then positioned over a sturdy, ghee-smear pitcher buried underground up to its neck and covered with a lid.

Then after pushing it with black earth, it should be heated with cow dung fire. The extract which is collected in the lower pitcher should be taken out.

The preparation should be administered with one-eighth part honey and twice the quantity of ghee. Its regular use is said to promote rejuvenation, enabling an individual to attain a stable lifespan of one hundred years, free from senility.

#### **Bhallataka taila**

भ#लातकतैलपा]ं सपयHकं मधुकेन क#के ना[मा]ेण शतपाकं कुर्या।वदित समानं पूव[ण॥१५॥च िच १/२

(इित भ#लातकतैलम्)|

*Bhallataka* oil, in a quantity of 2 kg 560 g, should be processed with milk and the paste of *Madhuka* in one-eighth proportion. This procedure is to be repeated one hundred times.

भ#लातकािनि तीxणािनि पाकy(यिपसमािनि च| भव(Zयमृतक#पािनि 4युKािनि यथािविधा || १७||

*Amrita Bhallataka* is a special *Rasayana* yoga combining *Bhallataka* and *Amalaki*, highlighted in *Charaka Chikitsa Sthana (Kushta Roga Adhikar)* and later compiled in *Bhaishajya Ratnavali* in *Rasyana prakaran*.<sup>[13]</sup> It is considered both a *Rasayana* and a *Kushtaghna* yoga, balancing the dual nature of *Bhallataka*.

***Bhallatak Rasayan in Rasatarangini***:- pg; 737: 484-486<sup>[18]</sup>

शुुठीिविडAगलोहा {ं भ#लातं िवमलीकृतम । म}वाXयसंयुतं यK मास ि]तयसेवनात् ॥४८४

॥ रक्त्वृिं करोयेतद् बलं चेव विवबंयेत् । नवयोवनलावृयं जनययिवकपतः ॥४८४॥

समायतिभदं नाका भलातकरसायनस् । सेवितं सदा योकापव विनवृये ।;४८६॥

Equal parts of *Sunthi Churna*, *Vidanga Churna*, and *Loha Bhasma* are taken and finely powdered together. An appropriate dose of this mixture is administered with milk and honey continuously for three months. Regular use is said to increase blood formation, enhance physical strength, and restore youthful vigor and beauty. This preparation is known as *Bhallataka Rasayana*.

## DISCUSSION

*Rasayana* provides a holistic approach to promoting healthy longevity, supporting mental development, and strengthening the body's resistance to diseases. It is a specialized form of therapy that works on the body's core elements, including *Dhatu*, *Agni*, and *Srotas*.<sup>[7]</sup>

*Bhallataka* (*Semecarpus anacardium* Linn.), though classified as an *Upavisha dravya* in Ayurveda and considered an irritant vegetable poison in modern toxicology, occupies a distinguished place in *Rasayana Chikitsa*.

*Bhallataka*, though classified as an *Upavisha*, possesses *Laghu*, *Ruksha*, *Ashu*, *Vishada*, *Vyavayi*, *Tikshna*, and *Ushna* Gunas. These attributes contribute to the elimination of *Ama* and the purification of *Srotas* (*Srotoshodhana*), thereby facilitating unobstructed circulation and nourishment of all *Dhatu*s. Through this mechanism, *Bhallataka* manifests its *Rasayana* effect within the body. *Medhakara prabhava* of it improve the mental faculty.

*Bhallataka* exerts a significant influence on *Agni*, the principle of digestion and metabolism, through its *Ushna Veerya* (hot potency), *Laghu Guna* (light attribute), and *Katu*, *Tikta*, *Kashaya Rasas* (pungent, bitter, and astringent tastes). These properties stimulate metabolic activity, thereby ensuring the efficient transformation and assimilation of nutrients.

It may ultimately be leading to the achievement of the comprehensive effect as stated by *Charaka* “*Labhopayo Hi Shastanam – Rasadinam Rasayanum*.”<sup>[19]</sup>

The *Rasayana* action of *Bhallataka* can be partly explained through its *Madhura Vipaka* and *Snigdha Guna*. At the level of *Rasa Dhatu*, these attributes enhance the nutritive potential of ingested food, leading to superior transformation and assimilation. As a result, each

subsequent Dhatu—from *Rakta* to *Shukra*—receives improved nourishment. This process strengthens immunity, promotes tissue regeneration, and ensures the development of *Prasada Dhatus*, which are essential for maintaining longevity and vitality.<sup>[20]</sup>

## CONCLUSION

*Bhallataka* (*Semecarpus anacardium* Linn.) represents a unique example of the *Ayurvedic* principle wherein a potentially toxic substance, when properly purified and administered according to classical guidelines, transforms into a powerful therapeutic and rejuvenative agent. Classified as an *Upavisha Dravya*, *Bhallataka* demonstrates remarkable *Rasayana* potential through its ability to stimulate *Agni*, eliminate *Ama*, purify *Srotasas*, and promote optimal nourishment of *Dhatu*s.

Classical *Ayurvedic* literature, particularly the *Charaka Samhita*, describes multiple *Bhallataka Rasayana* formulations such as *Ghrita*, *Ksheera*, *Taila*, and *Kshaudra*, each designed to enhance vitality, intellect, strength, and longevity. These preparations illustrate the systematic *Ayurvedic* approach of detoxification (*Shodhana*) and controlled administration to harness therapeutic benefits while minimizing toxicity.

Pharmacodynamically, *Bhallataka*'s *Ushna Veerya*, *Laghu–Tikshna Guna*, and *Katu–Tikta–Kashaya Rasa* promote metabolic activation, improve digestion and assimilation, and facilitate tissue regeneration. Its *Rasayana* effect operates at both physical and psychological levels by enhancing immunity, supporting cognitive functions through its *Medhya* action, and strengthening overall physiological resilience. The *Madhura Vipaka* and *Snigdha* attributes further contribute to superior *Dhatu* nourishment, resulting in improved vitality, resistance to disease, and delay in ageing processes.

Textual evidence supported by modern perspectives suggests that *Bhallataka* acts as a potent metabolic modulator and immuno-supportive agent when used judiciously. Thus, despite its inherent toxicity, *Bhallataka* exemplifies the *Ayurvedic* wisdom of converting poison into medicine through proper processing, precise dosage, and rational therapeutic application.

In conclusion, *Bhallataka* stands as a powerful *Rasayana* drug capable of rejuvenating body and mind, promoting healthy longevity, and restoring systemic balance, reaffirming *Ayurveda*'s holistic philosophy of transformation, rejuvenation, and preservation of life.

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