

BOOK 5: SHADRADA: TYPES AND IMPACT UPON TRIDOSHA

Book 5.1: Sharadasa- the 6 tastes

1. Introduction

[Dravyaguna](#) is the content of this book. It aims to introduce the student with the features and applications of [Rasa](#), Guna, Veerya, Vipaka and Prabhava. Their effects on Mahabhoota, [Tridosha](#), [Dhatu](#) and [Mala](#) and [disease](#) wise application will also be discussed.

Charaka wrote '*Everything in the universe has some medicinal value*'. Before the advent of modern medicine, man was completely dependent upon medicinal plants for curing as well as preventing diseases. This experience and expertise, over centuries, evolved as a systematic study, termed as [Dravyaguna](#) in Ayurveda.

1.1. Video on Sharadasa

Watch this video: <https://youtu.be/mCtXaKCIJ4I>

1.2. Video: Six tastes & Tridosha

Watch this video on Six tastes & [Tridosha](#): <https://youtu.be/lpu0LlcrnrU>

2. Dravyaguna

[Dravyaguna](#) is integral part of Ayurvedic system of medicine. [Dravya](#) refers to components of the universe and guna signifies property. A matter is labeled as [Dravya](#) only if it can perform some actions and has some specific properties.

The study of [Dravyaguna](#) is based upon following parameters -

1. [Dravya](#) / The substance,
2. Guna / The property,
3. [Rasa](#) / The taste,
4. Vipaka / The post digestion effect,
5. Veerya / Potency,
6. Prabhava a / Special effect

These are described as essentials of Ayurvedic drug selection and formulation. Ayurvedic formulations are based on medicinal plants, minerals, animals, poison or marine source. In modern terminology, [Dravyaguna](#) can be compared with Materia Medica and pharmacognosy.

3. Rasa (Taste)

[Rasa](#) is the one, which the tongue perceives, and flows freely in the body to nourish. Ayurveda states that the [Rasa](#) / Taste of a matter whether food or herb, is not incidental, but is an indication of its properties. It has got significant place in Ayurvedic medicine. Diagnosis of a [disease](#) is based on [Tridosha](#) and treatment is based on six tastes (sweet, sour, saline, pungent, bitter and astringent).

- [Rasa](#) and 5 elements

[Rasa](#) is Panchabhautik in origin. All the five Mahabhoota contribute for generation of [Rasa](#) but two each are more expressed and these two command the actions of [Rasa](#).

The association is as follows :

Rasa	Mahabhoota
Sweet	Earth + Water .
Sour	Earth + Fire.
Saline	Fire + Water .
Pungent	Fire + Air .
Bitter	Ether + Air .
Astringent	Earth + Air .

This Mahabhoota combination decides all physical and clinical properties of these six tastes.

3.1. Properties of Rasa

The various properties in each [Rasa](#) make it useful against diseases or for [health](#) promotion. These are directed by Mahabhoota predominance and are as follows:-

Taste	Properties
Sweet	Moist, cold & heavy.
Sour	Moist, hot & light.
Salt	Moist, hot & light.
Pungent	Dry, hot and light.
Bitter	Dry, cold & light.
Astringent	Dry, cold & light.

The Sweet taste is the moistest, the coldest and the heaviest because of the two Mahabhoota with these properties, the [Earth](#) and the [Water](#). Bitter is the lightest, Astringent the driest and Pungent is the hottest.

3.2. Composition of Rasa

[Water](#) is primary constituent in composition of tastes. When [water](#) element interacts with other elements, evolution of tastes takes place. As a rule, no taste can be perceived unless the substance gets in a solution form. The taste of a particular thing depends on the predominance of the elements.

4. Rasa and Tridosha

- **Sweet taste** results from predominance of [Water](#) and [Earth](#) Mahabhoota, so is heavy, moist, and cooling by nature. Sugars, fats, milk and milk products, most grains, especially wheat, rice, and barley, many legumes like beans and lentils, ripe fruits such and certain cooked vegetables such as carrots, sweet potatoes, and beets are examples of Sweet [Rasa](#) foods.

Sweet taste naturally increases bulk, moisture, and weight in the body. For this reason, it is excellent for building body's Dhatus. Sweet taste also increases saliva, soothes mucous membranes and burning sensations, relieves thirst, and has beneficial effects on the skin, hair, voice etc. Taken in excess, this can lead to Kapha vitiation leading to many diseases as Dullness, Edema, lethargy, Diabetes, Obesity, Heart Diseases, and Cancers etc.

- **Sour Taste** is composed of [Earth](#) and Fire so it is hot, light, and moist by nature. It is commonly found in citrus fruits, sour milk products like yogurt, cheese and fermented substances including wine, vinegar, pickles, etc. Used in moderation, Sour taste stimulates digestion, helps circulation and elimination, energizes the body, strengthens the heart, relieves thirst, maintains acidity, sharpens the senses, and helps extract minerals such as iron from food. It also nourishes all the Dhatus except [Shukra](#). Consumed in excess, this can cause Pitta vitiation, inflammations, nausea, boils, skin diseases etc.
- **Saline taste** is composed of Fire and [Water](#) and is hot, heavy, and moist by nature. It is found in any salt (such as sea salt and rock salt) and some sea vegetables like seaweed. Salty taste falls somewhere between Sweet and Sour tastes with regard to its heavy and moist qualities. While Sweet taste stimulates the greatest [water](#) retention and weight gain in the body, Salty taste will have similar effects when used in excess.
- In moderation, Salty taste improves the flavour of food, improves digestion, lubricates tissues, liquefies mucous, maintains mineral balance, aids in the elimination of wastes, and calms the nerves. Due to its tendency to attract [water](#), it also improves the radiance of the skin and promotes overall growth in the body. In excess, this will cause Pitta and Kapha vitiation, hair-fall, greying, edema, obesity, hypertension, heart diseases etc.
- **Pungent taste** derives from the elements of Fire and [Air](#) and is hot, dry, and light. It is the hottest of all the 6 Tastes and is found in chilli peppers, garlic, and onions etc, and in spices like black pepper, ginger, turmeric etc. In small amounts, Pungent taste stimulates digestion, clears Srotas, promotes sweating and detoxification, dispels gas, aids circulation, improves metabolism, and relieves muscle pain. If consumed in excess, this causes Pitta vitiation, tissue destruction, skin diseases, [Shukra](#) & Oja deficiencies etc.
- **Bitter taste** is composed of [Air](#) and Ether and is light, cooling, and dry by nature. It is found in many vegetables, herbs and spices as turmeric, fenugreek, Neem etc. and certain fruits such as olives, and bitter melon. While Bitter taste itself is often not appealing, it stimulates the appetite and helps bring out the flavour of the other tastes. Bitter taste is a powerful detoxifying agent, and has antibiotic, anti-parasitic, and antiseptic qualities. It is also helpful in reducing weight, [water](#) retention, skin rashes, fever, burning sensations and nausea. In excessive use, this will lead to decrease in Kapha and Pitta, vitiation of Vata, [Dhatu](#) destruction, pains, heart diseases etc.
- **Astringent taste** results from the predominance of [Air](#) and [Earth](#) and is dry, cooling, and heavy by nature. Astringent taste has a choking effect on the tongue. It is the least common of all the 6 Tastes and can be found in beetle nut, legumes (such as beans and lentils), unripe fruits, vegetables, some grains, spices and herbs, coffee, and tea. Dry foods such as crackers and chips, and the skins of fruits also have Astringent taste. If taken in excess, the person suffers from abdominal dysfunction, heart pain, obstruction of secretions, severe thirst, impotency and narrowing of body channels.

5. Shadrasa Six Tastes

Watch this video: <https://youtu.be/mCtxaKCIJ4I>

5.1. Effect on the Doshas

Dosha Enhancing effect

1. Vata is increased by bitter, astringent and pungent.
2. Pitta is increased by sour, pungent and saline.
3. Kapha is increased by sweet, saline and sour.

Dosha Decreasing effect

1. Vata is decreased by saline, sour and sweet.
2. Pitta is decreased by bitter, astringent and sweet.
3. Kapha is decreased by pungent, bitter and astringent.

5.2. Taste and Dhatus

- Sweet, sour and salt enrich the Dhatus by Kapha promotion.
- Pungent, bitter and astringent reduce the Dhatus by Vata, Pitta promotion.

5.3. Taste and Malas (waste products)

- Sweet, sour and salt enhance the removal of waste products by increase in Kapha induced moisture & lubrication in Srotas.
- Pungent, bitter and astringent cause retention of waste products by Vata induced dryness in Srotas.

6. Actions of Rasa

1. Sweet- Nootropic, demulcent, tonic, expectorant and mild laxative.
2. Salt- Laxative, appetiser, digestive, expectorant and emetic.
3. Sour- Carminative and appetiser.
4. Pungent- Stimulant, carminative, diaphoretic, bronchodilator and anthelmintic.
5. Bitter- Alterative, anthelmintic, febrifuge, bitter tonic and cholagogue.
6. Astringent- Styptic and anti-diarrhoeal.
- 7.

7. Evolution, Properties and Functions of six tastes: A Summary

<u>S.No</u>	<u>Taste</u>	<u>Mahabhoota</u>	<u>Properties</u>	<u>Functions.</u>
1.	Sweet	Earth + Water	Moist, cold & heavy	Nutritive, thirst depressant, <u>Vata</u> and <u>Pitta</u> pacifying, <u>Kapha</u> vitiation
2	Sour.	Earth + Fire	Moist, hot & light	Appetizer, cardiac tonic <u>Pitta</u> , <u>Kapha</u> vitiation, <u>Vata</u> pacifying.
3	Salt.	Fire + Water.	Moist, hot & light.	Digestive, mild laxative, <u>sialagogue</u> , <u>Pitta</u> , <u>Kapha</u> vitiation, <u>Vata</u> pacifying.
4	Pungent	Fire + Air	Dry, hot and light	Anti-inflammatory, anti-obesity and anthelmintic, <u>Vata</u> <u>Kapha</u> pacifying
5	Bitter	Ether + Air	Dry, cold & light	Anthelmintic, anti-pruritic and thirst depressant, <u>Pitta</u> , <u>Kapha</u> pacifying
6	Astringent	Earth+ Air	Dry, cold & light	Styptic and anti-diarrhoeal, <u>Vata</u> vitiating, <u>Pitta</u> <u>Kapha</u> pacifying.

8. Anu-rasa (Secondary Taste)

The [Rasa](#) is the clearly expressed taste on consuming any food or herb. This reflects at the tongue or as the effects on certain physiology of body systems. Also, there can be some taste which is less expressed. This is called Anu-[rasa](#). These as well are the same six tastes. It refers to a taste or many that may not manifested properly at the tongue level or at the tissue levels. Still, this Anurasa has some clinical importance but inferior to the dominant [Rasa](#).

Book 5.2 Six Tastes & Tridosha

- Watch this video: <https://youtu.be/lpu0LlcrnrU>