

CONCEPT OF RITUSANDHI, METHOD OF ADAPTATION OF NEW REGIMEN AND ITS PRACTICALITY IN VARIOUS CONDITIONS

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ABSTRACT

Ayurveda postulates various theories to maintain the health of an individual such as *Dinacharya*, *Ritucharya*, *Ratricharya* etc. *Ritucharya* is one among them. *Ritucharya* is the regimens that should be followed during each season to prevent the occurrence of diseases during seasons. The junction between two seasons is termed *ritusandhi*. In this article the concept of *ritusandhicharya* is highlighted rather than *Ritucharya*. This is because even if a person follows the correct regimen in each season, he may prone to get disease due to the sudden change of regimens during the seasonal transition period. Among *Brihatrayee*, *Ashtanga Hridaya* is only classical text describes about the importance of *ritusandhi*. There are 6 seasons according to Indian calendar hence there are 6 seasonal junctions. The *Ritusandhi Charya* is to be followed based on the seasons felt on places because seasons are not equally felt in all places. The gradual adaptation of regimens in each seasonal junction is clearly mentioned in the commentary of *Ashtangahrdaya*. It can be followed based on the seasons felt places. Health of the individual is depended upon a healthy environment so the protection of environment during seasonal junction is also important. Also, the pattern of gradual reduction in *ritusandhi charya* can be adopted in various other conditions also such as in overcoming some addictions, to avoid health issues during migration etc.

Keywords: *Dinacharya*, *Ritucharya*, *Ritusandhi*, *Brihatrayee*

INTRODUCTION

The aim of Ayurveda is to prevent disease and to maintain health. Theory of maintenance of health in Ayurveda stands for all times and only we need to update the theory and apply it according to the circumstances. This theory of maintenance of positive health is dealt in the *Sutrashana* of *Ashtanga Hridaya*, *Swastha chathushka* of *Charaka Samhitha* etc. One among such rules put forward by our Acharya is *Ritucharya*. And it has prime

importance in maintenance of health. Therefore, any derangement of *kala* (time) is considered as the supreme etiological factor of disease.

Ayurveda mentions specific regimens to be followed in each season. But while making a sudden change to the prescribed regimens in consecutive seasons, the person may prone to get diseased. Here comes the importance of understanding *Ritusandhi*. *Ritusandhi* is the junction

of two seasons ie, the transition zone between two seasons. During this season it is advised to refrain from all activities. And the reduction is to be done gradually. A sudden change of habit may lead to the occurrence of *asatmyaja roga*¹. Hemadri, the commentator of Ashtanga hrdaya gives a detailed explanation to this gradual reduction. Acharya Charaka mentions *Ritusatmya* instead of *ritusandhi*, means that to maintain proper health and to prevent the *kalaja vyadhi* (seasonal disorders). The gradual reduction of regimens from one season to other should be based on the state of dosha and seasons felt on each place. Now a days due to non-uniformity of seasons determining *ritusandhi charya* may found to be difficult. It should be done by closer observation. A healthy environment is necessary for a healthy living. So, the importance of protecting environment in seasonal junctions is to be discussed. The concept of *ritusandhicharya* can be adopted in some other conditions such as in process of making *asatmyaja* to *satmyaja*, to avoid health problems during

migrating from one place to other places with extreme different climates and also. These are the significance of this work.

Aim: To give clarity to the concept of *ritusandhi* & to find its practical applicability.

Objectives:

- To study *ritusandhi* in detail.
- To study the practical applicability of *ritusandhi charya* in various conditions.

Materials & Methods: References have been collected from classics and relevant data are compiled. Available commentaries are also reviewed. All compiled data are organized and analysed. An attempt has made to find some practical applicability in present scenario.

Review of Literature: The word *Ritu* is derived from the root word 'R' which means 'to go'. And has meanings like an epoch, period, season, expression etc. there are 6 seasons according to Indian calendar as shown in the table 1

Table 1:

<i>Charaka & Vagbhata</i>	Susrutha
Sisira (Early Winter)	Vasantha
Vasantha (Spring)	Greeshma
Greeshma (Summer)	Pravrt (Early Rain)
Varsha (Rainy)	Varsha
Sharat (Autumn)	Sharat
Hemantha (Late Winter)	Hemantha

Ritusandhi is the seven days at the end and commencement of *Ritu*. This is the period in which body adopts itself to adjust with the incoming season. Duration required for an effective adaptation is specified by the term *Ritusandhi*. In this period people are advised to discontinue the regimens of previous seasons gradually

and should adopt the regimens of the upcoming season. The gradual reduction of the regimens of previous *ritu* and adaptation of new regimens of the upcoming *ritu* is well explained in Ashtanga Hrdaya. Hemadri, the commentator of Ashtanga hrdaya detailedly explained it as in the table 2.²

Table 2:

Day	Current Season	Upcoming Season
1 st Day	$\frac{3}{4}$	$\frac{1}{4}$
2 nd Day	$\frac{4}{4}$	0
3 rd Day	$\frac{3}{4}$	$\frac{1}{4}$
4 th Day	$\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{2}$
5 th Day	$\frac{3}{4}$	$\frac{1}{4}$

6 th Day	¾	¼
7 th Day	½	½
	PAST SEASON	CURRENT SEASON
8 th Day	¼	¾
9 th Day	½	½
10 th Day	½	¾
11 th Day	¼	¾
12 th Day	¼	¾
13 th Day	0	4/4
14 th Day	¼	¾

After 14 days one can completely avoid the regimens of the past season and can adopt the regimens of present season. Acharya Sharangadhara concise this concept and limited the period to 15 days of *Karthika* (Oct-Nov) and *Margashirsha* (Nov-Dec) and named it as *Yamadamshttra kala*³. During this period there may be more illness and deaths that may be the reason why Sharagadhara limited *Ritusandhi charya* to the seasonal transition.

There are no direct references of *ritusandhi* in Charaka Samhitha & Susrutha Samhitha. Only Vagbhata and later authors explained ritusandhi. It may be because of the increase in the incidence of seasonal disorders during the transition period. Later commentators like Chakrapani, Yogendranath sen , Gangadhara followed Ashtanga Hridaya.

Nagarjuna, tha author of Rasavaisheshika also accepted *ritusandhi* but he has mentioned it as *Sadharana Ritu*. During Sharat (Autumn), Vasantha (Spring) and Pravrt (Rainy) it won't be too much cold and hot climate. Hence these seasons are called *sadharana ritu* and are considered as the *Ritu sandhi*. He also adds that the last

7 days of current season and 1st 7 days of an upcoming season together constitutes *Ritu sandhi*⁴.

Acharya Charaka explained Ritu satmya to maintain proper health &to prevent the *Kalaja Vyadhi*. *Ritu satmya* is the regimen told for specific seasons for specific duration. *Ritusandhi* also states the same. If a person follows the suitable diet & regimen for every season & practise accordingly his strength will be maintained. The regimen & diet should be having opposite qualities of the habitat of the individuals and the disease they are suffering from. But the habituated things if to be given up then it should be done gradually otherwise it may lead to *Asatmyaja roga*.

Regimens for each season is mentioned by our Acharya based on the state of dosha in specific season

Doshic state in each ritu is mentioned as in table 3.⁵

Regimens mentioned in each season is meant to keep the state of dosha in normalcy i.e. should not aggravate the *prakupitha dosha* (in each season there will be normally an aggravation of dosha) &also the dosha in Chaya avastha.

Table 3:

	Chaya	Prakopa	Prasama
<i>Sisira</i>	K		
<i>Vasantha</i>	V	K	
<i>Greeshma</i>		V	K
<i>Varsha</i>	P		V
<i>Sharat</i>		P	
<i>Hemanatha</i>	K		P

In *ritusandhi kala*, if the Doshic state is extremely different, sudden change of regimen will cause the production of *asatmyaja roga*. So, it should be gradually reduced. Doshic state of each Ritu sandhi can be,

1. *Sisira Vasantha Ritu sandhi* – *kapha dosha* is tending to aggravate
2. *Vasantha Greeshma Ritu sandhi* – *Kapha dosha* get decreased by the strong rays of Sun
3. *Greeshma Varsha Ritu Sandhi-Vata dosha* is tending to aggravate
4. *Varsha Sharat Ritu sandhi- Pitha dosha* is tending to aggravate

5. *Sarat Hemantha Ritu sandhi- Pitha dosha* get decreased.
6. *Hemantha Sisira Ritu sandhi- Kapha dosha in Chaya avastha*

So, in *Sisira Vasantha Ritu sandhi* already there is a *kapha Chaya* one should gradually adopt the *kaphahara* aahara such as *Yava* (Barley), *godhuma* (Wheat) and activities like exercise, therapeutic procedures like emesis, *udwarthana* are advised. Because *kapha* is having a positive tendency to get aggravated in *Vasantha rithu*. And in other *Ritu sandhis* one can follow regimens like,

<i>Ritu Sandhi</i>	Gradually Increase		Gradually Decrease	
	<i>Ahara</i>	<i>Vihara</i>	<i>Ahara</i>	<i>Vihara</i>
VASANTHA-GREESHMA	<i>Madhura</i> <i>Laghu</i> <i>Snigdha</i> <i>Hima</i> <i>Drava</i>	<i>Divaswapnam</i>	<i>Purana Yava</i> <i>Godhuma</i> <i>Kshoudra</i> <i>Jangala Rasa</i> <i>Shoolyahara</i>	<i>Vyayaama</i> <i>Udwarthana</i> <i>Maidhuna</i>
GRRESHMA-VARSHA	<i>Madhura</i> <i>Amla</i> <i>Lavana</i> <i>Snigdha</i> <i>Drava</i> <i>Purana Yava</i>	Walk with Footwear Smear Body with Perfumes Keep Warmth	<i>Madhu</i> <i>Sheetha</i> <i>Nadi Jala</i> <i>Ghrta</i> <i>Sali</i> <i>Dhanya</i>	<i>Divaswapna</i> <i>Chandana Lepa</i> <i>Sheetala Pushpa</i> <i>Dharana</i>
VARSHA SHARAT	<i>Madhura</i> <i>Tiktha</i> <i>Laghu</i> <i>Sheetha</i> <i>Jangala Mamsa</i> <i>Tiktha Ghrta</i> <i>Pana</i> <i>Sali, Yava</i>	<i>Sugandhi Malya</i> <i>Dharana</i> <i>Chandana Lepana</i> <i>Virechana</i>	<i>Amla</i> <i>Lavana</i> <i>Snigdha</i> <i>Purana Yava</i>	<i>Divaswapna</i> <i>Atapa Seva</i>
SHARAT HEMANTHA	<i>Madhura</i> <i>Amla</i> <i>Lavana</i> <i>Ushna</i> <i>Snigdha</i> <i>Guru, Anupa</i> <i>Navadhanya</i>	<i>Abhyanga</i> <i>Udwarthana</i> <i>Vyayaama</i>	<i>Alpa Laghu Aahara</i>	<i>Divaswapnam</i>
Hemantha Sisira	CAN FOLLOW THE SAME AS SHARAT HEMANTHA RITU SANDHI CHARYA			
SISIRA VASANTHA	<i>Purana Yava</i> <i>Godhuma</i> <i>Kshoudra</i> <i>Jangala</i> <i>Shoolyahara</i>	<i>Vyayaama</i> <i>Udwarthana</i> <i>Vamana</i>	<i>Madhura</i> <i>Laghu</i> <i>Snigdha</i> <i>Drava</i> <i>Hima</i>	<i>Divaswapnam</i>

DISCUSSION

Ayurveda the science of life which gives importance to maintain the health of healthy individuals. And for that our sages postulates various theories like *dinacharya*, *ritucharya*, *ratricharya* etc. Here the regimens during seasonal junctions is highlighted. Because kala (seasons/time) is considered as the supreme etiological factor of diseases. Acharya had mentioned specific regimens that should be followed during each season. Even if one follows such rule, he may prone to get diseased during the seasonal junctions due to the sudden change of regimens. So, understanding *ritusandhi charya* is important. By understanding *Ritusandhi charya* one can easily get adapt to different seasons and it teaches the ways of let go the habits of previous season related to food, lifestyle and activities of the upcoming season. It will be helpful in prevention of seasonal disorders. And this theory of gradual reduction can be adopted in various conditions also. There is one limitation of *ritusandhi charya* is that all the seasons are not equally felt on all places and now there is unpredictable seasonal variations. So, the theory can be remoulded according to the need. In *rasavaisheshika sutra*, Acharya clearly mentions that there will be variations in *sheetha, ushna* and *varsha* depending on *desha bheda*. So, the regimens should be adopted accordingly. The term climate is derived from latin word 'clima' which means region which reciprocates with the concept.

Practical Applicability of Ritusandhi Charya

The concept of *Ritusandhi* can be applied in some other conditions also such as,

- In order to adapt a different food habit
For eg: If a South Indian going to North India as a part of study or job, the food habits are entirely different ie, In Kerala they are habituated to parboiled rice, coconut oil etc but in North India they prefer wheat, vegetable oil etc. so in order to avoid health issues due to sudden changes in the food habits one should gradually adopt those pattern of food habits before going to other places. According to Acharya Vagbhata the food patterns are to be tapered in quarters or quarters of quarters (should not be suddenly discarded) in an interval of 1, 2 or 3 mealtimes according to the condition.⁶
- In overcoming addictions

In order to withdraw from addictions such as smoking, alcoholism etc, the *satmeekarana* process can be adopted. Acharya Charaka mentions only seven days *satmeekarana* process here there may be a chance of relapse⁷. The schedule described by Hemadri is more acceptable, here the substitution should be done with healthy materials of similar appearance. For example, in alcoholic addictions, *Arishta* can be used as an effective substitute which will give some effects of alcohol. Gradually alcohol addiction could be withdrawn. Moreover, *Arishta* do not cause any drug dependency and hence it can be easily withdrawn. Similarly, cigarettes can be substituted with medicated cigars or cigars without nicotine.

Other narcotic addictions such as heroin, cocaine etc could not be withdrawn by this method. But by certain activities like working out in gym will help to increase the euphoria and well-being in human populations in a manner like that of abused drugs. This is possible only if the person is having strong willpower to withdraw from addiction.

- When changing from one system of medicine to other

In case of medicines like steroids is to be done accordingly by gradual tapering of dosage, or else, it may result in withdrawal reactions. Having said so, it is not applicable in medication to serious illnesses like mental disorders.

Seasonal Adaptations for the State Of Kerala

As the seasons are not uniformly felt in different parts of India, the social preparations during seasonal junctions based on Kerala climate is only discussed here.

South India generally experiences 4 seasons - Summer (February-May), Monsoon (June- August), post-monsoon or Autumn (October-November) and Winter (December – February) throughout the year. So, there will be 4 seasonal junctions

1. *Greeshma – Varsha Ritusandhi (May- August):*

During summer season there will be excessive heat and there will be scarcity of water. Before the rainy season the water resources (mainly depends on well water) are to be cleaned. Activated charcoal and hot lime stones are commonly used to purify the water. Other precautions to be taken include,

- Watch out for contaminated water sources
- Stay hydrated
- Get the roof ready for rain- look for any cracks etc
- Cleaning the drainage well and don't cause water to back up
- The dead branches of the trees should be removed from around house
- Road accidents are more common during rainy seasons. So, the gutters should be cleared before rain
- Electric accidents are also common – necessary precautions should be taken.
- Food poisoning – avoid street food, drink boiled and cool water
- Fumigating the environment
- Necessary steps to prevent flooding

2. *Varsha – Sharat Ritusandhi* (August – November):

There are two rainy seasons in Kerala - monsoon and post monsoon. In between the state experiences an intermediate season which can be called as Sharat, somewhat hotter season but not much hot as Summer season. Diseases like malaria, dengue, stomach infection, typhoid, pneumonia are more common in this seasonal junction.

- To prevent the breeding of mosquito, avoid logging of water, usage of kerosene in drainages, can introduce fish breeding models in drainages which feed on larva.
- Use boiled water for drinking
- Fumigating house and surroundings in evenings

3. *Sharat –Hemantha Ritusandhi* (December- February):

In South India we are experiencing winter seasons as comparatively cool climate. The common health problems during this transition period is dry skin, dandruff, cold and cough etc. In order to get rid of dryness one can practise daily oil massage and should keep the warmth.

4. *Hemantha – Greeshma Ritusandhi* (March- May):

Common health problems during this transition period include chicken pox, conjunctivitis, heat stroke, sun burn, food and water borne diseases such as typhoid, cholera etc. To prevent that,

- Fumigate the house and surroundings
- Drink plenty of water and fruits
- Preserve water
- Avoid staying under Sun
- Keep the home cool.

CONCLUSION

The main aim of Ayurveda is to maintain the health of healthy persons and to cure the disease of the diseased. In order to maintain the health, various theories are put forward by our Acharya. Among them *Ritucharya* is important. Any derangement of *kala* (time) is considered as the supreme etiological factor of disease. *Ritu sandhi charya* is important because even if one follows the proper regimen during seasons one may be prone to get disease during the transition period. During this period, it is advised to reduce the regimen of current season and gradually adopt the new regimen. Detailed explanation can be found in *Hemadri* commentary on Ashtanga Hridaya. Since seasons do not follow uniformity across places, the regimens mentioned in *ritu sandhi* needs a closer observation for clarity. Also, all the seasons are not equally felt in all places so the generalized *ritusandhi charya* may not be applicable all time. But according to the seasons experienced places it can be modified. Rather than personal concern, some social adaptation also should be done during seasonal junction in order to keep our ecosystem balanced. The concept of *ritu sandhi* can be adopted in some other conditions such as in migration, *satmeekarana* process etc. Here the number of days can be increased or decreased according to one's ability to adapt. Likewise, the concepts mentioned in our classics are to be reviewed about the course of time.

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