

THE IMPORTANCE OF YAVAGU IN CLINICAL PRACTICE

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**ABSTRACT**

Food is a unique tool in the possession of a physician for the maintenance of health as well as the eradication of diseases. *Yavagu* or medicated gruel (*Marunnu Kanji*) can be considered as a distinctive food preparation that ought to have a multifaceted approach in the treatment of diseases. Even today the food preparation *Kanji* is popular, but we have lost the legacy of *Marunnu Kanji* from our clinical practice due to multiple reasons. The *Yavagu* preparation can be considered as an advanced form of nutraceutical. What we can do now to restore the practice of *Marunnu Kanji Prayogam* is to modify the preparation to make it suitable and easy for op practice. *Yavagu* is very useful in clinical practice because it will increase the palatability of even the bitterest drug, when introduced as *Kanji*. Also depending on the *Yukti* of the practitioner, one can advise to increase or decrease the dosage of the specific drug. This article attempts to highlight the importance of the *Yavagu* or *Marunnu Kanji Prayogam* by referring to 28 *Yavagus* mentioned in the *Apamargatanduliya Adhyaya*.

Keywords: *Yavagu*, *Marunnu Kanji*, nutraceutical

INTRODUCTION

Food upholds a unique position in *Ayurveda*. It is regarded one of the pillars of life along with *Nidra* and

Brahmacharya. Food is heralded as *Mahabhesaja* itself. In the *Trisraishaneeya Adhyaya* of Charaka

Samhitha, *Yuktivyapasaraya Chikitsa* is defined as ‘*Aharaoushadadravyanam yojana*’¹. Again, while referring to the *Upasaya*, *Acharya Madhava* defines it as ‘*Oushadannaviharanamupayogam sukhavaham*’. From all these references we are able to catch the glimpse of food becoming a unique tool in the possession of a physician, for the maintenance of health as well as the eradication of disorders.

Yavagu or medicated gruel (*Marunnu Kanji*) can be considered as a distinctive food preparation that ought to have a multifaceted approach in the treatment of diseases. It is an age-old treatment tradition that has lost its value with the passage of time. Although mentioned in the second chapter of Charaka Samhitha, it should rather be considered as an undermined section in *Ayurveda*. This statement may be countered with an argument supporting the general assertion that *Yavagu* is administered as a part of *Peyadi Krama*. But *Peyadi Krama* includes *Peya*, *Vilepi*, *Kritayoosha*, *Akritayoosha*, *Kritamamsarasa* and *Akritamamsarasa*. That too is mentioned only in the context of *Vamana* and *Virechana*. Hence if the author has mentioned it in the beginning of the text, it should be thought as having a much wider perspective.

The term *Yavagu* has been referred to by *Acharya Susruta* in the context of *Aharavidhi* in chapter 46 of *Sutrastana*. Hence, we should assert the fact that *Yavagu* is an *Aharakalpna* only. But *Marunnu Kanji Prayogam* as part of treatment was a popular tradition in southern states of India, especially Kerala. They are medicated gruels, i.e. the gruels that are prepared with medicines. For years, this *Marunnu Kanji Prayogam* was so prevalent in the history of traditional practice. This was so easy to prescribe because the *Kanji* or gruel constituted staple food of most households then.

Superiority of Yavagu

Yavagu consists of two parts- Grains and medicinal drugs.

Grains	Medicinal Drugs
Stabilize metabolism in case of sluggish digestion	Bioavailability- The proportion of drug or other substance when enters the circulation when introduced into the body and so is able to have an active effect.
Starch 75%- resistant starch with low glycemic index	
Glucose level higher than ORS	

Even today the food preparation *Kanji* is popular, but we have lost the legacy of *Marunnukanji* from our clinical practice due to multiple reasons. Whether a simple *Marunnu kanji* or medicated gruel is effective in treating diseases is a possible doubt. But in Charaka Samhitha itself, it is mentioned as ‘*Vividhanamvikaranam tat sadhyanamnivruttaye*’²i.e. it is capable of eradicating diseases that are *Sadya*. This article attempts to highlight the importance of the *Yavagu* or *Marunnu Kanji Prayogam* by referring to 28 *Yavagus* mentioned in the *Apamargatanduliya adhyaya*.

Methodology

The entire matter for writing this article was obtained from classical Ayurvedic texts. The collected data has been closely analyzed and discussed here.

Result

The qualities of *yavagu* as quoted in *Sarngdhara Samhita* are ‘*yavagugrahinibalyatarpanivatanasani*’. None of the *Acharyas* mention about the dosage of *Yavagu*. It has to be determined according to the logic of the physician considering the state of the patient- ‘*Dosamagnibalavayavyadhidravyam cha kostam cha veekshyamatraamprayojayet*’.

Yavagu and *peya* are mentioned synonymously by *Acharya Susruta* in *Aharavidhiadhyaya*- ‘*Peyaityavagu*’. The properties of *Peya* have been mentioned as ‘*Swedagnijananilaghvideepanivastisodhani, ksuttrtsramaglaniharipeya vatanulomani*’³. The only difference between *Yavagu* and *Peya* is the difference in the amount of water used to prepare both. The ratio of rice and water in *Yavagu and Peya* is 1:6 and 1:14 respectively. Correspondingly, the amount of water that will be in the residue after preparation will also be in similar ratio.

Yavagu as Sabhakthaoushada

‘Sabhaktamyatannaenasamamsadithampaschatva avaloditam’⁴- Sabhaktha means administering medicine with food. It can be added during or after preparation of food. Thus, Yavagu can be considered as administering medicine during Sabaktaoushadakala.

Nutraceutical- Nutrient + Pharmaceutical

“Nutraceutical” is a substance that may be considered a food or part of a food which provides medical or health benefits, encompassing prevention and treat-

ment of disease. It consists of 4 types- dietary supplement, pharmaceutical, medical food and functional food. Medical food is formulated to be consumed or administered internally, under the supervision of a qualified physician. Its intended use is as a specific dietary management of a disease or condition. In compliance with the definition of medical food, the Yavagu preparation can be considered as an advanced form of nutraceutical.

28 Yavagu in Apamargatanduliya Adhyaya

No	Action	Drugs used in Yavagu preparation
1	Deepana Shoolagna	Pippali, Pippalimoola, Chavya, Chitraka, Nagara
2	Pachana Grahipeya	Kapitha, Vilwa, Charngeri, Takra, Dadima
3	Vata atisara hara peya	Stirathipanchamoola (Brhati, Kantakari, Shalaparni, Prishniparni, Gokshura)
4	Pitakapha atisara hara peya	Salaparni, Bala, Vilwa, Prishniparni, Dadima
5	Raktaatisara hara peya	Chaga payas+1/2 water, Hribera, Utpala, Nagara, /Prishniparni
6	Amaghnapeya	Ativisha, Nagara, Dadima
7	Mutrakrichra hara peya	Swadamshttra, Kantakari, Phanitam
8	krimighna	Vidanga, Pippalimoola, Sigru, Maricha, Takra, Suvarchika (Sarjikkakshara)
9	Pipasagna	Mridweeka, Sariba, Laja, Pippali, Madhu, Nagara
10	Vishagna	Somaraji
11	Brmhana	Varahaniryooaha
12	Karsaneeyanam	Gavedhukannam + Makshika
13	Snehana	Taila, Ghee, Lavana
14	Virookshana	Syaamaka, Kusa Amalaka Niryooham
15	Kasa, Hikka, Swasa, Kapha hara	Dasamoola (Vilwa, Agnimantha, Syonaka, Gambhari, Patala, Prsniparni, Salaparni, Brhati, Kantakari, Gokshura)
16	Pakwasayarujapaha	Madira yamaka
17	Varchonirasyati	Saka, Mamsa, Tila, Masha
18	Sangrahana	Jambu, Amrasti, Amla Kapitha, Vilwa
19	Bhedana	Yavakshara, Chitraka, Hingu, Amlavetasa
11	Anulomana	Abhaya., Pippalimoola, Viswa
21	Ghritavyapatnasana	Takra
22	Tailayapatnasana	Takrapinyaaka (Tilakalka)
23	Vishamajwaranasani	Gavyamamsarasa, Dadima
24	Kantya	Yava, Yamaka (Bharjana), Pippali, Amalaki
25	Retomargarujapaha	Tamrachoodarasa
26	Vrishya	Vidalamashaghrita, Kshira
27	Madavinashana	Upodika (Basella Rubra), Dadhi
28	Kshuthanyat	Apamarga, Kshira, Godharasa

If we go through the indicated diseases of the various above given Yavagu, we can see that most of them are Kostagatarogas. Those who practice Marunnukanji

testify the efficacy of Yavagu especially in Kostagatarogas.

DISCUSSION

Yavagu or Marunnu Kanji Prayogam was prevalent in our society for a long period of time. But subsequently

this tradition disappeared from the arena and was replaced by readily available over the counter therapies. Moreover, the derailing of *Ayurvedic* physicians and the booming acceptance of modern medicine in our society, to establish the magnitude of *Ayurveda* physicians stuck on to complex therapies and formulations rather than these simple medicinal recipes. However, some of the medicines like *Aviltoladi bhasma* to prepare *Yavagu* are still available in market. This indicates that many physicians still practice it, even though much lesser in number.

Need of the hour

“*Modifying the procedure of preparation*”

What we can do now to restore the practice of *Marunnu Kanji Prayogam* is to modify the preparation to make it suitable and easy for op practice. Here we have to remember the quotation From *Astanga Samgraha- ‘Yavatamuktarasata’*⁵ in the context of *Kashaya* preparation i.e. while preparing *Kashaya* the *Dravya* has to be boiled in water until the *Kalka* loses its taste. This indicates that the medicine has diffused properly into the water. Keeping this in mind, we can ask the patient to take the rice (according to one’s suitability) and the required amount of water to cook it. We can ask them to prepare a *Potali* or *Kizhi* of medicines. Put the *Kizhi* in water and start boiling. Once the water starts boiling, remove the *Kizhi* and put rice. Then reintroduce *Kizhi*. The time taken to cook the rice will be enough and more to get the essence of the drug in the water. This way the process seems simpler and can be effectively communicated to the patient or the care giver.

The above mentioned procedure is doable now, since most of the drugs mentioned in *Marunnu Kanji Prayogam* are *Mrdu Dravyas*. Even if we have to use *Katina Dravyas* like *Patala* etc., they are available in smaller pieces or even coarse powder nowadays.

In many of the *Yavagu*, buttermilk has been mentioned. Here we should not add it in the beginning because it will curdle. Hence after preparing *Marunnu Kanji* with rest of the drugs, we can add buttermilk at the end. This way it won’t curdle. Also, *Yavagu* gives the physician the freedom to determine the amount of the individual drugs used to suit one’s palatability as well as the strength of the *Roga* and the *Rogi*.

CONCLUSION

Yavagu is very useful in clinical practice because it will increase the palatability of even the bitterest drug, when introduced as *Kanji*. Also depending on the *Yukti* of the practitioner, one can advise to increase or decrease the dosage of the specific drug. *Yavagu* has been testified as extremely effective in curing *Kostagatarogas*. Hence it is the duty of the budding doctors to identify its importance and to incorporate it in clinical practice before the legacy is lost.

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