

## REVIEW OF AHARA VARGA FROM BRUHAATRAYEE WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO SHUKA VARGA AND SHIMBI VARGA

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### ABSTRACT

*Ayurveda* is the science of life. Though it is ancient, it has been treasured and relevant in today's world also. Many principles stated before thousands of years are yet to be relevant in today's fast life. Same is true for *ahara siddhant*. *Ahara*, *swapna* and *bramhacharya* are three main principles for healthy life. There are so many rules related to *ahara* scattered in *bruhatrayee*. Along with these rules, in all three compendia classification of *ahara* is done. First it is divided into *anna* and *pana* means solids and liquids respectively. These two main classes are again divided into subclasses. *Shuka* and *shimbi* varga are mentioned first because they are important. When we see *ahara kalpana* from *bruhatrayee*, it is noticed that there is predominance of *shuka* and *shimbi* varga. It shows importance of *shuka* and *shimbi* varga. So review of *shuka* and *shimbi* varga is taken from *bruhatrayee* with their commentators. It is compared with modern nutrition to check the advantages and disadvantages of ancient diet principles. Thus both *varga* have been discussed with relation to modern nutrition. After that usefulness of different *shuka* and *shimbi* dhanya in different *kalpana* has been concluded.

**Keywords:** *shuka varga*, *shimbi varga*, *bruhatrayee*

### INTRODUCTION

*Ayurveda* is ancient science. Purpose of this science is to keep individual healthy rather than treating diseases. In Charak Samhita it is mentioned that 'deho aharasambhava'.<sup>1</sup> It denotes importance of *ahara* in formation of healthy

foetus as well as its growth. Even *utpatti* of *prakrut dosha*, *dhatu* and *mala* depends upon *ahara*. *Ahara* is also responsible for *dosha prakopa* as well as for diseases. So *ahara* is described in detail in *bruhatrayee*. First rule for

*ahara* is 'matrashi syat'.<sup>2</sup> Every individual should take food in proper quantity (*matra*). This quantity of *ahara* depends upon *agni* of individual. *Matra, ahara vidhi, ashta vidha ahara vidhan* etc are mentioned in *bruhatrayee*. Substances which should be taken daily and which should be avoided all are described in *bruhatrayee*. Different types of *ahara kalpana* are also mentioned. If we observe these *kalpanas*, we can conclude that constituents of *shuka* and *shimbi varga* were main ingredients of the daily food. Though other classes are also described they are not main content of *ahara*. All contents were arranged by *yukti* to make it *complete* food. So these two *varga* are more important.

#### Materials and methods-

- Bruhatrayee with their commentaries.
- Supportive texts of contemporary science.
- Reference from internet and journals.

#### Observations (literary review)-

Review of classification of *ahara*-

Total 12 *varga* are described in *Charak Samhita*.<sup>3</sup> They are – *shuka dhanya, shami dhanya, mansa, shaka, phala, harit, madya, ambu, gorasa, ikshu, krutanna* and *ahara yogi*.

In *Sushrut Samhita* liquid and solid are differentiated and mentioned in two different *adhyaya* in *sutra sthana*. In *Sushrut Samhita* *sutra sthana* following *varga* are mentioned – *jala varga, ksheer varga, dadhi varga, takra varga, ghrut varga, taila varga, madhu varga, ikshu varga, madya varga, mutra varga*.<sup>4</sup> In *Sushrut Samhita* *Annapanavidhi adhyaya* following *varga* are mentioned – *shali varga, kudhanya varga, mansa varga, phala varga, shaka varga, pushpa varga, kanda varga, lavan varga, krutanna varga, bhakshya varga* and *anupan varga*.<sup>5</sup>

Thus total 21 are described in these 2 *adhyaya*. Thus classification of *ahara* is more elaborative in *Sushrut Samhita* than *Charak Samhita*.

In *Ashtang Hrudaya* also they are classified into *drava* and *anna* and mentioned in *dravadravyavidnyaniya* and *annaswarupavidnyaneeya* respectively. They are as follows – *jala varga, ksheer varga, ikshu varga, taila varga, madya varga*<sup>6</sup> as well as *shukadhanya, shimbidhanya, shakavarga, phala varga* and *oushadha varga*.<sup>7</sup> Thus total 10 *varga* are mentioned.

In *Ashtang Sanghara* also they are described in 2 separate *adhyaya* – *dravadravyavidnyaniya* and *annaswarupavidnyaneeya*. Thus in *Ashtang Sangraha* total 11 *varga* are described<sup>8</sup>.

#### Review of shuka varga-

*Annapana vidhi adhyaya* starts with *shuka varga*. *Chakrapani* has classified *shuka* in to three- *shali, shashti* and *brihi*. Grains which grows in *Hemant, Greeshma* and *Sharad rutu* are termed as *shali, shashtik* and *brihi* respectively.<sup>9</sup> *Gangadhar* has classified *shuka dhanya* as *sudhanya* and *kudhanya*. Again *kudhanya* is divided into *shali, Shashti* and *brihi*.

*Shali* described in *Charak Samhita* – *raktashali, mahashali, kalam, shakunahruta, churnaka, deerghashuka, gour, panduka, languli, sugandhak, lohavala, sarivakhya, pramodaka, patanga, tapaneeya, yavak, hayan, panshu, naishadha*.<sup>10</sup>

According to *Chakrapani* *yavak* etc has apposite qualities that of *raktashali*. So *yavak* have qualities like *trimalakara*. *Chakrapani* has explained *aguna* as *guna viparit dosha*.<sup>11</sup> *Gangadhar* has explained that these species are devoid of qualities which are mentioned of *raktashali*. Opposite to view of *Chakrapani* and *Gangadhar*, *Y.*

Sen has mentioned that these *yavak* etc have same *guna* and *dosha* that of *shali*.

*Shali* mentioned in Sushrut Samhita- *lohit shali, kalam, kardamak, panduka, sugandhak, shakunahruta, pushpandak, pundarik, mahashali, sheet, bheeruk, rodhra, pushpak, deerghashuka, kanchanak, mahisha, mahashuka, hayanak, dushak, mahadushak*.<sup>12</sup>

While commenting Dalhan has also mentioned that different species have different names in different region. Even same species have different names in different regions. So their knowledge should be acquired from local farmers. Dalhan has also given difference between *shali* and *shashti*.

*Shali* mentioned in Ashtang Hrudaya and Ashtang sangraha – In both compendia same species are mentioned- *raktashali, kalam, turnak, shakunahrut, saramukha, deerghashuka, rodhrashuka, sugandhik, pundra, pandu, pundareeka, pramod, gourasariva, kanchan, mahisha, shuka, dushaka, kusumandak, langala, lohavala, kardama, sheetabheeruka, patanga, tapaneeya, yavaka, hayana, pansu, bashpa, naishadha* etc.<sup>13</sup>

### **Shashti-**

In charak Samhita *shashti* are mentioned as follows- *Gour, krishna, varak, uddlaka, cheena, sharad, ujjvala, durdara, gandhana, kuruvinda*. They are mentioned as having qualities – *sheeta, snigdha, aguru, madhur, tridoshaghna* and *sthira*.<sup>14</sup>

In Sushrut Samhita *shashtika* are mentioned in su.46 as follows – *shashtik, kanguka, mukundak, peetak, pramodak, mahashashtik, churnak, kurvak* and *kedar*.<sup>15</sup> While commenting on this Dalhan has explained that use of term ‘*shashtika*’ at last indicates all these species are included in it. He has also explained that

*shashtika* are *sheeghrapaki*. In Sushrut Samhita also qualities of *gour shashtik* are given. *Mrudu* and *balavardhak* are different qualities from Charak Samhita. Here it is mentioned that *gour shashtika* is same as *raktashali*. Here also it is said that other *shashtika* has less qualities than that of *gourshali*.

In Ashtang sangraha only two types of *shashtika* are mentioned. They are *gour shashtika* and *asitagour shashtika*. *Shashtik* are mentioned best among all *brihi*. In Ashtang Hrudaya same quote as *Ashtang sangraha* is repeated. While commenting on it, Hemadri has explained three types- *gour, krishna* and *krishnagour*. He has also explained that name *shashtika* has been given as it ripens in sixty days.

### **Brihi –**

Chakrapani has explained that *brihi* is *ashudhanya* from *Sharad rutu*. *Patal* is also one of *brihi*. Gangadhar has also explained *brihi* as *ashudhanya*. They are mentioned as having *madhur rasa* and *amla vipaka*. They are *pittakara* and *guru*.

In Sushrut Samhita *brihi* are mentioned as follows – *Krishna brihi, shalamukha, jatumukha, nandimukha, lavakshi, tvaritak, kukkutandak, paravatak, patal*. While commenting on general qualities of *brihi* Dalhan has mentioned that *amadhur* means *katu vipak*. In Sushrut Samhita qualities of *brihi* according to *utpatti sthana* are mentioned. e.g qualities of *brihi* from *dagdha bhumi, sthalaja, anup* etc.<sup>16</sup> Here qualities of *atiropyia brihi* and *chinnarudha* are also mentioned. This is one of the special features.

Ashtang Sangraha –

In Ashtang Sangraha *brihi* and *shashtik* are mentioned together. Here *brihi* are mentioned having *amla vipak* same as *charak Samhita*.

Ashtang Hrudaya –

In Ashtang Hrudaya same quotes are revised as Ashtang Sangraha.

#### **Kudhanya –**

Actually in charak Samhita *kudhanya* term is not mentioned. But Chakrapani has included some species in *kudhanya*.<sup>17</sup> They are- *koradusha, shyamak, hasti shyamak, neevar, toyaparni, gavedhuka, prashantika, shyamak, priyangu, mukunda, zintirmukhi, varuka, varaka, shibir, jurnavha*.

Chakrapani has commented that *kordusha* means *kodrava*. It is mentioned as *shleshmapittaghna*. But in *raktapitta* nidana it is mentioned as *pittaprakopaka*. He has explained that in *raktapitta, kordusha* do *pittaaprakopa* due to combination with *nishpav, kanji* etc. Gangadhar has explained *koradusha* as *kangu* and *shyamak* as *shyamaghasasya beeja*. He has explained *karyakaranbhav* for each *karya*. He has also revised quote from Sushrut Samhita. Y.Sen has also explained *koradusha* as *kodrava* same as Chakrapani. He has also explained that *shyamak* are of three types – *shyamak, hasti shyamak* and *jala shyamak*. He has also said that these all are *trunadhanya*. He has also revised quotes from Sushrut Samhita.

#### **Sushrut Samhita –**

In Sushrut Samhita in *kudhanya* varga, guna karma of *kodrava, nivar, shyamak, shantanu, priyangu, nandimukhi, mukundak* and *venuyava* are mentioned.

#### **Ashtang Sangraha –**

In Ashtang Sangraha there are named as *trunadhanya* and their general qualities are also mentioned. Also *guna karma* of *priyangu, neevar, uddalak, madhulika, yava, venuyava, godhuma* and *nandimukhi* are mentioned. While commenting on it Indu has also explained *koradusha* as *kadrava*.

#### **Ashtang Hrudaya-**

In Ashtang Hrudaya *sutra sthana* 6, these are named as *trunadhanya* same as Ashtang sangraha. They are mentioned as having qualities like *sheet, laghu vatavruddhikar, lekhan* and *kaphapittashamak*. Also qualities of *priyangu, yava, anuyava, vanshayava, godhuma* and *nandimukhi* are mentioned.

#### **Review of shimbi varga-**

Species mentioned in charak Samhita –

In charak Samhita they are termed as *shamidhanya* and species mentioned are as follows – *mudga, masha, rajamasha, kulatha, makushtaka, chanaka, masura, khandika, harenu, kalaya, tila, shimbi, aadhaki, avalguja, edagaja, nishpava, kakanda, atmagupta*.<sup>18</sup> *Guna karma* of these species are mentioned separately. Even specific *dosha* and disease in which that species should be used is also given. Eg- *mudga- shleshma-pitta, masha- vatahara, vrushya, rajamasha- kapha-shukara* and *amlapitta nashak, kulatha- useful in kasa- hikka-shwasa-arsha, masur- grahi, tila- vataghna* and *kaphapittakruta, adhaki- kaphapittaghni*.

Species mentioned in Sushrut Samhita –

*mudga, vanamudga, kalaya, makushtha, masura, mangalya, chanaka, satin, tripataka, harenu, aadhaki, masha, rajamasha, atmagupta, kakanda, kultha, vanakulatha, tila, mudgaparni, mashaparni, kusumbha, atasi, siddharttak*.<sup>19</sup> In Sushrut Samhita these are named as *vaidala* and included in *kudhanya* varga. While commenting on it Dalhan has explained that these are *shamidhanya*.

Species mentioned in Ashtang Sangraha –

With species mentioned in quote some other species are also described later. They are – *rajamasha, kulatha, nishpav, masha, kakanda, atmagupta, kushamrashimbi, tila, atasi, kusumbha*. Species specially mentioned in

Ashtang Hrudaya – *mudga, adhaki, masura, kalaya, rajamasha, kulatha, nishpav, masha, kakandola, atmagupta, tila, uma, kusumbha*.<sup>20</sup>

D) Review of *shuka* and *shimbi* varga as per modern nutrition-

A cereal is any grass cultivated for the edible components of its grain. In their natural form (as a whole grain) cereals are a rich source of vitamins, minerals, carbohydrates, fats, oils and proteins. Cereals contain 6 to 12 % protein which is generally *deficient* in lysine. Among cereals rice protein is of better quality than others as compare to essential amino acids contents.<sup>21</sup> They are largely composed of starch- a complex carbohydrate. Cereals are also source of some nutrients like Ca and Fe. Although they are not rich in these minerals, they contribute significantly due to fairly large amounts of cereals consumed daily. However rice among the cereals consumed daily. However rice among the cereals is poorer in these two minerals, the content depending upon the extent of polishing. Cereals particularly the whole grains are an important source of B vitamins. It is in outer bran and so levels are decreased in highly polished grains.<sup>22</sup> Cereals do not contain cholesterol so it does not affect incidence of many circulatory diseases. They are also lack of uric acid.

The carbohydrates in cereals disintegrated into starch and then into glucose. Thus absorption of these carbohydrates in the body is gradual. So they maintain blood sugar levels without major changes. Whole grains i.e. those who have not undergone a refining process are very rich in fiber. Role of fiber in control of constipation is crucial. Also its ability to decrease cholesterol levels has been recognized. *Shami dhanya*-pulses represent dicotyledons. They are rich in proteins. Plant proteins are of poorer quality

compared to animal proteins. They are incomplete proteins.

## DISCUSSION

Ingredients of *shuka* and *shimbi* varga are most important content of ahara so they are mentioned at first in classification. *Shuka dhanya* means grains which grow with *tunda, bala* or *shuka*. All compendia have explained three types of it- *shali, shashtik* and *brihi*. It is based on the season in which they grow. All have explained that species have different names in different region. Some species are not found nowadays. *Shuka dhanya* which we use at present and mentioned in Samhita are - *yava, venuyava* and *godhum*. *Shukadhanya* which we use today but not mentioned in Samhita are – *jawar, bajara* and *maka* etc. qualities these grains are not mentioned in *bruhatrayee*.

In Sushrut Samhita qualities of *brihi* are mentioned on the basis of *bhumi* where it grows. It is mentioned that plant kingdom depends upon *bhumi* for its nourishment. So it is important to have knowledge of origin of it. Qualities of grains from *dagdha, jangal* and *anupa desha* are mentioned there. Thus we can compare qualities of cereals we use today on the basis of general qualities given in compendia as well as *desha* where it grows.

It is observed that *shali, godhuma* and *yava* are main components of diet at ancient time. Different types of *shali* were mentioned with which different types of food were prepared. They were mainly – *peya, vilepi, manda, odan, krushara, godhumika, dhana* and *pruthuka* etc. thus main ingredient was rice with *shimbi*.

*Shami varga* is also known as *shimbi dhanya, vaidala dhanya* or *supa yoni*. In general all species have *madhur kashaya* rasa and *sheet veerya*. They cause *vata prakopa* in *koshtha*.

They should be taken by person having good strength and only after processing with *ghee*. In presence of *sneha*, bio availability of proteins increases. *Mudga* and *masha* are mentioned as best and worst amongst this class respectively. Reason behind it is not mentioned in compendia. Even there is no much difference in nutritional values. So it can be concluded that mudga is mentioned as best because of bio availability of proteins and also it do less *vataprakopa* as compared to others.

## CONCLUSION

1) It is observed that food in ancient period as well as from present era contents *shami* with *shimbi*. Use of only one is not recommended. It has nutritional background. Some grains are deficient in the essential amino acid lysine. That is why many vegetarians combine their diet of grains with legumes. Many legumes however are deficient in essential amino acids methionine which is available in grains. Thus combination of legumes with grain forms a well-balanced diet for vegetarians.

2) *Shuka dhanya* which we use nowadays and have been mentioned in texts are *yava*, *venuyava* and *godhuma*. Now we are using *jawar*, *bajara* and *maka*. Although they are *shuka dhanya* they are not mentioned in *bruhatrayee*. Why? There are certain possibilities – **a.** non availability **b.** imported from far place **c.** created as a hybrid product **d.** neglected due to its low value- one component present in *maka* inhibits absorption of EAA. Hence may be Charak and Sushrut Samhita have not counted them. May be they were aware of this fact.

3) Though general qualities of species from same group are mentioned, effect of *desha* on these qualities has also a great significance. It is clearly mentioned in Sushrut Samhita. Thus use

of species from particular place which is followed by tradition is a good concept.

4) As per opinion of Chakrapani, *shali*, *shashtik* and *brihi* all have their own *kala*. Influence of *kala* on the qualities is also crucial. So qualities mentioned in compendia will be seen only if they are cultivated and become ripen in their respective *kala*. Today due to extensive research in agricultural field, availability of every food throughout the year is possible. But they may have deficient of some properties.

5) Again traditionally we use these food grains in particular season generally in which they grow naturally. It is beneficial to the health. It is also requirement of body due to condition of *dosha*, *dhatu*, *mala* and *agni*.

6) Thus diet principles mentioned in ayurved are more stable. Though they are mentioned before thousands of years, we can correlate them with modern nutrition.

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