



Review Article

## AN OVERVIEW OF THE CONCEPT OF BIOLOGICAL MODIFICATIONS IN *RITUSANDHI*

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### ABSTRACT

The incredible journey of Ayurveda from its holy beginnings to the present has us contemplating the immense potential that this science holds. Its successful existence since time immemorial itself proves its scientific approach attributed to its unique basic principles that remain unchanged. The theory of *Ritu* and *Ritusandhi* has been acknowledged as a fundamental principle and it is a specific causative factor to occur all the type of diseases. As the human body has a circadian rhythm and biological clock, they have an impact on every facet of human physiology. *Vagbhatta* describes *Ritusandhi*, at the end of *Ritucharya*. *Ritu* means season while *Sandhi* is the junction or meeting of two things. This indicates that *Ritusandhi* is where two *Ritu* converge. *Ritusandhi* is the sum of the last seven days of the just concluded season and the first seven days of the next or current season, which is about to start. As a result, the 14-day span that separates the conclusion of two distinct seasons. Since a person's health depends on their surroundings, it is also crucial to protect them from the elements throughout the transitional seasons. These seasonal changes weaken the body's immune system and create an environment that is conducive to the spread of illness. In order to improve our eating habits and daily routine and prevent *Sandhi Kalagat* disease, we must be aware of the preventative aspects of *Ritusandhi* (for example allergic diseases, urticaria, conjunctivitis, viral fever, cold, cough etc.) Since maintaining one's health, or "*Swasthya rakshan*," is the primary objective of Ayurveda, the significance of *Ritusandhi* is emphasized in this review article.

### INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda is a way of life that directs us toward all-encompassing human development. Three fundamental requirements for human existence on Earth were emphasized by Acharya Charak in *Tistrayeshana adhyaya*. *Praneshana* is the first<sup>[1]</sup>, *Dhaneshana* is the second<sup>[2]</sup>, and *Parlokeshana* is the last<sup>[3]</sup>. Also the calendar year is divided into two divisions by Charak: *Visarg Kala* and *Adana Kala*. The three seasons that make up each of *Adana Kala*, also known as *Uttarayan* (the northern solstice), and *Visarg Kala*, also known as *Dakshinayan* (the southern solstice), are *Shishira* (winter), *Vasant* (spring),

*Greeshma* (summer), *Varsha* (monsoon), *Sharad* (autumn), and lastly *Hemant* (late autumn), respectively<sup>[4]</sup>. *Aadan kala* reduces the watery part as well as the strength of the creatures on earth. It is the period of absorption. The sun moves from the tropic of Capricorn to the tropic of Cancer, or northward. *Visarg kala* generates energy and increases the watery part of the earth. It is the period of liberation in which the movement of sun is from the Tropic of Cancer to Capricorn. There are numerous methods for treating illnesses with specific diets. *Ritusandhi* suggests that one should progressively begin to reject (let go) the dietetic practices, lifestyle, and behaviour of the previous season while simultaneously progressively beginning to adapt the diet, lifestyle, and behaviour of the upcoming season. According to Ayurveda, these procedures should be carried out in a step-ladder pattern<sup>[5]</sup>, or "*Padanshik krama*". It's difficult to practice anything or to let go of anything abruptly.

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They must be completed in little steps. As per the Ayurvedic concept of *Loka-Purusha-Samya-Siddhant*<sup>[6]</sup>, alterations in the *Loka* have an impact on the *Purusha* and vice versa. The term "*Loka*" refers to the external world that humans inhabit. It is the source of all life's necessities, including food, medicine, water, air, heat, and humidity. It is also where the etiological component originates. As a result, it plays a crucial role in both promoting and maintaining health. The world is the environment, and the things and circumstances that exist there have an impact on and depend on *Purusha*. *Loka* affects the *Purusha* by causing changes in the atmospheric conditions of cold, heat, humidity etc. The fundamental components of the human body are immediately impacted by environmental changes.

Just as humans have no control over the motion of heavenly bodies like the sun, moon, etc., we also have no control over changes in the environment. They have a significant influence on human physiology. Because of this, our *Acharyas* has a regimen that is recommended for each season. Digestive fire is the source of all pleasures, power, health, and longevity. Because the external environment affects the digestive fire during seasonal variations, our diet and activity should be adjusted in accordance with our *Jatharagni*. A condition of health arises from the balance of *Dosha*, *Dhatu*, and *mala*, an imbalance results in disease in the human body<sup>[7]</sup>. So by, following proper *Dincharya*, *Ritucharya* and *Swasthavritta* the equilibrium of *Dosha*, *Dhatu*, *Mala* is maintained.

**Table 1: Characteristics of Uttarayana and Dakshinayan**

Uttarayana <sup>[8]</sup>	Dakshinayana <sup>[9]</sup>
<i>Ritu- Shishir, Vasanta, Grishma</i>	<i>Varsha, Sharad, Hemanta</i>
<i>Sun &amp; air- Teekshana, Ushana, Ruksha</i>	Moon is strong, sun weaker, air colder
Earth's <i>Samyansh</i> decreases	Due to clouds and rain earth cools down
<i>Tikta, Kashaya, Katu ras</i>	<i>Madhur, Amla, Lavana ras</i>
<i>Aagneya pradhan</i>	<i>Saumya</i>
<i>Jatharagni- Mand</i>	<i>Teekshana</i>

## MATERIAL AND METHODS

An attempt has been made to identify any practical value in the current scenario by exhaustively searching elementary Ayurvedic books, newspapers, manuscripts, authoritative websites that express the concept of *Ritucharya*, analyzing and comprehending it for optimal application in disease prevention.

### Review of Literature

The name *Ritu* is derived from the root word "R," which signifies "to go." Additionally, it has meanings related to epochs, times, seasons, phrases, etc. The vedic literature itself introduces the concept of *Ritusandhi*. The *Chaturmasya* sacrifices in *Kausitaki Brahmana* and *Gopatha Brahmana* are carried out in *Ritu sandhis* because they are considered restorative in nature. Diseases arise because of the shift from one to the other. An illustration of *Varsha-sharad Ritusandhi* is the jubilant cries of peacocks blended with the melodies of swans, the fresh blue lotuses with the *Kadambas* still showering, and their blossoms. *Ritusandhi* is not mentioned by name in the *Charaka* or *Sushruta Samhita*. In order to safeguard one's health and avoid *Kalaja Vyadhi*, *Acharya Charaka* recommended *Ritu Satmya*. It is the recommended routine for a certain time of year. In the *Ritucharya* chapter of *Sangrahakala*, *Vagbhatta* makes the first mention of *Ritusandhi*. This idea was condensed by *Acharya Sharangadhar* to encompass only fifteen days

during *Kartik* (October–November) and *Margasirsa* (November–December), and he called it *Yamadamshttra Kala*<sup>[10]</sup>.

*Astangahridaya* was followed by the *Charak Samhita* commentators, including *Chakrapani*, *Gangadhar*, and *Yogindranathsen*. *Astangahridaya* was written after *Srinivasa's Chikitsa-tilaka*, a 17<sup>th</sup> century combinatory masterpiece. While acknowledging *Ritusandhi*, *Nagarjuna*, the author of *Rasavaisheshika*, called it *Sadharana Ritu*. It won't be extremely hot or cold during the *Pravrat*, *Vasantha*, and *Sharad* seasons (rainy). The *Sadharana ritu* and *Ritusandhi* are the names given to these seasons as a result. If a person follows the right diet and exercise routine for each season, their strength will remain intact. It's the time when the body adjusts to the stresses of the new season. A person remains healthy when they are aware of the appropriate food and routine for each season and follow it. This demonstrates their vigor and lustre. Withdrawing from a season's regimen and diet gradually is advised to prevent *Asatmyaja roga*. As a result, in *Ritusandhi*, the previous season's regimen should be progressively abandoned and the following season's should be gradually introduced. It is necessary to follow a specific order in order to prevent the illness during *Ritusandhi*.

**Table 2: Characteristics of each Ritu according to Astanghridayam<sup>[11]</sup>**

Ritu	Ruksha	Sneha	Bala	Rasa
Shishir	+	-	+++	Tikta
Vasanta	++	--	++	Kashaya
Grishma	+++	---	+	Katu
Varsha	-	+	+	Amla
Sharad	--	++	++	Lavana
Hemanta	---	+++	+++	Madhur

**Table 3: This table represents Aaharakrama for 14 days of Ritusandhi according to Acharya Hemadri<sup>[12]</sup>**

Days of Ritusandhi	Aahara of preceding season	Aahara of succeeding season
1 <sup>st</sup> day	3 parts	1 part
2 <sup>nd</sup> day	4 parts	-
3 <sup>rd</sup> day	2 parts	2 parts
4 <sup>th</sup> day	2 parts	2 parts
5 <sup>th</sup> day	3 parts	1 part
6 <sup>th</sup> day	1 part	3 part
7 <sup>th</sup> day	1 part	3 parts
8 <sup>th</sup> day	1 part	3 parts
9 <sup>th</sup> day	2 parts	2 parts
10 <sup>th</sup> day	2 parts	2 parts
11 <sup>th</sup> day	2 parts	2 parts
12 <sup>th</sup> day	2 parts	2 parts
13 <sup>th</sup> day	2 parts	2 parts
14 <sup>th</sup> day	2 parts	3 parts
15 <sup>th</sup> day	-	4 parts

## DISCUSSION

### Biological Changes According to Ritu Sandhi

According to Indian calendar, there are six seasons. So, there would be six Ritusandhis seasonal connections. These are as follows:

#### 1. Varsha- Sharad Ritusandhi

Due to coldness of Varsha ritu when sunrays fall upon in Sharad ritu, the accumulated Pitta in the body gets vitiated. To pacify the enraged Pitta during this time Ghrita, Virechan and Raktamokshana should be used. Use of Tikta, Madhur, Kashaya ras aahara are also taken. Hansodak, which possesses the majority of essential qualities, is also utilized. This Hansodak pacifies Tridoshas which gets infuriated in Varsha ritu.

#### 2. Sharad- Hemanta Ritusandhi

This is the last phase of Visargkaala, it gives more strength to the man. Srotas are completely blocked, so the digestive fire is increases in the body. In this Ritusandhi the Agni, after receiving less heat, gets inspired by the air and starts digesting the Dhatus of the body. Therefore, one should consume food containing Madhur, Amla and Lavana ras. Acharya

Sushruta has described Kshar, Tikta, Amla, Ghrita, Taila and Ushna aahara as beneficial in this time.

#### 3. Hemanta- Shishir Ritusandhi

Being the season of Visargkaala, excess strength is found in Hemanta ritu which decreases comparatively as Shishir ritu sets in. Strong desire of hunger is felt in the morning due to longer nights. Skin suffers from dryness and cracks due to increase of Vayu in the atmosphere. During this period Madhur, Amla, Lavana ras remain dominant. Guru and Snigdha aahara can be taken during day or night hours. Due to increase in coldness in the atmosphere, heat remains preserved in the body which lead to strong Jatharagni and food is digested easily.

#### 4. Shishir -Vasanta Ritusandhi

Accumulated Kapha in Hemanta & Shishir ritu, gets liquefied due to solar heat and weakens Pachakagni. Arrival of Vasant ritu makes physical strength weaker due to which all human beings become more vulnerable to diseases. Due to weaker Jatharagni, less hunger is felt. Abstinence from taking food containing Snigdha, Amla and Lavan ras

should be followed. Avoiding daytime sleep is advised as it elevates the body's *Kapha* energy.

#### 5. *Vasanta- Grishma Ritusandhi*

In this seasonal conjoint decrease in cough and increase in *Vayu* is seen because the sun with its intense rays absorbs *Snehansh* of the planet. Along with *Madhur ras*, *Laghu*, *Snigdha*, *Sheeta* and liquid food should be advised gradually. Cold bath and *Shramhar dravyas* should be taken due to heat increases in the atmosphere. Digestive power becomes weak so *Laghu aahara* is followed.

#### 6. *Grishma- Varsha Ritusandhi*

Because of *Aadankaala* and due to vitiation of *Doshas* of *Varsha ritu Agni* becomes weaker. Also due to clouds in the sky and raining the water gets polluted and *Tridoshas* get vitiated. During this *Ritusandhi amla*, *Lavana* and *Snehayukta* dry food should be used with honey. In this time *Sadharana Ritucharya* should be adopted so that *Agni* can be strengthened.

#### *Doshic state of each Ritusandhi can be*<sup>[13]</sup>

1. *Sisira-Vasantha Ritusandhi- Kapha dosha* is tending to aggravate
2. *Vasantha-Greeshma Ritusandhi- Kapha dosha* gets decreased by the strong rays of Sun
3. *Greeshma-Varsha Ritusandhi- Vata dosha* is tending to aggravate
4. *Varsha-Sharada Ritusandhi- Pitha dosha* is tending to aggravate
5. *Sharada-Hemantha Ritusandhi- Pitha dosha* gets decreased
6. *Hemantha-Sisira Ritusandhi- Kapha dosha* in *Kshaya avastha*

Ritu	Kshaya	Prakopa	Shaman
Shishir	Kapha	-	-
Vasant	Vata	Kapha	--
Grishma	-	Vata	Kapha
Varsha	Pitta	-	Vata
Sharad	-	Pitta	-
Hemant	Kapha	-	Pitta

#### **Disease Onset and Relation of Ritu**

*Vata sambadhit vyadhi- Pravratt*<sup>[14]</sup>

*Pitta sambadhit vyadhi- Sharad*<sup>[15]</sup>

*Sleshma sambadhit vyadhi- Vasanta*<sup>[16]</sup>

*Vatika Arsas - Hemanta*

*Paittika Arsas - Sharad, Grishma*

*Slaishmika Arsas - Shitakala*

*Raktaja Vyadhi - Sharad*

*Udarda, Pratishyaya- Shita Ritu*

*Visarpa, Chardi - Sharad*

Maintaining excellent health is particularly beneficial because the goal of Ayurveda is "*Swasthasya swasthya rakshanam aaturasya vikara prashamana.*" In the classics of Ayurveda, prevention is given top priority<sup>[17]</sup>. *Swasthavritta*, *Sadvritta*<sup>[18]</sup>, *Rasayana* and *Vajikarana Tantra* are few examples. This is the Ayurveda classics only intent. The principles of *Dinacharya* (daily regimen)<sup>[19]</sup> and *Ritucharya* (seasonal regimen) are integral to Ayurveda medicine and are stressed to prevent disorders that may arise from following an unhealthy diet and lifestyle that disregards the body's natural fluctuations.

#### **CONCLUSION**

Ayurveda is a life science that emphasizes the importance of keeping people healthy. Our sages proposed many theories, such as the *Dinacharya*, *Ritucharya*, and *Ratricharya*, to explain this. The seasonal junction protocols are listed here. Since it is thought that the main etiological element responsible for illnesses is *Kala* (sea/time). The rules laid down by *Acharya* should be adhered according to the season. Even if one follows this advice, the sudden change in schedule brought on by the seasons may make him more prone to disease. It is hence necessary to understand *Ritusandhi Charya*. This teaches how to let go of long-standing routines related to one's food, way of life, and seasonal activities in order to facilitate a more effortless transition to new seasons. It will be simpler to avoid seasonal infections as a result. There are numerous other situations when this progressive decline idea is necessary. This page is a meagre attempt to clarify what we mean when we talk about seasons, food, and activities. This article also makes an effort to understand *Ritu's* importance in patient care.

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