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Review Article

GHRITA AS AJASRIKA RASAYANA

Komala.A^{1*}, Srinivasa.S², Divya Nagari.N³, Swarna Latha⁴

¹PG Scholar, Dept of Kayachikitsa, Shri Dharmasthala Manjunatheshwara College of Ayurveda & Hospital, BM Road, Hassan, Karnataka, India

²Assistant Professor, Dept of Kayachikitsa, Shri Dharmasthala Manjunatheshwara College of Ayurveda & Hospital, BM Road, Hassan, Karnataka, India

³PG Scholar, Dept of Samhita, Shri Dharmasthala Manjunatheshwara College of Ayurveda & Hospital, BM Road, Hassan, Karnataka, India

⁴PG Scholar, Dept of Agada Tantra, Shri Dharmasthala Manjunatheshwara College of Ayurveda & Hospital, BM Road, Hassan, Karnataka, India

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*Corresponding Author: **Komala.A**

PG Scholar, Dept of Kayachikitsa, Shri Dharmasthala Manjunatheshwara College of Ayurveda & Hospital, BM Road, Hassan-573 201, Karnataka, India.

ABSTRACT

Ayurveda, the indigenous system of medicine bears a unique concept of Rasayana. The term 'Rasayana' refers to means of obtaining optimum standards of Rasa. Rasayana tantra, one among the eight branches of Ashtanga Ayurveda, emphasizes on nutrition dynamics, rejuvenation of the body and psyche. Rasayana endows longevity, memory, intellect, lustre, complexion and strength to the body. Rasayana has various classifications of which Ajasrikarasayana is one. Ajasrika Rasayana is the rasayana given in the form of nutrition by means of dietary regimens, which are extensively utilized on day to day basis. Ajasrika Rasayana when taken regularly provides nourishment to Rasa-Raktadidhatu and also enhances Ojas. Ghrita and Ksheera have been mentioned as Ajasrika Rasayana.

Keywords: Rasayana, Ghrita, Ajasrika Rasayana, Bala, Ojas, Ayu.

INTRODUCTION

Rasayana comprises of two words "*Rasa*" and "*Ayana*"¹, with the literal meaning nutrition (rasa) and 'path' (Ayana) respectively. Thus it refers to nutrition and its transportation in the body. This means that if Rasa dhatu is produced in optimum quality and quantity, then naturally all the tissues in the body will be nourished properly. Rasayana is one of the comprehensive disciplines of Ayurveda, which comprises of specialized use of drugs, diet and life style. It invigorates a healthy person by producing the best quality of Rasa, Rakta and other dhatus, enhances the qualities of rasa, enriches the body with nutrients and also has the benefit of alleviating diseases². Rasayana therapy, after purification of the body in young age and middle aged persons is found more beneficial³. Rasayana has array of benefits like- Vardhaka (Enhance) by bringing about longevity, memory, intellect and strength. Sthapaka (Stabilization) by delaying the ageing process.

Apraptaprapaka (obtaining additional endowments) promotes health, youthfulness, lustre, complexion, voice, strength to body and sensory organs⁴.

Therefore, Rasayana has an imperative role in two ways, one by preventive and curative way in which it prevents/checks senile degeneration and cures the diseases. On the other hand, it is promotive in nature which promotes and keeps body tissues healthy and provides longevity⁵.

Ghrita (ghee) is the foremost substance of Indian cuisine from centuries. People, nowadays have become more conscious about their dietary intake with a growing proportions of obesity and lifestyle disorders. It is a common misbelief that ghrita is responsible for higher levels of cholesterol in blood. Though ghee is rich in fat and high on calories, not all types of ghee are harmful. Cow's ghee is said to be superior among the other types of ghee.

AJASRIKA RASAYANA:

The word 'Ajasrika' refers to perpetual/occurring everyday⁶.

"*आजस्रिकम्क्षीरघृताभ्यासादिकम्*"⁷ Ghrita (Ghee) and Ksheera (Milk) which are used on daily basis has an effect as Rasayana and hence these are appraised as Ajasrika Rasayana. Ghee has been cited as an excellent rasayanadravya. It is best useful in children as it improves the immunity power and prevents various infectious diseases.

GHRITA (GHEE):

An individual who is accustomed to intake of ghee, milk, oil and meat soup as well as the diets having all the shadrasa (six tastes) is endowed with strength, also can endure difficulties and bestows longevity⁸. The ghee which is preserved for ten years is considered as puranaghrita (old ghee) and it has the capacity to cure dyspnoea, fever, cough, insanity, epilepsy⁹. Hence, Ghrita just not being rasayana, also imparts curative benefits. The ghee which is preserved for more than ten years is referred to as Prapuraghrita. This ghrita

possesses the properties which is similar to that of Laksha rasa which is cold in potency, alleviates grahamdosha, enhances intellect and it is excellent for virechana (purgation)¹⁰.

Ghrita is a best snehadravya (unctuous substance) due to following reasons:

- As it has the remarkable property of “Samskarasya anuvartanam”¹¹; i.e. power to assimilate the properties of other substances effectively with which it is processed. There is no other unctuous substance except ghee which has this tremendous property.

- It also has the capacity to transform itself when added with other substances as the qualities of these substances get imbibed into it.
- Ghrita does not give up its own properties even if it is mixed with substances possessing other properties.
- Due to its Sheeta virya, Madhura rasa and Madhuravipaka, Sahasra virya (its potency gets enhanced thousand times when administered according to the proper procedure)
- Ghrita pacifies tridosha but when it undergoes Samskara (processing) it acts as kaphahara (subsides kapha)¹².

Properties and Benefits of Ghrita (Ghee)

Ch.Su-13 ¹³ , 27 ¹⁴	Su. Su- 45 ¹⁵	A.Hri.Su-5 ¹⁶
Pitta-anilaharam (pacifies pitta and vata)	Madhura (sweet in taste)	Dhi-Smriti-Medha-Agni-Bala-Ayu (increases intelligence, memory, digestive fire, strength, longevity)
Rasa, shukra and ojahitam (beneficial for nourishment of Rasa, Shukra (semen) and ojas)	Saumya (soft)	Shukra-Chakshyam (improves semen and vision)
Nirvapanam (cooling effect)	Guru and Mruduguna (heaviness and smooth)	Bala-vruddha (good for childrens, old age peoples)
Mrudukaram (softening)	Sheeta virya (cold potency)	Kanti-Swarathanam (lustre and voice)
Swaraprasadanam (promotes voice)	Anabhishtyandi (that which does not obstruct channels)	Saukaumarya (delicacy)
Varna prasadanam (imparts complexion)	Snehana (unctuousness)	Sheetam (coldness)
Kapha, medovivardhanam (enhances kapha, meda)	Vatapittaprashamana (pacifies vata and pitta)	Vayasthapanam (stabilizes life span)
Smriti-Buddhivardhanam (Promotes memory and intellect)	Agnideepana (increases digestive fire)	Praja (beneficial in having a progeny)
Agnivardhanam (Improves digestive capacity)	Smriti-medha-kanti- swara-lavanya-soukumarya- oja-teja- balakara (enhances intellect, memory, beauty, delicacy, strength and ojas)	Snehanamuttamam (best among unctuous substances)
	Ayushya (longevity)	Sahasra viryam (increases thousand times in potency), karmasahasrakrut (manifold utilities)
	Vrushya (potency)	
	Chakshushya (improves vision)	
	Sleshmabivardhana (increases kapha)	
	Papma, alakshmi prashamana (wards off sins and inauspiciousness)	
	Vishahara, Rakshoghna (subsides the effect of poison, protects from microbes)	

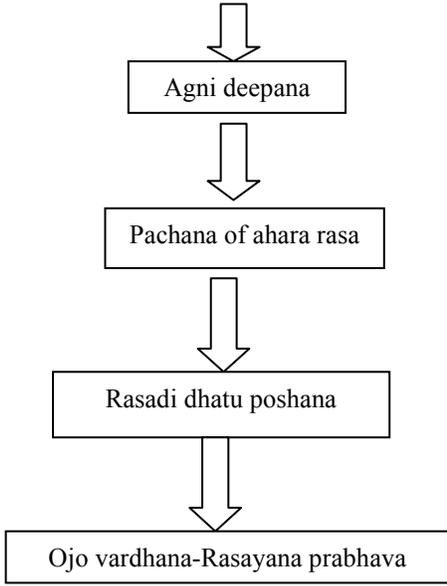
Significance of Ghrita in Old Age:

Ghrita contains Prithvi and Jala Mahabhuta, these mahabhuta have the quality to nourish the parthivamsha and jalamasha of the body. Hence, usage of ghrita is beneficial in promoting the strength, thus it is useful in emaciation, muscle wasting, and loss of strength in old age. Snigdha and Guru guna of ghrita helps in mitigating the vatadosha and stabilizes kaphadosha, which is utilized in fatigue in old age.

Ghrita possesses madhura rasa which is Saptadhatu vardhaka (increases development of tissues), indriya prasada (promotes the sensory functions), therefore necessary in decreased sensorial function of old age. Being Rasayana, it is smriti, buddhi, agni, shukra, oja vardhaka, which is useful in resisting ageing process, eg. Impaired memory, sexual dysfunction etc in old age. Hence Ghrita plays a vital role in old age by combating with senile problems and delaying ageing process¹⁷.

Probable mode of action of Ghrita as Rasayana:

Ghrita- madhura, snigdha, guru guna, sheetaviryya



Ghrita possessing sweet taste, unctuous quality and cold in potency, increases digestive power, helps in digestion of food, inturn nourishes foremost dhatu i.e Rasa dhatu and all other dhatus, therefore when all the dhatu are nourished, the essence of all the saptadhatui.eojas also gets enhanced. Thus Ghrita acts as Ajasrikarasayana which yields Ayuprakarsha, swara-varnaprasadana, medhya, chakshushya, shukravardhaka etc.

CONCLUSION

Rasayana brings about regeneration, revival and revitalization of the bodily tissues or dhatu. Ajasrikarasayana is one among the types of rasayana. Ajasrika refers to the regular use of nutritious foods for the endorsement of health. Ghritais one such among them. It augments Smriti, Buddhi, Agni, boosts ojas, thereby has the effect of rasayana which improves the immunity power of the body. Thus ghrita plays a pivotal role in the treatment aspect as well as in diet and as immunomodulator or rasayana.

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