

A Conceptual View On Langhan Brihaniye Adhyaya of Charak Samhita

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ABSTRACT

Acharya Charaka has bestowed upon us a wealth of profound wisdom, among which the *Langhanabrimhaniya Adhyaya* stands out as a remarkable gem which describes the foundational principles of six major Ayurvedic therapeutic modalities — *Langhana* (lightening), *Brimhana* (nourishing), *Rukshana* (drying), *Snehana* (oleation), *Swedana* (sudation), and *Stambhana* (astringent/stabilizing). These interventions are core to balancing the dosas and treating a broad spectrum of diseases. The chapter begins with an emphasis on *Langhana* and *Brimhana* therapies to address conditions of excessive emaciation and corpulence as introduced in the preceding chapter. Through twelve critical questions and systematic explanations, Acharya Punarvasu highlights the significance of mastering these treatments as the mark of a true physician. Each therapy is defined by its action, indications, and pharmacological qualities of suitable substances thus offering a simplified yet comprehensive understanding. Ten types of *Langhana* are explained, ranging from purification procedures like *Vamana* and *Virechana* to lifestyle interventions such as fasting and exercise. Similarly, indications for *Brimhana* and *Stambhana* therapies are elaborated upon, outlining their relevance in various physiological and pathological states. The chapter concludes with the assertion that, despite the vast diversity in disease presentations and doshic interactions, all treatment modalities ultimately fall within the scope of these six foundational therapies — *Shadvidha Chikitsa*. Their correct application in accordance with individual constitution, disease condition, strength, season, and doshic imbalance is essential for effective and holistic healing in Ayurveda.

Keywords: Langhan, Brimhana, Rukshana Snehana, Swedana, Stambhana. ..

1. INTRODUCTION

The *Langhanabrimhaniya Adhyaya*, the 22th chapter of the *Sutra Sthana* in Charaka Samhita, outlines the core principles of Ayurvedic treatment through six fundamental therapies: *Langhana*, *Brimhana*, *Rukshana*, *Snehana*, *Swedana*, and *Stambhana*. These therapeutic approaches are detailed in terms of their characteristics, uses, and indications, forming the basis for restoring doshic balance. Acharya Vagbhata further categorizes them into two broad groups — *Santarpana* (nourishing) and *Apatarpana* (depleting) — depending on their physiological effects. The text emphasizes the importance of tailoring treatment according to individual constitution, seasonal variations, and disease condition. As a key component of the *Shadvidha upakrama* (sixfold line of treatment), this chapter plays a crucial role in Ayurvedic clinical application.

2. AIMS AND OBJECTIVE

To study the concept of *Shadvidha upakarma* in Ayurveda.

To study the concept of the role of *Langhana*, *Brimhana*, *Rukshana*, *Snehana*, *Swedana*, and *Stambhana* in different treatment principles of disease.

3. METHODOLOGY

- All the available data in Charak Samhita about *Shadvidha upakarma* are comprehensively studied
- Interpretation of the role of *Shadvidha upakrama* or sixfold line of treatment in current scenario.

1. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Langhanbrimhaniye Adhyaya is the 22th chapter of Charak Samhita Sutra sthana which describes the 6 procedures through which we can treat diseases very easily.

The chapter begins with a description of the treatment methods — *Langhana* (lightening therapy) and *Brimhana* (nourishing therapy) — because in the preceding chapter, there was mention of condemned individuals who are either excessively emaciated (*Atikrisha*) or excessively obese (*Atisthula*).¹

Acharya Punarvasu said; One who truly knows the proper use of the six types of therapies — *Langhana* (lightening), *Brimhana* (nourishing), *Rukshana* (drying), *Snehana* (oleation), *Swedana* (sudation/fomentation), and *Sthambhana* (astringent/stabilizing) — alone deserves to be called a physician.²

There were total 12 questions asked in this chapter regarding six procedures

Explanation of Six fold Ayurvedic Therapeutic Principles:

These are six fundamental approaches or methods used in Ayurvedic therapy to balance the body and mind.

a) *Langhana* (Fasting or Lightening therapy)

Definition: A therapy or substance that induces lightness in the body.

Effect: Reduces heaviness, useful in obesity, indigestion, and excess *kapha*.

b) *Brimhana* (Nourishing therapy)

Definition: A therapy or substance that promotes bulkiness or nourishment.

Effect: Increases strength and tissue mass; useful in emaciation, debility.

c) *Rukshana* (Drying therapy)

Definition: A therapy or substance that induces dryness and roughness in the body.

Effect: Reduces oiliness and stickiness; balances excess *kapha* and *meda* (fat).

d) *Snehana* (Oleation therapy)

Definition: A therapy or substance that induces unctuousness, softness, and lubrication.

Effect: Used in preparation for detox (like *Panchakarma*); pacifies *vata* dosha.

e) *Swedana* (Sudation or Sweating therapy)

Definition: A therapy that alleviates stiffness, heaviness, and cold, and induces sweating.

Effect: Opens up the channels and prepares the body for detoxification.

f) *Sthambhana* (Astringent/Restrictive therapy)

Definition: A therapy that stops or restricts excessive movements or secretions in the body.

Effect: Used in diarrhea, excessive sweating, or other conditions with too much fluid/motion.

➤ Vagbhata's Classification:³

According to Vagbhata, these six therapies can be grouped into two major types:

❖ *Santarpana* (Nourishing therapy)

Includes:

Brimhana (bulk-promoting)

Snehana (oleation)

Sthambhana (restrictive)

All three lead to increase or nourishment in the body. Unless the body, *doshas*, *dhatu*s, and *malas* are satisfied or nourished, growth does not occur. Hence, these are grouped under *Santarpana*.

¹ Priyavrat sharma, Charak Samhita Vol 1 Sutra sthana Chapter 22 verse 1-2 , Chaukhambha Orientalia, Varanasi, Edition 2014

² Priyavrat sharma, Charak Samhita vol 1 Sutra sthana Chapter 22 verse 3-4 , Chaukhambha Orientalia, Varanasi, Edition 2014

³ Harishchandra Singh Kushwaha, Ashtang Hridayam part 1 Sutra sthana Chapter 14, Chaukhambha Orientalia, Varanasi, Edition 2024

❖ *Apatarpana* (Depleting therapy)

Includes:

Langhana (lightening)

Rukshana (drying)

Swedana (sudation)

These three are depleting in nature and hence fall under *Apatarpana* (reducing therapies).

(1) Substances Used for *Langhana*:

Those substances which possess the qualities of lightness (*laghu*), heat (*ushna*), sharpness or intensity (*tikshna*), clarity or non-sliminess (*vishada*), dryness (*ruksha*), subtlety (*sukshma*), roughness (*khara*), mobility (*sara*), and hardness (*kathina*) are generally considered to have *Langhana* (lightening) properties.—⁴

(2) Substances Used for *Brimhana*:

Generally, a substance that is heavy (*guru*), cool or calming (*shanta*), soft (*mridu*), unctuous or oily (*snigdha*), dense (*bahala*), gross or bulky (*sthula*), slimy or sticky (*picchila*), slow-acting (*manda*), stable (*sthira*), and sometimes possessing qualities like dull sound (*swara*) and non-penetrating (*rakṣa*)—such a substance is considered to have *Brimhana* (nourishing) properties.⁵

(3) The substances that are generally characterized by the following qualities are considered *Rukshana* (drying or absorbing agents):

Ruksha (dry), *Laghu* (light), *Khara* (rough), *Tikshna* (sharp or penetrating), *Ushna* (hot), *Sthira* (stable or unmoving), *Apicchila* (non-slimy or non-sticky), and *Kathina* (hard).⁶

(4) Substances that are generally liquid, subtle, mobile, unctuous (oily), slimy, heavy, cooling, mild, and soft in nature are considered suitable for *Snehana* (oleation or lubrication therapy).⁷

(5) Substances possessing qualities like hot, sharp, mobile, penetrating, dry, subtle, liquid, stable, and heavy are typically used for *Swedana* (sudation or fomentation therapy).⁸

(6) Substances that are generally cold, mild, soft, astringent, dry, subtle, liquid, stable, and light in properties are regarded as effective for *Stambhana* (astringent or constricting/stabilizing therapy).⁹

There are Ten Types of *Langhana*:

(1) *Vamana* (therapeutic emesis)

(2) *Virechana* (therapeutic purgation),

(3) *Shirovirechana* (*nasya* — nasal therapy),

(4) *Niruha Basti* (decoction enema) — these four are considered purification therapies (*Shodhana*).

(5) Thirst (*Pipasa*),

(6) Exposure to fresh air (*Vayu sevan*)

(7) Sun or smoke exposure (*Dhoopa sevan*)

(8) Use of digestive and carminative medicines

(9) Fasting (*Upavasa*)

(10) Exercise (*Vyayama*) — these are the remaining forms of *Langhana*.¹⁰

A person who has increased *kapha*, *pitta*, blood, and excretory matter, these substances associated with *vata*. A heavy or bulky body and good physical strength, Such a person is suitable for *Langhana* through *Shodhana* (purification techniques like *Vamana*, *Virechana*, *Basti*, etc. *Langhana* through *Pachana* (Digestive Therapy):

Those individuals who are afflicted with diseases caused by *kapha* and *pitta*, and are of moderate strength, or are suffering from conditions like:

Vomiting (*Vamana*), Diarrhea (*Atisara*), Heart diseases (*Hridaya Roga*), *Visuchika* (sudden vomiting and diarrhea like

⁴ Priyavrat sharma, Charak Samhita Vol 1 Sutra sthana Chapter 22 verse 12 , Chaukhambha Orientalia, Varanasi, Edition 2014

⁵ Priyavrat sharma, Charak Samhita Vol 1 Sutra sthana Chapter 22 verse 13 , Chaukhambha Orientalia, Varanasi, Edition 2014

⁶ Priyavrat sharma, Charak Samhita Vol 1 Sutra sthana Chapter 22 verse 14 , Chaukhambha Orientalia, Varanasi, Edition 2014

⁷ Priyavrat sharma, Charak Samhita Vol 1 Sutra sthana Chapter 22 verse 16 , Chaukhambha Orientalia, Varanasi, Edition 2014

⁸ Priyavrat sharma, Charak Samhita Vol 1 Sutra sthana Chapter 22 verse 17 , Chaukhambha Orientalia, Varanasi, Edition 2014

⁹ Priyavrat sharma, Charak Samhita Vol 1 Sutra sthana Chapter 22 verse 17 , Chaukhambha Orientalia, Varanasi, Edition 2014

¹⁰ Priyavrat sharma, Charak Samhita Vol 1 Sutra sthana Chapter 22 verse 18 , Chaukhambha Orientalia, Varanasi, Edition 2014

cholera), *Alasaka* (intestinal obstruction due to suppressed digestive fire), Fever (*Jvara*), Constipation (*Vivandha*), Heaviness in the body, Frequent belching, Nausea, Anorexia (loss of appetite), etc. such individuals should first be treated with *Langhana* through *Pachana*.¹¹

Brimhana Dravya

The meat which is considered *Brimhana* (nourishing and body-building) is that of animals (like deer), fish, and birds which: Dwell in a region suited to the individual's constitution (*satmya desha*), Are naturally accustomed to roaming freely in that region, Are not injured by poisoned weapons, Are free from diseases, and Are in their youthful stage.¹²

Persons suitable for *Brimhana* :

Those individuals who are: Emaciated (*kshina*), Naturally lean or thin (*kṣāṇa-kriṣha*), Elderly (*vridhdha*), Weak (*durvala*), Regularly walk long distances, Engage frequently in sexual activity, Habitually consume alcohol, such persons should regularly be given *Brimhana* therapy (nourishment and strengthening treatment).

Also, during the summer season (*Grishma ritu*), everyone should be administered *Brimhana* for maintaining strength and balance.¹³

Stambhana Dravya

All those substances which are: Liquid (*drava*), Light and thin (*tanu*), Stable (*asara / sthira*), And capable of producing coolness in the body, as well as those having tastes such as: Sweet (*madhura*), Bitter (*tikta*), and Astringent (*kashaya*) — All such substances are considered *Stambhana Dravyas* (retentive or astringent agents).¹⁴

Persons Suitable for *Stambhana*:

Individuals who are: Of pitta constitution, Burnt by alkali or fire, Suffering from vomiting (*vamana*) or diarrhea (*atisara*), Troubled due to excessive loss of poison (*visha*) or sweat (*sveda*) — Such persons are considered suitable for *Stambhana* therapy (treatment aimed at stopping or retaining bodily fluids or discharges).¹⁵

Shadvidha Cikitsa (Sixfold Line of Treatment):

Thus, the six types of treatments such as *Langhana* and others are prescribed as appropriate therapies for various diseases. When these are applied in proper dosage and at the appropriate time, they prove to be effective in the treatment of many curable diseases.¹⁶

2. CONCLUSION

Although the manifestations of diseases and imbalances in the body are highly diverse due to the numerous possible interactions and permutations of the three *doṣas* — *vata*, *pitta*, and *kapha* — all these variations can be traced back to disturbances in these three fundamental bio-elements. The *doṣas* may present individually, in pairs, or all three together, giving rise to 63 possible combinations as mentioned in classical Ayurvedic texts. Similarly, individual constitutions (*prakriti*) and disease presentations may vary due to genetic, environmental, dietary, and lifestyle factors, leading to an immense diversity in clinical conditions.

However, despite this apparent complexity, the treatment strategies in Ayurveda are fundamentally grounded in six therapeutic modalities, collectively known as *Shadvidha upakrama*— *Langhana* (lightening), *Brimhana* (nourishing), *Rukshana* (drying), *Snehana* (oleation), *Swedana* (sudation), and *Stambhana* (astringent/stabilizing therapy). These six treatment types serve as a comprehensive framework to address any disease, regardless of its form or intensity.

Each of these six therapies targets specific qualities of the *doṣas*, aiming to restore balance through opposite or supportive actions based on Ayurvedic principles like *samanya-vishesha siddhanta* (principle of similarity and dissimilarity). Therefore, even though practitioners may apply numerous therapeutic combinations or approaches, all such treatments ultimately align with and fall within the scope of these six fundamental categories.

In essence, just as all permutations of disease are rooted in the three *doṣas*, all therapeutic responses are grounded in the six-fold treatment philosophy. This structural simplicity within apparent complexity is a hallmark of Ayurvedic science, offering a clear yet flexible guide for clinical decision-making.

¹¹ Priyavrat sharma, Charak Samhita Vol 1 Sutra sthana Chapter 22 verse 20-21 , Chaukhambha Orientalia, Varanasi, Edition 2014

¹² Priyavrat sharma, Charak Samhita Vol 1 Sutra sthana Chapter 22 verse 25 , Chaukhambha Orientalia, Varanasi, Edition 2014

¹³ Priyavrat sharma, Charak Samhita Vol 1 Sutra sthana Chapter 22 verse 26 , Chaukhambha Orientalia, Varanasi, Edition 2014

¹⁴ Priyavrat sharma, Charak Samhita Vol 1 Sutra sthana Chapter 22 verse 33 , Chaukhambha Orientalia, Varanasi, Edition 2014

¹⁵ Priyavrat sharma, Charak Samhita Vol 1 Sutra sthana Chapter 22 verse 42 , Chaukhambha Orientalia, Varanasi, Edition 2014

¹⁶ Priyavrat sharma, Charak Samhita Vol 1 Sutra sthana Chapter 22 verse 43 , Chaukhambha Orientalia, Varanasi, Edition 2014

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