

# Seasonal Regimen (Ritucharya)

Class 3: Ashtanga Hridayam with Dr. Rekha Radhamony

# What is Ritucharya

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- Ritu = season, charya = practice
- Set of rules to stay healthy and prevent disease. All about the management of lifestyle in relation to the changing seasons
- The universe – constantly changing, days, months, years.
- The more human actions are aligned with the universe, the better the health is.

# The 6 Seasons (Ritu)

There are 6 seasons.

1. Sisiram (Dewy season)
2. Vasantham (Spring)
3. Greeshmam (Summer)
4. Varsham (Rainy season)
5. Sharad (Autumn)
6. Hima/ Hemantam (Winter)

Each ritu is comprised of two months

masair dwi samkhyair (2 months) makhadyai:  
kramat shad ritava: smrita: | sisiro adha  
vasantascha greeshma varsha sharad himaa: ||



# The concept of Kala (time)

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Time has 3 divisions:

- Divasam (day)
  1. Day to night
  2. Night to day
- Masam (month)
  1. New moon to full moon (suklapaksha)
  2. Full moon to the next new moon (krishnapaksha)
- Valsaram (year)
  1. Northward movement of the Sun (Uttarayanam) -
  2. Southward movement of the Sun (Dakshinayanam)

This movement begins to occur a day after the winter solstice in December which occurs around 22 December and continues for a six-month period through to the summer solstice around June 21 (dates vary)

# Uttarayana

Northward movement of the sun

Corresponds to Summer Solstice

Days are longer

Comprised of 3 warm seasons

Fire is dominant

Also known as adana kala

Human strength is relatively low

1. Sisiram (Dewy season) – mid January to mid March
2. Vasantham (Spring) – mid March to mid May
3. Greeshmam (Summer) - mid May to mid July

sisiradyai: tribhi: tai: tu vidyat ayanam uttaram| adanam  
cha tad adatte nrinaam pratidinam balam ||

# Dakshinayana

- Downward movement of the sun (Dakshinayanam)
- Corresponds to winter solstice
- Days are shorter
- Also known as visarga kala
- Human strength is relatively high
- Comprises of 3 cold seasons
  1. Varsham (rainy season) - mid July to mid September
  2. Sharad – (autumn) - mid September to mid November
  3. Hemantham – (winter) - mid November to mid January

# In a nutshell...

Uttarayana is hot – adana – less strength

Dakshinayana is cold – visarga – more strength

tasmat (so) adanam agneyam ritavo (hot seasons) dakshinayanam varshadayo (varsham, sharad, hemantam) visargascha yat balam visrijati (gives strength) ayam ||

# What happens during Uttarayana

- In Uttarayana, due to the movement of the sun towards north, the sun & air becomes extremely hot, sharp and dry. This reduces the qualities of the earth like cold etc.
- Remember the 6 rasas here.
- Swad, Amla, Lavana – increases the strength
- Katu, Tikta, Kashaya – reduces the strength
- So which rasas one should reduce during uttarayana? (hot months/low strength) Think over!

*tasmin (in uttarayana) atyartha (extreme) teekshna (sharp) ushna (hot) rooksha (dry) marga swabhavata: (due to movement of the Sun) | aditya (sun) pavanau (vata) saumyaan (cold, etc) kshapayanthi (reduces) gunan (qualities) bhuvā: (earth) || tikta: (bitter) kashaya: (astringent) katuko (spicy) balino (strength) atra rasa: kramat (of the rasas in that order) ||*

# What happens during these Dakshinaya?

As we know by now, Dakshinayana has cold months.

The moon has more strength

The sun has less strength

Due to the cold winds, rains and clouds, earth reduces its heat and becomes cold. These months we should reduce the rasas that increase cold (strength increasing) – swad (sweet), amla (sour), lavana (salty)

# Change in strength with seasons

High Strength	Medium Strength	Low Strength
Sisiram (Dewy)	Vasanta (Spring)	Varsha (Rainy)
Hemantam (Winter)	Sharad (Autumn)	Greeshma (Summer)

sheete agryam vrishti kharame  
alpam balam madhyam tu  
seshayo |

# Winter



# What happens to Agni during winter?

During winter, outside temperature is low, the exterior of the body also becomes cold. There is no sweating that happens due to cold and hence the channels that expel the heat of the body through sweat are blocked. Hence the heat of the body does not go outside the body and stays within. This is also helped by Vata inside the body as the sweat channels (sweda vaha srotas) are blocked.

In addition, in order to maintain the heat of the body (homoeostasis), the body tries to preserve the heat as well. This increases Agni.

If one does not have enough food to balance the agni, the dhatus (tissues) get burned. Hence a healthy person should eat well during the months of winter.

In a weak person, the agni is already in a compromised state. This is further weakened by the cold environment during winter and leads to indigestion etc.

Hence during winter, one should try to eat nourishing, warm, foods rich in sweet, sour and salty tastes.



## A typical day in winter

- In winter, the days are longer and hence the agni is good early on in the day
- Hence one should wake up early, pass bowel movements, use vata subsiding oils for abhyanga and head massage, followed by stroking the body.
- After that do exercise or engage in sports like body fight/ wrestling etc with (vayayam padu) exercise experts.
- Then do padakhatam( massage with feet) if required

# A typical day in winter (contd...)

- After exercise, take shower
- One can use a scrub which has kashaya rasa in it to remove the oil in the body ( eg. Incha/ Nikunchika)
- Then do Dhuma (Smoking of the body). For this apply a paste of turmeric and saffron and leave it to dry. After this burn a piece of Agarwood and show the fumes over the body.
- Then eat breakfast



# What to eat in Winters

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- Meat soup cooked in ghee
- Food made of wheat, rice, black gram, sugarcane juice, milk can be eaten as breakfast
- For lunch, have rice with new grain
- Drink warm water (sukhodakam)

# Other practices

- Do oil pulling with sesame oil or animal fat (vasa)
- Use blankets that are thin, and do not cause heat, preferably made of silk, etc.
- If required, it is good to stand in sunlight or do sudation (swedana karma)
- Always wear footwear during winter 😊
- Houses made with warm flooring is preferable



# Dewy Season



# Dewy Season

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- Temperature is colder than in winter
- Follow the same protocol as winter
- However, the air is dry during this season as Dewy season is part of adana kala





**Spring**



# Spring Season

In Sisira the temperature is very cold.

Kapha is extremely high and increased.

In Spring, the sun comes out again and due to its heat the kapha melts and reduces the Agni. This creates diseases.

Somehow or the other, this kapha should be reduced/remedied before it causes further damage to the body

# Practices to be followed during Spring

- Kapha has to be reduced. For this, do practices like the following:
- Vamana – Emesis with herbs with sharp (tikshna) qualities
- Nasya – Sharp nasya
- Food should be light and dry
- Exercise
- Udwarttana (dry powder massage)
- After that, take shower
- Apply a body pack made of camphor, sandalwood, agarwood & saffron all over the body

# Practices during Spring



- Eat lunch made of old barley, wheat, meat, etc
- Consume honey in Spring during lunch time
- Hearty alcoholic preparations made of tender flowers of mango tree can be consumed
- Drink warm water with dried ginger/ bark of Indian kino tree (sarambu)/ nut grass(musta)
- Sleeping during the day is prohibited
- Mind should be kept happy

# Summer Regimen

- The sun is extremely hot during Summer causing exhaustion to the living beings
- The extreme heat reduces the kapha in the body drastically, but increases vata

# Charyas for Summer

- One should avoid salty (lavana), spicy (katu), amla (sour) tastes during Summer
- One should eat enough carbs during Summer but make it light, cold, oily, & liquidy
- Lunch should be red rice and meat (jangala mamsam)
- Light meat soup without excessive fat should be taken
- Drinks like rasala, raga and khandava should be consumed
- Rasala is curd churned with pepper powder & sugar



# Charyas for Summer

- One should reduce exercise and going out in the sun during summer
- Take shower in cold water
- After taking shower, eat a mix of laja powder with jaggery
- Alcohol should not be consumed in plenty
- A little alcohol with lots of water is allowed
- If alcohol is consumed excessively, it can cause weakness, tiredness, heat & drowsiness



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# Recipe for Summer

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- Drink the juice of ripe banana & jackfruit cut into pieces kept overnight in mud vessel (to make it sour)
- Drink room temperature water with camphor powder and made fragrant by adding flowers of Patala



# Panaka Panchasara Recipe

- Panaka Panchasara is great drink for Summer
- Recipe: Extract the juice out of the following 5 fruits in equal quantities are taken, added with a pinch of camphor and jaggery to taste. Instead of camphor, you can also add leaves of cinnamon, cinnamon & cardamom
  - Raisins
  - Madhuka (butter fruit)
  - Kashmari (gambhari/ Kashmir tree fruit)
  - Dates
  - Falsa fruit (Indian sherbet berry)



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# Night regimen - food

- Eat sasanka kirana in the night – milk boiled with sugar and made into a thick concentrate is called sashanka kirana
- In the night drink buffalo milk with sugar and made cold by keeping in moonlight
- Buffalo milk is sweet, heavy, cold – vata and pitta balancing, kapha increasing



## Day time charyas

- Day time should be spent in forests with tall trees like pine & palm trees, not exposing oneself to direct sunlight
- The hut should have flowers like orange jasmine & grapes hanging from the creepers
- Water should flow near the hut with fragrant cold water
- The hut should have mangoes and mango flowers hanging from the roof



# Day time charyas (contd..)

The bed spread should be made of banana leaf, white ginger lily (sougandhika kusumam), lotus leaf decorated with white and red flowers

Post lunch, if one is tired due to heat, he should sleep

Room can be also kept cold by having a small fountain with vetiver water (cus cus grass)



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# Night-time regimen during Summer

- Be in the company of kids, parrots and mynas talking pleasantly and beautiful women wearing lotus stalk as bangles, lotus blossoms in the hair moving about nearby 😊
- In a nutshell, during Summer do cold practices to reduce Kapha, carefully by not vitiating Vata

# Night Regimen During Summer

- At night one should sleep on the terrace in the moonlight
- If the body is tired due to the heat during the day, apply a paste of sandalwood powder in the body in the night
- Avoid sex
- Wear garlands made of flowers like Jasmine, Karpooramalli (Indian Borage) flowers or sandalwood beads
- Wear very thin and light clothing
- For fanning, use fans made of leaves of Tala or use a lotus leaf
- Use venchamara that drips cold droplets of water





**Rainy Season**



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# What happens in Rainy Season

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- In Greeshma vata vitiates.
- Due to excessive heat, however it does not have the scope to go out of limits
- In rainy season, due to formation of clouds and excessive cold winds in the air, vata gets the chance to vitiates further
- When it rains, heat is released from the earth and vitiates Pitta
- Kapha is vitiated due to excessive moisture, cold and water in the environment
- Thus, in rainy season all doshas are vitiated, this further weakens the Agni
- In adana kala (hot months), people are tired due to exhaustion and the Agni is low. This is further worsened in rainy season.
- So during rainy season, one should carefully choose charyas that are favourable for all 3 doshas and to improve Agni

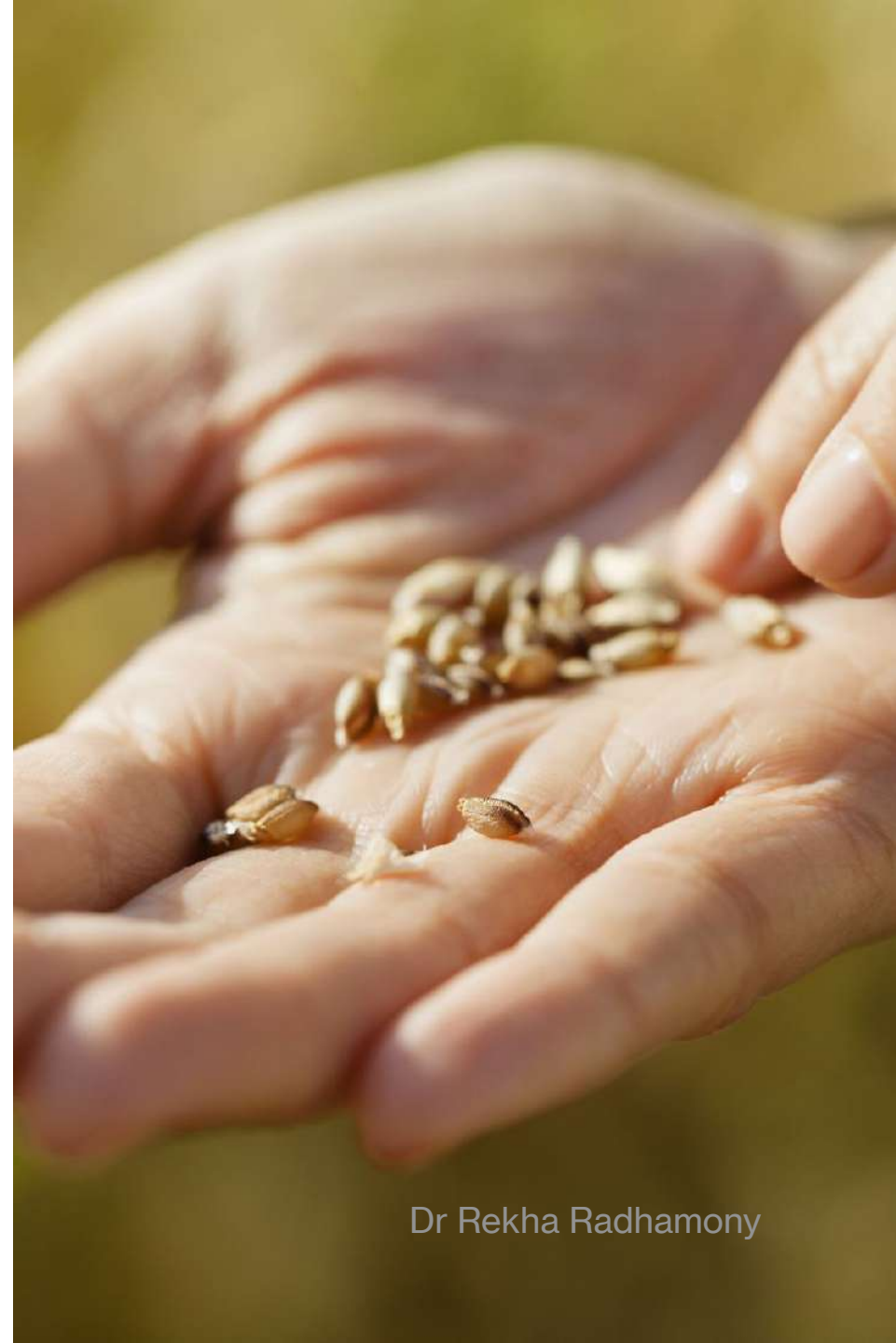
# What happens in Rainy Season (Contd..)

- There is conflict between doshas, and doshas and Agni during rainy season
- Body gets extremely vulnerable to diseases during rainy season as body becomes “doshamaya” (full of vitiated doshas)
- There is no other ritu that is as bad as rainy season when it comes to health
- In places where there is extreme rains, the disease rate is also substantially higher due to this reason
- The primary aim has to be for bringing up the Agni, increasing the body heat and balancing all the 3 doshas
- The most important thing to work on is Agni Sandeepana (increasing Agni)



# Foods favourable for Rainy Season

- Foods favourable for rainy season are the following:
  - Old wheat
  - Meat soups processed into a cooked curry/ dish
  - Well cooked meat
  - Green gram soup
  - Old wine
  - Buttermilk mixed with black salt or panchakola powder (long pepper, long pepper root, Balinese long pepper, Plumbago zeylanica & dried ginger)



# Foods favourable for Rainy Season (contd..)

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- Uncontaminated rain water or water from the well boiled and reduced
- If there is excessive rainfall and the Sun is completely invisible, food should have sour and salty tastes and added with ghee.
- Honey has to be consumed as well as it is Yogavahi
- What is Yogavahi? (We discussed this in 2nd class)
- One should not consume laja (puffed rice) mixed with water



# Charyas for Rainy Season

- During rainy season, one should do purificatory therapies like Vamana (emesis), Virechana (purgation) & Kashaya Vasti (enema)
- Always wear footwear during rainy season
- One should apply some form of fragrance in the body
- Always wear clothing that is pure (purified with dhooma(smoke))
- Stay in a house which is high up from the sea level
- Day time nap is not allowed in rainy season
- Reduce excessive exertion & exposure to sun





# Autumn

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# What happens in Autumn (Sharad)

- In rainy season, the body gets cold. Pitta is also vitiated. However due to lack of heat in the outside environment, the vitiated Pitta cannot express itself. It stays in chaya state in its own seat. As the season changes to Autumn and sun comes out, the body gets heated and due to this Pitta gets aggravated and goes out of balance.
- Hence, in the months of Autumn, one should do practices that reduces Pitta



# Charyas for Autumn

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- Use tiktaka ghrita to reduce Pitta and do purificatory techniques like Virechana (purgation) and raktamoksha (blood letting)
- This will help bring back the appetite. Once the appetite is normalised, one should have light food (laghu).
- During autumn, blood letting is done during Autumn to regulate BP.
- Apply a paste of sandalwood, vetiver, camphor on the body & sit in the moonlight during Autumn



# Foods for Autumn

- Foods rich in tastes - bitter, sweet and astringent
- Red rice
- Mung beans
- Sugar
- Amla
- Ash gourd
- Honey
- Meat
- Use Hamsodaka as water





# Hamsodaka

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The water which gets heated by the hot rays of the sun during the day cooled by the cool rays of the moon during night, for many days continuously, which has been de-poisoned by the rise of the star Agastya, which is pure, uncontaminated and capable of mitigating morbid matters of the body, is known as Hamsodaka. It neither too moist to obstruct the channels, nor very dry. Such a water is nectar and should be used for drinking, bathing and cooking purposes.



# What to avoid during Autumn

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- Cold foods
- Strong alkaline foods
- Eating till the stomach becomes full
- Curd
- Sesame oil
- Animal fat (vasa)
- Direct sunlight
- Day-time napping
- Strong alcohol
- Wind blowing from the East

# Summary

- As a thumb rule, in all seasons, all 6 rasas should be there in the food
- In each season, use more of the specific rasa for the season

Winter, Rainy Season, Dewy Season	Spring	Summer	Autumn
Sweet Sour Salty	Bitter Pungent Astringent	Sweet	Madhura Tikta Kashaya
(Oily, hot practices)	(Dry, hot practices)	(Oily, cold practices)	(Dry, cold practices)

# Ritu Sandhi (seasonal junction)

When a season ends and the new season starts, we take the last 7 days of the previous season and first 7 days of next season (total 14 days) as Ritu Sandhi. Sandhi means joint/junction.

One should plan transition of charyas based on ritu sandhi

The transition should be gradual and little by little

If ritu sandhi is not taken seriously, it can cause unfavorable outcome and create diseases

rituo antadi (the end of season) saptahou (7 days) ritu sandhi iti smrita: (is called ritu sandhi) | tatra purvo vidhi syat tyajya (discard the charyas of earlier season) sevaneeyo apara: kramat (new charyas of the new season) || asatmyajaa: (unfavourable) hi rogaa: (diseases) syu sahasa tyaga sheelanat ||



# Q+A

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