

AJASRIKA RASAYANA- A POTENTIAL REJUVENATION FOR LONGEVITY OF LIFE

[Rekha¹](#), [Neetu Singh Sivag²](#)

¹Assistant Professor, Department of Samhita Evum Siddhant
Kala Ashram Ayurved Medical College and Hospital Gogunda, Udaipur, India.

²Assistant Professor, Department of Kaumarbhritya
Kala Ashram Ayurved Medical College and Hospital Gogunda, Udaipur, India.

Corresponding Author: rekhatak602@gmail.com

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**ABSTRACT**

Introduction: Ayurveda, the indigenous system of medicine bears a unique concept of *Rasayana*. It maintains the longevity of life and increases vitality and mental competence. The term '*Rasayana*' refers to the means of obtaining optimum standards of *Rasa*. It is not a drug therapy but is a specialized procedure practiced in the form of rejuvenation recipes, dietary regimens, and special health-promoting conduct and behavior. *Ajasrika Rasayana* is one of the different types of *Rasayana* which should be consumed regularly just like the food. *Ghrita* and *Ksheera* have been mentioned as *Ajasrika Rasayana* by Acharya Sushruta. **Aim:** To explore the importance of *Ajasrika Rasayana* for the longevity of life with special reference to *Ghrita* and *Ksheera*. **Materials and Methods:** Classical texts of Ayurveda with available commentaries, published research papers, books, subject-related data on the internet, and other sources have been compiled, critically analyzed, and systematically organized to frame the present thought paper. **Discussion and Conclusion:** *Ajasrika* refers to the regular use of nutritious foods for the endorsement of health. *Ajasrika Rasayana* when taken regularly provides nourishment to *Rasa-Raktadi Dhatus* and also enhances *Ojas*. *Ghrita* is one such amongst them. It augments *Smriti*, *Buddhi*, and *Agni*, and boosts *ojas*, thereby having the effect of *Rasayana* which improves the immunity power of the body. *Ksheer* is known as *Pravara Jivaniya*, *Ajanma Satmya* and considered as *Jivana*, *Brimhana*, *Nitya Rasayana* and *Pathyatama*. It has *Dhatuvardhaka* and *Ojovardhaka* properties. Thus, *Ghrita* and *Ksheera* as *Ajasrika Rasayana* contribute to the healthy long life of a person.

Keywords: *Ajasrika Rasayana*, *Ghrita*, *Ksheera*, Longevity, Rejuvenation.

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda, the indigenous system of medicine is having a unique concept of *Rasayana* (Rejuvenation). It is one of the comprehensive disciplines of *Ayurveda*, which comprises specialized use of drugs, diet, and lifestyle. The term '*Rasayana*' refers to the means of obtaining optimum standards of *Rasa*. *Rasayana* comprises two words '*Rasa*' and '*Ayana*'¹ with the literal meaning of nutrition and path respectively. Thus, *Rasayana* refers to nutrition and its conveyance in the body. It has an imperative role in two ways- preventive and curative ways by which it prevents senile degeneration and cures the diseases respectively. *Rasayana* is promotive therapy that promotes and keeps body tissues healthy and provides longevity² According to Acharya Sushruta, *Rasayana* should be administered to a person at an early age or middle age.³ *Rasayana* therapies administered to those whose body has not been purified become useless just as colouring a dirty cloth hence before administration of *Rasayana* drugs purification of the body is necessary.⁴ The lifespan refers to the duration from birth to death. The quality of life and the lifespan are interdependent thus a healthy state of mind and body is to be maintained for the longevity of life. Immunity, physique, and psychological health are important perspectives to achieve a normal lifespan. *Rasayana* is not merely a drug therapy but is a specialized procedure practiced in the form of rejuvenation recipes, dietary regimen, and special health promoting conducts and behaviour. *Rasayana* helps in prevention of early ageing by delaying the process of ageing and preserve youthfulness. It maintains the longevity of life, increases vitality and mental competence. *Ajasrika Rasayana* is one amongst the different types of *Rasayana*. It is advised for regular intake just like food hence called *Ajasrika Rasayana*. *Ghrita* and *Ksheera* have been mentioned as *Ajasrika Rasayana* by Acharya Sushruta.⁵ When nutritious food items are taken regularly as food, it is considered *Ajasrika Rasayana*. It refers to the contin-

uous consumption of a nutritious diet in order to maintain optimum nutrition.

Materials And Methods

Classical texts of Ayurveda with available commentaries, published research papers, books, subject-related data on the internet, and other sources have been compiled, critically analysed, and systematically organized to frame the present thought paper.

Aim: To explore the importance of *Ajasrika Rasayana* for the longevity of life with special reference to *Ghrita* and *Ksheera*.

Ghrita as *Ajasrika Rasayana*

Chaturvidha sneha (four types of fats) are described in Ayurveda. They are *Ghrita* (ghee), *Taila* (oil), *Vasa* (fat of body), and *Majja* (bone marrow). Of these four *Snehas*, *Ghrita* is considered as best because it has more medicinal properties due to its *Samskaranuvarti guna*.⁶ 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, endurance, and longevity. *Ghrita* has been cited as an excellent *Rasayana dravya*. It increases digestive power, helps in the digestion of food, and in turn nourishes the foremost *Dhatu* i.e *Rasa dhatu* from which all other *Dhatu*s get their nourishment. When all the seven *Dhatu*s are nourished, the essence of *Saptadhatu*s i.e *Ojas* also gets enhanced. *Ghrita* acts as *Ajasrika Rasayana* which ultimately yields in *Ayuprakarsha*, *Swara-varna prasadana*, *Medhya*, *Chakshushya*, and *Shukravardhaka* effects. *Ghrita* with its *Snigdha* and *Shita* properties pacifies *Vata-pitta* but when it undergoes *Samskara* (processing), it acts as *Kapahahara* (subsides *kapha*) too.⁷ Thus *Ghrita* has its therapeutic action on all the three *Doshas*. Traditionally, in India ghee is one of the main ingredients in food. Freshly made cow ghee is called *Navina Ghrita* which promotes memory, intelligence, *Agni*, semen, and *Ojas*. It also alleviates *Vata*, *Pitta*, poison, insanity, phthisis, inauspiciousness, and fever⁸ owing to its *Sheeta Virya*, *Madhura Rasa*, *Madhura Vipaka*,

and *Sahasraviryatwa* (potency gets enhanced thousand times when administered according to the proper procedure).⁹ *Ghrita* does not give up its properties even if it is mixed with substances possessing other properties. Old *Ghrita* alleviates intoxication, epilep-

sy, fainting, phthisis, insanity, poison, fever, and pain in the female genital tract, ear, and head.¹⁰ Various therapeutic and rejuvenative properties of *Ghrita* mentioned in classical texts of Ayurveda are enumerated in Table 1

Table 1: Properties of *Ghrita* in classics

Charaka Samhita	Sushruta Samhita	Ashtanga Hridaya
<i>Pittaanilaharam</i> (pacifies <i>Pitta</i> and <i>Vata</i>)	<i>Madhura</i> (sweet in taste)	<i>Dhi-Smruti-Medha-Agni-Bala-Ayu</i> (increases intelligence, memory, digestive fire, strength, longevity)
<i>Rasa, Shukra, and Ojohitam</i> (beneficial for the nourishment of <i>Rasa, Shukra</i> (semen), and <i>ojas</i>) <i>Saumya</i>	<i>Saumya</i> (soft)	<i>Shukra-Chakshushyam</i> (improves semen and vision)
<i>Nirvapanam</i> (cooling effect)	<i>Guru and Mruduguna</i> (heaviness and smooth)	<i>Bala-vruddha</i> (good for childrens, old age peoples)
<i>Mrudukaram</i> (softening)	<i>Sheetavirya</i> (cold potency)	<i>Kanti-Swararthinam</i> (lustre and voice)
<i>Swaraprasadanam</i> (promotes voice)	<i>Anabhishtyandi</i> (that which does not obstruct channels)	<i>Saukaumarya</i> (delicacy)
<i>Varna prasadanam</i> (imparts complexion)	<i>Snehana</i> (unctuousness)	<i>Sheetam</i> (coldness)
<i>Kapha, medovivardhanam</i> (enhances kapha, meda)	<i>Vatapittaprashamana</i> (pacifies vata and pitta)	
<i>Smruti-Buddhivardhanam</i> (Promotes memory and intellect)	<i>Agnideepana</i> (increases digestive fire)	
<i>Agnivardhanam</i> (Improves digestive capacity)	<i>Smruti-medha-kanti- swaralavanya-soukumarya- oja- teja- balakara</i> (enhances intellect, memory, beauty, delicacy, strength, and ojas)	<i>Vayasthapanam</i> (stabilizes life span)
	<i>Ayushya</i> (longevity)	<i>Praja</i> (beneficial in having a progeny)
	<i>Vrushya</i> (potency)	<i>Snehanaimuttamam</i> (best among unctuous substances)
	<i>Chakshushya</i> (improves vision)	<i>Sahaisraviryam</i> (increases thousand times in potency), <i>karmasahasrakrut</i> (manifold utilities) <i>Vrushya</i> (potency)
	<i>Sleshmabhivardhana</i> (increases kapha)	
	<i>Papma, Alakshmiprashamana</i> (wards off sins and inauspiciousness)	
	<i>Vishahara, Rakshoghna</i> (subsides the effect of poison, protects from microbes)	

Ksheera* as *Ajasrika Rasayana

Milk (*Ksheera*) is the only dietary form that can be used in all stages of life that is why it is called *Jivana* (life).¹¹ As the milk is having identical properties to *Ojas* (immunological power), it promotes *Ojas*¹² (immunity). In Ayurveda, Cow's milk is much appreciated for therapeutic as well as nutritive purposes. Cow's milk promotes long life and acts as *Rasayana*

(medication to increase immunity). *Tarpaka* (nourishing), *Jivaniya* (life-supporting), *Hridya* (beneficial for the heart), *Ahladakara* (pleasing), and *Buddhi prabodhaka* (supporting the mental growth) and used in many drugs preparations. It is a rejuvenator, good for those emaciated after injury (especially to the chest), increases intelligence, strength and produces more breast milk, helps the easy movement of the

bowels, and cures exhaustions. Cow's milk possesses all the elements necessary for the growth and nutri-

tion of various tissues of our body.

Table 2: Properties of Cow's Milk¹³

<i>Swadu</i>	Sweetness
<i>Sheeta</i>	Cold
<i>Mrudu-</i>	Soft
<i>Snigdha</i>	Unctuous, oily
<i>Bahala</i>	Dense, thick
<i>Shlakshna</i>	Stickiness
<i>Picchila</i>	Slimyness
<i>Manda</i>	Slow
<i>Prashana</i>	Clear
<i>Guru</i>	Heavy

The abovementioned properties are also the properties of *Ojas*. The milk having identical properties is conducive to the promotion of *Ojas*. Thus, milk is an elixir par excellence. Milk is prescribed to be taken at

bedtime for people who are underweight, excessively tired, and those suffering from insomnia. It is not recommended in people with high *Kapha* conditions such as obesity, Cold, Cough, weak digestion, etc.

Table 3: Indications of *Ksheera*¹⁴

<i>Kshataksheena</i>	Chest injury
<i>Shrama</i>	Tiredness
<i>Bhrama</i>	Dizziness, psychosis
<i>Mada</i>	Intoxication
<i>Alakshmi</i>	Inauspiciousness
<i>Shwasa</i>	Asthma, respiratory disorders involving difficulty in breathing
<i>Kasa</i>	Cold, cough
<i>Trushna</i>	Excess Thirst
<i>Kshudha</i>	excess hunger
<i>Jeernajwara</i>	The end-stage of fever
<i>Mutrakrichra</i>	Dysuria, Difficulty to pass urine
<i>Rakta-pitta</i>	Bleeding disorders like nasal bleeding, Ulcerative colitis

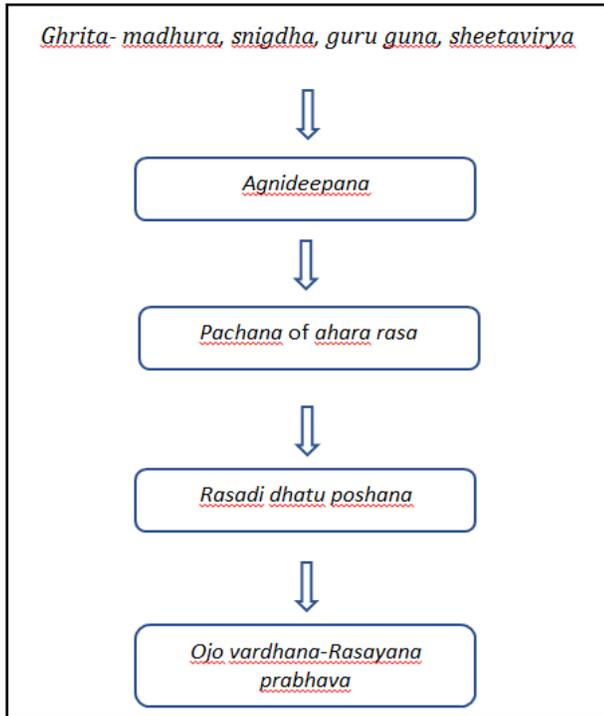
DISCUSSION

Rasayana plays an important role in preventive as well as health promotive aspect. It is a tremendous therapy improving the fundamental factors of the body i.e. *Dhatu*, *Agni*, and *Srotas*. *Rasayana* provides a healthy living with mental improvement and resistance to diseases. *Ajasrika* refers to the regular use of nutritious foods for the endorsement of health. *Ajasrika Rasayana* when taken regularly provides nourishment to *Rasa-Raktadi dhatu* and also enhances *Ojas*. *Ghrita* is one such amongst them. It augments

Smriti, *Buddhi*, and *Agni*, and boosts *ojas*, thereby having the effect of *Rasayana* which improves the immunity power of the body. The probable mode of action of *Ghrita* as *Rasayana* is depicted in Figure 1. As *Ghrita* has the remarkable property of "*Sam-skarasya anuvartanam*" 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 to other substances as the

qualities of these substances get imbibed into it. *Ksheera* is used as *Pravara Jivaniya Ajanma Satmya* (wholesome food which is considered best for all age groups) and is also considered as *Jivana*, *Brimhana*, *Nitya Rasayana*, and *Pathyatama*. It has *Dhatu-var dhaka* and *Ojovardhaka* properties. Thus, *Ghrita* and *Ksheera* as *Ajasrika Rasayana* contribute to the healthy long life of a person.

Figure 1: Probable mode of action of *Ghrita* as *Rasayana*



CONCLUSION

In the current scenario, when a huge population is suffering from various ailments Ayurveda *Rasayana* i.e., Rejuvenation therapy has a very crucial role to play. The use of *Rasayana* especially in early and middle age helps in minimising and preventing lifestyle disorders. *Ajasrika Rasayana*, an important type of *Rasayana* plays a vital role in contributing to the longevity of life. *Ghrita* and *Ksheera* which are easily available and palatable food items can be used as *Ajasrika Rasayana* as with their potential properties they promote longevity, health, and quality of life.

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