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## Lepas Mentioned Under *Ritucharya* – A Short Review

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### ABSTRACT:

*Ayurveda* is the science that provides knowledge about life and longevity. It is one of the traditional medical systems which are very close to nature. *Ayurveda* has two objectives:-alleviation of disorders in the diseased and maintenance of health. Prevention of diseases is one of the main principles of *Ayurveda*. Various healthy regimens, which people had practised once, are not in current practice and they are deflecting from nature leading to many lifestyle disorders. Skin, being largest organ, is exposed to various environmental factors like heat, sunlight, humidity etc plays a pivot role in protection and maintenance of health. According to *Ayurveda*, skin is *Sparshanendriya Adhithana* (responsible for tactile sensation) and has the dominancy of *Vata dosha*. The prevalence of skin disease in general population in India varies from 10 to 12%. Skin disease the fourth leading cause of non-fatal disease burden worldwide. *Ritucharya* describes the guidelines about the dietary and behavioural regimen which should be adopted in different seasons. *Lepas* are those formulations meant for topical application. Based on their site of application, mode of application etc *Lepas* are classified in many ways. This review elaborately describes *Lepas* mentioned in *Ayurvedic* classical texts with special reference to seasons.

**Key Words:** *Lepas*, *Ritucharya*, Seasonal regimens, *Mukhalepa*

### INTRODUCTION

*Ritucharya* means seasonal regimens. *Ritus* are classified into six types as per *Ayurveda* *Sisira* (winter), *Vasantha* (spring), *Greeshma* (summer), *Varsha* (rainy season), *Sarath* (autumn) and *Hemantha* (pre winter). *Adana kala* is northern solstice. During *Adana kala* (*Sisira*, *Vasantha* and *Greeshma*) body strength is decreased. *Visarga kala*, which is southern solstice, includes *Varsha*, *Sarath* and *Hemantha ritus*. Body attains good strength during *Visarga*

*kala*.<sup>[1]</sup> Seasonal routines are advised by *Acharyas* in order to pacify the concerned *Dosa*, vitiated in a specific *Ritu* and also to prevent body from different diseases, which can be aroused due to seasonal change. Various anointments are described by *Ayurveda* according to specific seasons. External applications/anointments specific for season is mentioned in this work.



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## Review of literature

### Twak

*Twak* comes under *Bahya Roga Aayatana*.<sup>[2]</sup> It is divided into 6 layers<sup>[3]</sup> and is the upadhatu of *Mamsa dhatu*.<sup>[4]</sup> Apart from protective function, it has another functions like thermoregulation, sensory function, Vit D synthesis, maintenance of fluid balance, shock absorption, pheromonal, and psychosocial, grooming and sexual behaviour.<sup>[5]</sup> Hypothalamus controls body temperature and is directly sensitive to changes in core temperature and indirectly responds to temperature-sensitive neurons in the skin.<sup>[6]</sup> Several factors affect the integrity of the skin. *Bhraajaka Pitta* (a division of *Pitta*) absorbs the medicaments administered through the skin in the form of *Abhyanga*(massage),*Parisheka*(thin stream of liquid medication to pour over the body) *Avagaha* (tub bath) *Alepa*(ointment)etc.<sup>[7]</sup>

### Environmental factors and skin disorders

Skin cancer is most common in those areas which have the greatest ambient Ultraviolet rays (if other factors such as skin colour are kept constant).<sup>[8]</sup> Humidity, temperature, pollen, pollution, and ultraviolet light are all factors associated with climate change that contribute to atopic dermatitis and its severity.<sup>[9]</sup> Temperature change, sun exposure, pressure, exercise and water exposure are additional triggers of chronic urticaria.<sup>[10]</sup> Exposure to heat/sun and improper seasonal behaviour (*Ritu Dosa*) are depicted as the cause of *Visphota* (Bullous eruption) disease.<sup>[11]</sup>

### Lepas

*Lepas* are formulations meant for topical application. *Lipta*, *Lepa* and *Lepana* are the synonymns of *Alepa* (unguentum). Anointment of the body with *Sugandaitita* drugs causes *Saubhagya*, *Teja*, *Twakvarna*, *Kanthi*, *Ojas* and *Bala Vardhana*.<sup>[12]</sup> *Upadeha lepa* is one of the recommended measures in *Pitta Prakopa* conditions.<sup>[13]</sup> *Ayurveda Samhitas* has widely described different types of *Lepas* for various ailments. (Table 1) presents *Lepa Kalpana* in *Ayurveda*.

### Ushna Kala Lepa

*Candana*, *Karpura*, *Sugandha vala* mixed *lepa* is very *Seethala*. Therefore it is suitable as anointment in hot summer season.<sup>[14]</sup> During *Vasantha Rithu*, *Kapha* diminishes the digestive fire and gives rise to many diseases. After mitigation of *Kapha*, one should be smear the body with *Candana*(*Santalum album* Linn.)and *Agaru*(*Aquilaria agalocha* Roxb.).<sup>[15]</sup> In *Greeshma Kala* (summer),the sunrays become more powerful and *Vata* increases gradually. Hence it is advised that during

*Greeshma*(summer) at the night one should besmear the body with sandal paste and sleep on the open airy roof of the house which is cooled by the moon rays.<sup>[16]</sup> In a hot environment, sweating is the main mechanism for increasing heat loss there by thermoregulation is achieved.<sup>[17]</sup>

### Seeta Kala Lepa

*Kumkuma*,*Candana* and *Kaala Agar* mixed *lepa* is hot and mitigates *Vata* and *Kapha*. Therefore it is suitable in cold season.<sup>[18]</sup> In *Hemanta*, digestive fire is more powerful. *Ashtanga Sangraha* advises external application of *Agaru* and *Kumkuma* <sup>[19]</sup> while *Yogaratanakara* advises application of *Agaru*, *Kumkuma* and *Kasturi*<sup>[20]</sup>. The same rituals of *Hemantha* should be performed in *Sisira Ritu* also. Continuous contact of cold winds has mentioned as one causative factor of *Sheetapitta* (Urticaria) by Acharya Madhava.<sup>[21]</sup> In a cold environment, cutaneous vasoconstriction and shivering are protective mechanisms for thermoregulation. Basal metabolic rate reduces in hypothermia.<sup>[22]</sup>

### Varsha Kala Lepa

In *Varsha rithu* the digestive capacity of the individual is low. Hence diseases can generate easily. *Candana*, *Kesara*, and *Mrganabhi* mixed *Lepa* are neither hot nor cool. Hence they can be used for external application during rainy season.<sup>[23]</sup>

## Drugs described under *ritucharya lepana*

### *Kasturi* (Musk /*Moschus Moschiferous*)

*Mrganabhi*, *Mrgamada*, *Sahasrabhit*, *Kasturika*, *Kasturi* and *Vedhamukhya* are synonyms. *Kasturi* is the secretion from a pouch present in a kind of deer called as Musk deer. It is pungent, bitter in taste, *Kshara*, hot in potency, increases semen, hard for digestion, mitigates *Kapha*,*Vata* and cures poison and wards off cold feeling. *Kasturi* is of three kinds: - 1) *Kamarupa Udbhava*- produced in *Kamarupa*, is black in colour and is considered superior 2) *Naipali Kasturi* produced in *Nepala* is blue in colour 3) *Kasmiri Kasturi* , produced in *Kasmira*, is brown in colour.<sup>[24]</sup>

### *Candana* (*Santalum Album* Linn).

*Srikhanda*, *Gandhasara*, *Malayaja* are synonymns. *Candana* posses *Tikta*, *Madhura Rasa*, *Laghu Ruksha Guna*, *Seetha Veerya* and *Katu Vipaka*. It pacifies the *Kaphapitta Dosas*. It is therapeutically indicated in *Daha*, *Visarpa*, *Charmaroga*, *Varnavikara*, *Atisweda janya Dourgandhya*, *Rakthavikaras* etc. Heartwood and oil are the part used generally.

It posses pharmacological activities like antibacterial,

antiviral, antioxidant, antifungal etc.<sup>[25]</sup> Sandalwood paste with water or rose water is applied externally in prickly skin eruptions and skin diseases to allay itching inflammation, heat and pruritis. An emulsion of the wood is used as a cooling application to the skin in erysipelas, prurigo and sudamina.<sup>[26]</sup> The heartwood taken from the nodular part of the *Candana* tree, which is heavy red and on rubbing yields a clear white yellowish paste, is considered to be the best.<sup>[27]</sup> *Candana* is mentioned in *Varnya, Kandughna* and *Visaghna mahakashayas* in *Caraka Samhita*.<sup>[28]</sup>

#### **Agaru (Aquilaria Agallocha Roxb.)**

*Pravara, Vamsika, Krimija* and *Krimijagtha* are synonyms. It is hot in potency, pungent, good for skin, bitter, penetrating, increases *Pitta*, relieves cold, mitigates *Vata* and *Kapha* and cures diseases of ears and eyes.<sup>[29]</sup> External application of *Agaru* is advised during *Hemantha Ritucharya*.<sup>[30]</sup> In various skin diseases Agarwood is used as liniment. It acts as a preventive against fleas and lice when dusted on clothes and skin.<sup>[31]</sup> Manasi et al., (2008) reported the aqueous and methanol extracts along with dry powder of leaf and bark of *Aquilaria agallocha* for antimicrobial activity against pathogenic bacteria such as *Shigella flexneri*, *Bacillus brevis*, yeasts dermatophytes and helminths by a disk diffusion method.<sup>[32]</sup>

#### **Kumkuma (Crocus sativus Linn.)**

*Kumkuma* grown in the fields of Kashmir is having thin *Kesara* (stigma), slight red in colour and smell like that of lotus flower. This is the best in qualities. *Kumkuma* grown in Bahlika country (modern – Beluchistan, Afghanistan, Iran) is moderate in qualities. It is whitish (red), has smell like flowers of *Ketaki* and has thin *Kesara*. *Kumkuma* grown in *Parasika desa* (Persia, Arabia) is slightly whitish (red), has the smell resembling honey and has thick *Kesara*, this is inferior in qualities.<sup>[33]</sup> External application of *Kumkuma* is advised during *Hemantha Ritucharya*.<sup>[34]</sup> Useful part is stigma. *Kumkuma* possess *Ayurvedic* properties such as *Katu Tikta Rasa, Snigdha Guna, Ushna Veerya* and *Katu Vipaka*. It pacifies *Tridoshas*. It is therapeutically indicated in *Vyanga, Nyachha, Varnavikara, Charmaroga, Masurika*, etc. *Kumkuma* possesses pharmacological activities such as antifungal, anti-inflammatory, antioxidant etc.<sup>[35]</sup>

#### **Karpura (Cinnamomum Camphora Nees)**

*Himalaluka, Ghanasara, Candrasamjna* and *Himanama* are synonyms. *Karpura* is cold in potency, aphrodisiac, scarificant, easy for digestion, sweet bitter in taste, fragrant, mitigates *Kapha, Pitta* and poison, cures burning sensation, bad taste in mouth, obesity and bad smell of the

body. *Karpura* is of two kinds: - *Pakva* and *Apakva*. *Apakva* is better than other. Another variety known as *Cinaka Karpura* brings about decrease of *Kapha*, cures leprosy, itching and vomiting. It is bitter in taste.<sup>[36]</sup> Camphor has a wide range of medicinal use. On external application it acts as a counter irritant. It is a mild antiseptic. The essential oil from the plant possess potent antifungal activity against many fungi such as *Aspergillus fumigatus* Fres., *Candida albicans* (Robin) Berk. etc.<sup>[37]</sup>

#### **Sugandhavalala/Valam (Pavonia Odorata. Willd)**

*Hribera, Udicya, Kesa, Barhishta* and *Ambunama* are synonyms. *Valaka* is cold in potency, dry, easy for digestion, increases digestive fire, cures nausea, anorexia, herpes, heart disease and diarrhoea of recent onset.<sup>[38]</sup> External application of this drug is advised by *Yogaratanakara* during hot season.

#### **Mukhalepas Recommended In Different Ritus**

*Ashtanga Hridaya* has described *Mukhalepas* (facial application of medicinal herbs in paste form) according to season. Regular application of these *Lepas* benefits are: - *dridham bhavati darsanam* (clear vision), *aparimlana vadan* (bright expression) *slasnam* and *tamarasopamam* (makes face resembles a lotus flower).<sup>[39]</sup>

#### **Table 2. Mukhalepas Specific To Ritus<sup>[40]</sup>**

#### **Table 3. Drugs And Their Botanical Name Mentioned Under Mukhalepas**

#### **Benefits of mukhalepa**

On proper application, *Mukhalepa* prevents *Akalapalita* (premature greying of hair), *Vyanga* (pigmentation disorder), *Vali* (skin wrinkles), *Timira* (early stage of Cataract) and *Neelika*.<sup>[41]</sup>

## **DISCUSSION**

As per *Ayurveda*, Skin is *Bahyarogayatana*. Skin is affected by various external factors like sunlight, dry air, humidity; moistness etc. Skin infections (bacterial and fungal), scabies and eczema are the most common skin problems consistently shown by the community based studies in the tropics.<sup>[42]</sup> Many individual and environmental factors including the anatomical area of the skin, intensity of perspiration, skin temperature and ambient temperature, hormonal balance, age, sex, race, daily rhythm, humidity of the air, season of the year, and many others impact the modification of processes like

epidermis hydration, trans epidermal loss of water, sebum production and the pH gradient between the surface of the skin and the inside of the body.<sup>[43]</sup> In present era, various forms of skin protection are dominating markets and some of them are formulated in unscientific way too. Impairment of skin integrity will result in interruption of various functions. So protective regimens in accordance with seasonal changes, strength and digestive capacity after considering *Dosha* status should be adopted. In developing countries like India, other than hot and humid conditions, low hygiene, poor access to water, overcrowding, and high interpersonal contact also plays significant etiological role for certain skin diseases like pyoderma, scabies and fungal infections. Other than hot and humid conditions, low hygiene, overcrowding, poor access to water and high interpersonal contact plays significant etiological role for certain skin diseases like fungal infections, scabies and pyoderma in developing countries like India.<sup>[44]</sup> As a consequence of improper regimen and diet, extreme climactic conditions, environmental pollution, human population density etc, new diseases are emerging day by day. Certain rituals, regimens and practices are strongly interrelated with environment. It is described in *Ayurvedic* classics that efforts has to be made to mitigate *Dosha* when it is in *Chaya Avastha* itself. Absence of conducting specific regimen is explained as a cause for diseases. Observing *Ritucharya* can bring *Doshas* to their normal state. *Lepa kalpana* with suitable drugs is a kind of protective measures to preserve health. Time has reached to look into and evaluate those factors which are deteriorating the quality of human life. *Ayurveda* has explained proper regimen for each season considering major factors like digestive capacity, immune system and *Dosha* status. This regimen enables one to attain better health and longevity. In this review, *Lepas* which has been mentioned in specific seasons are described.

## CONCLUSION

*Ayurveda* is not merely a system of medicine but a way of life. Being the science of life, *Ayurvedic* life style guides one to a healthy living there by maintains body and mind's equilibrium. We are living in a modern era where advanced measures are present as solution to combat problems. But how they impact our health in other way is still a matter under concern. Certain cosmetics adversely affect skin's health and are expensive. The above said *Lepas* which are natural, cheap and without any side effects, are important for preventing skin diseases. Clinical and safety studies

should be made on these *lepas* for progress of Ayurvedic cosmetic industry.

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**Table 1. *Lepa Kalpana in Ayurveda***

Sr.No.	Classical texts	Types
1	<p><i>Susrutha Samhita:</i> Classified in <i>Vranalepana Bandhana Vidhi</i> as 3 types :- <i>Pralepa, Pradeha and Alepa</i><sup>[45]</sup> Indicated many <i>Lepas</i> in <i>Shashti Vrana upakramas</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Pralepa</i>: It is <i>Seeta</i> and <i>Tanu</i> and can be either <i>Avishoshi</i> or <i>Vishoshi</i>. <i>Pralepa</i> pacifies deranged <i>Rakta</i> and <i>Pitta</i></li> <li>2. <i>Pradeha</i>: It is either <i>Ushna</i> or <i>Seeta Bahalo Abahu</i>(neither too thin nor too thick) <i>Avisoshi</i>.<i>Pradeha</i> pacifies deranged <i>Vayu</i> and <i>Kapha</i>.It is <i>Sodhana</i> and <i>Ropana</i> in action. Relieves swelling and pain.</li> <li>3. <i>Alepa</i>: It lies in between <i>Pralepa</i> and <i>Pradeha</i> <i>Alepa</i> action lies principally in cleansing the skin, <i>Mamsa</i> and the <i>Rakta</i>. It is best in removing burning sensation and in alleviating pain and itching.</li> </ol>
2	<i>Caraka Samhita</i>	Mentioned 32 <i>Pradehas</i> for <i>Bahirparimarjana</i> . <sup>[46]</sup>
3	<p><i>Ashtanga Sangraha</i>  Mentioned <i>Pradeha &amp; Pralepa</i>  Subclassification of <i>Alepa</i> :- 1) <i>Snaihika</i>, 2) <i>Nirvapana</i>, 3) <i>Prasadana</i>, 4) <i>Sthambana</i>, 5) <i>Vilayana</i>, 6) <i>Pachana</i>, 7) <i>Peedana</i>, 8) <i>Sodhana</i>, 9) <i>Ropana</i>, 10) <i>Savarneekara</i>.</p>	<p><i>Pralepa</i> : <i>Ushna</i> or <i>Seeta</i> and thick. Pacifies <i>Vata</i> and <i>Kapha</i>. Used in <i>Kshata</i> and <i>Akshata</i>.</p> <p><i>Pradeha</i>: <i>Seeta Tanu</i> and should be applied frequently (<i>Muhur Muhur</i>).It is <i>Rakta Pitta Twak Prasadakara</i>.</p> <p><i>Alepa</i>: 10 sub classification of <i>Alepa</i> mentioned.</p>
4	<i>Ashtanga Hridaya Mukhalepa</i> <sup>[47]</sup>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Doshaghna</i> -1/4 <i>angula</i> thickness</li> <li>2. <i>Vishaghna</i>-1/3 <i>angula</i> thickness</li> <li>3. <i>Varnakara</i>-1/2 <i>angula</i> thickness</li> </ol>
5	<i>Sarnghadhara Samhita</i> <sup>[48]</sup>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Doshaghna</i>: Thickness- 1/4 <i>angula</i>. It alleviates the <i>Dosas</i> impurities</li> <li>2. <i>Vishaghna</i>: Thickness- 1/3 <i>angula</i> It nullifies the poisonous effect</li> <li>3. <i>Varnakara</i> : Thickness- 1/2 <i>angula</i> <i>Varnya</i> also known as <i>Mukhalepa</i> (that which increases skin colour)</li> </ol>
6	<i>Bhavaprakash</i> <sup>[49]</sup>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Doshaghna</i> -1/4 <i>angula</i> thickness</li> <li>2. <i>Vishaha</i>-1/3 <i>angula</i> thickness</li> <li>3. <i>Varnya</i>-1/2 <i>angula</i> thickness</li> </ol>
7	<i>Yogaratanakara</i> <sup>[50]</sup>	<i>Lepas</i> mentioned in treatment of diseases



**Table 2. Mukhalepas Specific To Ritus** <sup>[51]</sup>

Sr.No.	Season	Mukhalepa
1	<i>Hemantha</i>	<i>Kolamajja</i> , Root of <i>Vrsha</i> , <i>Shaabaram</i> ( <i>Lodhra</i> ), <i>Gaurasarshapa</i> .
2	<i>Sisira</i>	Root of <i>Simhi</i> , <i>Krsnatila</i> , Bark of <i>Darvi</i> , Dehusked <i>Yava</i> .
3	<i>Vasantha</i>	Root of <i>Darbha</i> , <i>Hima</i> , <i>Usira</i> , <i>Sirisa</i> , <i>Misi</i> , <i>Tandula</i> ( <i>Saalinam</i> ).
4	<i>Greeshma</i>	<i>Kumuda</i> , <i>Utpala</i> , <i>Kalhara</i> , <i>Durva</i> , <i>Madhuka</i> , <i>Candana</i> .
5	<i>Varsha</i>	<i>Kaliyaka</i> , <i>Tila</i> , <i>Usira</i> , <i>Mamsi</i> , <i>Tagara</i> , <i>Padmaka</i> .
6	<i>Sarath</i>	<i>Talisa</i> , <i>Gundra</i> , <i>Pundrahva</i> , <i>Yashti</i> , <i>Kasa</i> , <i>Nata</i> , <i>Agaru</i> .

**Table 3. Drugs And Their Botanical Name Mentioned Under Mukhalepas**

Sr.No.	Sanskrit name	Botanical name
1	<i>Kolamajja</i>	<i>Ziziphus Jujuba</i> Linn.
2	<i>Vrsha</i>	<i>Adathoda vasica</i> Nees
3	<i>Lodhra</i>	<i>Symplocos Racemosa</i> Roxb.
4	<i>Gaurasarshapa</i>	<i>Brassica campestris</i> Linn.
5	<i>Tila /Krishnatila</i>	<i>Sesamum Indicum</i> Linn.
6	<i>Darvi</i>	<i>Coscinium fenestratum</i> (Gaertn.) Colebr.
7	<i>Yava</i>	<i>Hordeum vulgare</i> Linn. (dehusked)
8	<i>Durva /Darbha</i>	<i>Cynodon dactylon</i> (Linn.) Pers
9	<i>Hima</i>	<i>Pterocarpus santalinus</i> Linn.
10	<i>Usira</i>	<i>Vetiveria zizanioides</i> (Linn.) Nash
11	<i>Sirisa</i>	<i>Albizia lebeck</i> (Linn.) Benth.
12	<i>Misi</i>	<i>Foeniculum vulgare</i> Mill.
13	<i>Tandula</i>	<i>Oryza sativa</i> Linn.
14	<i>Kumuda</i>	<i>Nymphaea nouchali</i> Burm.
15	<i>Utpala</i>	<i>Nymphaea stellata</i> Willd.
16	<i>Kalhara</i>	<i>Nelumbo nucifera</i> Gaertn.
17	<i>Yashti/Madhuka</i>	<i>Glycyrrhiza glabra</i> Linn.
18	<i>Kaliyaka /Candana</i>	<i>Santalum Album</i> Linn.
19	<i>Mamsi</i>	<i>Nardostachys jatamansi</i> DC.
20	<i>Nata /Tagara</i>	<i>Valeriana wallichii</i> DC
21	<i>Padmaka</i>	<i>Prunus cerasoides</i> D. Don.
22	<i>Talisa</i>	<i>Abies webbiana</i> Lindl.
23	<i>Gundra</i>	<i>Callicarpa macrophylla</i> Vahl
24	<i>Pundrahva</i>	<i>Saccharum officinarum</i> L.
25	<i>Kasa</i>	<i>Saccharum spontaneum</i> Linn.
26	<i>Agaru</i>	<i>Aquilaria agalocha</i> Roxb.