

RAJA, RAJON ASHA&ITS CHIKITSA- AN AYURVEDIC VIEW

ShilpaKavade¹, AbhijitJoshi²

¹Reader.Dept. of Basic Principles, S.J.G.S. AyurvedaCollege,RUHS,Ghataprabha, Gokak,
Karnataka.India.shilpakawade82@gmail.com.

²Reader and Head, Faculty of Ayurved, Tilak Maharashtra Vidyapeeth, Gultekadi, Pune, Maharashtra,India.
abhi_203@rediffmail.com.

ABSTRACT:

Ayurveda is based on the basic principles which are described in the ancient books like *Charakasamhita*, *Sushrutasamhita*, *Ashtanghridayam* etc. *Ayurveda* states its versatility in *AyurvedaSharirkryia*(physiology) i.e. *Raja*(menstruation) which is of immense use in womanhood. Hence, it is necessary to collect the concept of *Raja* as described in various sciences. In this article, only *Ayurvedic* concept of *Raja* i.e. menstruation is dealt. This article provides all the details regarding concept of *Raja,Rajonasha*(amenorrhea) & its treatment according to *Ayurveda*.

KEY WORDS:*Raja,Ayurveda, Rajonasha, Chikitsa.*

Comment [DK1]: Arrange All the keywords in alphabetical order.

CORROSPONDING AUTHOR:

Dr. Abhijit Joshi

Reader,Head,Department of Ayurveda, Tilak Maharashtra Vidyapeeth,Gultekadi,Pune, Maharashtra,India.

Mobile: +919822426879

Email: abhi_203@rediffmail.com

INTRODUCTION:

Raja is a normal physiological process indicating womanhood. It is a cyclical process and repeats every month. In modern text book a detailed description may be found but the exact mechanism behind the process is yet to be explained. The function or purpose of menstrual bleeding is not clearly understood. Experimentally, it has been observed that if the hormone level is decreased very gradually, regression can be made to occur as slowly as growth, and menstruation will not take place. From all these points, menstruation becomes an important physiological manifestation in a women's life. Hence, it is necessary to collect the concept of menstruation as described in various sciences. In today's fast life *Rajonasha* (amenorrhea) has become headache for the doctors, here an effort is made to give solution to *Rajonasha* from *Ayurvedi* cpoint of view.

AIMS & OBJECTIVES:

- To study the concept of *Raja* & *Rajonasha*.
- To compile the treatment mentioned in *Ayurveda* for *Rajonasha*.

MATERIALS & METHODS:

This article is based on review of *Ayurvedic* texts. Material related to Definition & description, references of all classics have been compiled. The main *Ayurvedic* texts like *Charakasamhita*, *Sushrutasamhita*, *Ashtangahridayam* etc. along with available commentaries are referred.

Before going through the detailed description of *Raja*, it is necessary to consider a little about the terminology used in the old text. Here an effort is made to explain the meaning of the terms, after considering their use at various places.

1) *Raja*:

From the references in *Charaka*¹, *Sushruta*², *Ashtanghrudaya*³, *Bhavaprakasha*, *Kashyapa*, *Bhojatantra* & *Harita* it clearly indicates that *Raja* means nothing but the menstrual discharge. The words "*Artava*" and "*Rakta*" are used with similar intention.

All the references from *Charakasamhita*, *Sushrutasamhita*, *Ashtangahridayam* given to point out how the word *Artava*^{4,5} has been employed as a synonym of *Raja*. There are references which will explain how the word *Rakta*^{6,7} is also used in the place of *Raja*.

Considering all the above references, one can easily conclude that *Raja* means menstrual fluid. *Artava*, *Rakta*, *Shonit* or *Pushpa* are the synonyms of the same. Roughly speaking, any of these synonyms viz *Artava* and *Rakta* when used in relation to the menstrual cycle, it should be considered as *Raja* i.e. menstrual fluid. In other references the words *Artava* or *Rakta* may have different meaning.

2) *Artava*:

The references are quite enough to explain the *Artava* means ovum. *Rakta*, *Shonita* or *Beeja* are used as synonyms of *Artava*^{8,9,10}.

Thus *Artava* means ovum. It is essential for conception. Its quantity is only two drops. It occurs during *Rutukala* i.e. the proliferative phase. Its disorder causes sterility. *Rakta*¹¹ and *Beeja* are used as its synonyms. Broadly speaking, word *Artava* and synonyms *Rakta*, *Shonita* and *Beeja* when used in relation to the discussions about conception, these term should be interpreted as ovum. In other references, it also used to denote menstrual fluid as seen in description of *Raja*. It is supposed by some authorities that word *Artava* is used to denote a vaginal discharge also. In *Yonivyapat*, it appears that the word *Artava* used there in is suggestive of blood stained discharge, especially in the descriptions of *Vataja*, *Pittaja*, *Shleshmaja* and *SaanipatajaYonivyapat*¹².

3) *Beeja*:

The references shows that the same word *Beeja*¹⁰ is used to denote the fertilized ovum after conception, ovum and sperm. In fact the word should be reserved for fertilized ovum, as ovum is called as *Artava* and Sperm is called *Shukra*.

4) *Stree-Shukra*:

This word gives rise to a lot of controversy and creates a confusion in mind. It is not possible to decide what is meant by *Stree-Shukra* by just going through the theory. The nut-shell description of *Stree-Shukra* suggests a lot but its exact interpretation does not appear to be an easy thing. Thus *Bhava Mishra* describes that *Shukra* is present in the female body also. During intercourse this *Shukra* is secreted but for sexual pleasure, although is not helpful for conception. *Artava* is useful for conception while *Shukra* is responsible for a women's energy, colour, growth etc. In *Bhava Mishra's* opinion when two women try intercourse among themselves this secretion of *Shukra* give rise to a bone-less foetus. From the references one can interpret the word *Stree-Shukra* in different ways.

- If secretion during intercourse is concerned, it should be interpreted as Bartholiansecretions.
- If it maintains strength, growth and healthiness in a woman it can be interpreted as growth hormones.
- If it has role in providing sexual pleasure it can be interpreted as sex-hormones.

Every interpretation has got its supportive as well as contradictory points, and the description available is too short, hence any conclusive decision is not possible at least in the light of the present available knowledge.

Raja:

Raja is a menstrual discharge, which comes out of the vagina from uterus, at regular intervals of one month. *Raja* is present in female body from childhood but it is expressed only after the age of 12 years. It is explained in the following way:

We cannot see flowers and fruits in very young plants and very old trees; we cannot feel the fragrance of a flower when it is in bud stage. In the same way *Shukra* in the male body is not received till the age of 16 and *Raja* in the female is not visible until she is 12 years. *Raja* is not seen after the age of 50. Fruit from a flower

and the fire in a wood become visible only at the right time. In the same way 'Shukra' and 'Shonita' also become perceptible only after a particular age. Until then they are in the body in a *Sukshma* or subtle form.

Formation Of Raja:

There is difference of opinion among *Acharyas* regarding which *Dhatu Raja* is formed from. According to *Charaka*, *Sushruta*² and *Vagbhata*³ – *Raja* is formed from *Rasa Dhatu*. *Vridhdha Vagbhata* says that the blood accumulated in the uterus is called *Artava*. So according to him *Raja* is formed from *Rakta.Raja* and *Rakta*, both are said to be formed from the essence of *Rasa* only. All the *Acharyas* might have mentioned the same point in different way. Blood gets collected during inter menstrual period which is of one month duration. This blood gets black color and specific odor and attains *Artava* form. *Vata* brings out this *Artava* through yoni or the vaginal orifice as menstruation.

Factors Influencing The Raja(Menstrual Cycle) :

(A) Rasa:

It is a well-known fact that *Rasa* is the main source which supplies the nourishment to various *Dhatu* and *Upadhatu* of the body. But, as far as *Raja* is concerned it is said to be *Upadhatu* of *Rasa*¹³.

(B) Rakta:

The blood discharge by a woman during her menses is the same which circulates through her body⁷.

(C) Dhamanee :

Thus *Vata* acts through *Dhamnee*⁷ for the discharge of menstrual fluid. Especially *ApanVayu* is said to be responsible for this action. If we take into consideration the *ApanSthana* it has been mentioned the same. Thus we can say that influence of *Apan* through *Dhamanee* is that of nervous system acting on the uterine vessels.

(D) Doshas:

It would be very long discussion to describe the role of *Doshas* on menstruation. Sufficient to say, that like all other physiological processes menstruation is also govern by three *Doshas* viz. *Vata*, *Pitta* & *Kapha*.

Phases Of Raja (Menstruation):

Raja is a cyclical process spread over a period of 30 days. This period is divided into three phases according to the physiological changes taking place in the body. The phases are -

(A) *Rutukala* (B) *Rutavateekala* (C) *Rajahakala*.

(A) Rutukala:

About *Rutukala* there four opinions (1) It is of 12 days after menstruation

- (2) It is of 16 days after menstruation
- (3) It is for the whole month
- (4) It is present even in the absence of menstruation.

The last two opinions are supported by the definitions that are the most fertile period; and the last two opinions are arrived from the observations that conception occurs in some exceptional cases at any period of menstruation as well as in absence of menstruation. The first two opinions which are suggestive of the period in relation to menstruation are of more interest. Though it appears that the two opinions are different they are not. Those who describe the period as 12 days exclude four days of menstruation while those who describe it to be of 16 days include the four days of menstruation. In short *Rutukala* starts from 5th day of menstrual cycle and ends on 17th day of menstrual cycle.

Changes In *Rutukala*:

As previously collected *Raja* has been discharged, new collection of *Raja* starts. The female genital organs are in good health condition. (the term *Avyapanna* clearly explains the condition of female genital organs. *Vyapanna* i.e. diseased. *Avyapanna* i.e. undiseased, healthy). The uterus is ready for nidation, ovum is ready for fertilization, vagina is ready to allow the passage of sperm through it, i.e. in short the period is the maximum fertile period.

Thus the phase *Rutukala* is not merely a particular following menstruation, but it is the period in which the female genital organs are in good healthy normal condition. A real normal physiological *Rutukala* is thus a period of twelve days after menstruation in which *Avyapanna* of *Yoni*, *Garbhashaya* is marked. In other words, well developed proliferative phase accompanied with ovulation is the *Rutukala* i.e. the most fertile period.

Physiological State Of Woman:

The woman though somewhat exhausted is in a happy mood. There is a typical sensation called *Sphurana*¹⁴ (which resembles twitching) over the regions buttocks, thighs, arms and umbilical region. Eyes appear to be sleepy and flanks empty. She likes to hear about males. The sexual ardor is at its peak.

***Paricharya*(Management):**

On the fourth day of *Raja* or on the first day of *Rutukala*¹¹ the lady should have a complete bath, she should wear white clothes, flowers i.e. she should approach her husband in a happy and joyful mood. It has been advised that sexual contact should occur on even nights for male issue and on odd nights for female issue. The modern science does not describe any management of this phase as such.

(B) *Rutavateeta Kala*:

This phase has been described in a very short way. It has been mentioned that menstrual cycle repeats after every month i.e. twenty eight to thirty days. *Rajakala* and *Rutukala* are together of sixteen days duration.

Naturally the remaining twelve to fourteen days period forms a phase of menstruation. While describing the phase '*Rutauovateete*' and '*Rutuavateete*' are the terms used in old texts. Hence the term *Rutavateetakala* is used to denote this phase. Thus the *Rutavateetakala* is present for fourteen days starting at the end of *Rutukala* and ending at the beginning of *Rajakala*. In this period regressive changes take place in *Yoni* (*Yonisankocha*). The *Yoni* does not allow the entry of *Shukra*. The coitus is also prohibited in this period the idea behind this being: it will be futile coitus and not fertile coitus.

(C) *Rajakala*:

Thus this phase is present for three to seven days, about five days in average. This discharge is red in color, similar to the color of rabbit's blood, liquid *Lakh*, fruits namely *Gunja*⁴, a small creature namely *Indragope* (which is a port wine colored creature). Some authorities describe the color as slightly blackish. The commentators explain that this blackish red tinge is of the outgoing discharge. The discharge has a typical odor and it does not stain the clothes.

Amount Of Discharge:

According to *Sushruta* the amount is four *Anjalees*. According to *Charak* the amount of discharge varies from person to person, hence he clearly states that neither excessive nor scanty discharge is the normal one, *Desha*, *Kala*, *Prakruti* (i.e. region, season and constitution) have their effects on amount of discharge, hence all these factors should also be considered while deciding the amount.

***Paricharya* (Management):**

Right from the beginning of menstrual flow, woman should observe *Brahmacharya*^{15,16} (Abstain from intercourse), she should sleep on a grass mat, she should not see even her husband, she should take her food only on the palms or on a leaf or in a small earthen bowl viz. *Sharava*. She should not weep, she should not remove her nails, and she should avoid use of scents, eye paints and application of lotions. She should not take bath, should not sleep during day time, should not laugh loudly, should not talk too much, should not hear loud words, should avoid exertion, digging the ground and exposure to heavy winds. Her diet should be light, non-residual and fat reducing one. Why intercourse should be avoided is very nicely explained by *Sushruta*. He says as a floating substance dropped in a stream travels in the direction of flow and does not go against it, just in the same way *Shukra-PurushaBeeja* i.e. sperm though introduced, comes out along with *Raja*, hence there should be no intercourse.

It is also possible that as during this phase, there is influence of *Vata* and *Pitta*, on *Yoni* region i.e. the whole passage is somewhat in a state of *Kshobha* i.e. congestion, hence intercourse may cause pain and what *Madhava* has described as *Yonnyakshepaka* may result. The female is also advised to live in a happy calm mood.

***Rajonasha* (Amenorrhea):**

It has been already discussed that *Raja* is a sign of womanhood, *Rajonasha* (amenorrhoea) is a disorder which draws the notice of the individual earliest. Amenorrhea may be a simple physiological state (*Shareerawastha*) or may have a pathological background. Amenorrhea may be false in which case, menstrual out flow is obstructed, or it may be true where menstruation is suppressed. It is the true amenorrhea which is spoken of as amenorrhea in the real sense. *Ayurvedic* texts have described this condition under the following names.

- A) *Rajakshaya*
- B) *Rajaksheenata*
- C) *Artavkshaya*
- D) *Artavksheenata*
- E) *Artavnasha*
- F) *Rajonasha*

Etiology & Pathology:

Menstruation is absent in *Bala* epoch and *Vrudha* epoch. In other words there is physiological amenorrhea before menarche and after menopause or during childhood and menopause. *Charakcharya* had described amenorrhea is the first symptom of pregnancy. *Sutikawastha* i.e. puerperium is also said to be a physiological state in which amenorrhea, is manifested.

It will be useful to consider the general pathology (*SamanyaSamprapti*) of amenorrhea before we enumerate the various disorders in which *Rajonashais* present. In the opinion of *Sushruta*¹⁷ the imbalance of *Vata* and *Kapha* influences the amenorrhea. He says if the passage is encircled by *Vata* and *Kapha*, amenorrhea will be produced. We have already seen the role of *Vata&Kapha* in menstruation. Taking into consideration their influence, amenorrhea of this origin resembles hyperhormonal ovarian amenorrhea. It has been said that amenorrhea of short duration results from prolonged & intensive production of estrogens or progesterone or both. *Sushruta* had also explained that trauma or injury to *ArtavawahaSrotasa* causes sterility, dyspareunia & *Artavanasha*¹⁸ (amenorrhea). *Dalhana*, commentator of *Sushrutahad* described the various etiological factors of this condition.

Various Conditions Causing *Rajonasha*(amenorrhea):

(1) *ArajaskaYonivyapat* :

Arajaska described by *Charaka* is called *Lohitakshaya* or *Lohitakshara* by others. It is a condition marked by amenorrhea of a secondary variety. It is accompanied with burning syndrome, emaciation and general pallor.

(2) *ShamdhiYonivyapat*:

Shamdhi Yoni is a condition characterized by *Rajonasha* and underdeveloped breast tissue. Dry vagina disturbing the sexual pleasure is another feature. This is said to be a congenital deformity. This sort of uterine amenorrhea is derived from gross under development of uterus.

(3) Vandhyayonivyapat:

Vandhya yoni is also characterized by *Rajonasha* (amenorrhea). No more description is available. If we consider the relation of this amenorrhea and sterility this type of amenorrhea is a secondary one.

(4) Raktagulma:

Rajonashais described as a symptom of *Raktagulma*.

(5) RajodushtiVatapittaja:

Raja Kshaya (scanty menstruation) is obtained in this condition. The accompanying symptoms are pain at pelvic region. *Sushruta* had explained the meaning of the word scanty as either delayed menstruation or periods of short duration (*Yathochitakaladarsham*) or with less amount of flow (*Alpatava*).

(6) ShushkaYonivyapat:

ShushkaYonivyapat as explained by *Sharangdhar's* commentator *Adhamalla*, is the *VandhyaYonivyapat* described by others. Considering that amenorrhea is only symptom in both conditions, it becomes obvious that *Vandhya* and *Shushka* are synonyms of each other. But if we give a little attention to the description, we will find that they are not so. Amenorrhea in *Vandhya Yoni* is associated with sterility while that in *Shushka Yoni* is associated with *Shushkata* i.e. atrophy, constipation, oliguria and pain. This condition is said to be originated in withholding the bladder and bowel reflexes.

In *Pandu, Rajyakshma, Shosha & Grahani* amenorrhea occur as a symptom of anemia. According to *Ayurvedic* principles, *Rajaksheenata* is an *Upadrava* of the above conditions. Taking into consideration, the different conditions giving rise to amenorrhea, I have tried to tabulise the conditions according to *Ayurvedic* etiological factors.

Table No. - 1

<i>Beeja - Doshajanya</i>	<i>Awasthajanya</i>	<i>Dhatukshayajanya</i>	<i>Srotovikrutijanya</i>
<i>Shamdhī-</i> Hypoplastic uterus <i>SannirudhaYoni-</i> Imperforat Hymen.	<i>Bala</i> : Childhood <i>Vriddha</i> : Menopause <i>Garbhini</i> : pregnancy. <i>Sootika</i> : Puerperium <i>Manastap</i> : Psychological state.	<i>Arajaska</i> -T.B. Endometritis <i>Anashana</i> -Nutritional Pandu <i>Rajyakshma</i> <i>Shosha</i> <i>Grahani</i>	<i>Atisamshodan</i> : Vigorous curettage <i>Atisamshaman</i> : Prolonged anti-menorrhagea therapy <i>Vegadharana-</i> Hypothalamic amenorrhoea. <i>Vandhya</i> : Endocrinal imbalance as in Diabetes mellitus.

			<i>Shushka</i> : Hypothalamic amenorrhoea. <i>Vatapittajarajodushti</i> -Oophoritis. <i>Raktagulma</i> – New growth. <i>Artarvawahasrotasavedha</i> : Traumatic damage of ovarian function.
--	--	--	--

Differential Diagnosis:

- ✓ According to *Ayurveda* it is a symptom. A symptom can arise as a symptom of temporary imbalance of the governing factors i.e. *Doshas* (*Dosha- Lakshana*), or as a symptom of a disease (*Vyadhi- Lakshana*) or as a symptom of complication (*UpadravaLakshana*) or as a fatal symptom (*Arishtha-Lakshana*).

Following table explains the type of amenorrhea in a typical condition.

Table No. - 2

<i>Dosha - Lakshana</i>	<i>Vyadhi-Lakshana</i>	<i>Upadrava-Lakshana</i>	<i>Arishtha-Lakshana</i>
<i>Vata-pittaj-Rajo-Dushti</i>	<i>Arajskayoni</i> <i>Shamdhioni</i> <i>Vandhyayoni</i>	<i>Pandu</i> <i>Rajyakshma</i> <i>Shosha</i>	<i>Artavawaha</i> <i>Srotasavedha</i> <i>Marmaghata.</i>
<i>Atisamshamanjanya.</i>	<i>Raktagulma</i> <i>ShushkaYonivyapat.</i>	<i>Grahani</i> <i>Anashanajanya</i> <i>Atisamshodhan</i>	
<i>Vegadharanajanya.</i>			
<i>Manastapjanya.</i>			

In the present available *Ayurvedic* literature, careful history taking and minute observations during a clinical examination was the main source of diagnosing a case. No doubt, one must know the exact condition which causes amenorrhea in that case, but at least he must be able to understand the weak point behind it as explained in table no. : 1

Treatment:

Broad Principles:

Samshodhana, use of *AgneyaDravyas*, use of drugs which cause growth of uterus or increase of *Raja – Rakta*, and eradication of the causative factor are the main principles of treatment¹⁹.

(A) Samshodhana:

Samshodhana is measured by which the waste products or harmful products are thrown out either by (*Virechana&Basti*).*Adho-marga* or by (*Vamana*)*Urdhwamarga*. In case of female body, certain drugs called as *GarbhashayaShodhaka* are helpful to washout the uterine cavity. *NiruhaBasti*(enema by decoction of drugs) is useful in *Rajonasha*²⁰.

(B) Agneyadravya:

AgneyaDravya is said to be the anti-dote for increased *Vata&Kapha*. They are said to be *Pittakara* also. Administration of such *Dravyas* in cases of amenorrhea is advised with a caution – *VidhivatUpayoga* i.e. it should be administered with proper knowledge. Following are the ideas behind its use –

- It is *Vata-Kaphaghna*.
Amenorrhoea is said to be caused by imbalance of *Vata&Kapha*.
- It is *Ushna*, hence helps in digestion so it would be useful in cases of amenorrhea due to *Asatmyanna* or *Anashana*.

(C) SwayonivardhanaDravya:

Swayonivardhana means those measures which are useful for the growth of the uterus, or for the growth of *Dhatus*. If *Rajonasha* is the result of *Raktakshaya*(loss of blood), *RaktaVardhakDravyas* should be used. If it is due to *Rajakshaya*, *Rajovardhaka* treatment should be given. In short it is a treatment given to wipe of the deficiencies which cause the trouble.

(D) Nidanparivarjana:

In short, eradication of the causative factor is the treatment, of the disease.

There are four types of treatment:

- (1) *Uttarbasti* (Douches)
- (2) *Varti* (Vaginal tablets)
- (3) Internal medication – (a) Medicated Ghee
(b) Medicated Milk
(c) Certain preparations.
- (4) Diet – *Pathyapathya*.

(1) Uttarbasti:

Charakacharyah advised to give *Uttarbasti* of Ghee medicated with decoction of *Kashmari* fruits and bark of *Kutaja*²¹.

(2) Varti (Vaginal Suppositories):

(*Ikslwakuseed*, root of *Danti*, *Guda*, *Madana*, *Kirwa*, *Yavashooka* and *Snoohi* – juice) all these are taken in equal parts and are made into paste form. This paste is used to prepare a *Varti*²² i.e. cloth dipped in this paste and dried to turn it into a suppository form.

(3) Internal Medication:

(a) Medicated ghee – (i) *KalyanakaGhrita*

(ii) *PhalaGhrita*

Medicated milk – milk medicated with drugs of *JeevaniyaGana*

(b) Certain other preparations – (i) leaves of *Jyotishmati*, *Rajika*, *Yavanika&Asan*- all these are made into a paste form with add of cold water. This should be administered for three days.

(ii) Decoction of *Krishna Tila* with *Guda* added to it, should be advised to take early in the morning²³.

(iii) Decoction of *Krishna Tila*, *Sheluka& Krishna Jeeraka* added with *Guda*.

(iv) Flowers of a *JapaPestlet* with *Kanji* or fruits of *Jyotishmati* fried with Ghee pestled with juice of *Doorvas* is advised.

(v) *NashtaPushpantak Rasa*.

(vi) Use of *Shatavari*, *Shatapushpa* in various forms.

(4) Diet:

Fish, curds, *Shukta*, *Kanji*, *Masha*, *Tila*, *Kulitha*, butter, honey & *Gomutra* (urine of cow) - these substances should be used in ample quantity by a women suffering from amenorrhea.

CONCLUSION:

- *Raja* is a menstrual discharge, which comes out of the vagina from uterus, at regular intervals of one month. *Raja* is present in female body from childhood but it is expressed only after the age of 12 years.
- *Artara*, *Rakta*, *Shonit* or *Pushpa* are the synonyms of the *Raja*. Any of these synonyms viz *Artava* and *Rakta* when used in relation to the menstrual cycle, it should be considered as *Raja* i.e. menstrual fluid. In other references the words *Artava* or *Rakta* may have different meaning.
- *Raja* is formed from *Rasa&RaktaDhatu*. *Raja* and *Rakta*, both are said to be formed from the essence of *Rasa* only.
- *Rutukala*, *Rutavateetkala& Rajahakala* are the phases of *Raja*.