

## TRISKANDHA OF GRAHANI WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO MANAS

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## ABSTRACT

**Introduction:** *Grahani* and *Agni* are intrinsically connected, with Acharya Chakrapani highlighting that the decrease in *Agni*, a characteristic of *Grahani roga*, is akin to the disorders of *Agni* itself. While Charaka Samhita's *Grahani roga nidana* doesn't directly mention mental factors, contemporary science links stress and anxiety to GI motor dysfunctions and spasms. Therefore, exploring the role of *Manas* (mind) in *Grahani* is crucial in *Ayurveda*.

**Materials:** A comprehensive review of *Brihatrayi*, commentaries, journals, published works, and relevant online sources was conducted.

**Results & Discussion:** *Vataja* and *Kaphaja Grahani* manifest mental symptoms like *manas sadanam* and *strishu-aharshanam*, though no direct mental causation is identified. Charaka Samhita mentions that mental states like anxiety and fear can hinder digestion, emphasising the mind's impact on *Agni*. Addressing mental health through counselling alongside proper dietary habits may improve *Grahani* treatment, highlighting the need for a holistic approach in *Ayurveda*.

**Keywords:** *Grahani; Agni; Manas; Satmya; Ahara Vidhi*

## INTRODUCTION

In *Ayurveda*, digestion is not only a physical process but is deeply influenced by the mind (*Manas*). *Grahani*, the seat of digestive fire (*Agni*), plays a key role in the acceptance, digestion, and absorption of food, with its function shaped by both physical factors (diet, lifestyle) and mental factors (stress, emotions, cognitive state). Classical texts, including Acharya Chakrapani's *teeka*, highlight the importance of mental states (*Satvika, Rajasika, Tamasika*) in regulating *Agni* and *Grahani*, which affects digestion. *Grahani* disorders (*Grahani Roga*) are often linked to poor diet and irregular habits, but mental disturbances also significantly contribute. Stress, emotional instability, and psychological disorders can weaken digestive fire, leading to gastrointestinal issues and a cycle of imbalances. Understanding the *Manas-Grahani* connection is crucial in identifying the root causes of digestive diseases and creating effective treatments.

### Aims-

1. Investigate the physiological function of *Grahani* and how mental states influence its role in digestion.
2. Examine the influence of different mental states (*Satvika, Rajasika, Tamasika*) on *Agni* and *Grahani*, leading to digestive disorders.

### Objectives-

1. To examine the interplay between diet, lifestyle, and mental health in the prevention and treatment of *Grahani Roga*.
2. To evaluate Ayurvedic treatment strategies for addressing *Grahani* disorders, focusing on physical and mental health.
3. To emphasise the importance of mental and emotional balance in maintaining digestive health and preventing *Grahani* disorders.

### Materials & Methods

A thorough review of the *Brihatrayi* was conducted to examine the impact of *Manas* on *Grahani*

functioning. Relevant chapters and verses from these classical texts were analysed to explore the link between mental states and digestive health. Additional references from academic databases, peer-reviewed papers, and Ayurvedic textbooks were consulted to substantiate the findings further. Cross-referencing historical and contemporary sources achieved a comprehensive understanding of the topic, providing theoretical insights and practical applications. The review led to conclusions and the formulation of treatment recommendations.

### Review of Literature:

To understand *Grahani* morbidities, it is crucial to comprehend its physiological role as the seat of *Agni*. *Grahani*, located above *Naabhi*, is responsible for food acceptance, absorption, and digestion, supported by gastric fire. It retains undigested food until processed and discharges it into the large intestines. However, when *Grahani* is weakened due to a diminished gastric fire (*Durbalagnibala*), it fails to retain undigested food, leading to dysfunction.

Acharya **Chakrapani** elaborates that *Grahani* derives its name from its role in receiving food. Situated above the umbilicus, it amplifies the upward force of *Agni*, retaining undigested food and releasing digested material from the left side. *Grahani* benefits from *Pitta* and its *Brimhana* function, and when *Agni* is strong, *Grahani* functions efficiently. Conversely, weak *Agni* leads to vitiation (*Dushti*) by the *Doshas*.<sup>1</sup>

The **Sushruta Samhita**<sup>2</sup> and **Ashtanga Sangraha**<sup>3</sup> describe *Grahani* as the sixth *Pittadhara Kala*, where food is processed by the internal *Agni*. Disruption by *Doshas* causes the premature release of undigested food. The connection between *Grahani* and *Agni* (*Aadhaara Aadheya Sambandha*) highlights that *Grahani Roga* is essentially a manifestation of *Agni Dushti*.

**a) General cause:** Weak gastric fire improperly digests food and directs it to the upper or lower parts of the alimentary tract or orifices.

**b) General character of Grahani disorder:** When improperly digested or undigested food is expelled through the lower channel (as faeces), it is termed *Grahani Roga*. In this condition, the food is typically ill-digested.

**c) General features of Grahani Roga:** The patient experiences frequent stools, which may be liquid or solid, along with symptoms such as thirst (*Trishna*), anorexia (*Aruchi*), a lack of taste, excessive salivation, a feeling of darkness (*Tamas*), *Tamaka*-type breathing (*Shwasa*), oedema (*Shotha*) in hands and feet, joint and bone pain, vomiting (*Chardi*), fever (*Jwara*), and metallic or fleshy eructation, with a bitter or sour taste.<sup>4</sup>

**Manifestation of Grahani disease -** An individual driven by greed (*Laulya*) who disregards dietary rules is prone to *Grahani* dysfunction and its related diseases. Acharya **Chakrapani** explains that the five *Bhutagnis*, seven *Dhatwagni*, and one *Pachakagni* are interconnected, with the digestive fire (*Antaragni*) being the most important. This digestive fire governs all other *Agni*—when strong, all *Agni* function well, and when weak, they are impaired. *Antaragni* nourishes the body, supporting all other *Agni*.

Adhering to dietary principles (*Ahara Vidhi*) promotes longevity, strength, and complexion while ignoring them leads to *Doshic* imbalances in *Grahani*. Conditions like *Agnimandya* (weak digestive fire) and *Ama* (indigestion) are linked to *Grahani* but are not classified as *Grahani Roga* since they do not specifically involve *Grahani*'s structure. *Grahani*'s role is to retain undigested food and release digested material; when vitiated, it fails, resulting in excessive discharge of undigested food. However, these disorders are distinct from *Agnimandya* and *Ama*. *Grahani Gada* refers to conditions arising from *Grahani* dysfunction, separate from *Agni Dosh*.<sup>5</sup>

### Causes of derangement or vitality of Agni and its effect

The *Agni* can become deranged due to factors such as fasting, eating during indigestion, overeating, irregular eating habits, consuming unwholesome, heavy, cold, dry, or contaminated food, and improper therapeutic practices like emesis, purgation, and oleation. Other contributing causes include emaciation from diseases, disturbances from habitat (*Desha*), seasonal changes (*Kaala*), and suppression of natural urges. When *Agni* is weakened, it fails to digest even light food, causing undigested food to acidify and develop toxic properties, leading to various disorders throughout the body.<sup>6</sup>

A person with uncontrolled eating habits, consuming food excessively and indiscriminately, often suffers from indigestion, which leads to various bodily ailments. It is crucial to identify the root cause of the discomfort and address it with appropriate corrective measures and remedies.<sup>7</sup>

### Manasika Lakshana – Grahani Roga

- i. *Manasa Saada – Vataja Grahani*
- ii. *Hrit Daha- Pittaja Grahani* (which can be considered emotional/mental agitation), as *Hridaya* is considered *Manas Sthana* throughout the text.
- iii. *Sadana & Streeshvahrshanam – Kaphaja Grahani*.<sup>8</sup>

**Effect of Manasika bhava on Shareerika Dosh**-  
*Vata* gets affected by – *Kaama, Shoka, Bhaya*  
*Pitta* by – *Krodha*  
*Shleshma* by – *Harsha*.<sup>9</sup>

### Other reasons for disease manifestation:

**Satmya and Its Impact on Health:** The patient's *Satmya*, or compatibility with certain substances, should be evaluated. *Satmya* refers to substances that benefit an individual through regular consumption (*Okasatmya*). Those accustomed to ghee, milk, oil, meat broths, and foods with all six

tastes tend to have greater strength, resilience, and longevity. On the other hand, individuals who consume dry foods or diets with a single taste exhibit less strength, endurance, and a shorter lifespan. A balanced diet leads to moderate strength. **Chakrapani** Acharya equates *Asatmya* (incompatible substances) to *Apathya* (improper diet), causing *Srotodushti* (blockages) and resulting in disease.<sup>10</sup>

*Asatmya* = *Anupashaya* (something which is not suitable for an individual) & this is the potential cause of *Vyadhi*.<sup>11</sup>

In addition to unwholesome food, other factors contributing to disease include:

1. ***Asatmyendriyārtha Samyoga*** – Improper interaction of sense organs with their objects.
2. ***Prajñaparadha*** – Intellectual errors or poor judgment.
3. ***Parinaama*** – Seasonal or environmental changes.

These factors can cause disease even in those consuming wholesome food. Conversely, unwholesome food may not harm an individual immediately due to mitigating factors. Individuals with weak mental resilience (*Alpa Satva*) are more vulnerable, while those with strong constitutions (*Pushta Shareera*) may show no immediate symptoms. However, over time, deranged *Agni* and aggravated *Doshas* can lead to diseases of varying severity—mild (*Mridu*), severe (*Daruna*), acute (*Kshipra-samuttha*), and chronic (*Chirakari*).<sup>12</sup>

As *Asatmya Aahara* contributes to the manifestation and progression of the disease, it can also serve as a preventive measure. By recognising this pattern, a *Vaidya* can predict the onset of disease or halt its further progression in a patient.<sup>13</sup>

The food will not be adequately digested for the individual afflicted by envy, fear, anger, greed, sorrow, agony and hate.<sup>14</sup>

Even food that is wholesome and taken in proper quantity is also not digested properly when a person is anxious (*Chinta*), grief (*Shoka*), fear (*Bhaya*), wrath (*Krodha*), misery (*Dukha*), constantly lying

down, and night vigil (*Jagarana*). This led to disease manifestation.<sup>15</sup>

***Chikitsa*** - To overcome such issues, *Aacharya* mentioned the following measures -

In brief, the management consists of avoidance of etiological factors, i.e. *Nidana Parivarjana*.<sup>16</sup>

If a person follows the principles of *Aachara Rasayana*, such as consuming well-arranged food (*Asankirna bhojana*) and using *Rasayana* therapies, they will experience all the benefits of the therapy.<sup>17</sup>

***Sadvritta related to food*** - One should not eat in a depressed mood or with contemptuous feelings towards food.<sup>18</sup>

The eight types of specific food sources (*Ashta-vidha Aahara Visheshaatana*) have both beneficial and harmful effects, enhancing each other's qualities. It is essential to understand these factors and consume only wholesome food. One should avoid unwholesome substances, whether due to ignorance (*Moha*) or carelessness (*Pramada*), as they lead to adverse health outcomes.<sup>19</sup>

The general treatment for *Manasika Doshas* involves a) *Jnana* (spiritual knowledge), b) *Vijñana* (scriptural knowledge), c) *Dhairya* (calmness of mind), d) *Smriti* (memory or recollection of past experiences), e) *Samadhi* (mind control through meditation) This approach aims to guide the mind from unwholesome to wholesome practices.<sup>20</sup>

The dietary guidelines for maintaining health include Consume hot, unctuous food (*Ushna & Snigdha Aahara*) in proper quantity (*Matra ahara*) only after digestion of the previous meal (*Jirne Ashniyat*). Avoid contradictory potencies in food (*Virya Aviruddha*). Eat in a comfortable place (*Ishte Deshe*) with necessary accessories (*Ishta Sarvopakaranam*), not too quickly (*Natidrutam*) or too slowly (*Nativilambitam*), and without talking or laughing (*Ajalpan, Ahasan*). Eat mindfully with full concentration (*Tanmana Bhuñjita*) and self-respect (*Aatmaanam Abhisamisya*). These

practices contribute to overall health (*Shareera Poshana*).<sup>21</sup>

People with a *Saatvika* mindset prefer foods that promote longevity, strength, health, and contentment, which are nourishing, juicy, and flavourful. Those with a *Rajasika* mindset prefer overly bitter, sour, hot, or dry foods, which cause discomfort and illness. Individuals with a *Tamasika* mindset favour stale, overcooked, and impure foods.<sup>22</sup>

### Modern Aspect

Emotions significantly affect gastrointestinal (GI) function through the gut-brain axis, a bidirectional communication system linking the central nervous system (CNS) and the enteric nervous system (ENS). This explains how psychological factors impact digestive processes and vice versa.

### Impact of Emotions on the GI Tract:

- **Stress and Anxiety:** Stress alters gut motility, increases intestinal permeability, and heightens visceral sensitivity, activating the HPA axis and releasing stress hormones like cortisol. This can cause abdominal pain, diarrhoea, or constipation.<sup>23</sup>
- **Negative Emotions:** Anger, anxiety, and depression lead to visceral hypersensitivity, making individuals more sensitive to gut sensations. Anger can increase colonic motility, causing diarrhoea, while suppress anger may delay gastric emptying.<sup>24</sup>

### Mental State in Conditions like IBS:

- **Stress:** Stressful life events can trigger or worsen IBS by affecting gut motility and sensitivity.<sup>25</sup>
- **Psychological Disorders:** Anxiety and depression are more common in IBS patients, worsening symptoms and creating a cycle of GI and mental health issues.
- **Therapeutic Interventions:** Cognitive-behavioural therapy (CBT) and gut-directed hypnotherapy have effectively managed IBS by modulating the gut-brain axis and improving quality of life.<sup>26</sup>

## DISCUSSION

This study highlights the crucial relationship between the Manas and Grahani in developing Grahani Roga.

1. **Influence of Mental States on Digestion:** Mental states—*Satvika*, *Rajasika*, and *Tamasika*—affect *Grahani* and *Agni* function. *Satvika* individuals, characterised by balance and clarity, have strong digestion, while *Rajasika* and *Tamasika* individuals, marked by agitation or ignorance, often experience digestive disturbances due to weakened *Agni*.
2. **Mental Disturbances and Grahani Disorders:** Stress, anxiety, and emotional instability directly affect *Grahani*, leading to indigestion, bloating, and irregular digestion. These disturbances can worsen *Dosha's* imbalances, impairing *Grahani's* function.
3. **Mind and Agni Dysfunction:** A calm, focused mind (*Satvika*) supports *Agni*, while negative mental states suppress it, leading to digestive issues. This aligns with *Satmya's* idea that mental and physical constitution influences digestion.
4. **Impact of Diet and Lifestyle:** Irregular eating habits and unwholesome foods worsen *Grahani* disorders, especially in individuals with disturbed mental states. Mindful eating supports *Agni* and *Grahani* function.
5. **Integrated Approach to Treatment:** Effective treatment for *Grahani Roga* must address both physical and mental health, incorporating dietary changes, stress management, meditation, and emotional well-being to restore *Grahani* function.

## CONCLUSION

The relationship between *Grahani* and *Agni* in *Ayurveda* emphasises the role of physiological, dietary, and psychological factors in digestive health. Classical texts highlight *Agni* as central to health, nothing disturbances lead to conditions like *Grahani Roga*. While psychological factors aren't directly listed as causes, they significantly affect *Agni* and digestion. Modern research supports this by showing that emotions influence gastrointestinal function through the gut-brain axis, with stress and negative emotions

disrupting digestion, which aligns with Ayurvedic concepts.

Effective *Grahani Roga* management requires a holistic approach:

1. *Nidana Parivarjana* (elimination of causative factors),
2. *Aahara vidhi* (dietary guidelines), and
3. *Manasika bhavas* (mental state interventions).

Practices like *Achara Rasayana and Satwavajaya Chikitsa, as well as modern therapies such as cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT), can address both the* physical and mental aspects of the condition. *Saatvika* foods and mindful eating promote health and tranquillity and align with the principle “Eat to live, not live to eat.” As **Charaka** Acharya suggests, following a wholesome diet, ethical conduct, and yoga reduce the risk of ailments, integrating ancient wisdom with modern science for *Grahani Roga* management.<sup>27</sup>

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