



Review Article

www.ijrap.net

(ISSN Online:2229-3566, ISSN Print:2277-4343)



A REVIEW ON DOSHA DYNAMICS IN AYURVEDA: INSIGHTS FROM YOGINDRANATH SEN'S CHARAKOPASKARA COMMENTARY ON THE CHARAKA SAMHITA

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Received on: 18/8/25 Accepted on: 27/9/25

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DOI: 10.7897/2277-4343.165191

ABSTRACT

Ayurveda approaches health and disease by assessing the balance of the tri-dosha- Vata, Pitta and Kapha. Instead of depending solely on fixed disease nomenclature, it emphasizes upon identifying underlying patterns of dosha vriddhi (~increase) and kshaya (~depletion). The Kiyantashirsiya Adhyaya of the Charaka Samhita presents a structured framework of 62 combinations (manifestations) of doshic imbalance, including single, samsarga (~dual), and sannipata (~triple) dosha involvement. It also includes mixed conditions where one dosha may be elevated, another depleted, and the third in equilibrium, mirroring the complexity of real clinical presentations. This paper offers an analytical overview of these 62 permutations, focusing on the practical classification provided by Yogindranath Sen in his Charakopaskara commentary. Sen's interpretations systematically unpack the compact verses of the original text and arrange the combinations in a clinically meaningful way, making the diagnostic process more accessible to students and practitioners. He also draws valuable parallels between these permutations and disease patterns such as sannipataja jvara, further enhancing their clinical relevance. By decoding these classical models, this study emphasizes how understanding the dynamics of dosha vriddhi and kshaya contributes to precise, individualized diagnosis and treatment. It underlines the continued relevance of Ayurvedic principles in a modern, integrative healthcare context.

Keywords: Dosha Vriddhi, Dosha Kshaya, Kiyantashirsiya Adhyaya, Samsarga, Sannipata

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda, the traditional science of health and healing, places great emphasis on understanding the natural balance within the body. At the heart of this system lies the concept of Tri-dosha: Vata, Pitta and kapha, which together govern all bodily functions.¹ When these three doshas are in balance, a person enjoys good health; when disturbed, they give rise to disease. This fundamental idea continues to guide Ayurvedic diagnosis and treatment to this day.

Understanding how these dosha behave, particularly how they vriddhi (~increase) or kshaya (~decrease) is crucial in clinical practice. While general descriptions of such imbalances are found throughout Ayurvedic literature, the Kiyantashirsiya Adhyaya of the Charaka Samhita offers something especially valuable: a detailed account of how doshas interact in combination during states of increase and decrease. In this chapter, 62 such combinations are outlined, involving tri-dosha imbalances in which various patterns can emerge such as two doshas being disturbed while the third remains stable, or differing states of increase and decrease across all three.² These complex patterns reflect what practitioners often see in real patients, where disorders rarely follow simple or isolated pathways. However, the verses in this section are concise and layered with meaning, making them challenging to interpret directly.

This is where the role of classical commentaries becomes especially important. In Charakopaskara commentary, the esteemed commentator Yogindranath Sen unpacks each of these 62 combinations with remarkable clarity.³ His insights make the

clinical application of these concepts far more accessible, especially for students and practitioners trying to navigate the subtle interplay of dosha. Together, the foundational verses and Yogindranath Sen's commentary provide a deeper, clinically relevant understanding of dosha interactions—empowering practitioners to approach diagnosis and treatment with greater precision and clarity. This study employed a textual analysis of the Charaka Samhita, focusing on verses related to dosha permutations in the Kiyantashirsiya Adhyaya, along with the Charakopaskara commentary authored by Yogindranath Sen. Key verses were compared with Sen's interpretations to understand how he clarifies complex combinations. Secondary sources include classical Ayurvedic texts and translations, and supportive contextual understanding. This approach enabled a clearer grasp of dosha dynamics through the lens of traditional commentary.

Theoretical Foundation of Dosha Permutations in Charaka Samhita

The three doshas: Vata, Pitta and Kapha are regarded as fundamental principles that sustain physiological balance within the body. When in their natural state, they promote health and support all bodily functions; when disturbed, they become the primary cause of disease.⁴ Reflecting this core understanding, the Kiyantashirsiya Adhyaya of the Charaka Samhita offers a detailed classification of 62 combinations of dosha vriddhi (~increase) and kshaya (~decrease), illustrating how these doshas may deviate in paired and mixed patterns. This systematic mapping mirrors the complexity of real-life clinical presentations, where dosha imbalances rarely occur in isolation.

To make this intricate framework more comprehensible, Yogindranath Sen, in his Charakopaskara commentary, not only clarified each individual combination but also segregated them methodically. He organised the patterns into samsarga (~dual-dosha involvement) and sannipata (~tri-dosha involvement), and further subdivided them based on state of increase or decrease of the dosha, manifested in multiple ways.⁵ All such permutations and combinations are systematically arranged in Table 1.⁶ This structured classification transformed the compact and layered verses into an accessible, clinically meaningful format. By doing so, Sen effectively bridged classical textual theory with practical understanding, providing a clearer and more applicable perspective for students and practitioners engaging with the subtleties of dosha interactions.

Yogindranath Sen also compared the sannipataja vriddhi conditions described in the Kiyantashirsiya Adhyaya with the thirteen types of sannipataja jwara (~fever) given in the Jwarachikitsadhyaya. This comparison explains the manner in which the tri-dosha vitiation presents in actual disease conditions like jwara, making the theoretical patterns easier to relate to clinical understanding.⁷ Through this, Sen made the subject more practical and easier to apply for learners and practitioners.

Understanding Disease Through Dosha

To understand and manage disease, it is not always necessary to identify it by a specific name. Charaka Samhita states that, “A physician should not be embarrassed, if he is unable to name every condition, as all the diseases do not present in fixed, nameable forms”.⁸

vikaranamakushalo na jihniyat kadaana |
na hi sarvavikaranam namato 'sti dhruva sthitih ||

Many clinical manifestations arise from different combinations of dosha vriddhi and kshaya. These may not always fit into a fixed diagnosis. This shows that disease should be understood mainly through the perspective of dosha imbalance rather than by name alone. The sixty-two combinations described in the

Kiyantashirsiya Adhyaya give a practical model for this approach. By observing the elemental disturbances - whether single, samsarga (~dual), or sannipata (~tri-dosha) - a physician can identify the main cause of the condition more accurately.

This idea is also explained through the concept of anubandha (~dependent) and anubandhya (~independent) in Charaka Vimanasthana. Anubandhya means the independent dosha that shows clear signs and produces both onset and relief of disease as described. Anubandha means the dependent doshas, which are mixed with one or more doshas, have unclear symptoms, do not arise from a definite cause, appear during disease, or do not subside even after proper treatment.⁹ On this basis, many varieties of dosha classifications are explained.

Thus, physicians understand different forms of disease by studying the combinations of doshas. In practice, this is seen in vishama sannipata (~uneven tri-dosha condition). Here, treatment is directed towards the dosha that is predominant. Acharya Chakrapani explains that in sharada rutu (~autumn season), water becomes amla vipaka (~acidic in nature). This causes aggravation of pitta, but at the same time Kapha dosha also increases. Even so, treatment is focused mainly on pitta, and when pitta is pacified, Kapha also settles.

This shows that among combined doshas, one usually dominates and guides the line of treatment. Yogindranath Sen's Charakopaskara commentary further clarifies this principle by explaining the detailed patterns of dosha combinations in the Charaka Samhita.

The analysis of dosha combinations - especially their vriddhi (~increase) and kshaya (~depletion) can be systematically categorized for clinical understanding and diagnosis as shown in Table 2 to 11.

Similar Permutations in Kshaya (Depletion) States of Doshas

These reflect parallel patterns of imbalance as seen in their vriddhi (aggravation) counterparts.

Table 1: Manifestations of dosha in 62 ways

Category	Number	Remarks
Sannipata (3 doshas in vriddhi)	13	Unequal vitiation (3+3), hina/madhyama/adhika levels (6), and samavridhdha (1)
Sannipata (3 doshas in kshaya)	13	Unequal depletion (3+3), hina/madhyama/adhika levels (6), and samakshaya (1)
Samsarga (2 doshas aggravated)	9	6 conditions with one dominant dosha, 3 with equal aggravation (samvriddha)
Single dosha vitiation	3	Individual vriddhi of Vata, Pitta, or Kapha
Samsarga (2 doshas depleted)	9	6 conditions with one dominant dosha, 3 with equal depletion (samakshaya)
Single dosha depletion	3	Individual kshaya of Vata, Pitta, or Kapha
One vriddhi, one kshaya, one sama (normal)	6	Mixed conditions with one aggravated, one depleted, and one balanced dosha
Two doshas in vriddhi, one in kshaya	3	Typical dual-aggravation patterns with compensatory depletion of the third
Two doshas in kshaya, one in vriddhi	3	Severe imbalance with dominance of one dosha and dual depletion
—	62	—

Table 2: Dual Dosha Vriddha (Increase) Conditions

Vriddha (Adhika)	Moderate Vriddhi
Vata-Pitta ++	Kapha +
Vata-Kapha ++	Pitta +
Kapha-Pitta ++	Vata +

Table 3: Single Dosha Vriddha (Increase) Conditions

More Vriddha (Adhika)~more increase	Vriddha~increase
Vata ++	Kapha-Pitta +
Pitta ++	Vata-Kapha +
Kapha ++	Vata-Pitta +

Table 4: Patterns of Unequal Dosha Depletion

Mild Vriddha (Vriddha)	Moderate Vriddha (Vriddhatar)	More Vriddha (Vriddhatam)
Vata +	Pitta ++	Kapha +++
Vata +	Kapha ++	Pitta +++
Pitta +	Kapha ++	Vata +++
Pitta +	Vata ++	Kapha +++
Kapha +	Vata ++	Pitta +++
Kapha +	Pitta ++	Vata +++

Table 5: Samvriddha (Equal Increase of All Three Doshas)

Vata	Pitta	Kapha	Remarks
+	+	+	Similarly vitiated (Tulyavriddha)

Table 6: Comparative Vitiation – One Dosha More Aggravated than Another

Moderate Vriddha (Vriddha)	More Vriddha (Vriddhatara)
Vata +	Pitta ++
Vata +	Kapha ++
Pitta +	Vata ++
Pitta +	Kapha ++
Kapha +	Vata ++
Kapha +	Pitta ++

Table 7: Equal Vitiation of Two Doshas (Samanya Vriddhi)

Dosha (Samanvriddha) ~ Equally increased.
Vata-Pitta
Vata-Kapha
Pitta-Kapha

Table 8: Prithak Dosha Vriddha (Isolated Single Dosha Increase)

Vata	Pitta	Kapha
+	+	+

Table 9: Mixed State – One Dosha in Vriddhi, One in Samata, One in Kshaya

Vriddhi (~increase)	Samata (~equilibrium)	Kshaya (~decrease)
Vata	Pitta	Kapha
Vata	Kapha	Pitta
Pitta	Kapha	Vata
Pitta	Vata	Kapha
Kapha	Pitta	Vata
Kapha	Vata	Pitta

Table 10: Two Doshas in Vriddhi with One in Kshaya

Vriddha	Kshaya
Kapha-Pitta	Vata
Vata-Kapha	Pitta
Vata-Pitta	Kapha

Table 11: Two Doshas in Kshaya with One in Vriddhi

Vriddha (~increase)	Kshaya (~decrease)
Vata	Kapha-Pitta
Pitta	Vata-Kapha
Kapha	Vata-Pitta

CONCLUSION

Understanding the permutations of dosha through the lens of vriddhi (~increase) and kshaya (~depletion) provides a refined approach to diagnosis and treatment in Ayurveda. Yogindranath Sen's Charakopaskara commentary plays a pivotal role in demystifying these complex patterns, especially within the context of the Kiyantashirsiya Adhyaya of the Charaka Samhita. His systematic explanation of 62 dosha combinations offers clarity that not only deepens theoretical understanding but also

guides clinical decision-making. This becomes particularly relevant in real-life scenarios where disease presentations often involve overlapping doshas and do not conform to textbook definitions.

In today's evolving healthcare landscape, where there is a growing emphasis on personalized, integrative care, the insights drawn from Sen's commentary feel especially timely. By shifting focus from rigid disease labels to the dynamic interplay of doshas, practitioners are empowered to deliver more nuanced and patient-

centric care. This approach preserves the essence of classical Ayurveda while enhancing its application in modern clinical contexts, reaffirming its value as a living, evolving system of medicine.

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Cite this article as:

Vrushali Patil and Vaibhav Dadu. A review on Dosha dynamics in Ayurveda: Insights from Yogindranath Sen's Charakopaskara commentary on the Charaka samhita. Int. J. Res. Ayurveda Pharm. 2025;16(5):162-165
DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.7897/2277-4343.165191>

Source of support: Nil, Conflict of interest: None Declared

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