

A Comprehensive Review on the Ayurvedic Management of *Sheetapitta* and *Udarda* (Urticaria)

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Abstract

This review article provides a comprehensive analysis of *Sheetapitta* and *Udarda*, two crucial clinical entities within the framework of Ayurvedic dermatology that closely resemble modern urticaria and allergic skin manifestations. While classical texts delineate *Sheetapitta* as a combined *dosha* disorder where exposure to cold (*Sheeta*) aggravates *Vata* and *Kapha*, subsequently vitiating *Pitta* to manifest as inflamed cutaneous eruptions, *Udarda* is recognized as a *Kapha*-dominant variant presenting with a similar pathogenesis. This article synthesizes traditional Ayurvedic perspectives including historical commentaries and etiology (*Nidana*) with contemporary clinical insights to elucidate the complex pathophysiological mechanisms (*Samprapti*) underlying these allergic conditions. It critically examines diagnostic criteria, classical *dosha*-pacifying therapeutic approaches, and the pivotal role of dietary and lifestyle (*Ahara-Vihara*) interventions. Furthermore, the review highlights the therapeutic efficacy of classical formulations and systemic detoxification (*Vamana* and *Virechana*) in restoring homeostatic equilibrium. This article aims to enhance the conceptual understanding and practical application of Ayurvedic management strategies for allergic skin disorders.

Key words : *Sheetapitta*, *Udarda*, Allergic Dermatitis, *Samprapti*, *Panchakarma*, Urticaria.

Within Ayurvedic dermatology (*Tvak Vikara*), *Sheetapitta* and *Udarda* represent two distinct yet clinically overlapping pathological entities characterized by acute, transient cutaneous eruptions that closely mirror modern urticaria and allergic angioedema. While the *Brihatrayee* lays the foundational

principles for skin diseases, the *Laghutrayee* specifically the *Madhava Nidana* delineates them as independent clinical disorders with a distinct etiopathogenesis (*Samprapti*).

Both conditions stem from a multi-dosha vitiation triggered by environmental

factors like cold winds and unwholesome dietary or lifestyle habits (*Ahara-Vihara*). However, they diverge significantly in *dosha* dominance: *Sheetapitta*³ presents a *Pitta-Vata* profile marked by erythema and burning sensations, whereas *Udarda* is a *Kapha*-dominant³ variant characterized by pale, skin-colored swelling and intense pruritus. Unlike contemporary medicine's heavy reliance on symptomatic antihistamines and corticosteroids, Ayurveda addresses the underlying root cause. It utilizes a structured combination of systemic purification (*Shodhana*), internal bio-balancing formulations (*Shamana*), and strict adherence to dietary guidelines (*Pathya-Apathya*).

This review article comprehensively synthesizes classical scriptural wisdom from the *Brihatrayee* and *Laghutrayee* with modern clinical insights. By examining their distinct etiologies, clinical features (*Rupa*), and standardized management protocols, this paper seeks to enhance the practical application of Ayurvedic interventions for allergic skin disorders within contemporary healthcare systems.

Sheeta Pitta :

Definition :

Sheetapitta is an allergic cutaneous manifestation characterized by transient rashes, erythema, intense pruritus, and a localized burning sensation. It is Raktapradoshaja vikara¹.

Etiology (Nidana) :

The causes of *Sheeta Pitta* include:

Dietary Factors: Consumption of hot, spicy, oily, and acidic foods that increase *Pitta* dosha.¹ Environmental Factors: Exposure to excessive heat, sunlight, and pollutants that aggravate *Pitta* in the skin.^{2,3}

Psychological Factors: Stress, anxiety, and emotional disturbances can elevate *Pitta* levels and contribute to skin disorders.¹

*Prodromal symptoms (Purvarupa)*³:

Pipasa (excessive thirst), *Aasya-Vairasya* (altered or bad taste in the mouth), *Hrillasa* (nausea/salivation), *Angamarda* (body aches/malaise), *Raktalochana* (redness of eyes).

Clinical presentation (Rupa)^{2,3}:

Varati-Damshtra-Samsthana Shothah (Edema/wheals resembling a wasp sting), *Kandu* (itching), *Todabahulta* (pricking, throbbing pain), *Chardi* (vomit), *Jvar* (fever), burning sensation.

Pathophysiology (Samprapti)^{1,3}:

The pathogenesis of *Sheetapitta* is initiated by exposure to triggering factors such as cold winds (*Sheeta Maruta Sevana*), improper dietary habits, or allergens. This exposure primarily aggravates *Vata* and *Kapha* doshas. The aggravated *Vata* and *Kapha* then mix with and vitiate *Pitta* dosha. This combined, multi-dosha disturbance circulates throughout the systemic channels (*Prasara* stage) and localizes (*Sthana Samsraya*) in the skin (*Tvacha*), blood (*Rakta*), and superficial tissues (*Mamsa*). The resulting systemic stagnation and localized

inflammatory response manifest externally as itchy, red, raised wheals accompanied by a burning sensation.

Samprapti Ghataka of Sheetapitta & Udarda

Parameter	Description
Dosha	<i>Tridosha (Vata pradhana in Sheetapitta; Kapha pradhana in Udarda)</i>
Dushya	<i>Rasa Dhatu, Rakta Dhatu, and Tvacha</i>
Adhisthana	<i>Tvacha (Cutaneous tissue layers)</i>
Srotas	<i>Rasa-vaha and Rakta-vaha Srotas</i>
Srotodushti	<i>Sanga (Obstruction/stagnation)</i>
Agni	<i>Jatharagni-mandya (Metabolic impairment leading to Ama)</i>
Swabhava	<i>Aashukari (Acute onset)</i>

Management (Chikitsa)⁶ :

According to the classical *Siddhanta* of the *Laghutrayee*, the management of *Sheetapitta* strictly follows a tripartite clinical progression (*Chikitsa Krama*) consisting of *Nidana Parivarjana* (avoidance of etiology), *Samshodhana* (biocleansing), and *Samshamana* (pacification). Systemic purification (*Samshodhana*) begins with *Purvakarma*, utilizing *Abhyanga* with *Siddharthaka Taila* to alleviate intense *Kandu* (pruritus), followed by mild *Swedana*. *Vamana* (therapeutic emesis) is executed using a potent decoction of *Patola*, *Nimba*, and *Vasana (Vasa)*⁵ This is sequentially followed by *Virechana* (therapeutic purgation) using *Triphala*, *Guggulu*, and

Pippali, or through the administration of *Navakarshika Kashaya* to target the *Pitta-Rakta* axis⁵. To address deep-seated blood-borne toxins, *Chakradatta* advocates internal oleation (*Snehapana*) with *Mahatikitaka Ghrita*⁵, alongside *Raktamokshana* (bloodletting) for stubborn, localized lesions.⁵

Palliative care (*Samshamana*) seamlessly integrates localized procedures (*Sthanika Chikitsa*) with internal therapeutics. Immediate relief from cutaneous inflammation is achieved via *Pralepa* (medicated pastes), *Udvardana* (dry powder scrubbing to counteract *Kapha* dampness), and *Parisheka* (affusion) using *Ushnodaka* (warm water) to pacify the *Sheeta* (cold) attributes of *Vata* and *Kapha*. Crucially, *ayurveda* emphasizes that therapeutic success depends on strict adherence to *Pathya-Apathya*⁵ The dietary regimen (*Pathya*) must feature *Shali Dhanya* (aged rice), *Mudga* (green gram), and *Pitta-Kapha Hara* preparations, while *Apathya* demands the absolute restriction of *Sheetapitta-krit* factors—such as cold winds and exposure to sudden temperature fluctuations—which actively trigger the pathology.

Udarda :

Definition and Concept :

Udarda is a condition characterized by allergic skin disorders in Ayurveda, resembling modern dermatological conditions such as urticaria and allergic dermatitis. It involves the vitiation of *Kapha* and *Vata* doshas, leading to various skin manifestations due to allergens and immune system hypersensitivity reactions with predominance of *Kapha*

*Etiology (Nidana)*² :

The causes of Udarda include :

Dietary Factors: Consumption of allergenic foods such as nuts, shellfish, dairy products, and artificial additives.

Environmental Factors: Exposure to allergens like pollen, dust mites, animal dander, and certain chemicals.

Psychological Factors: Stress, anxiety, and emotional disturbances can weaken the immune system and trigger allergic reactions.

*Clinical Features (Rupa)*³ :

The disease characterized by elevated or raised borders (*Sotsanga*), redness/erythema (*Saraga*), and intensely itchy (*Kanduman*) circular patches or wheals (*Mandala*), which manifests or worsens during the cold winter season (*Shaishira*) and is predominantly born of aggravated *Kapha dosha* (*Kaphaja*), is designated as Udarda.

*Pathophysiology (Samprapti)*³ :

The pathogenesis of Udarda begins with exposure to aggravating factors like cold environmental conditions (*Sheeta*), an unwholesome diet, or allergens. This primarily causes a severe aggravation of *Kapha Dosha*, along with *Vata*. The dominant, aggravated *Kapha* mixes with *Vata* and *Pitta*, circulating through the *Rasa* and *Rakta* dhatus. It then localizes (*Sthana Samsraya*) in the skin (*Tvacha*). The dense, cold qualities of *Kapha* obstruct the local channels, manifesting as raised, skin-colored or pale wheals accompanied

by intense, deep itching (*Kandu*) rather than severe burning.

Management (Chikitsa) :

According to the classical tenets, the management of *Udarda*—as a *Kapha*-dominant variant of *Raktapradoshaja Vikara*—focuses heavily on counteracting cold, stagnant congestion through structured *Samshodhana* (biocleansing) and *Samshamana* (pacification) protocols. Systemic purification begins with *Purvakarma*, utilizing *Abhyanga* with *Siddharthaka Taila* to alleviate intense *Kandu* (pruritus), followed by *Swedana*. To root out the dominant *Kapha* pathology, classical guidelines mandate *Vamana* (therapeutic emesis) using a potent *Kwatha* of *Patola*, *Arishta*, and *Vari*⁵. This is followed by *Virechana* (therapeutic purgation) using *Triphala*, *Guggulu*, and *Pippali*, or the administration of *Navakarshika Kashaya* to clear the *Srotas* (micro-channels)⁵. To address deep-seated blood-borne toxins and prevent recurrence, internal oleation (*Snehapana*) with *Mahatiktaka Ghrita* is advocated, along with *Raktamokshana* (bloodletting) for stubborn localized lesions.⁵

Palliative measures (*Samshamana*) integrate *Pralepa* (medicated pastes), *Udvartana* (dry powder scrubbing to reduce *Kapha* dampness), and *Parisheka* (affusion) using *Ushnodaka* (warm water) to actively liquefy the dense, cold attributes of the *doshas*. Crucially, it is emphasized that clinical success relies on strict adherence to *Pathya-Apathya*⁶. The dietary regimen (*Pathya*) must strictly consist of *Shali Dhanya* (aged rice), *Mudga* (green gram), and preparations that are inherently *Pitta-Kapha Hara*. Conversely,

Apathya requires the absolute restriction of *Sheetapitta-Udarda-krit* factors—such as cold winds, cold water baths, and heavy, channel-blocking foods—which act as immediate triggers for cutaneous flare-ups.

The management of *Sheetapitta* and *Udarda* provides a profound demonstration of the clinical precision embedded within *Siddhanta* (Ayurvedic principles). Rather than viewing these cutaneous eruptions as isolated localized lesions, the *Samhitas* conceptualize them as the peripheral manifestation of *Bahirmarga* (external pathway) pathology, intimately bound to the vitiation of the *Rasa* and *Rakta Dhatus* (fluid and blood tissues). The true genius of classical masters like *Madhavakara* and *Yogaratanakar* lies in their subtle differentiation of these conditions based on *Anubandhitwa* (dosha dominance), establishing that what contemporary medicine broadly clusters under the umbrella of urticaria actually demands divergent therapeutic pathways.

The specific *Samprapti* (pathogenesis) of each condition commands a distinct, logical *Chikitsa Sutra* (treatment protocol). In *Sheetapitta*, the *Pradhana Dosha* is *Pitta*, which combines with *Vata* and *Kapha* to cause *Raga* (erythema) and *Daha* (burning sensation) akin to *Varati-Damshtra* (a wasp sting). Because *Pitta* and *Rakta* share an *Ashraya-Ashrayi* (interdependent) relationship, *Virechana* (therapeutic purgation) is the premier *Shodhana* modality to expel the deep-seated *Ushna* (hot) and *Tikshna* (sharp) toxins. This is paired internally with *Tikta-Kashaya Rasa* (bitter-astringent) dravyas like *Guduchi*, *Nimba*, and *Patola* to purify the circulating plasma and blood.

Conversely, *Udarda* is a distinct *Kapha-Utklesha* variant. Here, the dense, *Sheeta* (cold), and *Guru* (heavy) attributes of *Kapha* clog the *Srotas* (micro-channels) of the skin, producing pale, *Shotha-dominant* (edematous) wheals marked by unyielding *Kandu* (pruritus). Consequently, the clinical strategy pivots seamlessly toward *Ushna-Virya* (warming) drugs like *Ardra* and *Shodhana* via *Vamana* (therapeutic emesis) to liquefy and uproot the stagnant, cold congestion.

Furthermore, standard classical preparations like *Haridra Khanda*² illuminate the deep scriptural grasp of *Koshta-Shakha* (gut-skin) axis dynamics. Instead of merely suppressing symptoms superficially, these polyherbal compounds kindle the *Jatharagni* (metabolic fire), digest *Ama* (undigested metabolic toxins), and stabilize the *Vyadhikshamatva* (immunity) of the cutaneous tissue against environmental allergens. This internal homeostatic equilibrium is entirely dependent on the strict implementation of *Pathya-Apathya* (wholesome and unwholesome regimens). The classical texts brilliantly observe that exogenous triggers like *Sheeta Maruta* (cold wind) cannot provoke *Tvak Vikara* (skin diseases) unless the internal terrain has been sensitized by *Nidanas* like *Viruddha Ahara* (incompatible food combinations), excessive *Amla-Lavana Rasa* (sour-salty tastes), and *Divaswapna*⁷ (daytime sleeping). Ultimately, by adhering to the rigorous classical progression of *Nidana Parivarjana* (avoidance of root causes), *Shodhana* (purification), and *Shamana* (pacification), Ayurveda offers a time-tested, profoundly elegant framework that cures the *Rogi* (patient) from within rather than merely masking the *Roga* (disease) on the surface.

Sheeta Pitta and Udara are two distinct skin disorders described in Ayurveda, each characterized by specific doshic imbalances and clinical features. Understanding these conditions from an Ayurvedic perspective involves not only recognizing the signs and symptoms but also addressing the underlying causes through personalized therapeutic approaches. By adopting Ayurvedic principles of diet, lifestyle modifications, herbal remedies, and, when necessary, Panchakarma therapies, individuals can effectively manage and alleviate these skin disorders. Embracing the holistic wisdom of Ayurveda offers a comprehensive framework for promoting skin health and overall wellbeing, emphasizing the interconnectedness of mind, body, and spirit in the maintenance of health.

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