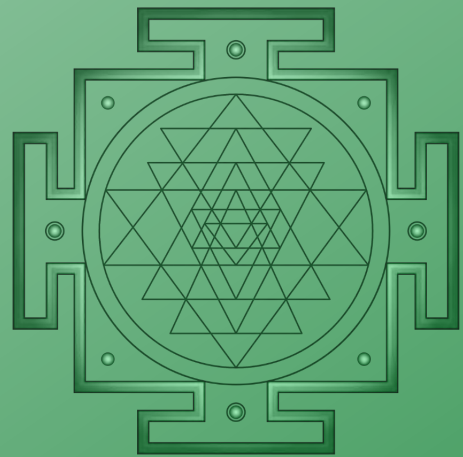


NEWSLETTER



MAY 2025

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Letter from the Editor

We welcome everyone to the latest edition of the Newsletter! As always, we have curated another great edition filled with useful articles, reviews and details on our Autumn Webinars.

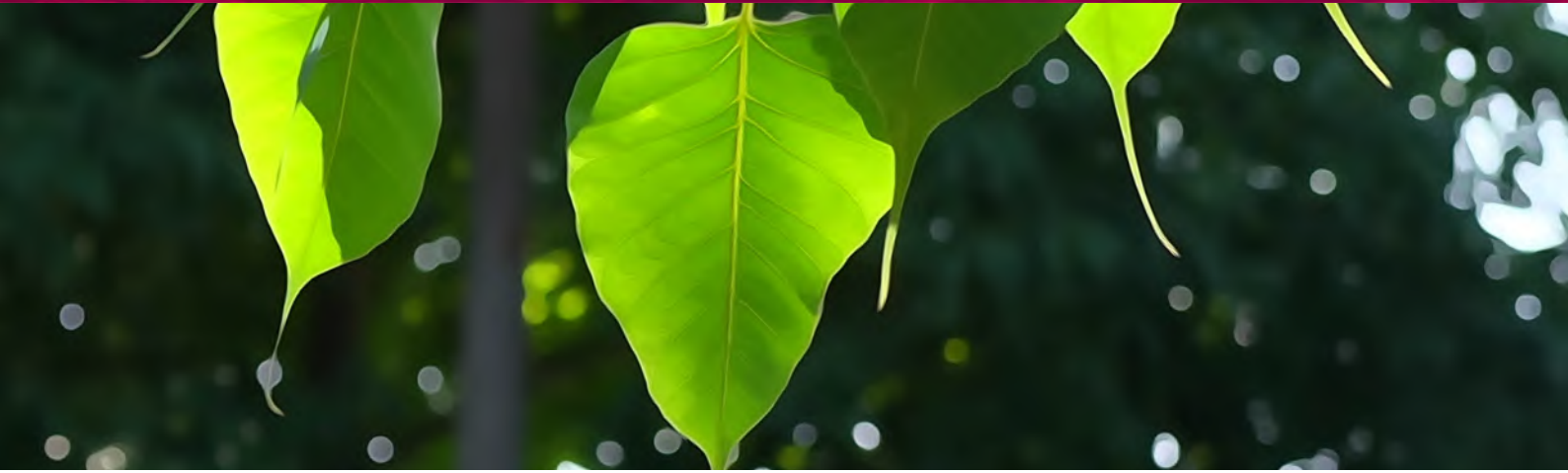
A heartfelt thank you goes out to all the contributors who made this issue possible. We strive to publish at least six issues per year and are always on the lookout for fresh, high-quality article submissions. If you have an article you would like to share with us, please send it to info@neterapublishing.com.

Our next edition will be published toward the end of September 2025. To be considered, please ensure your submission reaches us by the end of August.

Andrew Mason

Disclaimer: The information contained in this Newsletter is for informational purposes only and is not intended to be a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis or treatment. The views and opinions expressed here are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views or official policy of the *Ayurvedic Professionals Association*.





As we move forward into the next chapter for the APA, I wanted to take a moment to reflect on how far we have come, particularly in the area of webinars, which have become such a core part of how we, as members of the APA, connect, learn, and grow stronger together.

But firstly, to all our past, (and future) APA webinar speakers: Thank You. Your willingness to share time, insight, and expertise has been instrumental in building the high quality webinar program APA members now look forward to with anticipation. Every presentation, whether it was your first or your fifth, has added real value to the collective knowledge and helped strengthen the wider Ayurvedic professional community.

Over the years, APA webinar topics and speakers have grown into rich diverse offerings. The APA has been fortunate to be able to present a thoughtful and vibrant blend of sessions, some designed to engage the public and raise awareness of Ayurveda in the UK, while others were developed specifically as CPD content for APA members and professionals from related associations. That balance has allowed the APA to showcase the many facets of Ayurveda while providing meaningful, targeted CPD education supporting ongoing professional development and excellence among APA members.

It's hard to believe that not so long ago, webinars were not even part of the APA toolkit. When the need arose to pivot during the early days of COVID, this was no small challenge. I still remember those first Zoom meetings with Tomaz, Colette, and Karolina and others who have now left the committee, trying to understand and figure out the technology, working on who to approach for speakers, as well as building a framework from scratch. With the help of a dedicated team, along with promotion via social media, the APA newsletter, and word of mouth, the APA webinar series has grown steadily. We adapted to each new challenge, time zone logistics with speakers in India and America, as well as the inevitable technical hiccup. What began as a response to lockdown has become a cornerstone of how we deliver value, not just to APA members, but to a wider community increasingly curious about Ayurveda.

GRATITUDE FOR APA SPEAKERS - A LOOK BACK AND LOOKING FORWARD



It's wonderful to share that the next webinar dates scheduled for autumn are fully booked with speakers. We know you will enjoy the inspiring line-up, so don't forget to contact the APA office to reserve your space (see pages 12 & 13 for more information).

Nothing happens without a lot of effort and because of this I would also like to express how deeply grateful I personally feel to everyone who made this journey possible.

Thank You to all those working quietly behind the scenes.

Thank You to all who stepped forward to present, host, offer advice or a speaker contact.

Thank You to all of you who joined webinars, participating, asking such thoughtful questions to the speaker, without you there is no point to any webinar.

Alongside the growth of the APA website and APA newsletter, APA webinars from conception to now, has been a project I am extremely proud to be part of. Every tiny effort behind the scenes, or in front of the now familiar zoom camera, has helped spread Ayurveda concepts and teachings just a little further. I feel so thankful to have been involved in this phase of the APA's development. Now as the APA continues onward, I look forward to seeing how APA projects evolve and expand and what the future holds for Ayurveda within the UK.

If you're interested in contributing to the APA 2026 webinar series, please don't hesitate to reach out to the office, Karolina would love to hear from you and don't forget to book and rejoin when the APA webinar series resumes in September.

Wishing you all a wonderful summer and continued growth in Ayurveda and beyond.

With warmest regards,

Sue Clark

(Current APA President)

POLYVAGAL THEORY AND TRIGUNA: INTEGRATING NEUROSCIENCE AND AYURVEDA IN THE CONTEXT OF SAFETY, AUTONOMIC REGULATION, AND CONSCIOUS LIVING - REVIEW



APA WEBINAR

"Ayurveda & the Autonomic Nervous System:
Exploring Trigunas from the
Polyvagal Perspective."

by Anu Paavola

Thursday, 27th March 2025
7 pm - 8 pm (GMT)



My lecture on 26th March explored the intersection of Polyvagal Theory and the ancient Yogic-Ayurvedic concept of the Trigunas: Sattva, Rajas, and Tamas. It proposed that both frameworks, though arising from distinct epistemological backgrounds, converge on a shared understanding of how perceived safety governs behaviour, physiological function, and psychological well-being. Drawing from both neurobiological and Ayurvedic paradigms, the lecture argued for the superimposition of Sattva, or a state of conscious balance, upon sympathetic and parasympathetic autonomic drives to foster harmonious living, regulated reactivity, and health.

The Gut-Brain Axis and the Autonomic Nervous System

The gut-brain axis, under the regulatory control of the autonomic nervous system (ANS), plays a central role in mediating responses to internal and external stimuli. The ANS functions through two principal branches: the sympathetic and parasympathetic systems. When the sympathetic system is activated, the organism is primed for engagement: alert, responsive, and action-oriented. Conversely, the parasympathetic system facilitates rest, digestion, and physiological restoration.

A balanced life necessitates both drives: the capacity to act and the ability to rest. Health arises not from one dominating the other, but from their dynamic

interplay, a rhythm of action and repose operating under a condition of internal coherence.

Harmony under the umbrella of safety

Central to this equilibrium is the concept of safety. Harmony in autonomic regulation does not merely denote the alternating activation of sympathetic and parasympathetic pathways, but rather their modulation through the perception of safety.

When safety is perceived (or, when operating under the umbrella of safety):

- Behaviour becomes proportionate to environmental demands.
- Self-referential concern diminishes, enabling social engagement.
- Awareness flows freely between internal and external experience.

Sympathetic activity under safety manifests as:

- Coordinated, goal-directed action
- Playfulness, especially in children, where learning is supported by games and reassurance
- Adult social play through shared meals, humour, and the exploration of interpersonal boundaries
- Productive, creative work

POLYVAGAL THEORY AND TRIGUṆA: INTEGRATING NEUROSCIENCE AND AYURVEDA IN THE CONTEXT OF SAFETY, AUTONOMIC REGULATION, AND CONSCIOUS LIVING - REVIEW

Parasympathetic activity under conditions of safety supports:

- Restorative sleep and the capacity to rest while awake
- Calm and efficient digestion
- Secure nurturing of infants and interpersonal caregiving
- Natural and unstrained elimination

Threat Perception and Dysregulation

When the umbrella of safety is lost, fear and defence dominate, and both sympathetic and parasympathetic drives express maladaptively.

In states of sympathetic dysregulation:

- Hypervigilance and reactivity emerge
- Behaviour becomes critical, self-referential, and defensive
- Irritability and aggression may ensue
- Engagement with others is driven by ego rather than connection

In states of parasympathetic dysregulation:

- Withdrawal, depression, and emotional detachment occur
- Letting go becomes difficult, resulting in hoarding or stagnation
- Resistance to change becomes a defining trait

Thus, the ANS, while biologically fixed in its structure, is deeply influenced by psychophysiological context, especially the experience of safety or threat.

Integrating Triguna Theory and Polyvagal Science

The Ayurvedic model of the mind, as expressed through the three gunas—Sattva (balance), Rajas (activity), and Tamas (inertia), provides a parallel

framework to understand behaviour and internal states.

- Sattva signifies harmony, clarity, and balance.
- Rajas represents dynamism, passion, and movement.
- Tamas indicates stability, stillness, and heaviness.

When Sattva is predominant, Rajas and Tamas are functional and balanced. Under the Sattvic umbrella:

- Action is appropriate and attuned
- Interpersonal connection is fluid and cooperative
- Rest is deep and nurturing

However, in the absence of Sattva:

- Rajas becomes restless, irritable, and aggressive
- Tamas degenerates into inertia, depression, and aversion to change

This conceptual overlap between the two systems is striking. Both posit that a higher-order regulatory state, whether operating under the umbrella of safety (Polyvagal Theory) or Sattva (Triguna Theory), must be present to ensure that activity (Rajas/sympathetic) and inaction (Tamas/parasympathetic) serve rather than sabotage well-being.

Cultivating Safety and Sattva: Ayurvedic Lifestyle Principles

In Ayurveda, perceived safety is not left to chance. It is intentionally cultivated through Dinacharya (daily routines) and Ritucharya (seasonal rhythms). Regularity and predictability calm the mind, anchoring the individual in a secure sense of place and purpose.

Sattva, in this context, is a state of conscious living, a superimposed quality that informs both action and inaction. It is nurtured by:

POLYVAGAL THEORY AND TRIGUṆA: INTEGRATING NEUROSCIENCE AND AYURVEDA IN THE CONTEXT OF SAFETY, AUTONOMIC REGULATION, AND CONSCIOUS LIVING - REVIEW

- Compassionate engagement with others
- Alignment with natural cycles
- Mindful self-development and ethical intention

The practice of loving-kindness (*maitrī*) becomes both a behavioral and neurological intervention, activating the social engagement system and reinforcing the experience of safety.

Sattva in Nutrition: A Reappraisal of the Sattvic Diet

Sattva is also reflected in dietary practices. Ayurveda regards food as sacred, and dietary choices as central to mental and emotional balance.

It is essential to clarify a common misconception: no plant or animal is inherently “bad” or “impure.” All beings exist according to their dharma and, therefore, under the sattvic umbrella, unless altered by external influence.

Plants, in particular, express Sattva by fulfilling their biological purpose. Their energetic effects on the mind and body may be rajasic (stimulating) or tamasic (grounding), but their intrinsic nature remains sattvic.

Examples:

- Root vegetables and mushrooms are sattvic by nature and tamasic in effect, soothing the nervous system and balancing Vata, particularly in autumn and winter.
- Nightshades, onions, garlic, and chilli are sattvic by nature, yet rajasic in effect, stimulating mental and digestive functions.

When consumed with respect to time, season, and individual constitution, these foods support sattvic living. It is not Ayurvedically accurate to categorically reject tamasic foods such as mushrooms; rather, they may serve therapeutic roles under appropriate circumstances.

Physiological Implications and Ethical Living

A sattvic lifestyle, through food, routine, and conduct, supports the unobstructed flow of *shrotas* (channels) that distribute nutrients, oxygen, hormones, and *prāṇa* throughout the body. Unobstructed flow promotes self-regulation, or self-healing.

Ayurveda advocates for living in harmony with nature, a path of dharma where humans assume their rightful role as stewards of the earth and co-creators of balance.

Unlike humans, all of nature functions according to Sattva by default. Animals, plants, and ecosystems operate as designed by Mother Nature and thus maintain their sattvic essence. This essence can be maintained in culinary context if treated with respect and reverence.

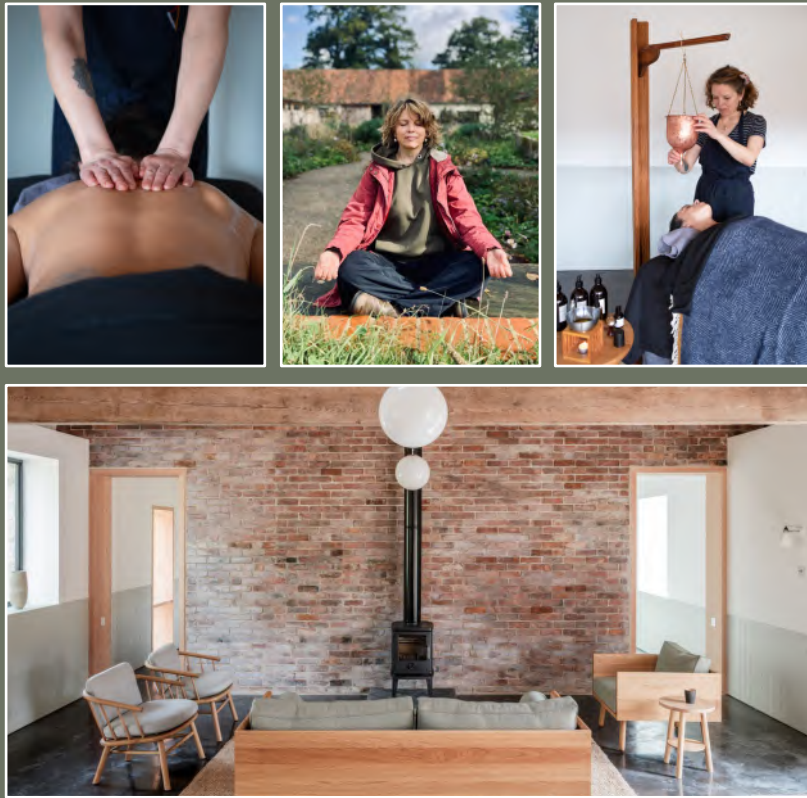
Conclusion

Polyvagal Theory and Triguna Theory, while originating from vastly different traditions, converge in their recognition of a higher regulatory principle that governs well-being. Whether framed as Safety or Sattva, this principle ensures that our drives, whether toward action or inaction, remain adaptive, connected, and life-affirming.

Sattva is not an absolute state but a dynamic overlay, a lens through which we engage with life meaningfully. It is cultivated through daily rhythms, ethical intention, loving-kindness, and harmonious alignment with nature.

In this way, modern neurobiology and ancient wisdom together offer a roadmap for healing, resilience, and conscious living.

JIVITA AYURVEDA RESIDENTIAL RETREATS IN DORSET



Jivita Ayurveda Residential Retreats in Dorset - now 10% discount for APA members.

Our Wraxall Yard Clinic opens annually for individually designed retreats which vary from 3 to 10 days depending on health needs.

Our retreats are all inclusive: food, treatments, herbs and other activities such as yoga, pranayama and meditation, visits to seaside with sauna option, nature walks, talks and musical evening events.

Full panchakarma, the Ayurvedic signature detox program requires the stay of full 10 days in addition to preparation and aftercare.

Consider our retreats like a stay in a healing hospital. The aim is to eradicate imbalances and rejuvenate by honouring body clocks with timing and seasonality.

Prices per day from £400 - £550 in twin sharing, twin en-suite, double sharing, double en-suite.

Clients have an option to bring a minder, friend or a family member who does not participate in the detox programs and who does or does not take part in the selection of activities during the retreat.

The pricing of such cases is determined case by case.

Contact: info@jivitaayurveda.com

or call 0203 181 0178

ASHOKA (SARACA ASOCA) IN AYURVEDA

BY ANDREW MASON



Ashoka (*Saraca asoca*) bark

Introduction to Ashoka:

Ashoka is a popular Ayurvedic herb, its name derives from Sanskrit, meaning *without sorrow*. This name reflects its association with happiness, well-being and contentment. Other popular names for Ashoka include: Asok (Hindi), Ashokam (Sanskrit), Ashok (Tamil and Malayalam) and Sorrowless Tree (English).

This tree is also called Sita Ashoka, with reference to the popular Indian classics *The Ramayana*. In this work, the Ashoka tree is central to the narrative of Sita, wife of Lord Rama. After being abducted by King Ravana (ruler of Lanka), Sita is held captive in the Ashoka Vatika, a beautiful floral grove upon the island. In some Ramayana retellings, Sita is said to have prayed under an Ashoka tree, and its shade offered her divine protection. This association has reinforced the tree as a symbol of sanctity.

In India, the Ashoka tree is considered a symbol of femininity purity and healing, making it a feature of many cultural as well as religious narratives. For example, Kamadeva, the Hindu god of love, is similarly associated with the tree, particularly its vibrant flowers and lush foliage, as is the Goddesses Parvati and Lakshmi, both symbols of love, prosperity, and feminine divine energy. These associations with Deva make the tree a favoured, decorative as well as medicinal resource, one that frequently finds itself occupying a place of prominence in temples, public gardens, and even the home.

In the Vedic tradition, the Ashoka tree is one of five sacred trees, known as Pancha-Vriksha, the other four being Peepal (*Ficus religiosa*), Banyan (*Ficus benghalensis*), Neem (*Azadirachta indica*) and Mango (*Mangifera indica*).

Buddhist tradition



In the Buddhist tradition, Ashoka has some prominence, firstly in its direct relationship to Gautama Buddha.

According to tradition, Queen Maya (mother to Siddhartha Gautama), gave birth to him and the tree's association with this sacred event, automatically elevated its spiritual status.

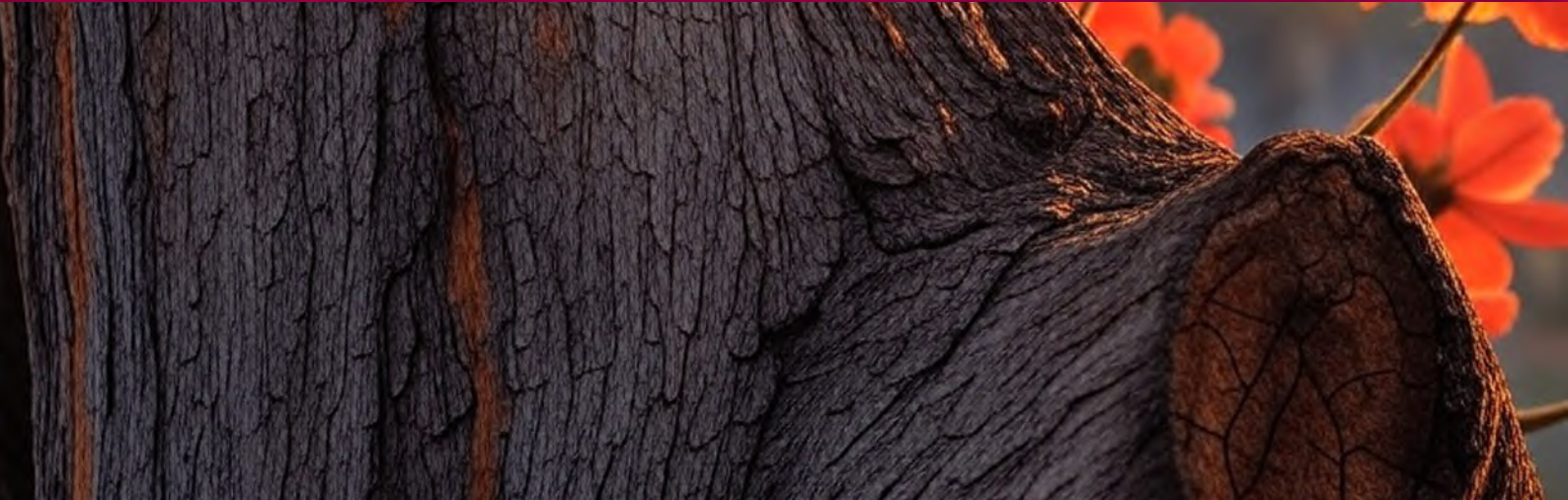
Later, the 3rd century BCE Mauryan ruler, Emperor Ashoka, took the name of this sacred tree. Ashoka, initially a renowned warrior king, turned to Buddhist after witnessing the ongoing horrors of war. His name, also aligns with the symbolism of the Ashoka tree. Interestingly and enduringly, the Ashoka Chakra or 24-spoked wheel, is today the central motif on the Indian National Flag, and therefore indirectly linked to the tree, as well as Ashoka's legacy of peace and non-violence.

Location and Habitat:

This tree is a small to medium-sized evergreen, prized for its vibrant reddish-yellow flowers and lush foliage. Typically it grows to around 7-12

ASHOKA (SARACA ASOCA) IN AYURVEDA

BY ANDREW MASON



Ashoka (*Saraca asoca*) bark

meters (23–40 feet) in height, although under exceptional conditions it can reach heights of up to 15 meters. It has a moderately spreading canopy which forms a somewhat rounded, dense crown. This tree is indigenous to the Indian subcontinent, including Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, and Myanmar. It is to be found in the Western and Eastern Ghats, as well as the foothills of the Himalayas. It thrives in tropical and subtropical climates with high humidity and has a moderate growth rate, taking 5–10 years to reach full maturity. Ashoka trees can live for 50–100 years and under more favourable conditions, even longer.

The fruit pods of Ashoka are flat and leathery, about 15–25 cm long and containing between 4–8 seeds. These turn purplish-black when mature, splitting releasing the seeds within. Its highly prized reddish-brown bark, is smoother when young, but roughens as the tree ages.

Historical usage:

Ashoka has a long evolution in traditional medicine, having been considered as an important medicinal resource. Its synonyms include:

Raktapallavaka, *Madhupushpa*, *Hemapushpa* and *Pindipushpa*. All parts of the tree were considered medical, ie: its bark, leaves, flowers, and seeds, however it is the bark that is used in Ayurvedic and (southern) Siddha medicine.

Its bark is firmly associated with as having an affinity with gynaecological disorders, digestive issues, and skin conditions. The bark contains a number of bioactive compounds like flavonoids, glycosides and tannins. It mainly balances Pitta (P) and Kapha (K), while its drying and astringent properties can slightly aggravate Vata (V).

Main uses of Ashoka in Ayurveda medicine:

- **Menstrual disorders:** Ashoka is widely used to regulate menstrual cycles, alleviate heavy bleeding (menorrhagia), and reduce pain during menstruation (dysmenorrhea). It is considered a powerful uterine tonic.
- **Menopausal symptoms:** It helps manage symptoms like hot flashes, mood swings, and hormonal imbalances during menopause due to its cooling and balancing properties.
- **Uterine conditions:** Ashoka is used to treat uterine conditions such as fibroids, endometriosis, and leukorrhea (excessive white discharge), by promoting uterine muscle tone while reducing inflammation.
- **Improves fertility:** It is believed to enhance reproductive health and support fertility by balancing hormones and improving ovarian functionality.

ASHOKA (SARACA ASOCA) IN AYURVEDA

BY ANDREW MASON



Flowers of the Ashoka tree

- Improves digestive health: Ashoka aids in managing digestive issues like diarrhoea, dysentery, and piles due to its astringent and anti-inflammatory properties.
- Skin disorders: It's antimicrobial and anti-inflammatory effects are used to treat skin conditions such as acne, eczema, and wounds, often applied topically.
- Heart tonic: Ashoka is used to support heart health by improving blood circulation and reducing symptoms of oedema (swelling).
- Stress relief: As a calming herb, it helps reduce stress, anxiety, and nervous disorders, while promoting mental well-being.

Ayurvedic categorisation of Ashoka:

Rasa: astringent and bitter

Guna: light and drying

Virya: cold in potency

Vipaka: pungent

Karma: Ashoka is astringent, reducing bleeding or discharges. As a blood purifier it strengthens the uterus, is pain-relieving and has excellent anti-inflammatory actions.

Prabhava: Ashoka has a specific affinity with the female reproductive system, acting as a uterine tonic and hormone balancer, both are considered a unique therapeutic effect of this plant.

Popular Ayurvedic formulations using Ashoka

Ashoka appears in a number of popular Ayurvedic formulations. Some popular Ayurvedic preparations include:

- Ashokaristha
- Chandraprabha Vati
- Pushyanuga Churna
- Supari Pak
- Patrangasava



Mythological Ashoka Vatika



UP-AND-COMING APA WEBINARS - THIS AUTUMN

ABOUT THE SPEAKERS

Speaker: Sunita Passi

Date: 16th September 6-7pm

Title of Talk: Build Confidence & Clarity: Online Breathwork for Ayurvedic Practitioners

Sunita is an Ayurvedic Practitioner and Holistic Wellness Expert with over two decades of experience in the transformative world of traditional healing. Throughout her journey, she had the privilege of training hundreds of wellness professionals worldwide. Through her brand, Tri-Dosha, she brings authentic Ayurvedic education, products, and services. She is the author of *The Doctor Won't See You Now*, a guide to maintaining health and well-being in today's fast-paced world.

<https://sunitapassi.com/>

Speaker: Nidhi Bhanshali Pandya

Date: 16th October 6-7pm

Title of Talk: Inflammation aka Internal Global Warming

Nidhi Bhanshali Pandya, a NAMA-certified Ayurvedic Doctor, is known for her modern approach. A faculty member at the Shakti School of Ayurveda, she offers Ayurvedic Nutrition courses on OneCommune.com, a video platform with over 3.5 billion views on TikTok. She has written for Ayurveda & Health Tourism, MindBodyGreen.com, and speaks at major corporations like Google and is based in New York.

www.nidhi.me

Speaker: Cyrus Willmott

Date: 29th October 6-7pm

Title of Talk: Ayurveda and the Psychedelic Renaissance

Cyrus Willmott is a researcher-practitioner of Ayurvedic Medicine and a PhD candidate at the University of Exeter. Currently, his research explores the integration of Ayurvedic Medicine with psychedelics, applying its ontological framework to psychedelic preparation, integration, and the psychedelic experience itself. Employing an interdisciplinary approach – incorporating peripheral biomarkers, neuroimaging, and phenomenology – he aims to bring a holistic perspective to this emerging field.

Speaker: Dr. John Douillard

Date: 13th November 6-7pm

Title of Talk: Potential subject: Wheat and healing intolerances

Dr. Douillard, DC, CAP, is a globally recognized leader in the fields of Ayurveda, natural health, nutrition, and sports medicine. With 40 years of experience, he has helped over 100,000 patients as director of the LifeSpa Clinic (Boulder, CO Holistic Wellness Center of the Year 2013). Dr. John is a renowned Ayurvedic educator, host of the Ayurveda Meets Modern Science podcast, and bestselling author of seven health books, including *Eat Wheat and 3-Season Diet*. He is the creator of LifeSpa.com, where he proves ancient Ayurvedic wisdom with modern science in articles published weekly. With its thousands of free educational articles and videos, LifeSpa.com is the leading Ayurvedic health resource on the web with 500,000+ social followers and newsletter readers.

ABOUT THE SPEAKERS

Speaker: Dr. Deepa Apte

Date: 27th November 6-7pm

Title of Talk: Ojas: Diagnosis, Clinical Application, and Its Vital Role in Ayurvedic Healing

Dr. Apte has over 25 years of experience and has helped countless patients achieve long-term health and balance through her Ayurvedic consultations and therapies. Her expertise includes:

- Ayurvedic diagnostics and pulse reading
- Holistic treatment plans for chronic health conditions

Dr. Apte has been honoured with multiple awards for her contributions to Ayurveda and holistic health. She has also authored several articles and books on Ayurveda and yoga. Dr. Deepa is the lead lecturer and director at Ayurveda Pura Academy, a renowned institute offering internationally accredited training in Ayurveda, yoga, and holistic therapies.

Speaker: Dr. Vara Lakshmi

Date: 9th December 6-7pm

Title of Talk: Unravelling Pancha Vata's role in multiorgan systems: Managing Modern Morbidities with Vata Centric protocols

Dr. Varalakshmi Yanamandra, an esteemed figure in the Ayurvedic community, was born and raised in India and has since made her home in Birmingham, UK. Her expertise has evolved to encompass her role as a distinguished Gut and Hormonal Wellbeing Coach. Dr. Yanamandra has conducted extensive work on modern lifestyle disorders, earning renown for her skilful application of Ayurvedic principles in treating contemporary morbidities. Her approach has successfully reversed conditions such as diabetes and chronic inflammation, demonstrating her ability to integrate traditional knowledge with modern health challenges.



An urgent call for contributions to this magazine.

The APA Magazine aims to reach you every 2 months and this requires a lot of work and more importantly - articles. If you think you have an interesting case study, book review, research paper or recipes that others would enjoy, please send it to us.

Other topics of interest include: favourite Ayurvedic herbs and why you like them, book promotion, jokes and amusing stories.

Please send your articles to: info@apa.uk.com



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