

A CRITICAL REVIEW ON DOSHA STHANA AND ITS IMPLICATIONS

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ABSTRACT

Even though the *dosha* are stated to be present all over the body , each *dosha* has its own highly specific abode and other general sites .Each site has its own specifications and is important while performing treatment .The importance of understanding ‘*Dosha sthana*’ or site specifications comes into the need during ‘*sthani-agantu*’ *dosha chikitsa* . *Amashaya* and *pakvashaya* are considered as the site of origin or *udbhava sthana* of most of the diseases .This is based on its significance in treatment, as *dosha nirharana* is done either through anal or oral route. Undersanding *dosha sthana* and its implications, throw light into the pathogenesis and planning of treatment. In this regard, detailed information on *dosha sthana* was collected from various authoritative treatises, publications and electronic media and was critically analyzed for its applied aspects.

Keywords: *Dosha sthana*, implication, specific abode , general site ,pathogenesis, treatment

INTRODUCTION

Dosha are on constant move all over the body. They are qualitative and functional, replicating the health status of an individual. Each *dosha* has its own highly specific abode or ‘*vishesha sthana*’ and other general sites or ‘*samana sthana*’. The importance of understanding ‘*Dosha sthana*’ comes into the need during the treatment of

‘*sthani-agantu*’ *dosha* (localized and external). The knowledge of the sites will hint the physician to do the *dosha nirharana* (removal) through the nearest route while performing the treatment.

VATA STHANA

TABLE-1: LOCATIONS OF VATA

| ASTANGA HRUDAYA (Sutrashatha .12) | ASTANGA SANGRAHA (Sutrasthana.20) | CHARAKA SAMHITA (Sutrasthana.20) | SUSHRUTA SAMHITA (Sutrasthana.21) |
|---|---|--|---|
| <i>Pakvashaya</i> | <i>Paadau</i> | <i>Paada</i> | <i>Pakvashaya, guda</i> |
| <i>Kati</i> | <i>Pakvashaya</i> | <i>Pakvashaya</i> | <i>Shroni(kati)</i> |
| <i>Sakthi</i> | <i>Kati</i> | <i>Kati</i> | <i>Adho nabhi</i> |
| <i>Asthi</i> | <i>Sakthi</i> | <i>Sakthi</i> | - |

| | | | |
|------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|---|
| <i>Srothra</i> | <i>Asthi</i> | <i>Asthi</i> | - |
| <i>Sparshanendriya</i> | <i>Srothra</i> | <i>Basti</i> | - |
| | <i>Sparshanendriya</i> | <i>Purishadhanam</i> | - |

Among the various sites of *Vata dosha*, *pakvashaya* is considered to be the ‘*vishesha sthana*’(specific site). This is a place below *nabhi* where digested food is stored. ^[1]

Though *vata* is present in the whole body in various forms like *prana* etc, *pakvashaya* is said as its specific site because mostly *vatika* disorders are rooted here, are difficult to treat if located here and if *vata* is overcome at this place, it would pacify all *vatika* disorders.

The *purishadhana* mentioned by *Acharya Charaka* is interpreted as *Pakvashaya* by *Acharya Chakrapani*. It is rather to be considered as a portion of intestine where *purishadhara kala* is located. ^[2] This is the place where *Vata guna*(qualities of *vata*) get nourished by the *katu avasthapaka*. In the diseases caused due to the abnormal *Vata dosha*, *basti chikitsa* proves very helpful as they help in purifying the foremost site of *Vata dosha*. ^[3]

‘*Asthi*’ is the *ashraya* (abode) of *Vata dosha*. The factors which lead to the aggravation or alleviation of the *asraya* or the *asrayi* (dependent) will affect the other in the similar manner. In the case of *Vata*, this rule applies reversely. ^[4] The drugs which control the *Vata* will increase its *ashraya*, ie. *asthi*, and those which aggravate *Vata* will decrease the *asthi* because *asthi vridhhi* (increase of *asthi*) is possible only by *santarpana* (nourishing therapy), which in turn is *Vatahara* (decreases *vata*) and *shleshma vardhaka* (increases *shleshma*). *Asthi kshaya* occurs through *apatarpana* (depleting therapy) which is *Vata vardhaka* and *shleshma hara*.

The functional mechanism of *srothra* (ears) and *sparshanendriya* (skin) are mediated in fact by air currents. As *Vata* is evolved with the predominance of *Akasha* and *Vayu bhutas*, it is stated to be mainly related with auditory and tactile functions. *Gangadhara* explains that though the root cause of the sound is *akasha*, the full manifestation of sound is not, however, due to it. It is the *vata dosha*, intimately associated with *akasha* that produces the manifested sound which we can hear. ^[5]

Both skin and nervous system are common embryologic derivatives ie. ectodermal origin. In embryological terms, the skin is a modified nervous system. This explains its close relation to *Vata dosha* and thus *Taila abhyanga* (oil massage) over the skin which is *vatahara*, appears logical.

In this context, considering one of the features of *Vata kshaya* i.e. *mudasangnyata/alpasangnyata*, which may be related to the altered/decreased tactile sensation with respect to skin. ^[6] By this we can infer that, the *Vata dosha* is responsible for tactile sensation, especially the *Vyana Vata* which is present throughout the body and is responsible for all physiological functions in the body. So, by mentioning ‘*Sparshanendriyam*’ as one of the *sthana* of *Vata dosha*, the sensory functions of skin have been allotted to *Vata dosha*.

Wherever there is nerve plexus (a bunch of nerve root origins chained together), *Vata* dominance can be appreciated there. At the region of *Kati* (waist), there is lumbar nerve plexus, from where, nerves arise and spread

to both legs. With this, *Vata* controls all the sensory and motor actions of the legs.

The location of *Vata* is stated as upper part of ‘*mastishka*’ as per *veda*.^[7] It is indeed justifiable to cross refer the definition of ‘*shiras*’ (head) by *Charaka* i.e. “*yatra aashritaaha sarvendriyani cha*”-the seat of all senses.^[8] *Shiras* is stated as *moola* (root cause) for *vijnana* (knowledge) in *Bhela Samhita*.^[9]

According to *Hatayoga pradeepika*, *Vata* masters *manas* (mind), which in turn governs the *indriyas* (sense organs).^[10] *Bhela* stated that *manas* is located in between *shiras* and *talū* (palate).^[11] Overlooking these two statements, it is no wrong to consider *shiras* as a *sthana* of *Vata*.

Though the properties of *Vata* are *rookshadi* (dry etc) *guna*, *mastishka* or *mastulunga majja* (brain) resembles partly melted ghee.^[12] The brain is mainly rich in proteins and lipids which have opposite nature to *Vata*. The *ashrayi Vata* is dominant of *akasha* and *vayu bhuta*, while *ashraya*, reflect *prithvi* and *aap bhuta*. When this balance is lost by the excess consumption of *rookshadi guna*, *Vata* gets vitiated. So it can be derived that, for the proper functioning of *Vata*, its seat should have *snigdhadi guna*, based on *ashraya ashrayi bhava*.^[13]

PITTA STHANA

TABLE-2: LOCATIONS OF PITTA

| ASTANGA HRUDAYA | ASTANGA SANGRAHA | CHARAKA SAMHITA | SUSHRUTA SAMHITA |
|------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|----------------------------|
| <i>Nabhi</i> | <i>Nabhi</i> | <i>Amashaya</i> | <i>Pakvashayamadthagam</i> |
| <i>Amashaya</i> | <i>Amashaya</i> | <i>Sveda</i> | - |
| <i>Sveda lasika</i> | <i>Sveda lasika</i> | <i>Lasika Rudhiram</i> | - |
| <i>Rudhiram</i> | <i>Rudhiram</i> | <i>Rasa</i> | - |
| <i>Rasa</i> | <i>Chakshu</i> | - | - |
| <i>Druk</i> | <i>Sparshanam</i> | - | - |
| <i>Sparshanam</i> | - | - | - |

Nabhi, the *vishesha sthana*, is considered as a landmark to describe the sites of various organs. *Acharya Charaka* has described *amashaya* as a place situated between *nabhi* and *sthana*, where four varieties of food are digested.^[14] In consideration with *amashaya*, *Chakrapani* stated that it has two divisions as *urdhwa* (upper) and *adho* (lower) *amashaya*, among which the latter is the seat of *Pitta*.^[15] *Hemadri* considered ‘*amashaya*’ as an organ situated above *nabhi* with *amapakwa anna* (partly digested food).^[16] No specific anatomical demarcation has been mentioned regarding *pak-*

vashaya. The word ‘*amashaya*’ denotes seat of *ama* / partly digested food i.e. stomach. The ‘*pakwashaya*’ should be then taken as the place where digestion is completed i.e. the receptacle of fully digested food or the small intestines. Thus ‘*nabhi*’ is a landmark around which functions of digestion and absorption takes place. *Vagbhata* laid importance on *nabhi* to denote the completion of digestion in the intestine and the longer time taken for it. *Nabhi* is one among *dasha prayathana* (ten seats of *prana*) and is a *sadyapranahara marma* which is *agneya* (predominant of *agni*).^[17,18]

Acharya Charaka considered *amashaya* as the *vishesha sthana* of *Pitta*, perhaps because the digestion of food is initiated here. The diseases like *amlapitta* and *parinama shoola* are closely associated with *amla avasthapaka* (second phase dominated by *amla*) of digestion. Gangadhara says it as the specific site because *pachaka pitta*, *ranjaka pitta* and *bhrajaka pitta* are located here and once *Pitta* is overcome at this place, it becomes easier to control *paittika* disorders.^[19]

Sveda (Sweat) is one of the mechanisms for thermoregulation. *Pitta (bhrajaka pitta)* is responsible for maintenance of *ushma*. *Lasika* is *jala sadrusha* (similar to water) considered as *rasa mala* and is seated in skin.^[20] It is regarded as the *sneha* (unctuousness) of *twak* , according to *Indu* .^[21] The fluid that resides between *twak* and *mamsa* is *lasika*.^[22] It is expressed through skin in case of *vrana* (abrasion) [²³]. It is a part of *rakta* only which is the *ashraya* of *Pitta*.

Pitta exhibits *ashraya ashrayi* relation with *rakta*. The pathogenesis of *raktapitta* well explains this fact. *Rasa* is the nutrient part of food which is carried all over the body by *vyana vata*. According to the places pervad-

ed by it, all kinds of *Pitta* come under its out of reach especially *sadhaka pitta* which is located *hrudaya*.

The eyes are dominant of *agni bhuta* and perceives *rupa* .This is carried out by *alochaka Pitta*, one of the sub types .^[24] By ‘*sparshanam*’ as *Pitta sthana* ,the skin colour and the entities responsible for the pigmentation have been emphasized. E.g., melanin, melanoid, carotene etc. One of the *lakshana* of *Pitta kshaya*, *nishprabatha/prabhahani* (loss of complexion) indicates the presence of *Pitta* in skin and its physiological function there is colouring/ pigmentation, which is carried out by *bhrajaka Pitta*.^[25] For this function, *vata* is also necessary which can be understood by the word ‘*varna*’(complexion) in the verse related to function of *udana vata*.^[26]

Twak has been mentioned as the *sthana* for both *Vata* and *Pitta*. Under *Vata* ,it should be read as the neurological component and under the latter, it should be understood as the metabolic aspect (*bhrajaka pitta*) which helps in assimilation and metabolism of topical drugs and provides pigmentation to skin.

KAPHA STHANA

TABLE-3: LOCATIONS OF KAPHA

| ASTANGA HRUDAYA | ASTANGA SANGRAHA | CHARAKA SAMHITA | SUSHRUTA SAMHITA |
|------------------------|------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| <i>Urah</i> | <i>Urah</i> | <i>Urah</i> | <i>Amashaya</i> |
| <i>Kanta</i> | <i>Kanta</i> | <i>Shiras</i> | <i>Urah</i> |
| <i>Shira</i> | <i>Shira</i> | <i>Parvani</i> | <i>Shira</i> |
| <i>Kloma</i> | <i>Kloma</i> | <i>Amashaya</i> | <i>Kanta</i> |
| <i>Parvani(sandhi)</i> | <i>Parvani</i> | <i>Medas</i> | <i>Jihwamula</i> |
| <i>Amashaya</i> | <i>Amashaya</i> | - | <i>sandhi</i> |
| <i>Rasa</i> | <i>Rasa</i> | - | - |
| <i>meda</i> | <i>meda</i> | - | - |
| <i>Ghranam</i> | <i>Ghranam</i> | - | - |

| | | | |
|-------|-------|---|---|
| jihva | jihva | - | - |
|-------|-------|---|---|

Uras is the seat of *avalambaka kapha* (a sub type of *kapha dosha*) which supports the other sites of *kapha* by its *ambukarma*.^[27] Hence it is considered as the main seat of *kapha* by *Acharya Vagbhata*. According to *Gangadhara*, *uras* is said to be the specific site because *kledaka, avalambaka* and *sleshaka kapha* are located here, and if *kapha* is overcome there, it is easy to control all disorders of *kapha*.^[28]

Amashaya is the *vishesha sthana* according to *Acharya Sushruta*, because he specified that *kledaka kapha* situated in *amashaya* supports the other *kapha sthana* by *ambukarma*.^[29] *Amashaya* is the receiving base of four types of food, situated above *pit-tashaya*, thus counterbalances the ascending heat. *Charaka* has specified *amashaya* as *sthana* for both *Kapha* and *Pitta*. But *Chakrapani* clarifies *urdhwa amashaya* as site of *Kapha* and *adho amashaya* as *Pitta sthana*.^[30]

Kloma being *mulasthan* (site of origin) of *udakavaha srotas* is a *mamsagrandhi* (muscular structure) situated in the right side of *Hrudaya*. According to *Chakrapani*, *Kloma* is the *pipasa sthana* (thirst centre) situated in *hrudaya*.^[31] *Kloma* is controversial as various organs like trachea,^[32] right lung^[33], pancreas^[34], adrenal gland^[35] and thirst centre come into the scenario referring along classics.

Jihwa (tongue) is also considered as a *kapha sthana*. The *saumyatva* (watery) of *sleshma* helps in the perception of *rasa* by *jihwa*. *Bodhaka Kapha* located in *jihwa* helps in taste perception.^[36]

Meda is considered as one among the different *sthana* of *Kapha dosha*. In the concept

of *ashraya-ashrayee bhava*, *meda* is considered as the *ashraya* for *Kapha*. In the *prameha samprapti* (pathogenesis), the *bahudrava sleshma* (*sleshma* dominated by *drava guna*) vitiates *meda* first due to *samana* (similar) *guna*.^[37] In relation to skin, *medas* can be considered as the adipose tissue of skin/below skin. *Sweda* is the mala of *medo dhatu*. In skin it can be taken as the secretions of eccrine glands. Eccrine glands secrete sweat when the external temperature is more and evaporation of sweat will help in lowering the body temperature. This can be proved by taking the example of *Kapha kshaya lakshana* in which *roukshyata* (dryness) is one of the feature which means there is absence/decrease of *jala mahabuta*.^[38] Secretion of sweat helps in regulation of body temperature and water balance, which exactly matches with function of *sweda* i.e. '*kleda vidhriti*' (maintains *kleda*).^[39]

Kapha is *ashrayi* in *Rasa dhatu*. The *rasa vrudhi lakshana* are similar to *sleshma vridhi*.^[40] *Vagbhata* has also stated that among the seven *dhatu, rasa, mamsa, meda, majja, shukra* and the mala except *sweda* are the seats of *Kapha*.^[41]

In *shiras*, *Tarpaka kapha* is located, which does nourishment of all *indriya*.^[42] *Kapha* being binding in nature, joins together various structures of the body, particularly the joints where *Sleshaka Kapha* is located.^[43] *Ghrana* being a *malayana*, is prone to external afflictions. *Kapha* by its *sneha* (unctuousness) and *bandhana* properties doesn't allow in passage of external pollutants. *Acharya Kasyapa* included *Baahu* and *Hrudaya* in special seats of this humor.^[44]

DISCUSSION

The *mahasrotas* in Ayurveda include *amashaya*, *pachyamanashaya* and *pakwashaya*. This is in direct relation to the developing gut tube, which includes a proximal foregut which receives and stores the food in a pre-digestive phase, a midgut where the main digestive functions occur and a terminal hindgut where the completion of absorption takes place with waste formation. Thus the foregut can be considered as the *Kapha sthana*, midgut the *Pitta sthana* and hindgut the *Vata sthana*.

Among the various treatment modalities practiced for vitiation of *Vata*, the *basti* is regarded par excellence for the cure of *Vata*, as it enters *pakvashaya* and strikes the *moolasthan* of disease. When *Vata* is subsided here, the vitiated *Vata* dwelling in other parts get subsided. This is why *basti* is being planned for most of the common clinical presentations like *gridhrasi* (sciatica), *kati shoola* (lumbar pain) etc.^[45] If in a person, *vayu* moves unimpaired and is *sthanastha* (present in own abode), then he lives long.^[46] The other *vatika* disorders apart from those mentioned in the text are determined based on the *sthana* (site) and *nama* (name). For eg, the disease *nakhabheda* takes place in the nail in the form of *bheda* or cracking.

The diseases like *agnimandya* (low digestive fire), *ajeerna* (indigestion) etc are associated with *amashaya* (*Pitta sthana*) with the involvement of *drava* and *snigdha guna* of *pitta*. *Prameha*, *kushta* and *Visarpa* involve the *lasika* which is a *pitta sthana* and the *guna* like *drava*, *sara* and *visra* come into play. *Sparshana* as a site is involved in *kushta*, *visarpa*, *mukha dooshika* etc with the *guna sneha*, *sara* and *drava*.

In *sannipataja jvara*, *Kapha sthana chikitsa* (treatment for site of *kapha*) is done first

, being *amashaya samutha vyadhi*.^[47] If *Vata* is located in *amashaya*, then first *rooksha sveda* (dry sudation) is done to treat the *sthanika dosha* (*Kapha*) followed by *snigdha sveda* (wet sudation).^[48] If *jvara* is dominated by *Kapha* and if this *Kapha* is located in *amashaya*, in a state of *utklesha* (increased state), then it should be removed by *vamana*. Emesis should be given only when the vitiated *dosha* come to *amashaya* from all over the body.^[49] In *madatyaya*, *vamana* is administered, targeting *kapha sthana*.^[50]

Importance of *Dosha sthana* can be understood by a familiar example. These days *prameha* is wrongly interpreted as Diabetes mellitus based on the increased sugar levels, and the patient is put on sugar free diet. This can turn a *kaphaja prameha* to *vataja prameha*. But here, treatment can be given by considering *prameha* as a *bastigata* (urinary bladder) *roga* and treat *apana sthana* by giving *mutrasangrahaneeya dravyas* (anti diuretics) which do *kleda shoshana*.

The *dosha* belonging to a particular place is *Sthani dosha*, while the one which invades becomes the *agantu dosha*. The treatment in such cases depends on the power of *sthani* and *agantu dosha*. It is for the physician to determine the *dosha* which is stronger and treat it first. If both are equally strong then the *sthani dosha* is given importance.^[51]

Among the sixty three *dosha vikalpa*, when the combination is characterized by one *vruddhi*, one *kshaya* and one *sama avastha* of *dosha*, *ashaya apakarsha* takes place.^[52] For eg. When *pitta* is normal, *vata* increased and *kapha* decreased, the *vata* expels normal *pitta* to other places of the body producing *bheda* (cutting), *daha* (burning sensation) etc.^[53] When normal *pitta* gets displaced to other sites, it gets added up to the *pitta* orig-

inally located in the site ,which results in *pittaja* symptom like *daha*. Acharya Chakrapani also explained the same in another way. When *dosha* in normal condition, comes in contact with vitiated one, the former also behaves like vitiated *dosha* .^[54]

CONCLUSION

Dosha are functional entities present all over the body. Still they are attributed with specific sites with giving due importance to treatment. The *sthani-agantu dosha chikitsa* is based on *dosha sthana*. When a *dosha* changes its place and comes to the site of another *dosha*, it is to be treated based on the lines of treatment for the latter . When vitiated *pitta* comes to the site of *kapha*, then it becomes an object of *vamana* owing to its contact with *kapha*.

Amashaya and *pakvashashaya* are considered as the site of origin or *udbhava sthana* of most of the diseases. This is based on its significance in treatment, as *dosha nirharana* is done either through anal or oral route. Undersanding *dosha sthana* and its implications, throw light into the pathogenesis and planning of treatment.

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