

## A CONCEPTUAL STUDY OF SROTAS AND THEIR MOOLASTHĀNA

Subodh Verma<sup>1</sup>, Hemant Kumar Rai<sup>2</sup>, Garima Sachan<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>M.D. Scholar; <sup>2</sup>Professor & Head; <sup>3</sup>M.D. Scholar;

P.G. Department of Rachana Sharir, State Ayurvedic College & Hospital, Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh, India

Email: [144subodhverma@gmail.com](mailto:144subodhverma@gmail.com)

### ABSTRACT

*Śarīra* is formed by innumerable number of *Pramāṇu*, which are in present time considered as cells. For the existence of life, the three elements i.e. *Prāṇa*, *Udaka* and *Anna* are very important, body which is constituted by the seven *Dhātus* and the end products formed in the body due to catabolism of *Dhātus* i.e. *Mūtra*, *Purīṣa* and *Sveda*, which all are 13 in number and so *Ācāryās* have also described thirteen types of *Srotas* carrying each of them. *Moola* of *Srotas* is anatomical base of the respective *Srotas*, the main seat of pathology of that channel (*Srotas*) or the principal seat of manifestation of disease. The *Moola* of *Srotas* as described by *Ācāryās* is different. There are four kinds of *Srotoduṣṭi* (abnormalities of *Srotas* system) may occur either individually or in combination. Without *Srotoduṣṭi* (histopathology) no disease occurs; every disease is nothing but the result of *Dhātuvaīśamyā* and *Dhātuvaīśamyā* includes *Srotoduṣṭi* (histopathology). *Moola* of *Srotas* is: i) root of *Srotas* (origin or collecting place), ii) conducting parts, iii) the main seat of pathology of that channel or iv) the principal seat of manifestation of disease after the vitiation of that particular *Srotas*.

**Keywords:** *Srotas*, *Moola*, *Pramāṇu*, *Dhātu*, Channels

### INTRODUCTION

*Maharṣi Caraka* has acknowledged in '*Śarīrasthāna*' that *Śarīra* is formed by innumerable number of *Pramāṇu*. Cells receive their nutrition and give up their waste in extracellular fluids during the maintaining of life at their vicinity. This process takes place through micro-channels, presents at their walls that are termed as *Sūkshma* and innumerable *Srotas* by *Ācāryās* in *Āyurvedic Saṃhitā*.

*Maharṣi Caraka* described the concept of *Srotas* in the 5<sup>th</sup> chapter of *Vimān Sthāna*. He defined that "*Srotas*" are the channels which carry transformed *Dhātu*<sup>1</sup>. These communicating channels work especially for the temporary *Dhātu* which is to be utilized for formation of permanent *Dhātu*. These channels also carry *Prāṇa*, *Udaka*, *Anna* and also three types of *Mala*. *Maharṣi Suśruta* has also explained the concept of *Srotas* in the 9<sup>th</sup> chapter of *Śarīra Sthāna*. He described that "*Srotas* are the hollow channel, except *Sirā* and *Dhamanī*, which originating from root space spreads in the body and carries specific entities"<sup>2</sup>.

*Moola* of *Srotas* is anatomical seat of the respective *Srotas*, the main seat of pathology of that channel or the principal seat of manifestation of diseases.

The body which is constituted by the seven *Dhātus* and the end products formed in the body due to catabolism of *Dhātus* i.e. *Mūtra*, *Purīṣa* and *Sveda*, which all are 13 in number and so *Ācāryās* have also described thirteen types of *Srotas* carrying each of them<sup>3</sup>. *Maharṣi Suśruta* has on the other hand, described 11 types of *Yogavāhī Srotas*, in context of *Srotavidhalakṣhaṇa*. *Asthivaha*, *Majjāvaha* and *Svedavaha Srotas* have been left out by him, and the mode of approach in this case is that of the surgeons<sup>4</sup>. Our living body has a channel system that comprised of innumerable gross, subtle, biological and energetic channels which are designed as inner transporting system meant for many functions. *Maharṣi Caraka* cleared the view of numbers of *Srotas* present in the body that body, mind, spirit organization are as many as *Srotāmsi*<sup>5</sup>

The word *Srotas* is used for as generic term that indicates for all the micro and macro channels and pathways operating in the living organism. The word *Srotas* is derived from the *Samskṛt* root “*Sru-gatau*” (*Sru+tasi=Srotas*) which means moving, filtering, flowing, leaking, secreting etc<sup>6</sup>. *Maharṣi Caraka* has explained it as the structures through which *Sravaṇam Karma* i.e. flowing, moving, oozing and permeation of different constituents and nutrient of the body takes place<sup>7</sup>. After action of *Jathrāgni*, *Bhutāgni*, *Dhātvāgni* on food *Posya Dhātu* is formed which needs *Srotas* to reach every cell of body. *Cakrapāṇi* has explained that *Sravaṇāt* as means *Sravaṇam* of *Rasādipoṣya Dhātu*<sup>8</sup>.

*Srotas* is defined as the channels through which the regular conduction of the nutrients for the nourishment and production of *Dhātu* takes place. The vitiation, depletion and maintenance of existed bodily structures i.e. *Dhātu* are never possible without *Srotas*. *Maharṣi Suśruta* and *Vāgbhaṭa* both have compared *Srotas* to the very fine passages and pores present in the lotus stem, through which *Rasādipoṣya Dhātu* circulates all over the body and provide nutrition to the body<sup>9</sup>. Blood flow through *Sirā*, *Dhamanī* and *Nāḍī*, to provide nutrition to every cell and collect wastes from it, so *Maharṣi Caraka* has included these words in place of synonym of *Srotas*.

*Maharṣi Caraka* has given many words for the *Srotas* that all indicating macro and micro channels and pathway operating in the living body. Following are the synonyms- *Sirā* (vein), *Dhamanī* (Arteries), *Rasāyanī* (lymphatics), *Rasvāhinī* (capillaries), *Nāḍī* (Ducts), *Pantha* (passages), *Mārga* (Tracts), *Śarīrachidrāṇi* (openings), *Samvrita-asamvrita* (open and blind passages), *Sthāna* (Sites, locus), *Āśayas* (Spaces), *Niketa* (Resorts), *Śarīradhātūvākṣlakṣhaṇa-alakṣhaṇa* (Visible and invisible spaces in the tissues and their cells).<sup>10</sup>

### Following are the *Srotas* with their *Moola*:

No.	Name of <i>Srotas</i>	( <i>Maharṣi Caraka</i> ) <sup>16</sup>	( <i>Maharṣi Suśruta</i> ) <sup>17</sup>
1	<i>Prāṇvaha</i>	<i>Hṛdya, MahaSrotas</i>	<i>Hṛdya, Rasvahini Dhamanī</i>
2	<i>Udakavaha</i>	<i>Tālu, Klom</i> (oropharynx)	<i>Tālu, Klom</i>
3	<i>Annavaha</i>	<i>Āmāśaya, Vamparshwa</i>	<i>Āmāśaya, Annavaḥa Dhamanī</i>
4	<i>Rasavaha</i>	<i>Hṛdya</i> (Heart), <i>Ten Dhamanī</i>	<i>Hṛdya, Rasvaha Dhamanī</i>
5	<i>Raktavaha</i>	<i>Yakṛt, Plīhā</i>	<i>Yakṛt, Plīhā, Raktvaha Dhamanī</i>
6	<i>Māmsavaha</i>	<i>Twacha</i> (Skin), <i>Snāyu</i>	<i>Tvacā, Snāyu, Raktavaha Dhamanī</i>
7	<i>Medovaha</i>	<i>Vṛkka, Vapavahan</i>	<i>Vṛkka, Kaḥī</i>
8	<i>Asthivaha</i>	<i>Meda, Jaghan</i>	Not consider
9	<i>Majjāvaha</i>	<i>Asthī, sandhi</i>	Not consider

*Srotāmsi* is derived from ‘*Sru Gatau*’ word + *Sruribhyam Sut + Cha*. Its meaning is to flow, to move<sup>11</sup>. It stands for channels, meatus openings through which the constant flowing process occurs. *Srotāmsi* of the body comprise of channels of different kinds. They may be classified as:

1. ***Sūkshma*** (Subtle) - Innumerable - As many as the life factor operating in the life process.

2. ***Sthūla*** (Gross) - Numerable - *Bahirmukha* (Aperture or natural opening) - 9 in male and 11 in female.

#### Characteristics of *Srotas*:

*Maharṣi Caraka* has defined the following features about the *Srotas*.<sup>12</sup>

\***Colour**- The colour of *Srotas* is to that of *Dhātu* they carry.

\***Size** - *Aṇu* (Atomic in size or microscopic), *Sthūla* (Gross or macroscopic).

\***Shape** – *Vṛtta* (cylindrical), *Dīrgha* (long), *Pratāna* (reticulated).

*Maharṣi Caraka* has defined 13 major gross *Srotāmsi* that are important for the normal functioning of the living body<sup>13</sup>, while *Maharṣi Suśruta* has defined 11 pair of *Srotas*<sup>14</sup>. *Sthūla Srotas* along with their *Moolam* have been described for the purpose of the study of pathology and clinical medicines.

***Moolam of Srotas***: *Cakrapāṇi* has described *Moola* of *Srotas* is anatomical seat of the respective *Srotas*, the main seat of pathology of that channel or the principal seat of manifestation of disease<sup>15</sup>. The cause of morbidity of *Srotāmsi* and their manifestation, pertaining disease has also been explained. The set of channels is apparently described as major seat of disease which can be clinically examined in a patient by physician for diagnostic purposes.

10	<i>Śukravaha</i>	<i>Vṛṣaṇa, Śepha</i> (Pudendum)	<i>Vṛṣaṇa, Stana</i>
11	<i>Mūtravaha</i>	<i>Vasti, Vankshaṇ</i>	<i>Vasti, Medhra</i>
12	<i>Puriṣavaha</i>	<i>Pakvāśya, Gudā</i>	<i>Pakvāśya, Gudā</i>
13	<i>Svedavaha</i>		Not consider
14	<i>Ārtavavaha</i>		<i>Garbhāśaya, Ārtavavaha dhamanī</i>
15	<i>Manovaha</i>	<i>Hṛdya</i> (Heart and Brain)	

### Function of Srotas:

- All the body structural entities are originated from *Srotas*.<sup>18</sup>
- *Srotas* maintain the structural entities of the body and prevent there diminish.
- *Ācāryās* described that the entire range of life process in health and disease depends on the integrity of *Srotas*.<sup>19</sup>
- They carry sensory and motor impulses to the body.<sup>20</sup>
- *Srotas* carry *Dhātu* (tissues, elements, or their constituents) undergoing transformation to their destination.<sup>21</sup>
- *Srotas* serves as the conduct units for the *Prasāda Dhātu* as well as *Mala Dhātu* are transported, and formation of *Sthāyī Dhātu*.
- *Srotas* are not only passage or channels for flow of various substances but also *Srotas* are in specific their functions. Each *Srotas* provides nutrition to their respective *Dhātu*, only with requisite quantities not others.
- *Srotas* are the inner transport system of the body which provides basic for activities of other important bio-factors like three *Doṣa*, the seven *Dhātu*, the *Oja*, the *Agni*, thoughts, and emotions.<sup>22</sup>

All the *Doṣa*, *Dhātu*, and *Mala* are dependent on *Srotas* for their formation, transportation, and destruction.

### Abnormalities in Srotas and their Practical applications:

There are four kinds of abnormalities in the functioning of *Srotas*, called the “*Srotoduṣṭi*”. They are *Atipravṛtti*, *Sanga*, *Sirāgranthi*, *Vimārga-Gamana*.<sup>23</sup>

#### *Atipravṛtti*:

Increase activity of one or more organ of a system. Increase in the rate of respiration and heart beat; increased peristalsis of the intestine, increased movement of the various parts of the body, increased production of urine, faeces and sweat, increase formation of *Rasa* and other *Dhātus*. It is mostly a functional abnormality but sometimes may be structural also.

#### *Sanga*:

It is also called *Srotorodha*, it is just opposite of *Atipravṛtti*. In this there will be decreases in the activity of one or more organs of any system, or obstruction to the *Srotas* (Channels, pores) leading to increase in shape, size and other qualities of the organ system. Obstruction to the pores of sweat in fever, accumulation of fluid in the abdomen in case of *Udara roga* as a result of obstruction of the channels of *Annavaḥa Srotas*, accumulation of fluid under the skin causing *Sotha* due to obstruction of *Rasavaha Srotas*; obstruction to the channels of the *Mūtravaha Srotas* causing scanty urine, accumulation of urine due to obstruction of its passage, causing pain and enlargement of the urinary bladder, in the left ventricular failure decreased heart rate and increased heart size due to obstruction of *Rasvaha Srotas*, are some examples for this kind of abnormality. It is a change both in structure and functions: (both physiological and pathological conditions e.g. Left Ventricular Failure etc.)

#### *Sirā-Granthi* or *Sroto Granthi*:

The kind of abnormality is characterized by formation of thickening, new growth of tumors. The *Dhātu Pramāṇu* (Tissue cells) undergoes increase in their size, shape and other qualities. Increase in the size of organs of the *Srotas* system, or development of new growth over them may take place. Disease such as *Vidradhi* (abscess); *Granthi* (benign tumour), *Arbuda* (malignant tumors), *Valmīka* (actinomycosis), *Ślīpada* (filariasis) etc, are the best examples of this kind of abnormalities.

#### *Vimārg- Gamana*:

*Vimārg-Gamana* meaning movement in the wrong direction or passage is the fourth kind of *Srotoduṣṭi*. Movement applies to the functions of the organs or to the materials that are handed by them. During health, both these have a fixed path and have definite direction of movement. Any deviation in these is to be called as *Vimārga-Gamana*. Food taken into the mouth is moved to the downwards direction to the stomach and from there to the intestines. In the disease, *Chardi* (Vomiting) food is moved in upward direction from the stomach; intestines and this abnormal movement is *Vimārg- Gamana* in the

*Annavaḥa Srotas*; similarly *Purīṣa Chardi* (faecal vomiting) faecal matter coming out through urethra or through fistula in the rectum; bleeding through the pores of the skin, nose, eyes, urethra regurgitation of some valvular defect in the heart etc. are some examples for understanding this type of *Srotoduṣṭi* / abnormality.

These four kinds of *Srotoduṣṭi* (abnormalities of *Srotas* System) may occur either individually or in combination. Without *Srotoduṣṭi* (histopathology) no disease occurs; every disease is nothing but the result of *Dhātuvaīśamya* and *Dhātuvaīśamya* includes *Srotoduṣṭi* (histopathology). Hence *Dhātuvaīśamya* vis-a vis *Srotoduṣṭi* is an essential prerequisite for every disease.

#### AIM & OBJECTIVES:

The *Moola* of *Srotas* as described by *Ācāryās* is different. Present paper emphasis on *Srotas* and it's *Moola*.

#### HYPOTHESIS:

*Prāṇa*, *Udaka* and *Anna* are very important, body which is constituted by the seven *Dhātus* and the end products formed in the body due to catabolism of *Dhātus* i.e. *Mūtra*, *Purīṣa* and *Sveda*, which all are 13 in number and so *Ācāryās* have also described thirteen types of *Srotas* carrying each of them. *Moola* of *Srotas* is anatomical base of the respective *Srotas*. It may be place of origin, conducting parts, place of pathogenesis or diagnostic tools.

## DISCUSSION

*Moola* of *Srotas* defined by *Ācāryās* are origin, conducting parts, place of pathogenesis or diagnostic tools. *Moola* of different *Srotas* is defined as following:

#### *Prāṇvaha Srotas*:

*Hṛdaya* and *MahāSrotas* have been considered as *Moolasthān* of *PrāṇvahaSrotas*.<sup>8</sup> In this context the term *Hṛdaya* not only signifies the organ heart but also extends chest or cardiac region.<sup>24</sup> Cardiac region is also important for normal flowing of *Prāṇvāyu*. The general treatment of disease of the vitiation of the *Prāṇvaha Srotas* resembles with disease which originates from *Āmāśaya*.<sup>25</sup>

#### *Udakvaha Srotas*:

*Tālu* and *Kloma* have been considered as *Moolasthān* of *Udakvaha Srotas*.<sup>26</sup> *Tālu* is commonly affected site in vitiation of this *Srotas*. In the *Vidradhi* of *Klom* organ *Pipasa* seen as a cardinal features.<sup>27</sup> In this regard *Tālu* is *Moolasthān* as a vital diagnostic tool, and *Klom* can be considered as a *Moolasthān* with clinical point of view.

#### *Annavaḥa Srotas*:

*Āmāśaya* and *Vamapārśwa* have been considered as *Moolasthāna* of *Annavaḥa Srotas*, including *Annavaḥa Dhamanī*.<sup>26,28</sup> *Annavaḥa Dhamanī* plays vital role in the *Prīṇan Karma* of *Rasa Dhātu* by carrying *paramsūkshma Tejorbhūta*, properly digested, *Panchbhautic Āhārārāsa* to whole of body. *Āmāśaya* is the storage site of the *Panchbhautic Anna* and along with the *Vāmaparshwa*. *Āmāśaya* is considered as *Moolasthān* with storage point of view, *Annavaḥa Dhamanī* as conduction point of view and *Vamapārśwa* as clinical point of view.

#### *Rasavaha Srotas*:

*Hṛdaya* and *Daśa Dhamanī* have been considered as *Moolasthān* of *Rasavaha Srotas*.<sup>26</sup> *Hṛdaya* is organ heart which is situated in the middle mediastenum of thorax and pumps the blood along with *Rasa Dhātu* throughout the body continuously. *Hṛdaya* works as storage and pumping action of *Rasa Dhātu*, after that *Daśa Dhamanī* transports that *Rasa Dhātu* which is pure minutest essence of properly digested food through all corners of body.<sup>29</sup> Thus *Hṛdaya* is considered as *Moolasthān* with storage point of view and *Daśa Dhamanī* as conduction point of view.

#### *Raktavaha Srotas*:

*Yakṛt* and *plīhā* are considered as *Moolasthān* of *Raktavaha Srotas*, *Raktavaha Dhamanī* are also considered.<sup>26,28</sup> Origin of *Yakṛt* and *Plīhā* takes place from *Śonit (Rakta)* during embryonic development.<sup>30</sup> After birth for particular time period, production of *Rakta* takes place in *Yakṛt*. *Raktavaha Dhamanī* conducts the blood after attaining red colour,<sup>29</sup> throughout all corners of body. In this regard, *Raktavaha Dhamanī* is *Moolasthān* as conduction point of view.

#### *Māmsavaha Srotas*:

*Snāyu* and *tvacā* have been considered as *Moolasthān* of *Māmsavaha Srotas*, along with *Raktavaha Dhamanī*.<sup>26,28</sup> *Snāyu* is a basic storage site of *Māmsa Dhātu*.

#### *Medovaha Srotas*:

*Vṛkka* and *Vapāvahan* along with *Kaṭī* have been considered as *Moolasthān* of *Medovaha Srotas*.<sup>26,28</sup> The *Vṛkka* vitally related with fat metabolism (*Medo Dhātu Pusṣṭi*).<sup>31</sup> On account removal of adrenal glands *Daurbalya*, *Karshya*, *Agnimand*, *Trṣṇā* etc arises as complication. *Vapāvahan* and *Kaṭī* mainly store the excess fat in the body. Deposition of the excess fat in body is commonly occurs in abdomen. So *Kaṭī* and

*Vapāvahan* are considered *Moolasthān* as storage point of view.

#### **Asthivaha Srotas:**

*Meda* and *Jaghan* have been considered as *Moolasthān* of *Asthivaha Srotas*.<sup>26</sup> According to *Dhātupoṣaṇa nyāya*, the origin of *Asthi dhātu* takes place on account of the specific action of *Asthi dhatvāgni* and *Asthi poshkanśa* which is formed at the time of *medo dhātu utpatti*. Entire hip region can be considered as a *Moolasthān* mention *jaghan* region. During old age vitiation of *Asthivaha Srotas* primarily seen in this region. Fracture of neck of femur is most frequently observed in old age.<sup>32</sup> In this regard, *Jaghan Pradesh* is *Moolasthān* as diagnostic as well as clinical point of view.

#### **Majjāvaha Srotas:**

*Asthi* and *Sandhi* have been considered as *Moolasthān* of *majjāvaha Srotas*.<sup>26</sup> *Majjā* is primarily found in long bones.<sup>33</sup> Bone marrow occupies the cavities of the bones. At birth these cavities are filled entirely with red bone marrow. Fatty yellow bone marrow is placed in diaphysis and red bone marrow is in spongy bone tissue of long bones.<sup>34</sup> *Sandhi* region includes entire lower end of one bone and entire upper end of other bone. In this way, *Asthi* and *sandhi* are considered as *Moolasthān* with origin and storage point of view.

#### **Shukravaha Srotas:**

*Vṛshna* and *Śepha* have been considered as *Moolasthān* of *Shukravaha Srotas* including *Stana*.<sup>26,28</sup> Production of *Shukra* takes place in *Vṛshna*. At the time of conception it is conducted from *Vṛshna* to *Śepha* by the specific tube like structures. *Stan* is explained as *Moolasthān* with diagnostic stand points. *Anārtava* (amenorrhoea) and *Astanī* (maldevelopment of mammary glands) have been observed as cardinal features in case of *Ṣaṇḍi Yonivyāpat*.<sup>35</sup> *Vṛshna* is considered *Moolasthān* as origin and storage point of view, *Śepha* as conduction point of view and *Stana* as diagnostic point of view.

#### **Purīṣavaha Srotas:**

*Pakvāsaya* and *Sthūlguda* have been considered as *Moolasthān* of this *Srotas*.<sup>26</sup> *Pakvāsaya* has proximal part for the production of the fecal matter and distal part mainly for storage of faecal matter takes place. Storage takes place in *Uttarguda* and through *Adhoguda* it is excreted out of the body.<sup>36</sup> In this regards *Pakvāsaya* is *Moolasthān* as origin and storage point of view and *Sthūlguda* with storage and conduction point of view.

#### **Mūtravaha Srotas:**

*Basti* and *Vankshaṇa* have been considered as *Moolasthān* for this *Srotas*.<sup>26</sup> Entire excretory system

can be considered with *Basti Pradesh*. After formation of urine, it is stored in the *Basti* and after that it is conducted through *Vankshaṇa pradesh* upto *Bahirmukh Srotas* of the body for excretion. In this regard *Basti* is *Moolasthān* as storage and conduction point of view, *Vankshaṇa* as conduction point of view.

#### **Svedavaha Srotas:**

*Medomoola* and *Lomakoop* have been considered as *Moolasthān* for this *Srotas*.<sup>26</sup> Production of *Sveda* takes place in the form of *Mala* of *Meda Dhātu*.<sup>37</sup> *Lomekoop* is *Āvirbhāv Sthān* of *Sveda* and through that *Sveda* is excreted out of body. In this regard *Medomoola* as origin point of view and *Lomakoop* as conduction point of view are considered as *Moolasthan* for *Medovaha Srotas*.

#### **Artavavaha Srotas:**

*Garbhāsaya* and *Ārtavavaha Dhamanī* have been considered as *Moolasthān* for this *Srotas*.<sup>28</sup> *Garbhāsaya* mainly responsible for production of *Artava*. In the *Garbhāsaya Pradesh*, Uterus and ovaries are included. *Ārtavavaha Dhamanī* conducts the *Artava* towards uterus during menstrual phase. In this regard, *Garbhāsaya* is *Moolasthān* as origin point of view, while *Ārtavavaha Dhamanī* as conduction point of view.

The functions of *Srotas* are transportation of biological fluids, physiological regulatory factors, nourishment of tissue, and biodiversity of medicaments on the integrity of the *Srotas*. Understanding the concept of *Srotas* facilitate the physician to take decisions accurately with respect to treatment and prognosis.

## CONCLUSION

Structurally, the *Srotas* are the hollow channels originating from the root space, spread within the whole body to act as a transport system for the fulfillment of nutritional needs of organism and to get rid of the end results of metabolism from the body. It can be concluded that there are following reasons to accept particular organs as the *Moola* of *Srotas* such as i) *Utapatti Stahān* (origin point of view), ii) *Samgraha sthān* (related with storage point of view) iii) *Vahan Sthān* (related with conduction point of view) iv) *Naidanic Drshtikone* (diagnostic point of view), v) *Chikitsatmak Drishtikone* (related with clinical point of view).

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