

A REVIEW ON BHOOTA SHABDA AND ITS VARIED MEANINGS IN DIFFERENT CONTEXTS OF CARAKA SAMHITA

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ABSTRACT

The word *Bhoota* is the most misinterpreted word in Ayurveda. Most often this word is used in Indian languages to represent ghost, goblin, demon etc. This is an interpretation passed on through generations, since we wrongly adapt the same idea in Ayurveda field also. But in the case of Ayurveda, the authentic classical texts are composed with some literal techniques known as *Tantrayukti*. *Bhoota shabda* is a typical example for *Tantrayukti Anekartha*; in which *Bhoota shabda* got different meanings at different contexts. This literary work is intended to explore the distinctive meanings of *Bhootashabda* used in different contexts and got four distinguishable meanings such as existence, living beings, diseases caused by external organisms and *Panchamahabhoota*.

Keywords: *Bhoota shabda, Tantrayukti, Anekartha*

INTRODUCTION

Understanding the structure and elements of construction used for building up the theoretical aspects is an essential prerequisite in the proper study of any system of knowledge. Ayurveda also is not exempted in this

aspect. Proper understanding of all the words used to construct the science is the first step of getting into the deeper meanings of this medical system. The theory of Ayurveda is constructed word by word, sentence by

sentence, reflecting in depth meanings related to the subject. Such enquiries normally start with the understanding of origin of words. Nature of the word as well as the grammatical origin plays central role in this type of understanding. This general meaning shall be further modified by contextual understanding. If not properly understood by following a systematic method, many words could be misinterpreted. One such word which is commonly and repeatedly used is *Bhoota*.

The word *Bhoota* is derived from the root *Bhoo sattayam*¹ which means existence or one which is existing. There are many words –especially in Sanskrit language- which possess the meaning of existence emerged from this '*Bhoo dhatu*'. Even though this is the most familiar word in Ayurveda, it has different meanings and interpretations in different contexts. The following are some different interpretations of *Bhoota shabda*.

Materials and Methods

Literary review is done with Ayurveda classical texts. The data is collected from *Caraka Samhita* and analyzed with the help of *Susrutha Samhita* and *Ashtanga Hrdayam* for contexts. Used Sanskrit dictionaries like *Amarakosa* and *Sabdakalpadruma* to understand the Sanskrit words and their meanings.

Review of Literature

❖ *Bhootashabda* - denoting existence

As per the meaning of the root '*BHOO*' *Bhoota shabda* is generally used to denote the existing things, things that had happened, things in a special state of existence (*Bhaavartha*) and along with some verbal forms. For example, the 6th *Sloka* in *Caraka Samhita Sutra sthana* 1st chapter *Vighnabhoota*² denotes the things (*Rogas*) that happened as a hindrance to *Tapa*, *Upavasa* etc. Likewise, 65 times *Bhootasabda* is used as an indicator of existence/ existing things in whole *Caraka Samhita*. The table below shows the references of *Bhootasabda* used in *Caraka Samhita* with the meaning as existence.

Sl. No	References	Sl. No	References
1	C.Su.1/6	34	C.Ni.4/8
2	C.Su.1/16	35	C.Vi.1/5
3	C.Su.10/6	36	C.Sa.6/18
4	C.Su.15/11	37	C.Sa.8/42
5	C.Su.26/43	38	C.Sa.8/54
6	C.Ni.1/9	39	C.Su.1/130
7	C.Ni.2/3	40	C.Su.8/4
8	C.Ni.3/15	41	C.Su.8/18
9	C.Ni.7/21	42	C.Su.14/46
10	C.Vi.3/24	43	C.Ni.3/7
11	C.Vi.5/6	44	C.Vi.8/127
12	C.Vi.6/12	45	C.Sa.1/9
13	C.Vi.8/25	46	C.Sa.4/9
14	C.Vi.8/38	47	C.Sa.5/25
15	C.Vi.8/96	48	C.I.4/7
16	C.Vi.8/97	49	C.I.8/4
17	C.Sa.4/6	50	C.Ci.13/48
18	C.Sa.6/4	51	C.Ci.15/9
19	C.Sa.6/17	52	C.Ci.19/46
20	C.Sa.6/21	53	C.Ci.30/45
21	C.I.1/7	54	C.Su.1/6
22	C.I.5/43	55	C.Su.10/6
23	C.Ci.1/3	56	C.Vi.5/6
24	C.Ci.5/33	57	C.Vi.5/6
25	C.Ci.8/8	58	C.Vi.6/12
26	C.Ci.16/23	59	C.Vi.6/12

27	C.Ci.21/40	60	C.Sa.6/17
28	C.Ci.26/3	61	C.Sa.6/17
29	C.Ka.12/44	62	C.Ci.1(2)/3
30	C.Si.1/35	63	C.Si.1/35
31	C.Ci.9/51	64	C.Ni.6/8
32	C.Su.12/7	65	C.Sa.4/9
33	C.Su.12/13		

❖ **Bhootashabda – denoting living beings**

This is the most important meaning of *Bhoota shabda* according to Ayurveda. We are familiar with the phrase *Chaturvidha Bhootagraamaa*.³Here *Bhootagraamaa* denotes all the four types of living beings viz *Jarayuja*, *Andaja*, *Swedaja* and *Udbhija*. According to the descent of Ayurveda, *Punarvasu Atreya* who possess *Bhutaanukampa* (friendly to all and having compassion to all creatures) expounded the sacred science of life to

his six disciples⁴. Likewise, *Bhootadhatri*⁵ is one among the seven sleeps described by *Carakacarya* in 21st chapter i.e. the sleep occurs at night which is quite natural is the sleep par excellence. This is known as *Bhootadhatri*, the stepmother of all creatures. Thus, in *Caraka Samhita Bhootashabda* is used 54 times to denote living beings. The following are the references obtained from the entire *Charaka Samhita*.

1	C.Su.1/7	29	C.Sa.1/83
2	C.Su.1/30	30	C.Sa.1/84
3	C.Su.1/35	31	C.Sa.1/155
4	C.Su.1/37	32	C.Sa.3/16
5	C.Su.1/40	33	C.Sa.4/33
6	C.Su.7/59	34	C.Sa.6/28
7	C.Su.8/32		
8	C.Su.9/23	35	C.Ci.1/22
9	C.Su.9/26	36	C.Ci.1(2)/23
10	C.Su.12/7	37	C.Ci.1(4)/58
11	C.Su.12/8	38	C.Ci.1(4)/62
12	C.Su.16/32	39	C.Ci.3/21
13	C.Su.21/59	40	C.Ci.3/31
14	C.Su.25/13	41	C.Ci.3/345
15	C.Su.26/312	42	C.Ci.3/346
16	C.Su.28/35	43	C.Ci.5/3
17	C.Su.30/81	44	C.Ci.9/91
18	C.Ni.7/14	45	C.Ci.13/8
19	C.Vi.3/15	46	C.Ci.15/223
20	C.Vi.3/25	47	C.Ci.19/4
21	C.Vi.3/29	48	C.Ci.20/3
22	C.Vi.8/54	49	C.Ci.21/4
23	C.Vi.8/127	50	C.Ci.24/51
24	C.Sa.1/14	51	C.Ka.1/14
25	C.Sa.1/51	52	C.Ka.12/
26	C.Sa.1/52	53	C.Ci.1/77
27	C.Sa.1/57	54	C.Su.26/39
28	C.Sa.1/63		

❖ **Bhootashabda- denoting disease caused by external organisms**

In the context of *Agantujarogas* Acharya says *Ye bhootavishavayvahni.....*⁶. Here *Bhootashabda* denotes the external disease-causing organisms. *Chakrapaani* gives a meaning of *Bhoota* as *Sookshma-krimyaadaya*. Some misinterpretations are occurred in this context that we intentionally discard the '*Aadaya*' and receive the meaning as '*Sookshmakrimi*' i.e.

microbes. In the context of preventive measures also *Acharya Vagbhata* gives the concept of *Bhootadyas-parsanopaya*⁷. Here also *Bhoota* denotes not only the microbes but also the creatures like snakes, spiders, rats, dog etc. Thus, we can see *Bhootashabda* repeated 23 times to represent the external disease-causing organism in *Caraka Samhita*. Following are the references obtained from the whole *Caraka Samhita*.

1	C.Su.7/51	2	C.su.11/37
3	C.Su.11/45	4	C.Ni.7/12
5	C.Ni.7/15	6	C.Vi.3/22
7	C.Vi.8/37	8	C.Sa.1/121
9	C.Sa.1/126	10	C.Ci.3/114
11	C.Ci.3/116	12	C.Ci.3/317
13	C.Ci.9/72	14	C.Ci.23/59
15	C.Ci.23/72	16	C.Ci.23/103
17	C.Ci.23/247	18	C.Ci.3/123
19	C.Ci.9/17	20	C.Ci.9/40
21	C.Ci.9/67	22	C.Ci.9/68
23	C.Ci.9/87		

❖ **Bhoota – denoting Panchamahabhoota.**

Panchamahabhoota theory is the foremost and very fundamental doctrine of Ayurveda. In the first chapter of *Caraka Samhita*, *Dirghanjivitiya* itself Acharya used *Bhoota shabda* for denoting the *Panchabhoota*, i.e. *Nirvikaraparastuvatma....*⁸ Here *Chakrapaani*

describes *Bhoota* as '*Sabdadaya*' i.e. *Sabda Sparsa Roopa Rasa* and *Gandha*- the five sense faculties. In *Caraka Samhita* 15 times *Bhootashabda* is mentioned to represent *Panchamahabhoota*. The following are the references.

1	C.Su.1/56	2	C.Su.8/14
3	C.Su.26/12	4	C.Su.26/38
5	C.Su.26/39	6	C.Vi.8/95
7	C.Sa.1/27	8	C.Sa.1/74
9	C.Sa.2/34	10	C.Sa.2/26
11	C.Sa.2/31	12	C.Sa.2/33
13	C.Sa.4/12	14	C.Sa.6/4
15	C.Ci.15/13		

DISCUSSION

According to *Caraka Samhita*, everything in the universe is of two-fold- existing and non-existing. The word *Bhoota* can be used to represent all type of varied existences. Since this word possess full potential to express varied forms of existences, it is applied to

represent the macroscopic as well as microscopic world. As we see, the same word is used to denote different forms of life, but exact meaning of the word can be deciphered by understanding the context in which it is used. If we are not careful to understand the meaning that will lead to misconception of the narrations. In

none of the contexts it is used to represent something nonexistent.

The most misinterpreted meaning of *Bhootashabda* is ghost or demon. But there is no description of *Bhootashabda* with this meaning anywhere in classics. This is an interpretation passed on through generations according to the social and cultural backgrounds in India. We adapt the same in the field of Ayurveda especially in the context of *Bhootavidya* ie, Ayurveda psychiatry. Most of the scholars in Ayurveda believe and teach that this type of insanities is occurred due to the possession of these supernatural powers.

According to *Vagbhatacharya* the definition of *Bhootagraha* is

Lakshayet jnanavijnanavaksheshtabalapourusham Purushe apourusham yatra tatra bhootagraham vadet^o
Here a person either male or female who shows non-human characters are included in the term 'Apourusha'. So, *Bhootagraha* means the non-human characters in knowledge, speech, activities or strength. Here *Apourusha* is misinterpreted as non-human characteristics which directly implies the supernatural power.

Apourusha → non-human characters → supernatural power

Thus, it led to the concept of *Yaksha*, *Rakshasa*, *Preta* etc. Actually, *Bhoota* implies the *Lakshanas* of all creatures other than human.

CONCLUSION

'*Bhootashabda*' is an apt example for the *Tantrayukti-Anekarthashabda* which means 'fix the best word at appropriate site'. Thus, *Bhootashabda* possess different meanings at different contexts. Among these the meaning of existence or the living beings is the most applicable and acceptable one and it is very necessary to understand the exact meaning of *Bhoota shabda* while reading the different contexts in Samhitas.

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