SAMHITOKTA CONCEPTUAL REVIEW OF MARMA AND PRANAYATANA

Singh Priyanka R V1, Patil Aparna S2, Dhurde Smita V3, Divekar Ujwala Murlidhar4

1, 2 P G Scholar, 3 Prof and Head of Department, 4 Reader, Department of Ayurved Samhita-Siddhanta, C.S.M.S.S Ayurved Mahavidyalaya, Aurangabad, Maharashtra, India

ABSTRACT
Ayurveda, the science of life, its approach of assembling subtlest information about facts associated with life or liveliness makes it unique. Its methodology of describing every aspect from anatomical and physiological approach leads to gaining knowledge from every possible dimension and that too fits with the concept of Marma and Pranayatana. Acharya Sushruta states that human body consists of twelve Prana namely Agni, Soma, Vayu, Raja, Tama, Panchindriyaani and Bhutatma. These twelve live attributes constitutes human body. Acharya Sushruta has mentioned the functional entity of the concept of Prana but Acharya Charak has anatomical positioned them as Dashapranayatana in Charak Sutrasthana chapter twenty-nine. These ten sites are being mathematicaly enumerated but not rationally defined. Probably, therefore Acharya Charak has again sited ten pranayatana in Sharirsthana chapter seven. Acharya Sushruta has clearly mentioned that Marma are the points where Prana resides “Svabhavata” (naturally or obviously). Therefore though no relationship is ever stated between Pranayatana and Marma, but a little in-depth knowledge proves it to be obvious.

Keywords: Prana, Pranayatana, Marma.

INTRODUCTION

The association of twelve live attributes or characteristics namely Agni Soma, Vayu, Satwa, Rajas, Tamas, five sense organs and Bhutatma are Prana or life, the entity which lives or survives (……Jivitama Sthitana). Now the question arises where are these live attributes or Prana resides or located in human body. That is mentioned by Acharya Charak in Charak Sutrasthana chapter twenty-nine Dashapranayataniya

Pranayatan = Prana + Ayatana
Prana = live attribute/characteristic
Ayatana = residing place/location/house/site

Pranayatan

These places are3 – Two Shankha Pradesh, Marmatraya, Kantha, Rakta, Shukra, Oja, Guda.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pranayatana</th>
<th>Charaka Sutrasthana chapter-29</th>
<th>Charaka Shaarirsthana chapter-7</th>
<th>Ashtanga Hridaya Shaarirsthana chapter-3</th>
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<tr>
<td>Shankha Pradesh</td>
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<td>Shankha Pradesh</td>
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<td>Marmatraya-Hridaya</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Basti</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Nabhi</td>
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</table>
Kantha (neck region)  +  +  +  
Rakta (blood)  +  Shonita (blood)  +  
Shukra (semen)  +  +  +  
Ojas (semen)  +  +  +  
Guda (Anal Region)  +  +  +  
Murdha  -  +  -  
Mamsa  -  +  -  
Shirobandha  -  -  +  
Rasanbandha  -  -  +  

Here in Sutrasthana Acharya has collected facts which will be discussed in detail in further sthana as stated by him. Hence it can be interpreted that Sutrasthana is basically an outlay plan of further study. Therefore while moving from Sutrasthana to Shaarirsthana, Acharya has replaced two Shankha Pradesh with Nabhi and Mamsa.

Acharya’s point of including Mamsa as seat of Prana can be understood by two facts. Firstly Mamsa is one among Maatricia Bhava accepted by both Acharya Charak and Acharya Sushruta. If one counts the number of Maatricia Bhava they stand second highest among the six Garbhotapadak Bhava, falling just short to Aatmaj Bhava, exhibiting their significance in human body. Secondly Mamsa is one among the Marma [Marma = the vital points of body which when get assaulted leads to feeling of pain whose magnitude equals death]

At the very same time Acharya Charaka says that the initial six (among the ten Pranayatana) are Marma namely Murdha, Kantha, Hridaya, Nabhi, Guda and Basti.

The five common sites of Prana mentioned by Acharya Charak in both Sutrasthana and Shaarirsthana are- Kantha (neck region), Guda (anal region), Shukra (semen), Shonita (blood) and Oja (immunity). First two are anatomical sites and latter are the functional entities residing in complete body.

Acharya Sushruta’s illustration of twelve Prana together constituting life is explained by Acharya Dalhana as follows. Agni (Tejas fire) is present in the body in the form of five kinds of Pitta and firey element present in the Dhatus (tissues) it is the presiding deity of Vaak (speech) and supports life by performing functions such as digestion of food etc., Soma (Ap-water) is present in the form of five kind of Kapha, moisture in the Dhatus (tissues) is the presiding deity of Rasenendriya (tongue) and supports life by nourishing all liquid tissues. Vayu is present in the body in five kinds (Prana, Udana etc) and supports life by respiration, movement and regulations of Doshas, Dhatus and Malas. Satva, Rajas and Tamas exert influence on the Manas (mind) and decides its nature. Panchenendriya (five sense organs) support life by perceiving objects such as light, sound etc. Bhutatma (soul) also known as Karmapurusha is the cause of consciousness (activity) of all factors and is the performer of all actions both good and bad. All the above together constitute Prana (life).

In the above aphorism the mentioning of Agni, Soma and Vayu together represents Tridosha, hence the presence of Prana in complete body is indirectly highlighted.

Acharya Vagbhata in Ashtanga Hridaya Shaarirsthana states that Marma is that place which has unusual throbbing and pain on touch. The Marma (vital spots) are
so called because they cause death; and they are the meeting place of muscle, bones, tendons, arteries, veins and joints, life entirely resides in them (any injury or assault to these causes danger to life). They; are indicated by the predominant structure found in them; on this basis the Marmas (vital spots) are of six kind only on the common factor ‘as seats of life’. 

The practical utility of Pranayatana-cum-Marma in therapeutics is exhibited by Acharya Vagbhata 9 ‘Though wounded greatly in places other than Marmas (vital spots), the person survives but not so when injured in the vital spots; for, these are destroyers of life, some may survive by the expertise of the physician and partial injury to them, even then they cause distortions (irregularity). Hence the use of Kshara, Visha Agni etc on the vital spots should be avoided as far as possible. Again Acharya Vagbhata lays emphasis that injury to vital spots, though slight (mild) usually produces severe pain (trouble); so also the diseases which are localised in the vital spots do not get cured in spite of great effort 10.

These all explanations by various sages make it inferentially important to accept the locations of Prana as not only Pranayatana but Marmas also. The total of one hundred and seven Marma can be seen as the elaborations of Dasha Pranayatana. The six kinds classification of Acharya Sushruta based predominantly on structure includes Guda (Anus) as Mamsa Marma, Basti (urinary bladder) as Snayu Marma, Hridaya (heart or mind) under Siramarma and Nabhi (umbilicus) is also considered as Siramarma. The further classification based on time duration of injury to be fatal or fatal outcome places Guda (anus), Hridaya, basti (urinary bladder) and Nabhi (umbilicus) under Sadya-Pranahara Marma (that causes instant death on being hurt).

DISCUSSION

The anatomical and functional vital points are of utmost importance in body. Though these vital points are not distinctly mentioned by the sages of Brihattrayee still one cannot deny the truth that these (Pranayatana and Marma) when discussed by Acharyas’ separately as their respective headings of Pranayatana and Marma, present their description finely taking into consideration the minutest details attached with it.

Hence it can be interpreted that Pranayatana and Marma are like the two faces/sides of coin (body) and in the absence of any one of them, the very presence of coin (~body) get lost.

CONCLUSION

Therefore one should take proper care of Pranayatana as one takes proper care of body as guided by Acharya Charak in Charak Samhita Sutrasthana chapter five, applying Tantrayukt (methodical device) called Upadesha (authoritative injunction).

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CORRESPONDING AUTHOR
Dr. Priyanka Singh
Email: twinkle.singh13@gmail.com

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