A Brief Mention of Agni in Brihatrayee

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Article History
Received: 21.06.2019
Accepted: 12.07.2019
Published: 30.07.2019

Abstract: The primary aim and objective of Ayurveda is to maintain the health of healthy person and to eradicate the diseases of a diseased person is the secondary one. One whose dosa, agni, dhatu and mala are in balanced state and whose senses, mind and soul are functioning properly is a healthy individual. Agni maintains the physiology of this deha desha. In other words agni controls the state of biological equilibrium of dosha, dhatu and mala. The derangement of agni produces various diseases and it is the root cause of all diseases. In Ayurveda the term agni is used in the sense of digestion of food and metabolic products. Agni converts food in the form of energy, which is responsible for all the vital functions of our body. So it is necessary to know all the reference found in brihatrayee.

Keywords: ayurveda, agni, dosha, dhatu, mala

INTRODUCTION

The Ayurvedic concept of agni is critically important to our overall health. Agni is the force of intelligence within each cell, each tissue and every system within the body. It is the discernment of agni that determines which substances enter our cells and tissues, and which substance should be removed as a waste. In this way agni is the gatekeeper of life. Ayurveda identifies a vast range of functions for which agni is directly responsible, but it also teaches us that impaired agni is at the root of all imbalances and diseases. Ayurveda has described an important factor of digestion and metabolism in our body as agni. Ingested food is to be digested, absorbed and assimilated, which is unavoidable for the maintenance of life, and is performed by agni. Therefore, ayurveda considers that kayagni is the cause of life, complexion, strength, health, nourishment, lusture, oja, teja and prana.

AIM AND OBJECTIVES

- To shed lights on the contribution of brihatrayi in agni.
- To put together the scattered topics of agni in brihatrayi.

METHOD AND METHODOLOGY

Manual and electronic search was done on charak samhita, susruta sahita, astanga hrdayam and available commentary on it.

DISCUSSION

CHARAK SAMHITA: Matrasiteeya Adhyaya

A person should take matravat ahar depending upon his agnibal a[1]. The person who seems to be physically weak and diseased and having sedentary lifestyle should follow the diet(laghu or guru) a/c to their condition. The person having strong jatharagni and can digest kathin ahardravya, physically active are not needed to follow the above concept.
Annapanadhi Adhyaya

*Bala, arogya, ayu and prana depends upon agni and the agni depends upon annapanadhi [2].*

Grahani Chikitsa Adhyaya

Life span of human being, varna, bala, swasthya, utsah, upasaya, prabha, oja, teja, bhutagni, dhatwagni and prana all are depends upon jatharagni/kayagni. When jatharagni extinguished, one dies, gets diseased if it is deranged. So it is the root cause of all [3] the food which is taken gives nourishment to ojas, bala, varna, etc. is totally depends on agni. Without proper level of agni ahar cannot covert to the ahar rasa [4].

The prana vayu carries the food to the belly where the food disintegrated by juices (digestive fluids) and softened by fatty substances gets acted by the digestive fire fanned by the samana vayu. Thus the digestive fire cooks the timely taken and balanced food properly leading to promotion of life span. Agni cooks food from stomach for division into rasa and mala as the same cooks the rice grains with water kept in a vessel into boiled rice[5].

The food composed of six rasas immediately after it is ingested undergoes the stages of prapaka (preliminary stges of digestion). Firstly due to predominance of sweetness kapha (mucous secretion) of frothy character arises. Thereafter during the process of digestion when the food is half-burnt and descending from the stomach due to predominance of pitta (the bile and other digestive factors) comes forth freely. Lastly when it reaches the large intestine, it is absorbed by fire and gets converted to a solid mass, vayu is formed due to predominance of pungency [6].

Five agnis pertaining each to prithvi, ap, tejas, vayu and akasa digest the respective fractions of the food [7]. In body, the substances and their properties nourish their counterparts respectively such as the fraction of prithvi in food nourishes the respective fractions in the body and so on [8] During the process of metabolism the dhatus supporting the body undergo twofold conversion into excretion and essence having been acted upon by the respective one of the seven dhatwagni [9].

Thus the function of agnis relating to bhutas, dhatus and food are said. The agni which digest food is regarded as the master of all agnis because increase and decrease of other agnis depend on digestive fire (jatharagni). Hence one should maintain it carefully by taking properly the wholesome fuel of food and drinks because on its maintenance depends the maintenance of life span and strength. One who eats greedily leaving aside all the rules acquires the disorders due to morbidity in graham soon [10].

Agni is deranged by fasting, eating during indigestion, over eating, irregular eating, and intake of unsuitable, heavy, cold, too rough and contaminated food, faulty administration of emesis, purgation and unction, emaciation due to some diseases, faulty adaptation to place, time and seasons and suppression of natural urges. Agni thus deranged becomes unable to digest even the light food and food being undigested gets acidified and toxic [11].

Digestive fire if irregular causes disequilibrium in dhatus because of irregular digestion and intense having little fuel dries up the dhatus. The normal digestive fire in a person taking proper food maintains the equilibrium of dhatus by regular digestion [12]. The weak digestive fire burns the food incompletely which goes either upwards or downwards. When it moves out downwards either in ripe or unripe condition, it is known as the disorder of grahami. In such patients often the entire food is half burnt and the stool is frequent, constipated or liquid. There is presence of thirst, anorexia, abnormal taste in mouth, excessive salivation and feeling of darkness. Besides, edema on feet and hands, pain in bony joints, vomiting and fever are there. Eructations have metallic or fleshy odour and bitter sour taste in mouth [13].

Prodormal symptoms of agni vikriti is—thirst, lassitude, debility, burning of food, delayed digestion and heaviness in body [14]. Grahami is the seat of agni and is called so because of holding up the food. It is situated above umbilicus and is strengthened by the power of agni. Normally, it holds up the food (till the digested) and releases it from the side after it is digested but when it is deranged due to weak digestive fire it releases the ingested material even in unripe condition [15].

Sneha is the excellent as stimulant of weak fire. Even much heavy food is not able to pacify the fire kindled of weak fire. Hence one passing undigested diarrhoeic stools due to deficient agni should take adequate dose of ghrita mixed with appetizing drugs. By this the samana vayu being normalized and positioned in its normal passage and due to its movement nearby improves the power of agni quickly. One who passes stool with difficulty due to hardness should take ghee in ample quantity added with salt and meal. If agni is deficient due to roughness, one should take ghee or oil mixed with appetizers [16].

The digestive fire is stimulated by neither fasting nor over eating like without fuel or little fire covered with excessive fuel. The power of digestive fire increases with the intake of unctuous food, various powders, aristas, sura, asavas prescribed properly by the physician. As fire with the fuel of heartwood is stable and lasts for long, the internal fire is stabilized by the application of unctuous food. One enjoys health for long by taking wholesome diet in proper quantity and after the previous food is digested. One should be careful to promote the agni by disturbing the equilibrium of dhatus. When dosas are in equilibrium the heat of agni located in the mid
portion of the body is also normal and the food digested by it leads to promotion of health, corpulence, lifespan and strength. If agni becomes deficient or excessive due to imbalanced dosas, it causes disorders [17].

When kapha become kshina and pitta kupita then that pitta along with vayu causes excessive hunger. Agni digests food quickly even after taking heavy amount of food, dhatu gets debilitated. It is called as bhasm rak roga(tikshagni)

Arsha Chikitsa

Three disorders—piles, diarrhea and grahaniroga are often of mutual causation. In these severity increases if the power of digestion is diminished and they are reduced if digestion is improved. Hence the power of digestion should be protected particularly in these three disorders [18].

SUSRUTA SAMHITA:
Shonita Varnaniya Adhyaya

After haemorrhage, due to loss of dhatus, digestive fire becomes sluggish and vayu is aggravated, hence the patient should be managed carefully with diet not too cold, light, unctuous, haematelic and with slight or without sours [19].

Dosha-Dhatu-Mala Kshya Vridhhi Vijnaniya Adhyaya

Colouring, digestion, vision, ojas with intellect and body-heat these functions are performed by pitta divided into five and thus which supports the body with the functions of fire(heat) [20]. Decreases of pitta causes deficient body heat and digestive power and loss of luster [21] in increases of pitta causes yellowish luster, heat, liking for cold, scanty sleep, fainting deterioration in strength, debility of sense organs, yellow tinge in faces, urine and eyes [22]. Aggravated dosa diminishes dhatus by its innate power as kindled fire dries up the water kept in a sauce-pan by its own heat. Dosas are very causative agents of diminution of dhatus and malas—this is the stated as dosa etc. dhatus are diminished by pitta due to pungent and hot properties [23]. One whose dosas, agni and functions of dhatus and malas are in the state of equilibrium and who has cheerful mind, intellect and sense organs is termed as swasthya(healthy) [24].

Vrana Prasna Ahyaya

As the moon, the sun and air support the cosmos with releasing, receiving and dispersing, likewise kapha, pitta and vata support the body(with these three functions) [25].

Now this would be considered wheather agni is different from pitta or identical with the same. The idea is- no other agni different from pitta is found. Pitta being of igneous nature, comes forth with function like burning (heat), digestion etc. and is metaphorically identified with agni as internal fire; in deficiency of the qualities of agni(pitta) similar substances are used while in their excess cooling remedies are prescribed. The statement beginning with 'na khalu' proves pitta as identical with agni by perception. But the question arises—if pitta and agni are identical then how does ghrits being pitta pacifying stimulate agni? Similar in case of goat's milk; on the other hand fish etc. increases pitta but do not stimulate agni; day sleep aggravates pitta but lowers the agni. Again susruta have accepted difference between pitta and agni. Body heat(agni) and pitta are mentioned separately. The present statement of the identity of pitta and agni is significant to show that the treatment of agni can be done through that of pitta which has properties like rasa, vinya etc. otherwise agni can't be tackled as it is devoid such properties [26] And that pitta situated between pakwasaya and amasaya, by invisible mechanism, digest four types of food and drinks, separate dosa, rasa, urine and faeces, and seated there itself supports, by its innate power, remaining seat of pitta and also the body with functions of agni; the name ‘digestive fire’ is given to this [27].

Aturopakramaniya Adhyaya

Agni (digestive fire), which digests food, is already described before. It is of four types— one associated with balanced dosas and deranged one of the three types—irregular, intense and mild by vata, pitta and kapha respectively; the fourth one(normal) is balanced due to equilibrium of all dosas. Of them, that which digests the ingested food properly and in time is normal, this is due to dosas in equilibrium; that which sometimes digests properly but at other times with flatulence, colic, upward movement of vayu, diarrhoea, heaviness and gurgling sound in abdomen and tenesmus-this is irregular; that which digests shortly the food taken even in large quantity is intense, the same, in advanced stage, is known as atyagni—this digests food taken even in large quantity and frequently in a shorter duration and also produces, at the end, dryness of throat, palate and lips; burning sensation and pyrexia; that which digests in longer duration even little food ingested producing heaviness in abdomen and head, cough, dyspnoea, salivation, vomiting and malaise is mild [28]. Irregular, intense, and mild agni produce diseases caused by vata, pitta and kapha respectively [29].

Amongst them, normal agni should be preserved, irregular one should be treated with unctuous, sour and salty substances and other specific measures; in intense one sweet, unctuous and cold substances as well as purgatives should be applied; more intense agni should also treated in this way particularly with buffalos milk, curd and ghee, while mild agni should be treated with pungent, bitter and astringent substances as well as emetics [30].

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Agni situated in abdomen is all powerful and glorious which digests food and due to subtly, while assimilating rasas(substances), can not be comprehended directly. Agni, due to subtly, can not be perceived but is inferred from its effects. The vitiation of agni takes place because of the previous deeds of the person or agni is dependent on pitta and as such deficiency etc occur due to vitiations of pitta and not directly. The existence of agni is inferred by the effect characterised by transformation of food.

Agni is fanned and preserved in all ways by three types of vayu —prana, apana and samana—staying in their respective position [31].

Garbha Vyakaran Sharir Adhyaya
Agni, soma, vayu, satwa, raja, tama. Pancaindriya and bhutamta are called as prana [32].

ASTANGA HRIDAYA:
Ayuskamiya Adhyaya
Dosa destroy the body when vikrita(vitiated) and maintains the same when they are in avikrita stage. Though dosas are omnipresent in the body, they predominantly reside in the regions inferior to nabhi, in between nabhi and hridaya and superior to hridaya respectively [33].

Because of vata dosa vishamagni, due to pitta dosa tikshna agni and due to kapha dosa mandagni are produced. When the dosas are in sama condition sama agni is produced [34].The pitta dosa is sasneha, tikshna, ushna, laghu, visra, sara and drava [35].

Dravyadivijnaniya Adhyaya
Agniya dravya(substances dominant in agni mahabhuta) is ruksha, tikshna, ushma, vishada, sukshma and is dominant in rupa guna. It causes dha, bha(luster), varna, prakasha and pachana [36].

Dosadivijnaniya Adhyaya
Pitta in its normalcy, performs functions such as pakti(digestion), ushma(body temp), darshana, kshut, trt, ruche, prabha, medha, dhi, shaurya and mardava of tanu (softness of the body) [37]Pitta(agni) when increased causes pitata of vit, mutra, netra and twak; it causes kshut, trt, daha, and alpa nidrata [38] when pitta get decreased produce manda anala,shila, and prabha- hani [39]Kayagni(i.e. jatharagni, digestive fire) present in its sthana(specific place - i.e. grahani) has an arsha of the dhatus(tissues) also termed as dhalwagni. Dhatus accomplish vridhi and kshya due to increase and decrease of the respective dhatagnis[40].

Dosavediya Adhyaya
Nabhi, amasaya, sveda, lasika, rudhira, rasa, drik and sparshana comprise the sthana of pitta; among them nabhi is important one[41]

Among the pancha pitta, the one that is located in the Madhya pakwasaya and amasaya, though pancha bhutamaka but because of predominance of tejas guna it is devoid of drava and termed as anala because of paka etc. karma. It performs anna pachana, sara-kitta vibhajana, anugraha(confers refinement) to other remaining pitas by providing bala, being localized there. This is termed as pachaka pitta[42].

Tikshna etc. qualities when associated with shita guna cause CAYA of pitta and when these qualities are associated with ushma guna cause pitta s KOPA. Manda qualities when associate with shita guna cause its SHAMA [43]. The functions of pitta(in prakopa stage) are daha, raga, ushma, paka, sweda. Kleda, , sruti, kotha, sadana, murchana, mada, katu-amla rasa and pandu- aruna varjita varna[44].

Dosopakramaniya Adhyaya
The therapeutic modules of aggravated pitta are sarpi pana, virechana, using drugs having swadu, shila properties, upasewana of sugandhi, shita and hridaya gandha, wearing hara of similar nature in kantha, applying shita lepa etc.[45].The initial dhatu i.e. rasa by the alpa balata of ushma remaining apachita and becoming dusta, amasses in the amasaya; this is termed as AMA[46].

Angabibhaga Sharira Adhyaya
The adhar of agni is called as grahani which takes ana. Grahani is called as pittadhara kala by dhawantari. This agni nourishes the ayu, arogya, virya shakti, oja, bhutagni and dhatagni [47]Agini gives strength to grahani and grahani also gives nourishment to agni. If agni become dushita, grahani also become diseased and vice [48].

Only because of agni ahar can give strength to the dhatu, oja, bala, varna etc [49]. After digestion by the jatharagni, agni of bhumi, jala, agni, vayu and akash act on the ahar rasa. This is called pancha bhutagni [50].Among all the agni jatharagni is the strongest one. Jatharagni is the root of all agni [51] When samana vayu is in the normal state the agni become sama and become visama when samana vayu become vitiated. Agni become tikshna when samana vayu combine with pitta and agni become manda when samana vayu associated with kapha[52].

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Samagni digests and assimilate food properly in proper time. Visamgni digests food some time slowly some time quickly. Tikshnagni digests food very quickly and mandagni digests food slowly [53].

Grahaniidosa Chikitsita Adhyaya:
By the application of proper diet along with agni vardhak sura, asav, arista, churna, kwath all increase the agni bala and sharira bala [54]. Kayagni do not increase without bhojan, not increase by excessive bhojan as like the physical fire can not blazing by excessive fuel or no fuel [55]. When kapha become kshina then along with vayu pitta increase in own site and increases agni. This agni along with vayu digested all the food material quickly and also digested own dhatu also. This is called as atyagni. It produces thirst, daha, murcha, etc [56].

If a person remains swastha after eating viruddha ahar, apathy ahar etc, then it is due to his agni bala and this agni bala should be protect. When agni become dosa grasta then the person become diseased and when agni remains in healthy condition then the person will remain in healthy state [57].

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