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Agni Sankalpana

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ABSTRACT

Agni is a very unique concept explained by *Acharyas* in ayurveda. It has been explained differently by different Acharyas, but each one has specifically stressed on its importance. *Acharya Vagbhata* states “*Rogah Sarvre api Mandagni*” (As.Hr.Ni 12/1). Thus it is evident that one has to understand Agni in all its entirety to understand the disease and its treatment aspects. Acharyas have repeatedly stressed on concepts of *swasthavritta*, *ahara vidhi vishesha*, *viruddha ahara*, *ahara vidhi vidhana*. These things when followed correctly helps in safeguarding the Agni, and helps in improving health and longevity. Ayurveda has an in depth understanding of the process of digestion and the role Agni has to play in it. Thus *Acharya Charaka* has explained in detail about the 13 types of agni and how each one of these are important for the proper digestion, absorption and assimilation of food.

Key Words Agni, Roga, Ahara

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INTRODUCTION

Acharya Charaka introduces the chapter of Grahanidosha chikitsa by explaining the importance of agni. He says that ayu, varna bala swasthya utsaha, upachaya, prabha, oja, teja etc are all dependent on dehagni. If this agni becomes shantha it leads to death and when it burns with its full strength it leads to a long healthy life¹. Thus agni is the only responsible factor for health, disease, life and death of an individual.

Further, Acharya sushruta also emphasizes on this by quoting

“*Jataro bhagawan agnirishwaro annasya pachakah*

Saukshmyadrasanaddano vivektum naiva shakyate”²

He elaborates the importance of agni by stating its sthana i.e jataro, it is given the synonym of Bhagwaan as there is no other entity which can perform the function of converting the food taken, into acceptable form. Hence he says it should be treated as God and due to its sukshmatva it is not visible and we have to understand it by the function that it performs. Thus from these two quotes it's very clear to us that the function of Agni is not restricted only to the digestion of food alone. If all the vital elements like ayush, varna, bala etc are to be kept in order then the dehagni has to be kept in order. Thus considering this explanation it becomes very evident that the study of agni in detail is very important to understand the disease process and the treatment perspective. The acharyas have

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a difference of opinion when it comes to number of agni's Acharya Sushruta have told that there is only one agni and they have simulated it to pitta and its types³ whereas Acharya Charka has mentioned there are 13 types of Agni 1. Jatharagni; 5 Bhutagni, 7 Dhatwagni⁴

Definition of Agni: Agni is defined as “*Nayate parin Amayateeti* ” that which brings about the transformation of the consumed food of vijaateeya origin (incompatible) into sajateeya form (Compatible). Thus the scope of understanding of Agni is huge as from this we understand that agni is the hetu for poshana of Deha . If it is not working properly it won't be able to transform the food and nourishment cannot be derived from Apakwa annarasa.

Synonyms of Agni : There are 61 synonyms of agni explained in shabdakalpadruma they are Shuchi, Vaishwanara, Tanoonpata, Amivachantana, Damunasa, Vishwambhar, Rudra, Tejasa, Shikhi, Anala, Vanhi etc.

Relation between Agni and Pitta:

Marichi uvachya: “*Agnireva sharire pittantargate kupitakupitah shubhashubhani karoti*”⁵

Here it's described as Agni is pittantargata i.e it is in the adhishtana of pitta dosha, when vitiated it does ashubha karya and when it is in normalcy it does shubha karya, here shubha karya can be taken as its prakruta karma of Pakti, darshan, shaurya, ruchi etc. However the chakrapani tika for the same explains the meaning of pittantargata as *Jwaladiyukta vanhi* i.e it discharges the same functions of the agni that we

see outside. It is kept in the body in the form of Ushma (heat). This ushma is kept along with pitta.

The fact that Agni and pitta are different can be explained by giving a few illustrations:

1. *Pittenagnimandyasya grahaniadhyaya vakshyamantvat* i.e it is explained in Grahani adhyaya that due to pitta vitiation agnimandya occurs and which further causes pittaja Grahani.
2. *Pittaharsya sarpisho agnivaradhanatvenouktatvat* ; the sarpi which has the quality of pitta shamana is an excellent drug for the purpose of agni vardhana.
3. Pachaka pitta when it does the tyag of its drava swarup(tyakta dravatva) it does the dharana of agni swarupa and once its function is done it comes back to its drava form.
4. Ajaapeya and Matsya do pitta vruddhi, however they do not do vardhana of Agni.
5. Diwaswap causes prakopa of pitta but does agni shamana.

Thus from all of the above we understand that pitta due to its agneatva does the function of dahana and pachana etc. hence it's clear that Pitta and Agni are kept only together in ashrayashrayi bhava and they are two different entities.

When agni and pitta are two different entities the question arises what was the purpose of calling them Abheda

It is explained in the dalhana teeka it says;

“*Tadrasaveeryadigunopadhiyuktasya pittasya chikitsadwarena agnichikitsa karayet darshanartham*”⁶

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For the purpose of agni chikitsa we have to understand the gunas of pitta and agni. Since both have same gunas treating pitta will treat agni. Thus they are considered abhedha for the purpose of chikitsa.

Types of Agni:

The detailed classification about types of agni is given by Acharya Charaka; he has mentioned about 13 types of Agni 1 Jatharagni, 5 Bhutagni and 7 Dhatwagni.⁷

Acharya Sushruta he explains about 5 types of agni i.e Pachakagni, Ranjakagni, Alochakagni, Bhrajakagni, Sadakagni⁸

Acharya Vagbhata explains only one type of agni which is located between amashaya and pakwashaya, in spite of being panchabhutatmaka it is tejas guna pradhan. It has left its drava guna (tyaktadravatva). Since it has involved in the panchanadi karma it derives the synonym of Agni. This pachaka pitta which gives bala to the other types of pitta is called as agni by vagbhata⁹.

Awastha of Agni:

While explaining the state of agni it is said that, when the nabi mandala stith Samana vayu remains sthir in this own sthana, then the Jatharagni remains in Sam avastha.

When this agni goes into the viparith marga it becomes Vishama. When it gets affected by pitta it becomes tikshna and when it get avruth by kapha it becomes manda¹⁰

Physiology of Digestion :

Jatharagni Paka :

- The ingested food is pulled into the kostha by the pulling action of prana vayu.

- The snehamsha in the food and kledaka kapha imparts klinnata to the ingested food making it mrudu and into bolus form.

- The agni which is ignited further by Samana vayu acts on this anna. Now the ahara which is taken in proper time and in proper proportion gets digested by samagni imparting health and longevity.

- As this process of digestion happens by Jatharagni the food ingested goes through 3 Awasthapaka.

- Ingested food as it passes through the first stage of digestion there is a udirna of kapha which happens in the form of phena bhuta . This gives a bolus form to the anna and the ann attains madhuri bhava; this is the prathama avastha paka called madhurawastha paka.

- In case the ingested food is devoid of Madhura rasa then there will be less generation of kapha in madhurawastha paka. Due to which there will be vidaha of anna later in the 2nd avastha paka, which is the reason for the burning sensation.

- In the second avastha paka the entire annaras gets amlarasa as the ahara moves from amashaya to pachyamanashaya and the agni acts on this. This is called the amla avastha paka.

- In the third avastha paka the heat available in the pakwashaya is just enough to convert the kittansha into drava and ghana bhaga. Hence the adjective used here is shoshyamana vanhi and not pachyamana vanhi. As the ahara paka has already occurred now the job of removing the atirikt dravata remains. This stage is largely dominated

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by vayu and the entire kittansha becomes katu, after which there is separation of mutra and purisha. This is the Katu avastha paka.

- Thus if there is any deformity in the formed stools we have to understand that there is derangement in the functioning of vayu.¹¹

Bhutagni Paka:

The function of Bhutagni paka is to do the nourishment of Parthivadi bhavas, with the help of panchoshma of the panchamahabhutas. Since the deha is panchabhautika, the ahara also needs to be panchabhautika and for the digestion of this panchabhautika ahara we need panchabhautika agni. This parthivadi dravya vyavasthita agni gets ignited by Jatharagni which gives bala to it. After getting sandhukshita by Jatharagni this bhutagni starts the pachana of Parthivadi dravas leading to increase in its own gunas(formation of molecules similar to its own). The role of Bhutagni is limited to getting its similar gunas from the dravya, do the pachana of these gunas and do the poshana of those gunas in the body¹².

Dhatwagni paka :

As the rasa formed by the bhutagni vyapar reaches the level of Dhatwagni, it gets activated and it starts its job. Here we have to understand that this bhutagni and dhatwagni paka is going on simultaneously as the formation of Sharirasadrusha dhatus is the job of Dhatwagni and imparting the gandhatvadi guna of parthivadi mahabhuta in those dhatus is the karma of bhutagni. Thus this kriya goes on till the last molecule of the body. Now in Dhatwagni vyapar

also there is formation of some kittansha (Dhatu mala) from the separated ahara rasa.¹³

CONCLUSION

From the above discussion we can conclude, the role of agni in maintaining health and longevity is huge. This needs to be taken into consideration while examining a patient as this will give the physician a lot of clues to his problem. Again it is very important to have agni in proper time as when the food is had when the agni is sandhukshita it will help in proper digestion of food. As Acharya Charaka correctly quotes as in a yagya lack of fuel as well as too much of fuel leads to extinguishing the agni similarly both abhojana and atibhojana destroys the agni. It is very important to consider taking Hita (taking food once the earlier food is digested) and Mita (matravat) ahara for maintaining the agni.

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