

## CRITICAL REVIEW ON AGNI KARMA

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## ABSTRACT

During the period of *Achrya Sushruta*, *Agni Karma* has gained importance as a treatment for so many disorder. It was the *Achrya Sushruta*, who have earmarked the *Agni* as supreme in all the para surgical procedures. A separate chapter in *Sushruta Sutra Sthana* 12 with details about every aspect of *Agni Karma*, denotes its importance in the treatment, during those period. *Sushruta* has referred *Agni* in *Agropaharaniya*, as *Upayantra*, *Anushstra* and one of sixty measures for *Varana* (Su. Su. -5/6; 7/15, Su.Su. - 8/15; Su. Chi.1/8).<sup>[1]</sup> *Acharya Charaka* has considered *Agni Karma*, under one of the three fold treatment i.e. *Shastra Pranidhana* (Ch. Su. 11/55). *Charaka Samhita* is mainly text of Medicinal treatment but the use of *Agni Karma* has been indicated at different places. In the chapter of “*DwiVarniya Chikitsa*” *Agni Karma* is indicated under 36 *Upakramas* of *Varna*. In *Ashtan Samgraha* 40th chapter of *Sutra Sthana* of *Ashtang Samgraha* deals specifically with *Agni Karma*. Besides, for different disorder *Agni Karma* is also indicated as a line of treatment.<sup>[2]</sup>

**KEYWORDS:** *Ashtan Samgraha*, *Sutra Sthana*, *Upakramas*, *Agni Karma*.

## Definition

The word *Agni Karma* comprises of two words - *Agni* and *Karma*, i.e. fire and procedure and collectively gives the meaning, a procedure done by *Agni* (Su. Su. 12/1-2 Dlh).<sup>[3]</sup> A study of different texts regarding the derivation of *Agni* reveals that, the word *Agni* derived by the root “*AgiGatou*”. In short the word *Agni* denotes its upward going nature and universal presence. *Acharya Sushruta* have indicated the materials by name according to the site of *Agni Karma* viz.:

1 *Twakadagha* - *Pippali*, *Ajasakrida*, *Godanta*, *Shara*, *Shalaka*.2 *Mamsadagha* - *Jambhavsta* *Shalakla* and *Other Metals*.3 *Sira*, *Snayu*, *Sandhi* and *Asthidagha* - *Madhu*, *Jaggery* and *Snehas*.<sup>[4]</sup>

According to *Acharya Vagbhata* for *Twakadah*, *Godanta* and *Suryakantan* should be used. *Madhu*, *Sneha*, *Jambavastha* and *Jaggery* should be employed for *Agni Karma* of *Arsha*, *Bhagandara*, *Granthi*, *Nadivrana* etc.<sup>[5]</sup>

Classification of *Agni Karma*

During describing the *Agni Karma* there is no description available regarding its classification, but it can be classified on various basis as below: viz.

1 According to *Dravyas* used.

2 According to the Site.

3 According to the Disease.

4 According to *Akriti*.5 According to *Dhatus* to be cauterized.According to *Dravyas* used*Agni Karma* can be classified into two groups.A. *Snigdha Agni Karma*-Performed by the means of *Madhu*, *Ghritha*, *Taila* etc. According to *Achrya Sushruta* they should be used for *Sira*, *Snayu* etc. type of deep structures.B. *Ruksha Agni Karma*- Done by *Pippali*, *Shalaka*, *Ajasakrida* etc. According to *Achrya Sushruta* they should be used for *Twaka dagha*.<sup>[6]</sup>

## According to the Site

On the basis of site *Agni Karma* can be grouped under two types.A. *Sthanika* (Local):- As in *Vicharchika*, *Arsha* etc.B. *Sthanantariya* (Distal to the site of disease) as in *Visuchikta*, *Apachi*.<sup>[7]</sup>

etc.

## According to the Disease

There are so many types of *Agni Karma* eg. In the disease like *Arsha*, *Kandara* etc. it should be done after surgical excision.In *Sinus*, *fistula* in *ano* etc. it should be done after incision.In *Krimidanta* it should be done after filing the cavity by *Jaggery*, *Madhuchhista* etc.<sup>[8]</sup>

**According to Akriti**

In regard to *Akriti*, *Acharya Sushruta* have mentioned four types of *Agni*.

*Karma*. (S.Su. 12/11)

**I Valaya III Vilekha**

**II Bindu IV Pratisarana.**<sup>[9]</sup>

*Acharya Vagbhata* has added more three types. (A.S. Su. – 40/4)

1 *Ardha chandra*

2 *Swastika*

3 *Astapada.*<sup>[10]</sup>

*Acharya Dalhana* have given explanation regarding the shapes of *Agni*

*Karma* in his commentary. (*Dalhana* on S. Su. 12/11)

i *Valaya* - It means Circular shape.

ii *Bindu* - Dot like shape. According to *Dalhana Shalaka* should be of pointed tip.

iii *Vilekha* - Making of different shapes by heated *Shalaka*.

iv *PratiSarana* - Rubbing at indicated site by heated *Shalaka* and there is no specific shape.

v *Ardhchandra* - Crescent shape.

vi *Swastika* - It is specific shape of *Swastika Yantra*.

vii *Astapada* - It is specific shape containing eight limbs in different directions.<sup>[11]</sup>

**5 According to Dhatus**

According to *Acharya Sushruta* and *Vagbhata* the *AgniKarma* should be done as per involvement of the *Dhatus* such (Su. Su. 12/7, A.H. Su. 30/4) as.

i *Twaka dagdha*

ii *Sira and Snayu dagdha*

iii *Mamsa dagdha*

iv *Asthi Sandhi dagdha*

But *Acharya Sushruta* have classified it in two groups only.

(a) *Twaka dagdha*

(b) *Mamsa dagdha* (S. Su. – 12/7).<sup>[12]</sup>

**Sign and Symptoms produced after Agni Karma as per Dhatus****A) Twaka Dagdha**

When the *Twaka* is cauterised, burning is attended with a crackling sound, bad odour, and contraction of the skin.

**B) Mamsa Dagdha**

When *Mamsa* is cauterised, there occurs a pigeon like discolouration of the part, inflammation, mild pain, lesion get dried up and shrivelled.

**C) Sira Snayu Dagdha**

When the *Snayu and Siras* are cauterised, there occurs black discolouration, swelling of the lesion and a cessation of discharge (including that of blood).

**D) Sandhi and Asthi Dagdha**

When *Asthi and the Sandhis* are cauterised there occurs dryness, redness, hardness.<sup>[13]</sup>

**Indications of Agni Karma**

A number of diseases and conditions have been explained in text where *Agni Karma* as therapeutic measure has been indicated as below.

1 *Shiroroga*

2 *Vataja Shiroroga*

3 *Kaphaja Shiroroga*

4 *Ardhav bhedaka*

5 *Bharu-lalata Vedana*

6 *Vartma Roga*

7 *Pakshama Kopa*

8 *ShlistaVartma*

9 *Bisa Vartma*

10 *Alaji*

11 *Arbuda*

12 *Puyalasa*

13 *Abhisyanda*

14 *Adhimantha*

15 *Lagana*

16 *Medaja Ostha Roga*

17 *Danta Nadi*

18 *Krimi Danta*

19 *Adhidanta*

20 *Sheeta Danta*

21 *Danta Vidhradhi*

22 *Jalarbuda*

23 *Arsha (Vataja-Kaphaja)*

24 *Nasa arsha*

25 *Karnarsha*

26 *Lingarsha*

*Bhagandar*

29 *Chippa*

30 *Kunakha*

31 *Kadara*

32 *Balmika*

33 *Jatumani*

34 *Mashaka*

35 *Tilakalaka*

36 *Charmakila.*<sup>[14]</sup>

**Suitable Season for Agni Karma**

*Agni Karma* can be done during all the seasons except *Grishma and Sharada*. Even in these Seasons, during emergency States amenable only to cautery, it may be used after taking appropriate counter measures against them. ( S. Su. 12/4 ). It is because of, in *Sharada* there is *Prakopa of Pitta and Agni Karma* also aggravates *Pitta* and it may be lead *Pitta Prakopa*, that's why here *Agni Karma* is contra indicated. While *Grishma* season is also a hot season and in this season *Agni Karma* is contra indicated.<sup>[15]</sup>

**Pre Agni Karma Diet**

In all diseases and during all seasons, the *Agni Karma* can be done after feeding the patient with *Pichhila diet*.

### Post Agni Karma Management

After completion of *Agni Karma* the part where *Agni Karma* has done should be anointed with *Madhu* and *Ghrta* for *Ropana* of *Dagdha Varna*. (S. Su.12/11).<sup>[16]</sup>

### Contra indications for Agni Karma

In following conditions *Agni Karma* should not be done.

1. *Pitta Prakriti*
2. *Bhinna Kostha*
3. *Durbalya*
4. *Vridhdha*
5. *Antah Shonita*
6. *Anuddhrata Shalya*
7. *Bala*
8. *Bhiru*
9. A person afflicted with a large number of *Vranas*
10. A person who is forbidden for *Swedana*. *Swedana* is contra indicated for person and suffering from – *Pandu Atisara*

*Kshaya Guda Bhramsa*

*Udara Roga Nasta Sangya*

*Chhardi Shochita*

*Who has taken Alcohol Oja Kshaya*

*Vidagdha Rakta Pitta*

*Sthula Ajirna*

*Kruddha Trishna*

*Adhya Rogi Garbhini*

*Prameha Ruksha*

*Daurbalya Shranta*

*Visha Kshudha*

*Timir*

According to *Acharya Charaka Agni Karma* should not be done in the *Vrana of Snayu, Marma, Netra, Kushtha* and *Vrana* with *Visha* and *Shalya*. (Ch. Chi. –25/105).<sup>[17]</sup>

### Superiority of Agni Karma

*Agni Karma* is superior than *Kshara karma* as a disease burnt with *Agni* will never reoccur. Disease which can not be cured with medicines, *Kshara* and Surgery, can be cured with *Agni*. (S. Su. 12/13) The Surgical excision should be done with the sharp instrument which is heated by *Agni* with benefit of asepsis, otherwise there will be sepsis by unheated instrument. (Dal-Su. Chi. 2/46) There will be vaso constriction due to heat and it will check the haemorrhage. S. Su. (14/42) By these virtue *Agni Karma* is superior than every other procedure.<sup>[18]</sup>

### Agni Karma in Modern Perspective

After the detailed description of *Agni Karma* from Ayurvedic view point, a brief description in modern perspective of the same therapy has been presented in following paragraphs.

There are two procedures similar to *Agni Karma* are available in modern science.

1. Electrocautery
2. Diathermy

### (1) Electrocautery

Electrocautery is one of the most useful instruments for surgical procedure. It consists essentially of a platinum wire which, can be heated to red hot by means of an electric current. Application of the red hot wire to tissues will either cut them or seal any bleeding points by coagulation. It is thus ideal for removing small skin tags and pappillomats etc. and for controlling the bleeding following curetting works, granulomas and similar lesions.

### (2) Diathermy

It is a bi-polar apparatus being used in most of operative procedures. In this a very high frequency current is passed through the patients body and generates heat.

Three types of diathermy are available.

#### I Medicinal diathermy.

It is mild degree and does not cause destruction of tissues.

#### II Short wave diathermy.

It is used as a therapeutic elevation of temperature in the tissue by means of an oscillating electric current of extremely high frequency (10-100 million cycles/seconds) and a short wave length of 3-30 meters.

#### III Surgical diathermy.

In this diathermy, a very high frequency current is passed through the patient's body and generated heat. By making one electrode relatively large and strapping it firmly to one limb and making the other electrode a pointed moveable tip, sufficient heat is generated at the tip to coagulate or cut tissue.

#### Advantage

Absence of bleeding; it's effect is very similar to that of the electrocautery, and the heat generated automatically sterilises the area treated, a sterile dry dressing or no dressing at all is, therefore, all that is needed to promote healing.

#### Disadvantage

1. Histological examination of the treated lesion is not usually possible due to the distortion of the cells from the heat, thus a preliminary biopsy needs to be done, where the diagnosis is in doubt.<sup>[19]</sup>

### CONCLUSION

Regarding the procedure of *Agni Karma*, there is a detailed description is available in *Astang Samgraha* (A.S. Su. 40/5) i.e., before doing the procedure of *Agni Karma*, benedication chanting and collection of related materials and instruments should be done, the patient kept in suitable position by keeping head in the East direction and held by expert assistants to avoid movement. After this the surgeon should make the different shapes of *Agni Karma viz -Valaya, Ardhchandra, Swastika*, etc. as per need by heated *Jambvostha* or *Shalaka* in a smoke free fire of *Khadira* or *Badara* with the help a blower or a fan. During this

period if patients feels discomfort then keep them satisfies by courageful, consolating talks, give cold water for drink and sprinkle cold water. But procedure of *Agni Karma* should be done till production of complete cauterisation, anoint the *Madhu*, *Ghruta*, and followed by cold and lubricating *Dravyas* applications.

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