

RAKTA AS CHATHURTHA DOSHA – A CONCEPTUAL STUDY

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ABSTRACT

Ayurveda is a Science of medicine which is based upon Tridoshas, Sapta Dhatus and Trimalas. Concept of dosha has been around for as long as ancients have been practicing Ayurveda from Charaka –Hippocrates, all have practiced the system on the basis of tri-dosha and panchamahabhuta theory. Tri-doshas are basic elements of the body, mean while Rakta also a major constituent of the body. Acharyas also mentioned that along with three Doshas Rakta, the 4th Dosha present even during the origin, existence & destruction of the body. Now, this becomes the debatable topic for whole Ayurveda scholars, because Rakta is basically considered as one among Sapta Dhatus. So whether we can accept Rakta as Chaturtha Dosha or it is only one among the Sapta Dhatus. So, here attempt is made to discuss the possible points for the same.

KEYWORDS: Tridosha, Saptadhatu, Rakta, Chaturtha Dosha.

INTRODUCTION

Rakta is the word derived from the word “ रज रंजने ” meaning is to stain. If white cloth is stained with this it become red coloured hence it is called as Rakta. Synonyms of Rakta are Lohitam, Asriga, Shonitam, Rudhiram, Astram. Most of these indicate the red colour. Sthana of Rakta is Yakrut and Pleeha. Panchabhoutika composition of rakta is tejo and jala mahabhuta.

Factors In Favour To Consider Rakta As Dosha

1) There will be no existence of the body without Rakta: Vata, Pitta & Kapha are the cause for the origin of body and they are situated respectively in the lower, middle & upper parts of the body. The body in the same way like a house supported on three pillars (Tri sthambha) and when they are vitiated they causes destruction of body. These three along with Shonita, the 4th Dosha are present even during the origin, existence & destruction of the body.^[1]

2) Rakta sthana^[1] – शोणितस्य स्थानं यकृत्प्लीहानौ |

In Samhitas as other doshas sthana are mentioned, rakta dosha sthana is also mentioned as Yakrut and Pleeha.

3) Rakta prakopak hetu^[2]

छर्दि वेग प्रतिघातात् काले चानवसेचनात् ||

श्रमाभिघात सन्तापैरजीर्णाध्यशनैस्तथा ||

शरत् काल स्वभावात् च शोणितं सम्प्रदुष्यति ||

As all doshas have there prakopak hetu. In Charak Samhita Rakta prakopak hetu is also explained.

4) Raktaja Roga^[2]

As we have Roga due to vitiation of Tridoshas, we have different disorders due to vitiated rakta also. Some of them are as Kushta, Raktapitta, Visarpa, Raktameha, Raktapradra, Gulma, Vidradi, Vatarakta, Kandu, Pidaka, Charmadala, Angamarda, Pidaka, Mashaka, Neelaka, Tilakalaka, Nyaccha, Vyanga.

5) Raktaja Roga Chikitsa^[2]

कुर्यात् शोणितरोगेषु रक्तपित्तहरीक्रियाम् |

विक्रेतुपवासं च स्रावणं शोणितस्य च ||

As every dosha has its own upkrama, Rakta dosha also has its own method of chikitsa.

6) Dosha prasara

While describing Shatkriya Kalas, in the stage of Prasara Avastha of Dosha, Susruta states 15 types of Prasara which are due to combination of Vata, Pitta, Kapha and Rakta. So, it indicates Shonita is given equal importance along with other three doshas in vyadhi utpatti.

7) Rakta is the causes of saririka vyadhi

Sharirika Vyadhi are those caused by foods and drinks which bring about abnormalities in Vata, Pitta, Kapha and Rakta, either individually or combined. By this we can understand as Rakta is Moola of Sharira also it is Moola of Sharirika Vyadhis like other Doshas.^[1]

8) Rakta is the cause of saririka vrana
As in Shalya Tantra, Vrana Chikitsa is most important aspect. In the formation of sharirika vrana along with three Doshas Rakta is also explained, so this shows the importance of Rakta in body¹.

9) Disease classification^[3]

शारीरा सत्वन्नपानमूला वातपित्तकफशोणितसन्निपात
वैषम्य निमित्ताः ॥

While classifying diseases, many of the diseases are classified as, Vataja, Pittaja, Kaphaja, and Raktaja. E.g, Vrana Shopha, Gulma, Pleeha Roga, Mutrakruhra etc.

10) Shodhana Chikitsa^[4]

Our Acharya's told Rakta Mokshana is one among the Panchakarma. Individual three Doshas have their specific Shodhana procedure, similarly Raktamokshana is also told specific Chikitsa for vitiated Rakta.

Samshodhana	Dosha
Basti	Vata
Virechana	Pitta
Vamana	Kapha
Nasya	Urdhvajatrugata vikaras
Raktamokshana	Rakta

Factors Against To Consider Rakta As Dosha

1) Nirukti of Doshas - Acharya Sushruta not explained Rakta nirukti while explaining dosha nirukti.^[1]

तत्र वा गतिगन्धन्योः इति धातुः, तप सन्तापे, श्लिष
आलिङ्गने, एतेषां कृद्विहितैः प्रत्ययैवार्तः पित्तं श्लेष्मेति च
रूपाणि भवन्ति ॥

2) Acharya Sushruta did not explain Rakta Sthana while explaining Dosha Sthana^[1]

दोष स्थानान्यत ऊर्ध्वं वक्ष्यामः

तत्र समासेन वातः श्रोणि गुद संश्रयः, तदुपर्यधो नाभेः
पक्वाशयः पक्वामाशयमध्यं पित्तस्य, आमाशयः श्लेष्मणः ॥

3) Difference in formation of Dosha & Rakta - As in formation of Rakta it under goes Uttarottara Dhatu formation as per Kshiradadhi Nyaya, Hence Rakta is formed only after formation of Rasa Dhatu. Doshas are formed from food and in the formation they are individually present in the body, they are not depended on each other.

4) In the types of Prakruti^[5] only doshas are considered and no reference for Raktaja Prakruti.

Vataja Prakruti
Pittaja Prakruti
Kaphaja Prakruti

5) Acharya Sushruta Compared Doshas like Vata as "Anila" (air) Pitta as "Surya" (sun) Kapha as "Soma" (moon). But did not compared the Rakta.^[1]

विसर्गादानविक्षेपैःसोम सूर्यानिला यथा |

धारयति जगद् देहं कफपित्तानिलास्तथा ॥

6) In all classics, there is explanation regarding Rakta Sara Purusha Lakshanas. But there is no reference about Vata, Pitta, Kapha Sara Purusha Lakshanas.

7) All Doshas are explained with their sub-types, but there is no reference about sub-types of Rakta.

Vata dosha - Prana, Apana, Vyana, Udana, Samana
Pitta dosha - Pachaka, Ranjaka, Sadhaka, Alochaka, Bhrajaka

Kapha dosha - Avalambaka, Kledaka, Bodhaka, Tarpaka, Shlesaka

8) Ashraya Ashrayi Bhava^[6]

तत्रस्थानि स्थितो वायुः पित्तं तु स्वेद रक्तयोः

श्लेष्मा शेषेषु तेनैषां आश्रया आश्रयिणां मिथः

येदकस्य तदन्यस्य वर्धनक्षण औषधम्

अस्थि मारुतयोः नैवं ॥

Ashrayee Ashraya (Dhatu & Mala)

Vata Asthi

Pitta Sweda & Rakta

Kapha Rasa, Mamsa, Meda, Majja, Shukra, Purisha & Mutra

Acharya Vagbhata explained Doshas resides in Dhatus, but as Rakta itself gives ashraya to Pitta dosha. It does not get ashraya in any other dhatus. So it cannot be considered as Dosha.

9) Vata, Pitta, Kapha Doshas have there respective Nanatmaja Vyadhis, But Rakta does not have Nanatmaja Vyadhis, instead only few Rakta Pradoshaja Vikaras has been explained.

10) Koshta^[5] are classified on the basis of doshas.

कोष्ठः क्रूरो मृदुर्मध्यो मध्यः स्यातैः समैरपि |

Krura, Mrudu, Madyama koshta. There is no reference of koshta on basis of Rakta.

11) Rutu Dosha relationship^[7]

चयप्रकोप्रशमा वायोग्निष्मदिषु त्रिषु |

वर्षादिषु तु पित्तस्य, श्लेष्मणः शिशिरादिषु ॥

Acharya Vagbhata explained the effect of shadrutu on Tridosha like sanchaya, prakopa and prashama but not for rakta.

12) Dhaarana karma of Dhatus^[8]

दूषणात् दोषाः | That which contaminates body is called Dosha.

धारणात् धातवः | That which supports body is called Dhatu.

Doshas also act as tissues in term of protecting & supporting body. Doshas in state of balance, behold body & support it by performing all functions. But when they disturbed, they cause many diseases. Thus Doshas are defined in terms of both contaminants & tissues. But Dhatus are only defined in terms of supporting body & not in terms of vitiating body components. Thus rakta is a tissue which can be vitiated by Doshas but it cannot vitiate independently.

13) Doshas control the Jatharagni^[9]- In Ayurveda it is stated that all diseases are manifested due to weakness of Jatharagni. Quality & quantity of dhatvagni & doshagni are maintained by Jatharagni, but Jatharagni itself is controlled by doshas. But there is no evidence that Rakta controls Jatharagni.

CONCLUSION

- By above all discussion points, it is very difficult to come to one conclusion that Rakta can be accepted or rejected as Chaturtha Dosha.
- Rakta is not a Dosha but due to similarities in the method of explaining Rakta nirukti, sthana, guna, karma, vikara and chikitsha it can be considered as a Dosha.
- By above mentioned points we can infer that Rakta is a Dhātu only but it has independent pathogenesis in the initiation of diseases as dosha like in vrana, vidradhi, rakta pitta, gulma etc.
- But ultimately it can be concluded that Rakta cannot be considered as Chaturtha Dosha but it is most important dhātu in the body especially in purview of Shalya Tantra.

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