



**AN APPRAISAL CONCEPT OF KOSHITA & KOSHTANGA IN AYURVEDA WITH
MODERN CORRELATIONS**

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ABSTRACT

Ayurveda has some unique entities, Koshta and Koshtanga is one of them. Word Koshta is used for vacant place having covering, where things can be kept in a lot. The organs located within the Koshta are called Koshtanga. They are known as Ashayas. The term Ashaya can be compared to hollow viscera in the body which has lumen to provide accommodation to one or other essential substances, The term Koshta refers to the nature of the digestive tract or Alimentary tract, which usually represents the motility of the intestines and movement of food, fecal matter in the alimentary canal and elimination of the stool. According to dominance of Doshas or Dehaprakruti, Koshta is generally divided into three types i.e. Krura, Mrudu and Madhya where dominance of Vata, Pitta and Kapha Dosha is seen respectively. Koshta is included in Abhyantara Rogamarga. Koshta Pariksha tells us about the liquidity, moistness, roughness of the bowel habits. Assessment of Koshta is important for diagnosis and treatment of diseases. Koshta Pariksha helps for choice of Aushadhi and Aushadhimatra. Koshta Pariksha also plays an important role for to advice Pathya-Apathya and Aahara - Vihara. Thus in this article an attempt is made to explore the structure basis of Koshta and Koshtanga explain by our Acharya in classics with modern review.

KEYWORDS: Ayurveda, Koshta, Koshtanga, Ashaya.

INTRODUCTION

In Ayurveda the knowledge of Sharir has been explained under the heading of Sharir Sthana. Acharya have been very well known about structure of the various parts of the body. Before constructing a house for selves or transforming them into homes, we all should remember that we are all blessed with a beautiful home of our own immediately when the destiny plans that we are going to descend as tenants into the creation. That home is called Physical home. The human body resembles a home with bones and muscles forming the protecting walls. The interiors comprise of huge cavities which accommodate various organs designed and assigned to be located in the place allotted to them, designed to perform an assigned set of activities and comprising of ingredients and amenities to accomplish these functions. The large spaces (cavities or rooms) of our body which accommodate the organs (Koshtanga or Ashayas) are called Koshta. Example Thoracic cavity is a large space which accommodates lungs and heart, a part of food pipe etc. and doesn't allow any other organ because the space is designed to accommodate only these set of organs. The abdominal cavity or cavity of our tummy gives place to digestive organs like stomach, intestines, gall bladder, glands like liver, spleen and pancreas, urinary apparatus including kidneys and ureters etc. The pelvic

cavity located just below the abdominal cavity accommodates urinary bladder, uterus (womb), lower part of intestines etc. The thoracic cavity, abdominal cavity and pelvic cavity are the large spaces and accommodate the above said organs. Thus, they can be included under Koshta. The organs located within the Koshta are called Koshtanga. They are known as Ashayas. The term Ashaya can be compared to hollow viscera in the body which has lumen to provide accommodation to one or other essential substances, so Ashaya can be defined as space meant for occupancy of essential substances needed for body functioning (Aamashaya, Raktashaya) and also for the waste materials which are to be eliminated (e.g- Mutrashaya).

DEFINITION

“Sthaanani Aama Agni Pakvaanam Mutrasaya Rudhirasya Cha Hrut Unduka Puphusaha Cha Koshta Iti Abhidheeyte”. (Sushruta Chikitsa Stan 2/12)

Sushruta explains Koshta as a place or cavity occupied by the below said organs:-

➤ **Amashaya**

“**Aama Ana Mananah Amasaya**”.

The Amashaya lays Urdhva (proximal) to the Pittashaya (seat of Pitta) above the Nabhi. It is a receptacle for all the kinds of food due to the activity of Slesma and its moistening properties, the food gets moist and going to be easily digestible. According to Dalhana, the Amashaya primarily meant for the Adhithana (seat) of all type of food. It is the place where the process of digestion occurs. According to Chakrapani, Amashaya is also known as Slesmasaya as it is the chief Sthana (place) of Slesma.

➤ **Agni –Ashaya**

Agni-ashaya is the site of fire, through Pittasthana (place of Pitta) i.e. the entire digestive tract involving the function of digestion of food should be taken as place for Agni or fire (Agni in the body represented in the form of Pitta) i.e. stomach, small intestine, pancreas, liver, etc. we should mainly consider Pancreas as the site of Agni.

➤ **Pakwashaya**

“**Tatrapa Pakwashayo Viseshana Vatasthanam**”.

Pakwashaya is the main site of Vatasthan. It can be considered as Colon. Since movement of Vata takes place in upward and downward so it is mainly found in transverse colon. The term also includes small and large intestine put together i.e. Starting from the end part of the stomach to the anal opening.

➤ **Mutrashaya**

Organ holding urine, mainly the term Mutrashaya includes urinary bladder. It is situated between Nabhi and Prstha (back) in the region of Kati (Pelvis) and Vanksana Pradesa (Pelvic region) and it is closely related with Muska (Andakosa, Guda, Sepha). Mutrashaya is situated in Gudasthivivara Pradesa and it is closely related with the Paurusam, Vrsana (scrotum), Guda.

➤ **Rudhira ashaya or Rakta ashaya**

“**Sonitasya Sthanam Yakrit Pleehanoh**”.

Organs related to formation of Rakta (blood), Yakrit (liver) and Pleeha (spleen) should be considered as Rakta Ashaya.

➤ **Hrut/Hridaya:-**

“**Ahar Rasya Yah Sarah Sa Rasa Iti Uchayate. Tasya Cha Hridayam Sthanam**”.

Hridaya is organ of circulation of Rasa (plasma) and Rakta (blood), Hridaya being place for Chetana (consciousness), it gets active while in wakefulness in comparison to asleep condition. It has mentioned as Adhithana (seat) for the Manas and Buddhi by Sushruta in the context of development of various Avayava. It is the Avayava of Urah Pradesa (Thoracic region) and situated in between the two Stanya (breast) which are seen externally. It is situated in Koshta (abdomen) with relation of other Avayava like Yakrit (liver), Kloma (gall bladder), Pleeha (spleen) and Amasaya. These all are surrounds to Hridaya by keeping it in center.

➤ **Unduka**

It is an Avayava of Madhyam Anga (Koshta) which has relation with mala (waste material) especially with Aharamala (stool). So, it should be situated below the Nabhi (umbilicus) and in Pakwasaya (large intestine) because Nabhi is defined as place of Agni and below this, discrimination of food starts in Pakwashaya.

According to Dalhana's opinion, Unduka is situated in the Pakwashaya and provides storage place for the separated Mala (which was separated from the rest part). Word Unduka represents the proximal part of Guda (rectum) according to Dalhana.

➤ **Phupphusa**

“**Udaanvayoradharah Phupphusah Pryochyate Budhah**”

Sharangadhar Phupphusa is also a Koshtangaa which lies in relation to Hridaya, as mention in Sharira Sthana, Adah (lower) and Vama (in left) to Hridaya along with Pliha, Phupphusa is placed. As per Dalhana, Phupphusa has been defined as Avayava which is attached with Hridayanadika (attached to heart).

Analysis of koshta & koshtanga with correlation of ayurveda & modern science

Analysis of koshta explained by sushruta

When we see the Koshtanga explained by Sushruta, the list of organs looks incomplete. We can justify by telling that Sushruta has intelligently given a few examples of the organs comprising of Koshta without giving an entire list of the organs. He has included Hridaya and Phupphusa i.e. lungs and heart which are the main organs occupying the Uroguha (thoracic cavity). Sushruta has mentioned Mutrashaya as organ of pelvic cavity. If we classify the Pakwashaya (large intestine) into an abdominal part and a pelvic part, we get sigmoid colon and rectum into the pelvic cavity. But Sushruta mentioned Unduka or caecum separately because being the first part of large intestine and large in shape, there is very possibility for Sushruta to have taken it as a separate organ. Considering Unduka as a separate organ, he would have taken the small intestine and the part of large intestine as above ileocecal junction (junction of last part of small intestine and first part of large intestine) as Pakwashaya.

There is a possibility of the author clubbing certain organs and giving a broader meaning of an organ. Example there is a possibility of Sushruta clubbing the oral cavity and oesophagus under the term Amashaya. Even the small intestine might clubbed in the term Amashaya or Agnayashaya or even Pakwashaya. Thus, he has not skipped mentioning organ representation of any major cavity (Koshta). Thus Sushruta's explanation of Koshta becomes clear and valid.

Koshtanga

“Pancha Dasha Koshta Angaani- Naabhi Cha ,Hridayam Cha, Kloma Cha , Yakrit Cha ,Pleeha Cha ,Vrukka Cha ,Vasthi Cha, Pureesh Aadhaaraha Cha, Aamaashayaha Cha, Pakwashayaha Cha, Uttaragudamm Cha, Adharagudam Cha, Kshudra Antram Cha,Sthoola Antram Cha, Vapaavahanam Cha”.-Ca. Sa. 7/10.

Charaka has given a big list of Koshtanga i.e. Ashaya Considered as Nabhi (Naval region or umbilicus region), Hridaya (Heart), Kloma (Pancreas, Lungs or Trachea), Yakrit (Liver), Pleeha (Spleen), Vrukka (Kidneys), Vasti (Urinary bladder), Pureeshaadhara (Ceacum), Aamashaya (Stomach), Pakwashaya (Large Intestine), Uttara Guda (Sigmoid colon and Rectum), Adhara Guda (Anal canal and Anal opening), Kshudrantram (Small Intestine), Sthoolantram (Large Intestine), Vapa Vahanam (Peritoneum Layers covering and protecting abdominal viscera).

Analysis of koshta explained by charaka

Though there is some similarity with respect to some organs mentioned by Sushruta, Charaka has mentioned some more organs or parts of organs which lead to confusions. Hridaya, Yakrit, Pliha, vasti (Mutrashaya by Sushruta), Pakwashaya, Amashaya, Pureshadhara (Unduka by Sushruta) are explained in the list of Koshtanga by both Charaka and Sushruta.

The other organs mentioned by Charaka are as follows:-

Nabhi (umbilicus) or navel region:- It cannot be considered as organ. The word Nabhi is often used interchangeably with Pitta Sthana. Since we do not find the mention of Grahani (duodenum) or Agnyshaya (Pancreas) or Pittashaya (gall bladder) in the list of Koshtanga, it is wise to include all these organs under the term ‘Nabhi’. Kloma is a controversial organ. It is one of the Udakavaha Srotas i.e. water balancing or carrying channels in the body. Kloma is often related to pancreas, lungs or trachea or thirst regulating centers in the brain.

Another reference from charaka

“Koshtaha Punaha Uchyate Mhaa Srotaha Shareera Madhyammahaa Nimnam Aamapakwashayaha Cha Iti”–Ca. Su.11/48.

Charaka tells that Koshta is also called Maha Srotas (Antaha Srotas) which means the largest channel of the body. It is located in the deep recess in the middle portion of the body and is comprised of Amashaya and Pakwashaya. According to this definition, The term Koshta comprises of Amashaya and Pakwashaya. Charaka in a later context (Shareera Sthana, which comes after Sutra Sthana in the treatise), explains Koshtanga without defining What is Koshta because he had already quoted it in Sutra Sthana. This also gives us an idea that according to Charaka, Amashaya and Pakwashaya are the major components of Koshta and all

other viscera surrounding them are called Koshtanga or organs in the vicinity of Koshta.

Types of koshta

According to Ashtanga Hridaya, Koshta has three main categories according to the dominance of the Dosha in the body or Ayurvedic body type.

Koshta type	Dominant dosha
KRURA (Hard)	Vata Dosha
MRIDU (Soft)	Pitta Dosha
MADHYA (Moderate)	Kapha Dosha

A) Krura koshta: (Hard)

If in Grahani there are excess amount of Vata Dosha is present, then it oppose the function of Pitta Dosha so individual with this pathology can't excrete fecal matter properly, that is, he suffers from hard stool, this type of Koshta is called as Krura Koshta. If there is excess amount of Vata and Kapha Dosha present then also there is Krura Koshta present because Kapha Dosha also oppose in excretion process. For treatment of Krura Koshta Acharya said – Nishottar, Niwadunga likes Tivra-Virechaka that is purgatives also failed in this type of patient. These patient are “Durvirechha” that is “Madyama Virechana” treatment is not so effective in these type of people. If there is effect of Vata Dosha more on “Grahani” in formation of Krura Koshta then “Snehapana” is preferred by Acharyas.

B) Mrudu koshta: (Soft)

Due to excess amount of Pitta or Vata Dosha and Pitta Dosha, Mrudu Koshta occurs. Due to presence of Pitta Dosha with “Sara Guna” in Grahani in large amount so effect of Kapha Dosha is formed in less amount, hence there will be little bit motivation then function of excretion occurs forcefully. People with Mrudu Koshta should avoid milk, grapes juice, sugarcane juice, etc these types of food or drugs are also responsible for loose motion in this type of people. For treatment of Mrudu Koshta Acharyas preferred “Mrudu Virechaka”.

C) Madyama Koshta: (Intermediate)

Due to all three Doshas and excess of Kapha, Madhyama Koshta occurs. In this type of Koshta, Vata Dosha is present in less amount and Kapha Dosha is Shita, Manda and Stambhaka hence there will not be difficulty in Shodhana. This type of Koshta is also called as “Sadharan Koshta”. For treatment Madhyama Koshta five days Snehapana and Madhyama Virechaka Dravya is preferred.

According to modern view

Some people compare Koshta with the gastrointestinal or the digestive tract. The digestive system is also known as Gastrointestinal System. It chiefly consists of the alimentary canal and of certain accessory organs. The alimentary canal is about thirty feet long extending from the mouth to the anus. It is lined by mucus membrane (covering beneath skin) throughout its length. Every

organ has definite role to play in digestion. In fact the process of digestion starts from the mouth and continues down to the intestine.

1. **Mouth:** It includes vestibule, buccal cavity (mouth) and tongue. Vestibule is a narrow space between the lips and cheeks externally and the gums and teeth internally. Bucal cavity is bounded by palate and throat.
2. **Pharynx:** It is divided into two parts – nasopharynx (nasal part) and oropharynx (mouth part). Pharynx acts as gateway for the food from mouth to the oesophagus.
3. **Oesophagus:** It conveys the food from the pharynx to the stomach.
4. **Stomach:** It is a sac like organ playing prominent role in the process of digestion. Besides it acts as store house of food and proper churning of the food.
5. **Small intestine:** It is a 2-2.5 meters long tube. Lengthwise it is the longest part of the intestine. Absorption of the food is the main function of the small intestine.
6. **Large intestine:** It is a long part of the alimentary canal and chief function is formation of stools. Absorption of water takes place in large intestine. Anus is the last portion guarded by sphincter.

Koshta parikshana

While doing Chikitsa (treatment) Koshta Parikshana is important. According to Koshta we can decide suitable drug for Chikitsa. If patient can get Virechana (Purgation) with Kshir (milk), Aaragwadha, Ikshu, Takra, Mastu, Gudha, Krushara, Nava - Madhya, Ushnodak, Draksha than we can guess, there is Pitta - Bahulyathan this Koshta will be Mrudu. If patient can get Virechana with Shama, Kushata, Triphala, Sudhathan we can guess that, there is Vata - Bahulya than this Koshta will be Krura.

Benefits of knowing koshttha

Sharira Rachana or Human Anatomy is the basis for any medical science. We need to know about the construction of human body which includes the cell, the tissues, organs and organ systems. The knowledge of Koshta gives us a precise anatomical knowledge of the cavities of the human body and the viscera's included them. The physiology related to the human body, according to Ayurvedic basics are governed by the actions of Tridoshas i.e. Vata, Pitta, Kapha. These three forms of energies control the entire activities of the body in a smooth way. These 3 Doshas are moving around the entire body. Each Dosh has certain tissues and organs as their abode. They stay in those organs and control the activities. E.g. Phuphusa, Amashaya etc are important sites of Kapha. Pakwashaya is an important abode and controlling centre for Vayu. Nabhi, Amashaya, Agnayshaya, Hridaya etc. are the sites of Pitta. Many of the organs of Koshta from the Ashaya or residence or place of stay for many elements. The name of the organ itself explains to relationship with that elements. E.g. the

term Amashaya means an abode for Ama or improperly processed or semi digested food. Pakwashaya is an abode of digested food and holds it until it is converted into faces and excreted. Mutrashaya holds the urine until it is voided. We need to understand the anatomical and physiological relationships between these Ashayas (abode) and the elements staying in them. For this the knowledge of Koshta is essential. Many of the organs of the Koshta from the root or point of origin for Srotas (channel or duct or transportation system in the body). It is said that the whole body is composed of millions of Srotas.

CONCLUSION

Ayurveda have its own concepts and Sidhantas. All concepts have its own importance. Koshta and Koshtanga is the basic and important concept in Ayurveda. Concepts of Koshta and Koshtanga helps to understand find out types of disease and its help for treatments because drug selection depends on Koshta. The knowledge of Koshta gives us a precise anatomical knowledge of the cavities of the human body and the viscera's included them.

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