



A CORRELATION BETWEEN AGNI & PRAKRITI IN PRESENT SCENARIO- A REVIEW ARTICLE

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ABSTRACT

Ayurveda consider Prakriti (individual constitution), Agni (fire), Dosha (body humors), Dhātu (body tissue and fluid) and Mala (various excreta from body) as reason for such individual differences. All these factors are correlated with each other and thus influenced by changes in one or more factors which are the fundamental principles of Ayurvedic physiology, pathology and therapeutics. Agni is one of the basic concepts of Ayurveda. The role of Agni in body is very much emphasized for example, having a balanced state of Doshas, Agni (digestive fire), Dhatus (tissues) normal functioning of Mala (waste products), cheerful state of Atman (soul), sensory organs and mind are the symptoms of healthy life. Prakriti is the innate constitution of an individual based on the predominance of Dosha determined at the time of conception which cannot be changed till death. It is evident that Vata Prakriti individual prone to Vishamagni (irregular digestive fire/ metabolism), Pitta Prakriti individual prone to Tikshagni (Intense digestive fire/ metabolism), and Kapha Prakriti individual prone to Mandagni (Low digestive fire/ metabolism). Which indicates correlation between various types of Agni and Prakriti.

KEYWORDS: Ayurveda, Kriya Sharir, Agni, Prakriti, Jathara agni, Digestive Fire.

INTRODUCTION

Agni is one of the basic concepts of Ayurveda which provides fundamental knowledge for understanding of the theories of Ayurveda not only related with digestion and formation of various tissues in the body but also deficiency disorders and preventive medicine comes under this concept. In today's irregular and fast lifestyle skipping regular meals, excessive intake of food or drinks, irregularities in diet and sleep; and high stress levels at the work place, emotional factors such as envy, fear, anger, etc. can lead to indigestion. Indigestion can also be due to uncomfortable postures, controlling natural urges and changes in the period and pattern of sleep. It can lead to waking up frequently at night, several diseases and psychological disturbances. It occurs due to deficiency in quality and quantity of digestive juices, which is termed as Mandagni (deficient digestive fire). Agni is one of the ten factors which is to be examined before initiating, the treatment of patient. The importance of Agni is for the maintenance of health as well as manifestation of diseases. It is also an important factor to be considered while prescribing treatment. In each and every process of transformation, that may be bio-physical, bio-chemical, the media or

agency responsible for all these process is Agni. Status of Agni varies in different Prakriti. It is stated that all internal disease are caused by vitiation of this Agni, another meaning of Agni is Kaya, and Kaya (Agni) Chikita is included in Ashtang Ayurved. Prakriti means neutrality or habits or condition. In Ayurveda, Prakriti concept has been given much importance. Ayurvedic treatment also emphasize on examining the Prakriti or the natural states of an individual before proceeding. The Prakriti or the physical constitution, Susceptibility to diseases, mental make-up and lifestyle of an individual is ascertained in accordance to the elemental constitution of the universe. Hence the concept of Agni, Prakriti & its interrelation are vital factors which are to be studied in detail for well being of a person.

The concept of agni

The term "Agni" generally means fire. In Ayurvedic perspective this term does not actually means fire. In this context, it comprehend various factors which participate in and direct the course of digestion and metabolism in living and physiologically functioning organism.

Human body converts consumed food into suitable form which is assailable. This process requires few digestive fluids and enzymes. Ayurveda consider Agni (digestive fire) as the initial reason for such conversion of food. In healthy state the food consumed is properly digested and assimilated by the body with the help of Agni. As the core of digestion and nutrition, Agni is responsible for strength, maintenance of health, longevity of life, existence of life, composition of body and mind, vitality, and for formation of essence of body (Oja). The normal activity of the Agni helps the maintenance of physiological activities while its abnormal state produces pathology and its absence causes of death of the human being that is why Agni is known as Mula or vital life force. The term Agni not only includes Jatharagni (gastric juice) but also Bhutagnis (factor responsible for maintaining homeostasis) and Dhatwagnis (enzymes necessary for chemical reactions at cellular level). These are responsible for digestion and metabolism at different levels.

Etymology

The word, Agni is the root verb of “Anga” in the broad sense Agni. That which is present in each and every cell of human body is called Agni.

Agni as pitta

The origin of Pitta is from “Tapa,” which means: (1) combustion/digestion – to give nourishment to the body by digestion of ingested food, (2) to maintain heat – by means of heat, it maintains the color, lusture, etc. of the body (Su.Su.-21/5).

Now, there is a question as to whether Pitta and Agni are both the same or are different? Does any area exist of Agni without Pitta, or is it that Pitta is Agni? This should be clearly understood. Different views have been suggested regarding Pitta and Agni by different Acharyas. Some Acharyas consider Pitta to be Agni while others speak differently.

According to Acharya Sushruta, there is no existence of any other Agni in the body without Pitta, because when there is increased digestion and combustion in the body due to Ushna guna of Pitta, the treatment is like Agni (Su. Su. 21/09). Acharya Marichi has also emphasized that the Agni present in the Pitta gives good or bad results when it is normal or vitiated (Cha. Su. 12/11).

Chakrapani has commented on “Pittantargatta,” that the function of Pitta inside the body is not combustion but its work is to provide heat of Agni. Besides this, Acharya Shusrut has described five types of Agnis as the variety of Pitta. Acharya Bhoj also considered Pitta as Agni, digestive fire is included within Agni, which is specially meant for different enzymatic activities of the body, i.e. Pachana, Deepan, Bhedana, etc. (Chakrapani Tika on Cha.Su.-12/11).

Types of agni

Agni is innumerable because of its presence in each and every Dhatu Paramanu (cell) of the body. But, enumeration of the number of Agnis varies in various classical Ayurvedic texts, as shown below

- Charaka has mentioned about 13 Agnis. Jatharagni – 1, Bhutagni – 5, Dhatvagni – 7 (Ch.Chi.15/38).
- According to Acharya Sushruta, five types of Agnis are illustrated, viz. Pachakagni, Ranjakagni, Alochakagni, Sadhakagni and Bhrajakagni. However, there is an indirect reference of five Bhutagnis underlying in the brief description made to the transformation of food stuff. (Sh.Su.21/10.) Vagbhata has described different types Agni, viz. – Bhutagnis – 5,– Dhatvagnis – 7, – Dhoshagni – 3 and– Malagni – 3.
- Sharangadhara has recognized five Pittas only (Pachak, Bhrajak, Ranjak, Alochaka and Sadhak) (Sha.Sa.Pu.Kh.-5/32).
- Bhavamishra has followed Acharya Charaka and Vagbhata (Bh.Pu.Kh.-3/169,180).

Agni has been divided into 13 types according to the function and site of action. These are:

1. **Jatharagni** – one Agni present in the stomach and duodenum.
2. **Bhutagni** – five Agni from five basic elements.
3. **Dhatwagni** – seven Agni present, one in each of the seven Dhatus.

Accordingly, they are classified into three groups, namely Jatharagni, Bhutagni and Dhatvagni.

Jatharagni

Jatharagni is the Agni or bioenergy present in the Jathara (stomach and duodenum). According to Ashtanga Hridaya, Jatharagni, the seat is Grahani (duodenum), so called because it withholds the food for a certain time inside the Amasaya (stomach) to facilitate digestion. In the opinion of Dhanvantari, it is the Kala known as “Pittadhara,” situated at the entrance of the Pakvashaya (intestine) and acting as a bolt to the door of the pathway/channel of food. It is responsible for the duration of life, health, valour, Ojas (essence of the Dhatus), strength of all the Bhutagni and Dhatvagni. The strength of the Grahani is from Agni itself, and the strength of Agni is from Grahani. When the Agni undergoes vitiation, Grahani also gets vitiated and produces diseases (As.Hr.Sha.3/50-54). Jatharagni is considered to be the most important because each and every nutrient that one ingests first comes to the Jathara and is subjected to the action of Jatharagni. Jatharagni digests the food materials that consist of the five basic elements and transforms it for utilization by the respective Dhatus paramanus (tissues). Jatharagni is also responsible for separation of the food material into the essence portion (PRasad) and the waste products (Kitta) in our body (As.Hr.Su-12/8). Jatharagni is also classified into four categories according to its performance of digestion in the human

being (Cha.Chi.15/51), namely Vishamagni, Tikshanagni, Mandagni and Samagni. According to Harita Samhita, Samagni depends on whether the Doshas (Vata, Pitta, Kapha) are in normal stage. When the Pitta is higher than normal, the condition is known as Tikshanagni. When Vata and Kapha are higher than normal, the condition is known as Mandagni.

a) Samagni: The Samagni digests and assimilates food properly at the proper time. This thus increases the quality of the Dhatus (supportive tissues of the body). Persons having Samagni are always hale and healthy.

b) Vishamagni: This type of Agni changes between digesting food quickly and slowly. When this Agni is affected by the Vata Dosha, it creates different types of Udargata Roga.

c) Tikshanagni: Tikshanagni means very quick/very sharp/very fast. Tikshanagni is a state of very quick digestion of food, regardless of the type of food. Acharya Shushruta states that when the power of digestion is increased from normal to above normal, food digests very quickly and produces hunger or the desire for food. When food is digested, the throat, the mouth cavity and the lips become dry with a burning sensation. This condition is known as "Bhasmak Roga" according to Ayurveda.

d) Mandagni: "Mand" means slow. The meaning of the Mandagni is slow digestive power or digestive capacity. Those who are having Mandagni eat very little and are unable to digest the smallest amount of food. Dhanvantri says that Agni digests the least amount of food in the greatest amount of time.

Bhutagni

Bhutagni is the one that is present in a basic element (Bhutas). There are five Agnis in each of the five basic elements, namely Parthiva (earth), Apya (water), Tejas (Agni), Vayavya (Vayu) and Nabhasa (Akash). Each and every cell in our body is composed of the five Mahabhutas or five basic elements. Naturally, each cell (Dhatu Paramanu) consists of these five Bhutagni also. All the nutrients in this world that we eat also consist of the same five basic elements with their respective Agni or bioenergies. Thus, they are completely similar with respect to the five basic elements with their Bhutagni in our body cells as well in all the outside nutrient, that we ingest for the nutrition of our body. Acharya Charaka has mentioned that the five Bhutagni digest their own part of the element present in the food materials. After the digestion of food by the Bhutagni, digested materials containing the elements and qualities similar to each Bhutas nourish their own specific Bhautika elements of the body (Cha. Chi. 15/13,14). These Bhutagnis act after the Jatharagni present in the stomach and duodenum, acting on the food and causing their disintegration. In the modern physiological perspective, the action

of Jatharagni can be equated with the digestion in the stomach and duodenum, and the action of the Bhutagni can be equated with the conversion of digested materials in the liver.

Dhatvagni

All the seven Dhatus (seven element tissues of the body) contain their own Agni to metabolize the nutrient materials supplied to them through their own Srotas.

1. Rasagni present in the Rasa Dhatu.
2. Raktagni present in the Rakta Dhatu.
3. Mamsagni present in the Mamsa Dhatu.
4. Medagni present in the Meda Dhatu.
5. Asthyagni present in the Asthi Dhatu.
6. Majjagni present in the Majja Dhatu.
7. Shukragni present in the Shukra Dhatu.

Each Dhatvagni or the bioenergy present in each Dhatu synthesizes and transforms the essential Rasa Dhatu required for that particular Dhatu or cell from the basic nutrients present in the AnnaRasa or essence of the diet that we consume. Each Dhatvagni has got a speciality to synthesize and transform the constituents suitable to its particular Dhatu. This action is a sort of selective action. Acharya Charaka has mentioned the fact that the seven dhatus that are a support of the body contain their own Agni, and by their own Agni they digest and transform the materials supplied to them to make the substances alike to them for assimilation and nourishment (Cha. Su. 28/15).

The concept of prakruti

Ayurveda lays emphasis on examining the Prakruti or the natural state of an individual first. The disease Vikruti is examined later. However, in terms of the functioning of living beings, Ayurveda sees all actions based on three basic functions called Doshas - namely Vata, Pitta and Kapha. Before a detailed description of each Prakruti type, the qualities of each of the Doshas are given. These qualities are manifested in the individual's personality.

The word Prakruti means "nature" or natural form of the build and constitution of the human body. Pra means the "beginning", "commencement" or "source of origin" and Kruti means "to perform" or "to form". Put together, Prakruti means "natural form" or "original form" or "original source". Disease occurs when there is a change in this original form at the psychological or physiological level.

Vata has characteristics such as dry, light, mobile, expansible, quick, cold, rough, clear and astringent in taste. Therefore, dry quality of Vata is manifested in the body as dry skin and thin structure i.e. lean body. The hair, nails, teeth and eyes appear dry. The voice is weak, low, crackling and hoarse. These individuals require little sleep and are hyperactive. The expansive nature is manifest in prominent blood vessels. Their memory is weak but they have a quick grasp. Due to the cold nature, the body temperature is low and body stiff. The natural

desires and craving for food and environment are opposite to the qualities of Vata. They have meager seminal fluid and have only a few children. They tend to have a short life span.

Pitta is hot, penetrating, slightly foul smelling, liquid, sour and pungent in taste. So Due to the inherent hot quality of Pitta, these individuals have a high metabolic rate, a tendency to eat and drink a lot and are often thirsty. They develop moles and skin eruptions. They possess soft and scanty hair and tend to be prematurely grey and bald. They are unable to bear even minimum heat. They are brave and courageous but cannot tolerate exertion. They get easily provoked and upset. The fluid quality makes the body parts, muscles and joints soft and flabby. The high metabolic rate leads to excessive perspiration and excretion. The foul smell of the Pitta tends to give them a strong body odour. The quality of heat and pungent taste leads to limited sexual urge,

scanty semen and limited progeny. Due to the sharp and quick action, they have a very good intellect, grasping power, memory and are of moderate strength and the life span is medium.

Kapha have attributes such as unctuous, smooth, soft, and sweet in taste, stable, dense, slow, rigid, cold and clear. Kapha Prakriti individuals tend to have soft limbs, slow gait and are slow to understand. Due to the unctuous nature of Kapha, the individuals of Kapha Prakriti possess unctuous and oily skin. The soft quality of Kapha makes the face soft, the looks gentle and clear. The stable and steady quality endows them with a well-built and steady body. The dense nature provides fullness to the body and organs. They have poor appetite and low body temperature. The steady and dense quality gives them steady joints and ligaments. All the qualities of Kapha endow the individual with strength, wealth and energy and also a long life.

Table 1: Relationship between Prakriti, Jatharagni and Bhutagni.

Sr. No.	Prakriti	Dosh Prakopa - Agni Vikruti	Predominant Bhutagni	Modern View
1.	Vata	Vishama	Vayu + Aakash	Irregularity in digestion
2.	Pitta	Tikshana	Teja	High hunger and digestion power
3.	Kapha	Manda	Prithi + Jaliya	Low hunger and digestion power
4.	Sama	Sama	Equilibrium of all Bhutagni	Good hunger and digestion power

Table 2: Probable relationship between Dhatu (body part/tissue), Bhutagni and Prakriti.

Sr. No.	Dhatu	Predominant Bhutagni	Prakriti
1.	Rasa	Aapya	Kapha
2.	Rakta	Agni + Aapya	Pitta-Kapha
3.	Mamsa	Parthiva	Kapha-Vata
4.	Meda	Aapya + Parthiv	Tridoshaj
5.	Asthi	Parthiv + Vayu + Aakash	Vata-Pitta
6.	Majja	Aapya	Kapha
7.	Shukra	Aapya	Kapha

Table 3: Relationship between Prakriti and Dhatvagni.

Sr. No.	Dhatvagni	Modern functional correlation	Relate predominant
1.	Rasa Dhatvagni	Factors responsible for chemical reactions in plasma, hormonal secretions and lymphatic fluid	Kapha
2.	Rakta Dhatvagni	Chemical transformers in blood and related blood formation	Pitta Kapha
3.	Mamsa Dhatvagni	Enzymes required for formation and changes at skin and cells of soft organs	Tridoshaj
4.	Meda Dhatvagni	Chemical agents working in fatty tissues	Kapha -Pitta
5.	Asthi Dhatvagni	Chemicals accountable for formation of bones	Vata
6.	Majja Dhatvagni	Digestive causes related to formation of bone marrow and nutrition of nervous system	Kapha-Pitta
7.	Shukra Dhatvagni	Factors associated with formation of semen, ovum and genital hormones	Kapha

CONCLUSION

In this article, we concluded that there is no relation between Prakruti and Agni except Pitta Prakruti and Tikshna Agni. Prakruti is accessed based various characteristics of three body humors. Agni can be accessed by knowing digestion and absorption of food which has influence on metabolic activities in the body. Kapha Prakruti has low metabolism rate, Pitta Prakruti has high metabolism rate and Vata Prakruti has irregular metabolism rate. Correlation of Prakruti, Jatharagni (digestive enzymes), Bhutagni and Dhatvagni (metabolism at tissue level) is needed to be undertaken for prevention and management of diseases.

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