



INTRODUCTION OF ASHAYA WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO MUTRASHAYA

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ABSTRACT

Ayurved is one of the world's oldest holistic healing therapies which was developed thousands of years ago in India, having its main motto as preservation of health in a healthy person and treating ailments while demolishing the causative factors of pathogenesis. For this purpose, it is necessary to know the complete structure of human body before treating the diseases. A separate sthana known as 'sharir sthana' has been mentioned in Samhita granthas to provide knowledge about entire body in all aspects. Many concepts has been described in Sharir sthana including the concept of *Ashaya*, which is known as a space meant for occupancy for different and essential entities needed for the body functioning and also by the waste materials needed to be expelled out of the body. As *mutra* is also a type of *mala* (waste material), separate *ashaya* called as *Mutrashaya* is mentioned in samhitas. In this present paper, an attempt is made to explore the concept of *Ashaya* in an introductory form with special reference to *Mutrashaya* in a systematic and well organized manner to know its exact anatomy and importance as an *Ashaya*.

KEYWORDS: *Ashaya, Mutra, Mutrashaya.*

INTRODUCTION

Samhita granthas like Sushruta, Ashtanga and Sharangdhara etc. while dealing with concepts of *Sharira*, has explained seven types of *Ashaya* as *Saptashaya*. *Ashaya* are defined as spaces, abode or place which are occupied by the essential ingredients needed for functioning of body and also by the waste products or malas which are needed to be voided. *Vatashaya, Pittashaya, Shleshmaashaya, Raktashaya, Aamashaya, Pakwashaya* and *Mutrashaya* are seven *Ashaya* which are mentioned in samhitas. The eighth *Ashaya* known as *Garbhashaya* has been separately mentioned which is present in females only which gives place for growing fetus before birth of a baby. It is need to explore the concept of *Ashaya* regarding its number, formation, utility and importance for better understanding. Body is made up of *Doshas, Dhatus and Malas*.^[1] To maintain the equilibrium of the body *malas* or waste products have to be continuously expelled out of it. *Mutra* (urine), *Purish* (stool) and *Sweda* (sweat) are said to be three *pradhan malas*. The *Ashaya* which is occupied by the *mutra* is called as *Mutrashaya*. Out of three important *mala*, *Ashaya* for only *mutra* has been mentioned but not for *Purish* and *Sweda*. So it is necessary to explore the concept of *Ashaya* for better understanding.

Formation of ashaya

By virtue of repeatedly staying at a place, the *Vayu* creates *Ashaya*.^[2] *Vayu* is a force in body which is always in motion. The movement of other elements in the body depends on the qualitative and quantitative equilibrium of *Vata* or *Vayu*. *Vayu* is never used to stay at one place nor has a habit of doing it. When it stays at one place it makes a habit of it, it can either be destructive or constructive. The constructive part is forming an *Ashaya*. Since *vayu* has made a habit of staying at a place repeatedly, it pushes the tissues to the periphery and creates a space or place within. These spaces becomes *Ashaya*.

Number and Sequence of Ashaya

In *Sharir Sthana* of **Sushruta Samhita**, seven *Ashaya* are described in body. *Tridoshas* are very much important entities for the normal functioning of the body. They are considered as primary and most essential factors in situation of human organism. A deranged condition of these three fundamental humors may bring about its dissolution or death, while on their continuance in a normal state Depends the vitality of organism. So firstly *Ashaya* related to *Tridoshas* is mentioned in Sushruta Samhita. Even though *Tridoshas* are important; there is equal importance to blood. Three humors in combination with a fourth (blood), determine the origin,

preservation and dissolution of organism and permeate it with their respective properties till the moment of death. So after the *Tridoshas*, *Ashaya* for *Rakta* is mentioned.

Anna rasa nourishes *Dhatus*. During process of digestion, *Ahara* undergoes two stages, *Amavastha* i.e. partially digested food, and *Pakwavastha* i.e. digested food. So next *Ashaya* given for *Ama Anna* (*Amashya*) and *Pakwa Anna* (*Pakwashya*).

After *pachana*, *sara* and *kitta vibhajan* takes place. *Sara* is absorbed for nourishment while *kitta* again differentiate into *purisha* and *mutra*. *Purisha* remains in *Pakwashaya* i.e. Large intestine. It is the remains of *pakwa anna* so *ashaya* for *purisha* is not mentioned separately, but *Mutra* is stored in different site, so next *Ashaya* is mentioned for *Mutra* i.e. *Mutrashaya*.

7 Ashayas are as follows –

- 1) *Vatashya*: means the site of *vata* in the body. *Vata* is superior to all doshas.^[3] and its existence can be judged by its normal functions.^[4] It controls all other entities in the body and also helps in perception of knowledge by *indriyas*.^[5]
- 2) *Pittashaya*: means site of *pitta*. Main function of *pitta* is *pachana*.
- 3) *Shleshmashaya* or *Kaphashaya*: means site of *kapha* and its main function is like that of water in the body.^[6] eg.- *snehana*, *awalamban*, *sandhi sanshleshana*.
- 4) *Raktashaya*: means site of blood storage in the body. *Rakta* is mainly present in *yakrita* and *pleeha*.^[7]
- 5) *Amashaya*: means site of *aama anna* i.e. partially digested food
- 6) *Pakwashaya*: means site of *pakwa anna* i.e. fully digested food
- 7) *Mutrashaya*: means site of urine storage in the body.

Acharya Sushruta clearly states that *Vasti* is the site of *Mutra*, which continuously stores urine so it can be considered as *adhishthan* of *Mutra*.^[8]

Eighth *Ashaya* is found exclusively in females i.e. the *Garbhashaya*.^[9]

Sharangdhara says that there are two *Sthanya Ashayas* in females in addition to the above said.^[10]

Acharya Vagbhatta says that *Adhara* are seven in number. *Pakwadhara* and *Mutradhara* are included in them. In females the eighth one is *Garbhashaya*, which is situated in between *Pittashaya* and *Pakwashaya*. *Koshthagangas* like *Hridaya*, *Vrikka* etc. are situated in these *Ashayas*.^[11] He used the term “*Sapt Adhara*” as a synonym of *Ashaya*.

Location of ashaya

Acharya Sharangdhara gave description about the location of all the *Ashaya*. The *Shleshmashaya* is located in *Uras Pradesha*, *Amashaya* is located beneath

Shleshmashaya. *Agnyashaya* (*agni* as synonym of *pitta*) is located above and left of *Nabhi*. *Tila* is located above *Agnyashaya*, below the *Tila*, the *Pavanashaya* (*Vatashaya*) is located. *Malashaya* (*Pakwashaya*) and *Mutrashaya* (*Vasti*) are located in the lower part of the *koshtha*. The *Raktashaya* is vital and is located in *Uras*.^[12]

Mutrashaya

Nirukti and paryaya

According to *Amarkosh*: ‘*Ekam Mutrashaya Vasti Naabhe adho dwayam*’ i.e. *Mutrashaya* is another name of *Vasti* which is single and found in lower pelvis and is found in both sex.^[13]

Mutrashaya, *Vasti*,^[14] *Mutrasthanam*,^[15] *Mutradhara*, *Mutravasti*.^[16] are synonyms of *Mutrashaya*.

Shape of mutrashaya

It is mentioned as “*Alabu Sadrisha*”^[17] i.e. like that of bottle gourd by **Acharya Sushruta**. **Acharya Gananathsen** in *Pratyaksha shariram* clearly defines its shape as that of as ‘*Kshudra alabu samakaro*’ i.e. its shape is like that of a small gourd.^[18]

Acharya Vagbhatta mentioned it as “*Dhanurvakra*”^[19] i.e. bent like a bow.

Site And Structure: *Vasti* is name given to *Mutrashaya* and it is present in *abhyantara kati* (within pelvic cavity), and it is made up of small quantity of *mansa* and *shonita*.^[20]

Acharya Charak says that *Vasti* is placed in between the *sthul guda*, *mushka*, *sevani*, *shukravaha nadis*.^[21]

As per Regional Anatomy and relations of *Vasti* are concerned it is said that it is surrounded with different structures viz. *Nabhi*, *Prishtha*, *Kati Mushka*, *Guda*, *Vakshana*, and *Shepha*. The other structures having interrelation with *Vasti* and situated in pelvic cavity are *Vasti shir*, *Paurusha*, *Vrishana*, and *Guda*. This structure is mentioned as extremely thin and membranous, covered with *sira* and *snayu* all around it. It is provided with one aperture, which is directed downwards, thus giving the organ a shape like that of a gourd.^[22] Description of *Snayu* shows that the *Snayu* present in *Mutrashaya* or *Vasti* are *Sushira* type of *Snayu*.^[23]

Embryological Consideration: Embryologically *Vasti* or *Mutrashaya* is originated from *Matrija Bhava*.^[24] it is formed by the *uttam sara bhaga* (essence) of *Rakta* and *Kapha* by the *pachaka* action of *Pita* and *Vayu* along with organs like *Antra* and *Guda*.^[25]

Importance: *Vasti* is included under *Dash Pranayatana*s which are the ten places of *prana*, where the *prana* or life resides.^[26] *Mutrashaya* is also a *mala adhara* (site of mala or excreta because *mutra* is also a mala) and it is *Uttam Pranayatana*.^[27] **Ashtanga Samgrahakara** also explained *Dash Vidha Pranayatana*s as *Murdha*, *Jihva*

bandhana, Kantha, Hridaya, Nabhi, Vasti, Guda, Shukra, Ojas, and Rakta, out of these first seven are known as *Maha Marma*.^[28] **Vagbhatt Dwitiya** used the term '*Jeevita Dhama*' for *Pranayatanas*^[29]

Acharya Sushruta while giving the definition of *koshta*, included *Mutrashaya* as one of the *Koshthanga*.^[30] *Mutrashaya* is also included as one of the *Panchdash* (15) *Koshthangas*.^[31] and *Shatpanchashat* (56) *Pratyanga*.^[32] here it's synonym *Vasti* is used. *Vasti* is accepted as *mula* of *Mutravaha Srotas* by all the classics.^[33] It is also accepted as one of the **Marma point**. In context of *Marma* also, it's synonym *Vasti* is used. *Vasti* is accepted as one among the *Trimarmas* which are the *pradhan marmas* of the body by **Acharya Charaka**.^[34] It is *Madhya sharir gata* or *Udargata Marma* (*Shadanga bheden*),^[35] *Snayu Marma* (structurally),^[36] with *Pramaan* equal to '*Swapani tal*',^[37] i.e. a person's *Vasti* is equal to his '*pani-tal*' in measurement which is considered as 4 finger. It is *Sadya Pranahara Marma*^[38] i.e. emergently fatal and lead to death within a week (7 days).^[39] *Sadya Pranahara Marmas* are '*Agneya*' (igneous) and as qualities of *agni* are extinguished quickly the patient dies immediately.

DISCUSSION

The seven *Ashaya* described in *samhita* granthas does not depict to single organ, rather these are the sites where seven entities named *Vata, Pitta, Kapha, Rakta*, partially digested food, fully digested food and *Mutra* are stored, so as to maintain normal functioning of the body. These seven *Ashaya* are described on the basis of fundamental concept of *Dosha, Dhatu* and *Mala*. *Tridoshas* are functional entities which are carried with *Rakta* all over the body. So all such entities has their specific place or abode in the body called as *Ashaya*. So *Ashaya* can be considered as prime functional areas in the body.

Mutrashaya is the name given to *Vasti* which is present in lower pelvic (*Abhyantara kati*) region and it is continuously filled day and night with *Mutra* through its lateral apertures by means of *Mutravaha Nadis*. These *Mutravaha nadis* constantly drains urine into *Vasti* or *Mutrashaya* and keep it moist or filled with urine in same manner as rivers drain their water to ocean.^[40] According to **Acharya Sushruta** *Mutrashaya* is *adhara* of *mala* (*mutra* is also a type of *mala*) so it is the site of *mutra*. From shape and function of *Vasti*, it can be compared with Urinary Bladder. So Urinary Bladder is *Mutrashaya* which is *Adhishthan* of *Mutra* and *Utam Pranayatana*. It's importance can be understood by the fact that it is also a vital point or *Marma* which is included as one of the *pradhana marma* or *Trimarma* of the body. Any trauma to it causes sudden death as it is a *Sadyapranahara Marma*. Functionally it is a store house of urine before the same is voided out of the body.

CONCLUSION

Ashaya does not depict to a single organ but these are different sites or places where seven essential entities are

predominantly present. These are the spaces or abode meant for occupancy for essential entities which is necessary for the proper functioning and maintaining equilibrium of the body. **Acharya Sushruta** synonymously used the term *Mutrashaya* and *Vasti* but while describing *Ashaya Sharir* he used word '*Mutrashaya*' because it provides *aashraya sthana* to *Mutra* in the body until it is excreted out from the body. So *Mutrashaya* is the reservoir of *Mutra* which is the Urinary Bladder.

Rich literary source are available regarding the Anatomy and Physiology of Urinary system in Ayurvedic texts. These have wide scope for further research in medical science. This is just a preliminary attempt to interpret the hidden meanings in our texts. The reference quoted are authentic and the commentary of these are direct from the text itself. It is just an effort to reorganize the scattered references in a proper order with logical reasoning for better understanding of the subject.

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