APPLIED ASPECT OF AGNI IN AYUVEDA SCIENCE

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ABSTRACT
According to Vedas the ancient texts of India and Ayurveda, Agni is worshipped in its divine form as the bringer and sustainer of life. When we honor our Agni thus, we become mindful of what we eat and how we accept it in ourselves. The term Agni is best represented by biological fire. Agni is vital at physiological and pathological levels. As we take food stuffs to feed ourselves for nourishment, maintenance, and sustainer of life. Whose action, these are classified into three groups, viz. – Jatharagni, five Bhutagni and seven Dhatvagni.

INTRODUCTION
Agni is the invariable agent in the process of Paka (digestion, transformation). Ingested food is to be digested, absorbed and assimilated, which is unavoidable for the maintenance of life, and is per-formed by the Agni. Different examples are available in our classics to indicate that Pitta is the same as Agni, but some doubt arises behind this concept, that Pitta is Agni. Agni is innumerable because of its presence in each and every paramanu of the body. But, the enumeration of the number of Agnis varies in various classical Ayurvedic texts. According to Acharya Sushruta, five types of Agnis are 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, Alohakagni, 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, Dhoshagni – 7, Dhovagni – 3 and Malagni – 3.

• Sharangadhara has recognized five pittas only (Pachak, Bhrajak, Ranjak, Alohaka 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. Dhatvagni – seven Agni present, one in each of the seven dhatus.

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

KEYWORDS: Vedas, Agni, biochemical.
JATHARAGNI

Jatharagni is the Agni or bioenergy present in the Jathara (stomach and duodenum). According to Ashtanga Hridaya, Jatharagni, the seat is grahah (duodenum), so called because it withdraws the food for a certain time inside the Amaasaya (stomach) to facilitate digestion. In the opinion of Dhanvantari, it is the Kala known as “Pitadhara,” 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 dhatu), strength of all the bhutagni and dhatvagni. The strength of the grahah is from Agni itself, and the strength of Agni is from grahah. When the Agni undergoes vitiation, grahah 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 Dhatu paramamus (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 directly related to Dhatvagni or bioenergy in the cells and their metabolic processes, with ultimate tissue metabolism or Dhata-Paka process. All the Dhatvagni depend on the normal, healthy state of Jatharagni. If the Jatharagni is hyperactive (Tikshna) or hypoactive (Manda), it will cause an excessive or retarded action of the Dhatvagni. This disturbed action ultimately leads to various disorders. Jatharagni is the main important Agni that controls the function of all other 12 Agnis. All the Agnis are totally dependent on the status of Jatharagni (Cha. Chi. 15/39-40). 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 Hareet Samhitah, Samagni depends on whether the Doshas (Vata, Pitta, Kaphha) are in normal stage. When the Pitta is higher than normal, the condition is known as Tikshagni. When Vata and Kaphha are higher than normal, the condition is known as Mandagni.

c) Tikshagni: Tikshagni means very quick/very sharp/very fast. Tikshagni is a state of very quick digestion of food, regardless of the type of food. Acharya Shushrut 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 “Bhamsak 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. Dhanvantari 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 paramamu) 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 Charak 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 AsthiDhatu.
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 materials supplied to them to make the substances alike to them for assimilation and nourishment (Cha. Su. 28/15).

**DISCUSSION**

The Ayurvedic concept of Agni or fire is critically important to our overall health. Agni is the force of intelligence within each cell, each tissue, and every system within the body. Ultimately, it is the discernment of Agni that determines which substances enter our cells and tissues and which substances should be removed as waste. In this way, Agni is the gatekeeper of life. In fact, according to Ayurveda, when the Agni is extinguished, death soon follows. Ayurveda identifies a vast range of functions for which Agni is directly responsible, but it also teaches us that impaired Agni is at the root of all imbalances and diseases. Ayurveda identifies 13 distinct subtypes of Agni in the body, each defined by its specific physiological function as well as its location in the body. The mother of all of them is Jathara Agni, the central digestive fire that governs the digestion and assimilation of food. But there are many other fire components in the body’s cells, tissues and organs that govern things like sensory perception and the nutrition of specific tissues. Localized manifestations of Agni also determine which substances can cross cell membranes and maintain cellular memory in our DNA. A poor diet, an unsupportive lifestyle, and unresolved emotions can easily hinder Agni by dampening any of these qualities throughout the system. Similarly, nurturing the qualities of Agni in a very general way has the potential to benefit Agni throughout the body. Hence understanding of Agni in one of the important concepts for the understanding of disease process as well as to prescribe principles of treatment.

**CONCLUSION**

Agni is the term given in Ayurveda for the whole process of energy liberation through digestion at the level of the digestive tract and metabolism at the level of tissues. Digestion, metabolism and assimilation i.e. whole process of biological conversion and utilization of energy is symbolize by the term Agni. Agni is derivative of Tejas (fire) Mahabhuta it carries metabolic transformations in which the inherent feature is change.

When the Agni is extinguished man dies., when a man is induced with it adequately, he lives long in good health, when it is de-arranged, he begins to ail. Therefore the function of Agni is said to be the main stay of life. The food which is considered the nourishing factor of the Sharira, Dhatu, Ojas, Bala, Varma and other things, that very food too, is dependent for its nutrient action on the Jatharagni as from the undigested food, the Sharira Dhatu cannot be formed.

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