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A REVIEW STUDY OF SHAT KRIYAKALA

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ABSTRACT:

Kriyakala is one of the concepts of Ayurveda. It is also known as Shatkriyakala or Chikitsavasara Kala. Kriya means action and Kala means time. So Kriyakala means the time of treatment or opportunities in the process of disease manifestation. The series of Vikruta Kriya (abnormal activities) successively developing in different periods of Kala is known as Kriyakala (period or stages) of evolution of disease. It is the narration; in sequential order of the abnormal changes taking place in the Dosha, Dushya, Agni, Srotas etc. This knowledge is very helpful for diagnosis, prognosis and the level of intervention so that to prevent the establishment of a disease. Acharya Sushruta in his text has described Kriyakala in following six stages- Sanchaya, Prakopa, Prasara, Sthana Samshraya, Vyakti and Bheda. Each stage of Kriyakala provides a chance to stop the disease.

Key words: Dosha, Kriyakala, Srotas.

INTRODUCTION

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The prime factors in pathogenesis of any diseases are *Dosha* and *Dushya*. The *Doshas* undergo abnormalities due to indulgence of unwholesome (*Apathya*) diet and activities and they in turn bring about abnormalities in *Dhatus* and produce diseases. These abnormalities starting minutely develop in successive stages to assume great proportions and become the disease. The series of *Vikruta Kriya* (abnormal activities) successively developing in different periods of *Kala* is known as *Kriyakala* (period or stages) of evolution of disease. It is the narration, in sequential order of the abnormal changes taking place in the *Dosha*, *Dushya*, *Agni*, *Srotas* etc. this knowledge is very helpful for both the diagnosis and treatment of diseases.

Kriyakala is of two kinds¹-

1. *Ritu Kriyakala*
2. *Vyadhi Kriyakala*

1. *Ritu Kriyakala* - The equilibrium of the *Doshas* is very unstable and is undergoing

change constantly every day. These daily changes happening in particular *Ritu* (season) has been described as the three stages of *Doshas* as *Chaya* (mild increase), *Prakopa* (profound increase) and *Prashama* (decrease to normal)². As the cycle of changes in the *Ritu* goes on naturally, so the cycle of changes in the *Doshas* is also natural event. These changes of the *Doshas* do not produce severe distress to the body nor do they require any drastic remedial measures because the degree of these changes are mild, the human body will have become habituated to the natural seasonal conditions occurring year after year and these abnormalities of *Doshas* will revert back to normal automatically. So this *Kriyakala* is also known as *Prakruta* (natural) and is almost normal. Hence this is not much relevant, in the context of disease production.

2. *Vyadhi Kriyakala* - It represents the abnormal changes taking place in the *Doshas* due to the effect of unwholesome diet and activities. These changes are powerful, abnormal, unacquainted to the human body and so cause severe distress to it. The *Doshas* may not revert back to normal of their own harmony, continue to become profound, give rise to diseases and if left unchecked will endanger life itself. Hence this is considered as very abnormal, requiring remedial measure at the earliest.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The basic and conceptual materials were collected from the *Ayurvedic* classics viz. *Brhatrayi*. The main *Ayurvedic* texts used in this study are *Charak Samhita*, *Sushruta Samhita*, *Ashtang Hridaya*.

Vyadhi Kriyakala

Sushruta has described this *Vyadhi Kriyakala* in six successive stages which are as follows³-

1. ***Sanchaya* (accumulation)**
2. ***Prakopa* (aggravation)**
3. ***Prasara* (spreading)**
4. ***Sthana samshraya* (localisation)**
5. ***Vyakti* (manifestation)**
6. ***Bheda* (chronicity)**

1. *SANCHAYA* - THE FIRST *KRIYAKALA*

Sanchaya means 'accumulation'. The *Doshas* undergo mild increase by the effect of unwholesome (*Apathya*) diet and activities, in their *Pramana* (quantity), *Guna* (quality) and *Karma* (functions). This mild increase is confined to the *Vishistasthana* (special or chief site) of the respective *Doshas*^{4,5}. *Vata* undergoes *Sanchaya* in the *Pakwashaya* (colon) which is chief site; *Pitta* undergoes *Sanchaya* in the *Amashaya* (stomach) and *Kapha* undergoes *Sanchaya* in the *Uras* (thorax). Once the increase takes place, certain specific symptoms are also produced by the *Doshas*, they are as follows⁶:-

- *Vata Sanchaya Lakshana* - *Sthabdha Koshtata* (absence of movements of the alimentary tract) and *Purna koshtata* (feeling of accumulation of materials inside the alimentary tract).

- *Pitta Sanchaya Lakshana* - *Pittavabhasata* (appearance of mild yellowish discolouration) and *Mandoshmata* (mild increase of body temperature).
- *Kapha Sanchaya Lakshana* - *Gaurava* (feeling of heaviness) and *Aalasya* (lassitude).

All these symptoms being mild will usually go unrecognised by the person. The body tries to get over these mild abnormalities of its own accord, resorting to two defensive mechanisms⁷-(a) *Chaya Karana Vidvesha* - developing aversion towards the cause of increase of *Doshas*. (b) *Viparitaguna Iccha* - desire towards the things and qualities opposite of those of the cause of increase.

The person who is conscious for his health and desirous of avoiding disease should recognise these instincts, act accordingly

and help the *Doshas* to revert back to normal. If on the other hand, the person is careless, fails to recognise these instincts and continues to indulge in the causes of the increase, he will surely get into the

next stage of abnormality. Control of the *Doshas* in the *Sanchaya* stage itself, will not only prevent further stages of abnormalities but also restores health fully⁸.

2. PRAKOPA - THE SECOND KRIYAKALA

In this stage the *Doshas* undergo further *Vruddhi* (increase), travel to their other *Sthana* (sites) in the body (*Unmargagaamita*) and produce the following symptoms⁹:-

- *Vata Prakopa Lakshana - Koshtatoda* (mild pricking pain in the alimentary tract) and *Sancharana* (increased peristalsis).
- *Pitta Prakopa Lakshana - Amlika* (sour eructation), *Pipasa* (thirst) and

Paridaha (feeling of burning sensation).

- *Kapha Prakopa Lakshana - Annadwesa* (aversion of food) and *Hrudayotklesha* (nausea).

The person who has developed these symptoms can easily recognise them and also understand the changes in his health. He should take suitable treatment for controlling the *Doshas* and thereby avoid further abnormality.

3. PRASARA- THE THIRD KRIYAKALA

The meaning of the word *Prasara* is 'spreading'. If the *Doshas* are not controlled by proper remedial measures during the second stage, they increase and spread the sites of the other *Doshas* in addition to their own. *Vata* spreads to the site of *Pitta* and *Kapha*; *Pitta* spreads to the sites of *Kapha* and *Vata*; *Kapha* spreads to the site of *Pitta* and *Vata*. Just as solution of starch mixed with a little yeast and kept overnight, undergoes fermentation, increases in quantity, spills over the container and spreads to other area or just as the water of a reservoir after filling it fully flows over the dam and

spreads to a vast area on the other site, so also the *Doshas* increasing in quantity spill over their own sites and spread to the sites of other *Doshas*¹⁰. Spreading to other sites though found in the second *Kriyakala* also. It was then confined to the different site of the same *Doshas* but in the third *Kriyakala* spreading is to the sites of the other *Doshas* also in addition to their own.

Out of the three *Doshas*, it is only *Vata* which has independent movement, while the other two are lame- that is not capable of moving themselves¹¹. They require the help of *Vata* for movement. During this stage of *Prasara*, the increased *Doshas*

will produce certain symptoms as follows¹²:-

- *Vata Prasara Lakshana* – *Vimargagamana* (movement in wrong or reverse direction), *Aatopa* (gurgling sound in alimentary tract).
- *Pitta Prasara Lakshana* – *Osha* (feeling of burning sensation), *Chosha* (feeling of sucking), *Paridaha* (feeling of burning sensation all over the body) and *Dhumayana*.

- *Kapha Prasara Lakshana* – *Arochaka* (loss of appetite), *Avipaka* (indigestion), *Angasada* (tiredness) and *Chardi* (vomiting).

Rasa Dhatu is the circulating *Dhatu* and it is the medium through which the *Tridosha* travel throughout the body. During the stage of *Prakopa* and *Prasara*, the *Doshas* which are moving from one place to another are known as *Tiryaggata Doshas* or *Paridhavamana Doshas* (circulating)¹³.

4. *STHANA SAMSHRAYA* – THE FOURTH *KRIYAKALA*

Sthana Samshraya literally means 'localisation', 'getting settled at one place'. During the first three stages, the *Doshas* were moving from place to place along with *Rasa Dhatu*. Indulgence in diet and activities which produce their further increase which bring about abnormalities in the *Srotas* (*Srotodushti*), *Oja Kshaya* (decrease of *Oja*) and *Agnimandya* (weak digestive activity) and absence of remedial measures to control the *Doshas* etc., all these make way for the development of this fourth stage. The *Doshas* further increase and get mixed with *Rasa Dhatu*, which is *Saama* (having improperly digested food material) due to *Agnimandya*. This *Saama Dhatu* mixed with *Doshas*, while circulating in its channels finds itself in capable of entering into the minute *Srotas* in such places where *Srotas Dushti* has also taken place. The *Dosha* being present in the *Rasadhatu*

also get settled in those places. This activity is known as *Sthana Samshraya* of the *Doshas*. The *Doshas* thus getting localised or settled at particular places come in direct and intimate contact with the *Dushya*, *Dhatu* and *Mala* which have also undergone *Vaishamyas*. This *Samyoga* of abnormal *Doshas* and abnormal *Dushya* known as *Dosha-Dushya Sammurchana* takes place. This union of two abnormal substances gives rise to development of symptoms. Such symptoms are actually the *Purvarupa* (Prodormal symptoms) of specific diseases¹⁴. Thus the fourth *Kriyakala* is a very important stage during which abnormalities are found in the *Doshas*, *Dushya*, *Srotas*, *Agni* and *Ojas* leading to *Dosha-Dushya Sammurchana* and appearance of *Purvarupa*.

Purvarupa is defined as those symptoms, produced by the *Doshas* which have become localised in specific places and

which indicate the upcoming disease¹⁵. These symptoms are mild in nature and few in number and so can only help to identify or recognise the future disease but cannot definitely indicate the predominance of the *Dosha* which give rise to such disease. *Purvarupa* is of two kinds¹⁶ –

- (a) *Samanya* (general)
- (b) *Vishishta* (special)

By recognising the prodromal symptoms and adopting appropriate remedial measures, the onset of the future disease can be prevented.

5. VYAKTI – THE FIFTH KRIYAKALA

If proper treatment is not undertaken during the fourth *Kriyakala*, the abnormalities get aggravated further and assume the severe form known as *Roga* (disease), manifesting clearly with all its characteristic features; hence this stage is called *Vyakti*¹⁷. These characteristic features are also called by several synonyms such as *Rupa*, *Samsthana*, *Vyanjana*, *Linga*, *Lakshana*, *Chinha* and *Akruti*¹⁸. These signs and symptoms are well marked, clearly recognisable and powerful enough to produce distress to the body. These signs and symptoms appearing in this *Vyakti* stage are broadly classified into two kinds:-

Classification of *Lakshana* – the signs and symptoms manifesting during this stage can be broadly classified as follows¹⁹:-

- (a) *Doshaja Lakshana* – signs and symptoms caused by *Doshas*. These may arise either due to *Vruddhi* or *Kshaya* of *Doshas*.
- (b) *Dushyaja Lakshana* – signs and symptoms caused by *Vruddhi* or *Kshaya* of the *Dhatu*, *Updhatu* and *Mala*.
- (c) *Srotodushtija Lakshana* – these are signs and symptoms due to the abnormal changes in the *Srotas*. Each one of the four *Srotodushti Atipavrutti*, *Sangha*, *Granthi* and *Vimargagamana* produce one or more signs and symptoms.
- (d) *Agni and Amaja Lakshana* – signs and symptoms by weak digestive activity and consequent accumulation of undigested materials.
- (e) *Ojakshaya Lakshana* – signs and symptoms produced by decrease quantity or quality of *Ojas*.

Strength of the *Lakshana* – the signs and symptoms vary regard to their number and severity from person to person, their manifestation is very much influenced by many factors. These factors are:-

- *Hetu* – the causes which bring about abnormalities of the *Doshas*, *Dushya* etc. if the causes are powerful and more in number, the sign and symptoms will also be powerful and more in number. On the other hand, if the causes are weak and few, the symptoms also will be likewise.
- *Dehaprakruti* – if the predominant *Dosha* in the constitution of the person and *Dosha* now causing signs and symptoms are the same or identical in nature then the number and severity of the symptoms will be more; whereas the these two are different, the symptoms will be mild.
- *Dehabala* – the strength of the body is at its best when all the *Dhatus* and *Ojas* are in good condition. In such persons, the sign and symptoms will be less and poor in strength whereas in those who have either weak or have ill nourished *Dhatus* and *Ojas*, the symptoms will manifest with severity.
- *Dushya* – if the *Dosha* and *Dushya* are of identical nature (*Tulya Dosha*

Dushya) then the symptoms will be severe but if they are of opposite or dissimilar nature (*Atulya*) then symptoms will be few and less severe.

- *Satwa* – *Satwa* or will power also influences the symptoms. In a person who is having strong *Satwa* or will power, the symptoms appear mild and few.
- *Ritu* – if the dominant *Dosha* of the season and the *Dosha* producing the symptoms are the same, then the symptoms will be powerful and more but if they are different, the symptoms will be mild.
- *Desha* – the dominant *Dosha* of the region of land and the one producing the symptoms if happen to be the same then the symptoms will be more and powerful.
- *Vaya* – the symptoms will be more in number and severity in infancy, childhood and old age. While in youth and middle age they will be less in number and strength because the strength of the body and the power of resistance will be maximum during this period.

In the fifth *Kriyakala*, different kinds of symptom varying in number and severity manifest in different parts of the body.

6. BHEDA – THE SIXTH KRIYAKALA

If proper and effective treatments are not done to control the *Doshas* in the fifth

Kriyakala, the *Doshas* undergo further abnormal increase and give rise to sixth

Kriyakala known as *Bheda*²⁰. During this stage, the abnormal changes taking place in the *Dosha*, *Dushya*, *Srotas* etc., are unusual, profound, greatly damaging and irreversible. If all conditions are favourable, such treatment can only make for prolongation of life of patient with constant suffering. On the other hand, if conditions are not favourable, the patient is sure to get death. One or more of these abnormalities will lead to *Dirghkalanubandha* (chronicity), *Asadhyata* (incurability), *Upadrava* (complication), *Rogapunaravartana* (recurrence of disease), *Arishta Lakshana* (fatal sign and symptoms) and finally *Marana* (death)²¹.

- *Upadrava* (complication):- it is defined as another which develops either during the course of a disease or after its termination. It may either be minor or major one²². *Upadrava* usually originates from the same *Dosha* from which the primary disease has developed. So, the treatment of the primary disease by itself will be sufficient for the *Upadrava* also, most of the time. But sometimes if the *Upadrava* are many and severe, causing great distress and danger to the life of the patient, it becomes necessary to treat them urgently in addition to the primary disease. The primary disease which has become the cause of

Upadrava can be called as *Nidanarthkara Roga*²³.

- *Rogapunaravartana* (recurrence of disease):- during the fifth *Kriyakala*, if effective treatment is administered, the disease may get cured. If on the other hand, the treatment is of medium strength, it will only mitigate the increased *Doshas* to some extent but cannot expel them out of the body. By this the symptoms may also get mitigated and give some relief to the patient. The *Dosha* which are thus mitigated will become *Dhatulina* (hidden in *Dhatus*), lie dormant till they get some more exciting causes. This condition is known as *Dhatugatatwa*. When exciting causes become available, the *Doshas* will produce the same disease again. This activity is called *Rogapunaravartana* (recurrence of disease).
- *Arishta Lakshana* (*Rishta Lakshana*):- these are signs and symptoms which indicate death. They may appear any time before death, as early as one year or late as a few moments prior to death. Once these *Lakshana* manifest in the body, death is sure.
- *Marana* (death):- it is extinction of life caused by the *Viyoga* (separation) of its four components *Sharir* (body), *Indriya* (senses), *Satwa* (mind) and *Atma* (soul).

So it is very essential for the physician to understand each stage very clearly. *Sushruta* has also declared that he who understands the stages such as *Sanchaya*,

Prakopa, *Prasara*, *Sthana Samshraya*, *Vyakti* and *Bheda* of the *Doshas*, can only be called the physician²⁴.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The knowledge of *Kriyakala* is very essential to control and prevent the diseases. Abnormalities taking place in the six successive *Kriyakala* are powerful successively. Prevention of disease is possible by efficient treatment in the first three stages. *Dosha Dushya Sammurchana* occurs in the fourth *Kriyakala* is very essential for the origin of the disease. Appearance of *Purvarupa* is the chief feature of this stage. Manifestation of characteristic features of the diseases

represents the fifth stage. They are produced due to abnormality in *Dosha*, *Dushya*, *Agni*, *Srotas* and *Ojas*. The abnormalities occurring in the sixth stage are irreversible, damaging, leads to chronicity or death. It can be said that the first three stages indicate *Dosha Awastha*, later two stages indicate disease condition and the last one *Bheda* indicate final course of diseases, complication, recurrence of disease and death.

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