

FROM SAMPRAPTI TO DIAGNOSIS: CORRELATING SHATKRIYAKALA WITH MODERN DISEASE PROGRESSION MODELS

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ABSTRACT

Ayurveda, the ancient system of holistic medicine, emphasizes both maintaining health in the well and treating illness in the unwell. It does so by maintaining balance among the three core principles of the body: *Doshas* (biological energies), *Dhatus* (body tissues), and *Malas* (waste products). One of the key frameworks within Ayurveda for understanding how diseases develop and progress is known as *Shat Kriyakala*. The term *Kriyakala* combines two Sanskrit words—*Kriya*, meaning action or treatment (such as medicines, diet, and lifestyle changes), and *Kala*, meaning time or stage. Together, they refer to the timely interventions at different stages of disease development. The concept was detailed by the ancient scholar Acharya Sushruta, who described six distinct stages through which a disease evolves in the body. Recognizing these stages allows for timely and appropriate interventions before the illness becomes more entrenched or difficult to treat. By

identifying imbalances in the *Doshas* early on, practitioners can address the root of the issue before it manifests as a full-blown disease. This early detection and proactive approach not only makes treatment more effective but also reduces the patient's discomfort. The *Shat*

Kriyakala model provides valuable insights into diagnosis (understanding the illness), prognosis (predicting its course), and the ideal timing for therapeutic actions. It acts as a roadmap for preventing the escalation of disease and helps ensure better health outcomes through timely intervention.

KEYWORDS: Ayurveda, Kriyakala, Dosha, Diagnosis, Prognosis.

INTRODUCTION

The ancient Ayurvedic scholar *Susruta* introduced the concept of Kriyakala to support the early identification of diseases, aiming to intervene promptly and prevent further progression.^[1] Building upon this principle, the idea of *Shatakriyakala* was developed. This model outlines six sequential stages in the evolution of a disease: *Sanchaya*, *Prakopa*, *Prasara*, *Sthanasamshraya*, *Vyakti*, and *Bheda*. These stages represent a continuum from the initial accumulation of imbalances to the full manifestation and complication of a disease. For clinical purposes, these stages are often grouped into two categories, as shown in Table ,based on their relevance to disease manifestation.

S. No.	Stages of Shatakriyakala	Clinical classification
1)	<i>Sanchaya</i>	Subclinical stages
2)	<i>Prakopa</i>	
3)	<i>Prasara</i>	
4)	<i>Sthanasamshraya</i>	Clinical stages
5)	<i>Vyakti</i>	
6)	<i>Bheda</i>	

The concept of Shatkriyakala takes into account various contributing factors that can lead to the development of acute or chronic illnesses. These include external trauma (*Abhighata*), exposure to toxins (*Visha*), unseen entities (*Bhutas*), environmental disturbances, imbalance in the Doshas, and the buildup of metabolic waste products such as *Ama*, among others.

General considerations related to Shatkriyakala The various stages of disease progression as per *Shatkriyakala* are as follows:

1. *Sanchaya*: Accumulation of Dosha or causative entity.
2. *Prakopa*: Spread of Doshas to other sites than its original site.
3. *Prasara*: Aggravated Doshas or causative factors spread other parts of the body through *Strotas*.

4. *Sthanasamshraya*: Agitated Doshas or disease causative entity spreads to different parts and gets accumulated throughout the body.
5. *Vyaktavastha*: Manifestation of symptoms of diseases.
6. *Bhedavastha*: Specific sign of diseases manifested.

AIM AND OBJECTIVE

This article is intended to explain in detail about the concept of *Kriyakala*. We have also represented *Kriyakala* along with its correlation to disease progression in context to modern medical sciences.

OBJECTIVE

1. To depict the concept of *Shatkriyakala* and its importance in detail by review of literature.
2. To understand correlation of *Shatkriyakala* in context to correlation to disease progression.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study is primarily based on a comprehensive review of classical literature. Key Ayurvedic scriptures such as the *Charaka Samhita*, *Sushruta Samhita*, and *Ashtanga Hridaya* were examined, along with modern scientific sources discussing *pathogenesis*. An attempt has been made to explore the correlation between the Ayurvedic concept of *Shatkriyakala* and the modern understanding of disease development.

Literature Review

As discussed earlier, the concept of *Shatkriyakala* as presented by Acharya Sushruta not only allows for a structured understanding of how a disease progresses but also offers valuable insights into its early prevention.^[2] When the *Doshas* become imbalanced in the initial stages, implementing basic therapeutic measures—along with modifications in diet and lifestyle, including environmental adjustments—can effectively halt the progression of the disease. This approach enables intervention well before the condition becomes clinically apparent, highlighting the preventive strength of the *Shatkriyakala* framework.

1. *Sanchaya*

The term *Sanchaya* refers to the process of accumulation. In the context of *Shatkriyakala*—the six stages of disease progression in Ayurveda—*Sanchaya* denotes the initial build-up of *Doshas* (bodily humors) within their natural sites.^[3] At this phase, the *Doshas* begin to

increase but remain confined to their original locations without spreading elsewhere. This accumulation is subtle and represents what is termed *Samhata Rupa Vriddhi*, meaning growth without movement. Since the causative factors (*Nidana*) are still relatively mild or insufficient, the *Doshas* do not become mobile or shift state—they remain in a static, more solid form. Only when the contributing factors intensify do the *Doshas* undergo transformation to a more fluid form, known as *Vilayana Rupa*, at which point they begin migrating from their usual seats to other parts of the body. For this progression to occur, a stronger and more persistent causative influence is necessary.

2. *Prakopa*

If the causative factors continue to persist after the stage of *Sanchaya* (accumulation), the *Doshas* that have accumulated begin to move into the next stage—*Prakopa* (aggravation). According to Acharya *Vagbhata*, *Prakopa* is characterized by the *Doshas* beginning to exhibit abnormal or increased activity within their natural sites. He describes this as "*Unmargagamita*," indicating the initial tendency of the *Doshas* to move out of their normal pathways or boundaries.^[4] This marks the beginning of pathological manifestations if not checked in time.

Acharya *Dalhana* describes *Prakopa* as a progressed stage of *Chaya* (accumulation), where the *Doshas* gain sufficient strength and instability to begin shifting from their natural locations.^[5] In this phase, the *Doshas* are no longer merely accumulated—they become activated and capable of initiating movement, setting the stage for further pathological progression.

3. *Prasara*

Prasara represents the third stage of *Kriyakala* in the progression of disease. If the aggravating factors (*Dushtikara Nidana*) persist beyond this stage, the vitiated *Doshas* do not remain confined to their original sites. Instead, they begin to spread throughout the body, entering the next stage known as *Prasara* (spread or dissemination).^[3]

All *Dhatus*, *Malas*, along with *Pitta* and *Kapha* *Doshas*, are considered *Pangu*—meaning they are inherently immobile. While they can undergo quantitative changes, they lack the independent ability to move from one location to another. Their mobility is made possible only through the action of *Vata Dosha*, which acts as the driving force behind their

displacement. Therefore, *Vata* plays a pivotal role in initiating *Prasara Avastha* (the stage of spread), making it a crucial factor in the progression and outward expression of disease.^[7]

4. *Sthanasamshraya*

As previously explained, during the stage of *Prasara*, the *Doshas* begin to disperse from their original sites and circulate throughout the body. If appropriate treatment is not administered at this stage, the aggravated *Doshas* may localize in specific tissues (*Dhatus*) where there is an existing weakness or dysfunction in the bodily channels (*Strotovaigunya*). This localized accumulation of *Doshas* at a vulnerable site marks the onset of the next stage, known as *Sthana Samshraya* (localization).^[8]

For *Doshas* to become lodged at a specific location in the body, certain conditions must be met. Firstly, the causative factors (*Nidana*) need to be strong enough to produce significant disturbance. Secondly, there must be a vulnerable site present—referred to as *Kha Vaigunya*—which indicates structural or functional weakness in the tissues, making them more susceptible to the settling of vitiated *Doshas*.

5. *Vyakti*

Sthayna Samshraya represents the fifth stage of *Kriyakala*. If the patient continues exposure to the causative factors (*Nidana*) during this phase, the aggravated *Doshas* will advance into the next stage—*Vyakti*, or the full manifestation of disease. At this point, the clinical features of the illness become apparent, a stage referred to as *Vyadhi Darshana*. The dominance of specific *Doshas*, the involvement of affected tissues (*Dushya*), and the disturbed bodily channels (*Strotas*) are distinctly observed. This stage is crucial for the physician, as it allows for accurate diagnosis and formulation of a targeted treatment plan. In this stage, the fundamental signs and symptoms of the disease begin to manifest clearly.^[9] For instance, elevated body temperature is a key indication in *Jwara* (fever), while frequent passage of loose, watery stools is characteristic of *Atisara*. These clinical features help in identifying the specific disease condition.

6. *Bheda*

At this stage, accurate disease identification (*Vyadhibheda*) becomes possible by assessing the predominant *Doshas* involved. Distinct signs and symptoms specific to the disease start to appear clearly. However, if appropriate treatment is not administered or if the body's defensive factors (*Vyadhivighataka Bhavas*) are inadequate, the condition may progress

further into the next phase—*Bhedavastha*. In this advanced stage, the original disease may lead to the development of secondary complications, known as *Upadravas*.^[10]

Pathogenesis

The word pathogenesis comes from the Greek word *Pathos* means disease and *genesis* means creation. Pathogenesis is the manner of development of a disease.^[11]

1. Pre-Pathogenesis Phase / Stage of Susceptibility^[11]

In this initial phase, the disease has not yet manifested, but the groundwork for its development has already been laid due to the presence of contributing factors. This stage refers to the period **before** the actual onset of disease in an individual. The causative agent may not yet have entered the human body, but the conditions that facilitate its transmission or impact are already present in the surrounding environment.

In the context of *Ayurveda*, this stage is primarily applicable to *Nija Vyadhi* (endogenous diseases), as there is no well-defined concept for *Agantuja Vyadhi* (exogenous diseases) within this phase.

Examples include

- Elevated cholesterol levels, obesity, and behavioral factors predisposing to heart disease.
- Smoking, hypertension, and high lipid levels increasing the risk of stroke.

The factors associated with a higher likelihood of disease development in the future are referred to as **risk factors**.^[12] These can be classified as:

- **Modifiable:** such as smoking, alcohol use, poor diet, and physical inactivity.
- **Non-modifiable:** including age, gender, race, and family history.

2. Pathogenesis Phase

The pathogenesis phase begins when the disease-causing agent successfully enters a susceptible human host and initiates internal changes leading toward disease development.

In the context of *Ayurveda*, the concept of specific biological agents—such as viruses, bacteria, or protozoa—is not explicitly outlined as it is in modern medicine. Instead, the term "Bhoota" is used to refer broadly to external or invisible disease-causing entities. However, there is no detailed classification or specificity regarding different types of infectious agents within classical *Ayurvedic* texts. This lack of specificity presents a challenge when

attempting to diagnose or interpret communicable diseases—especially those caused by identifiable biological agents—through a purely Ayurvedic framework.

Symptoms of diseases and related Doshas in progressive stages of diseases.

S. No.	Stages of <i>Shatkriyakala</i>	<i>Vata Lakshana</i>	<i>Pitta Lakshana</i>	<i>Kapha Lakshana</i>
1	<i>Sanchaya</i>	Abdomen trouble	Altered thermostat of body	Heaviness and <i>Alasya</i>
2	<i>Prakopa</i>	<i>Toda</i>	<i>Pipasa and Paridaha</i>	<i>Annadwesh</i> and <i>Hridyotkledascha</i>
3	<i>Prasara</i>	<i>Atopa</i>	<i>Dhoomayanani and Paridaha</i>	<i>Arochaka</i> and <i>Angasada</i>
4	<i>Sthanasamsraya</i>	Inflammation and pain	Metabolic disturbances	<i>Chardi</i>
5	<i>Vyakti</i>	Stiffness	<i>Visarpa</i>	<i>Arbud</i>
6	<i>Bheda</i>	<i>Vataj Jwara</i>	Bursting of swelling	<i>Kaphaj Jwara</i>

CONCLUSION

The concept of *Shat Kriyakala* in *Ayurveda* offers a detailed understanding of the pathological progression of disease and serves as a valuable tool for implementing preventive and therapeutic strategies. It outlines six sequential stages of disease development—*Sanchaya*, *Prakopa*, *Prasara*, *Sthana Samshraya*, *Vyakti*, and *Bheda*—each representing a critical phase in the manifestation of illness. By recognizing these stages, practitioners can intervene early to avoid the intake of causative factors (*Hetusevana*), plan precise treatment approaches, and facilitate early diagnosis. This early intervention not only helps in managing the disease effectively but also in preventing further complications. The *Shat Kriyakala* framework also provides insight into *Saadhyasadhyatv* (prognosis), enabling better clinical decision-making.

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