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SAPTA KALA: A REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

Acharya Sushruta used the term "Kala" to refer to the sheath or beholding membrane of internal organs that is functional in nature. It also provides the underlying body organs with structural support. Its functional features and anatomical locations as mentioned in Ayurvedic classics can help us understand the fundamental physiology of organs, or srotas, which can help us decide on a treatment plan for the diseased organs. With the exception of Acharya Sushruta and Vagbhata, the majority of Acharyas don't discuss Kala much. As a result, the topic will be clarified and its usefulness will be easily understood.

KEYWORDS: Kala, Saptakala, Acharya Sushruta, Vagbhata, Ayurveda.

INTRODUCTION

The two fundamental concepts "Ayu" and "Veda," where "Ayu" means life and "Veda" denotes science or knowledge, combine to form the phrase "Ayurveda," which means "the science of life." Ayu is not only a system of living things; it is an active conglomeration of the mind (Mana), soul (Aatma), sensomotor organs (Indriyas), and physical body (Sharer). It is said that Ayu, or life, begins when the sperm (Shukra) fertilizes the ovum (Shonit), at which point the soul (Aatma) attaches itself to it. When this all-powerful Aatma leaves life, it ends.

All facets of life—physical, psychological, spiritual, and social—are included in Ayurveda. The srotas are the locations of action for all biotransformations in the body, and the Kala is a key player in this process. For example, the meaning of the word "Kala" in Vedic literature and Ayurvedic treatises is different. The term "Kala" has multiple meanings in Vedic literatures, as listed below:

1. The moon's sixteenth section
2. A rise in the amount of money invested (profit or interest)
3. Kalas, or the fine arts
4. Time measurement
5. The lengthy musical stroke
6. A fraction
7. Gathering

The term "Kala" has multiple meanings in Ayurveda, such as

1. Thirty Kastha make one Kala, twenty Kala make one Muhurta, or one tenth of Kala.
2. There are sixteen Kalas and eleven Pranas in Purusha (also known as Karma Purusha or the living man). In his reply, Dalhana states that the term Kala in this context refers to sixteen qualities, including iccha, dvesha, dukha and sukha.
3. The four therapeutic limbs of Chikitsa Chatushapada are composed of sixteen Kala (qualities). The attributes of Vaidya, Paricharaka, Aushadha and Rogi are represented by these four limbs.
4. Kala is known by several names, including covering, sheath, aponeurosis, secreting membrane, and living membrane. Most people consider it to be a secreting membrane.
5. There are even seven Kalas, which are found within the asayas (Hollow organs) and dhatus (Tissues).

Although Kala is commonly thought of as a membrane, not everyone can accurately distinguish between the three types of Kala mentioned above. The three basic tissue types—epithelial, connective, and adipose tissues, from which the membranes created during the embryonic phase itself are derived were covered in the Sushrut Samhita. When explaining Kala, Acharya Sushruta provided a lovely illustration of how a transverse piece of a hardwood log allows us to examine the tree's layers one by one in the same manner the Kala is present in our body.

Formation of kala

According to Acharya Vagbhatta, Kala is generated by the Swaushmana transforming the redundant matter (Kleda) that lies between the Ashayas and the Dhatus into tissues that are infused with fibrous matter, serous, and mucinious structures. It is called Kala because of its structure and resembles the heartwood of plants, the remaining portion of important Dhatu.

The same idea is also explained by Ashtanga Hridaya.

Functions of kala

1. Absorption (Via the big and small intestines)
2. The small intestine's secretion
3. Protection (Uterine chorion)
4. Renal selectivity

Classification of kala

In all 7 types of Kalas are described by Acharya Sushruta in Sharirsthana-

1. Mamsadhara kala
2. Raktadhara Kala
3. Medodhara Kala
4. Shlesma dhara Kala
5. Mala dhara Kala
6. Pitta dhara Kala
7. Sukradhara Kala

Mamsadhara kala

It permits the dhamani (Arteries), snayu (Ligaments), and siras (Veins) to expand their branches inside the muscles. Thus, it is clear that the term Mamsadhara Kala refers to the muscles or tissues that support membranes, specifically -

1. Deep Fascia (Very thick)
2. Inter muscular septa (Moderately thick)
3. Sarcolemma (Thin or minute)

Raktadhara kala

Which is found inside the muscle, where shonita is found, particularly in the siras (Veins), which are found in the pliha and yakrit. This could be related to the endothelium, which is a

thin mucous membrane made of epithelial tissues that surrounds the arteries, veins, liver, and spleen.

Medodhara kala

This is regarded as the third Kala. Meda is mostly seen in the belly, where it manifests as majja in tiny bones. Majja stays inside large bones, however it is referred to as sarakta meda in all other bones (Small, Flat, Curved). Vasa is the term for the pure fat found in muscles. This could be regarded as a membrane made up of adipose tissues, or fat, like the omentum and subcutaneous fascia.

Shlesma dhara kala

It supports its existence and is found in all joints, much like how a wheel moves smoothly when its axis hole is lubricated with shlesma. It is an epithelial membrane that is serous.

Purish dhara kala

Located inside the alimentary system, starting from the intestines and yakrit, this Maladhara Kala separates the mala (Waste materials, Particularly fecal matter) from the food material after it has been digested. It does this at the level of unduk. This could be related to the mucous membrane made of epithelial tissue that is found inside the big intestine.

Pitta dhara kala

It keeps four different types of food and beverages in the pakvashaya (Small and big intestines) after being forced out of the amashaya. Foods that are consumed, chewed, drank, or licked eventually make their way to the koshtha (The human digestive tract), where they are digested and absorbed by the pitta's tejas. It can be inferred to be the mucous membrane found in the small intestine, duodenum, and stomach.

Shukra dhara kala

It permeates every living thing's entire body. According to the Acharyas, shukra is present in the human body in the same way that ghee and jaggery are found in milk and sugar cane juice, respectively, but in invisible form. The mucous membranes of the vagina, uterus, uterine tubes, and ovaries in females, as well as the testis, seminiferous tubules, epididymis, vas deferens, and prostrate in males, may be connected to this.

Modern aspect

1. Membrane: A thin layer of tissue that covers a surface, lines many body cavities or divides a space or organ.

a. Fibrous membrane: A membrane composed mainly of fibrous connective tissue. E.g. Fasciae, dura mater

b. Serous membrane: A mesothelial tissue which lines certain internal cavities of the body, forming a smooth, transparent, two-layered membrane lubricated by a fluid derived from serum. The peritoneum, pericardium, and pleura are serous membranes.

c. Mucous membrane: An epithelial tissue which secretes mucus, and lines many body cavities and tubular organs including the gut and respiratory passages.

CONCLUSION

Kala may be considered as secreting membranes present in their respective areas. Broadly these Kala may be correlated as-

1. Snayu praticchanna kala – Fascia, aponeurosis, ligaments, tendons, and the outer layer of the digestive, respiratory, circulatory, urinary, and reproductive systems, among other connective tissue membranes. For instance, Mamsadhara Kala.
2. Jarayu santata kala – Membranes made of fibrous connective tissues aid in the formation of deep and superficial fascia, which form a portion of muscles and divide them into functional units. They also create cavities in the body.
3. Shlesma veshthith kala – Mucous and serous membranes are membranes made of fluid-secreting epithelial structures. Hence, Shlesma veshthith Kala can be regarded as Purishdhara Kala, Pittadhara Kala, and Shukradhara Kala.

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