

## ROLE OF SHAT KRIYAKAL IN DISEASE DIAGNOSIS: A REVIEW ARTICAL

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### ABSTRACT

The concept of Kriya Kala in Ayurveda is essential for understanding the stages of disease progression and determining the appropriate timing for intervention and treatment. This approach, which can be likened to the modern understanding of disease pathogenesis, is thoroughly explained by Acharya Susruta in the 21st chapter of Sutrasthana, where he outlines the six stages of Shatkriyakala. Sanchaya, Prakopa, Prasara, Sthansamshraya, Vyaktavastha and Bhedavastha. Kriya means action or treatment, and Kala means time or period. Thus, Shatkriyakala refers to the 'appropriate periods to take action or treatment.' In Ayurveda, the Prayojana, or purpose, is twofold: the maintenance of health in a healthy person, which is achieved by following Ritucharya (Seasonal routines), Dinacharya

(Daily routines), and Sadvritta (Moral and ethical conduct); and the curing of disease in a diseased person through therapeutic measures. Before studying the pathological conditions of the body, a physician must first understand the normal functions and structures of the body based on the concepts of dosha, dushya, and srotas. Kriya Kala aids the doctor in adopting an appropriate line of treatment by assessing the condition of the vitiated doshas using their intellect and knowledge.

**KEYWORDS:** *Shad kriya kaal, Diagnosis, Prognosis.*

### INTRODUCTION

The focus in Ayurveda is primarily on the prevention of diseases rather than solely adopting curative measures. Sushruta's concept of Shatkriyakala outlines the consecutive stages of

disease progression and suggests preventive measures to avoid complications. Early diagnosis allows for successful disease management with minimal discomfort during treatment planning. If a physician can detect changes in the early stages, such as Sanchaya (Accumulation) and Prakopa (Aggravation), based on the manifestation of dosha symptoms, they can recommend techniques to prevent the disease from progressing and becoming stronger. By understanding Shatkriyakala, a physician can treat weakened areas or organs early on, preventing further development into Sthansamshraya (Localization). This knowledge also enables the physician to determine the prognosis (Sadhyasadyatva) of the disease.

Kriya Kala is primarily divided into two types

1. Ritu Kriya Kala
2. Vyadhi Kriya Kala

Ritu Kriya Kala is explained by Vagbhata in the 12th chapter of Astanga Sangraha, Sutra Sthana. It includes three stages: Chaya (Accumulation), Kopa (Aggravation), and Prashama (Pacification). These stages of doshas are influenced by the existing season. Following the appropriate seasonal regimen can bring these doshas back to their normal state.

Vyadhi Kriya Kala is described by Sushruta and consists of six stages, known as Shatkriyakala. In modern science, disease progression is typically recognized in two stages: the detection of the disease and the complications arising from it. In contrast, Ayurveda identifies six stages for any disease (Shatkriyakala), where the visible symptoms and complications of a disease are observed in the final two stages.

Shatkriyakala is the process of understanding the pathogenesis of disease through consecutive stages. Six main stages are described for the successive manifestation of disease:

1. Sanchaya: Gradual accumulation of doshas in their respective seats.
2. Prakopa: Accumulated doshas begin moving to other sites beyond their main location.
3. Prasara: Aggravated doshas leave their original place and spread to other parts of the body through different srotas.
4. Sthanasamshraya: Agitated doshas spread to different areas and become obstructed in certain srotas due to abnormalities, resulting in localization.
5. Vyaktavastha: Clear-cut symptoms of the disease appear.
6. Bhedavastha: Specific signs and symptoms of the disease manifest.

Understanding Shatkriyakala is crucial for comprehending the disease process, making this article significant.

## AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

1. To study the concept of Shatkriyakala.
2. To examine the role of Shatkriyakala in the manifestation of diseases.

This conceptual study will aid in understanding the pathogenesis of diseases in consecutive stages.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

Source of data

1. Sushruta samhita
2. Ashtanga hridaya
3. Ayurvediya vikrti Vijnana and Roga vijnana
4. Relevant published articles

## OBSERVATION AND RESULT

- 1. Sanchaya (Stage of accumulation):** The increase of doshas in their respective sites is called Sanchaya. This stage produces a dislike for things that cause the increase and a liking for things of opposite qualities. Mild symptoms are seen in this stage, making it very beneficial to treat the person at this point. The symptoms include abdominal bulging due to the accumulation of vata dosha, yellowness of nails, eyes, and urine due to pitta dosha, and a feeling of heaviness and laziness due to kapha dosha.

The etiology of Sanchaya can be classified into

1. Kala Swabhava (Natural)
2. Trividha Hetu (Three types of causative factors):
  - Pragynaparadha (Misdeeds)
  - Asatmendriyarth Samyoga (Improper use of sensory organs)
  - Vyapanna Hetu (Inherent cause), which includes seasonal variations.

In this stage, the deranged doshas are not able to move to the next stage if they are not treated. If neglected, they become stronger and more intense in their subsequent development. In Sanchaya, a patient desires the opposite guna (Quality) of rasa (Taste). For example, when kapha reaches Sanchayavastha, the person will have an aversion to sweets

and will want to consume the opposite guna of rasa. This is a proper indication of Sanchaya Avastha of particular doshas, making it the right time to assess the accumulated doshas and take the appropriate line of treatment.<sup>[3]</sup>

## 2. Prakopa (Stage of aggregation)

In the Prakopa (Vitiation) stage, the accumulation of doshas has persisted for an extended period, and the causative factors have continuously been present. This stage occurs when the doshas are ready to migrate but have not yet spread from their original location to other areas. This stage develops due to the continuous intake of improper ahara (Food) and vihara (Regimen). Dosha vridhhi (Increase in biological humors) occurs in a liquid state at their original site. There are two types of Prakopa:

1. Chayapurvaka prakopa: Prakopa that occurs after passing through the Sanchaya stage.
2. Achayapurvaka prakopa: Prakopa that occurs without prior accumulation. Although doshas become aberrant in Achayapurvaka Prakopa, the damage they cause can be curable.

Diagnosis of the Prakopa stage can be made based on persistent Chaya Lakshanas (Features of aggravated biological factors), a desire for opposite gunas (Fundamental attributes), and aversion to similar gunas. Since the body becomes more vulnerable to Prakopa due to dosha accumulation, it is essential to consider Sanchayavastha before attempting to counteract the harmful effects of Prakopa. Panchakarma, or elimination therapy, is used to treat dosha excitation brought on by seasonal factors.

Basti Karma helps to eliminate aggravated Vata Dosha during the early rainy season. Virechana and Vaman Karma are effective in eliminating the excited Pitta and Kapha Doshas during the autumn and spring seasons, respectively. Avoiding specific etiological factors associated with each dosha is an important prophylactic measure for Prakopavastha.

## 3. Prasara: Stage of dosha expansion

Prasara, the third stage of Kriyakala, signifies the expansion of doshas throughout the body. The term "Prasara" means to spread. In this stage, the aggravated doshas extend to other parts, organs, and structures of the body. The expanded doshas manifest specific symptoms corresponding to the actions of each dosha:

- Vata Prasara manifests as Vimarga-gamana and Aatopa.
- Pitta Prasara manifests as Osha, Chosha, Paridaha and Dhumayana.

- Kapha Prasara manifests as Arochaka, Avipaka, Angasada, and Chhardi.

#### 4. **Sthansanshraya:** Stage of Dosha-Tissue accumulation

Sthansanshraya represents the stage where doshas aggravate and spread to different parts of the body. This occurs due to the inherent property of Vayu, known as "Desham Vayurgati Matwatvat," which denotes the mobility of Vayu. This mobility serves as the cause of dosha expansion and overflow, leading to their localization in focal points. These focal points might be predisposed due to previous defects or weaknesses at the cellular, tissue, or organ level, known as Khavaigunya. These defects could be primarily genetic or hereditary, or secondarily acquired due to previous exposure to etiological factors. In this stage of Dosha-Dushya Sammurchana, or the amalgamation of doshas and tissues, past diseases or previous weaknesses become apparent. This marks the fourth stage of Kriyakala. The vitiated doshas spread to various parts of the body, giving rise to different diseases. When this Dosha-Dushya Sammurchana occurs in the Basti Pradesh (Urinary system), it leads to diseases like Ashmari (Renal calculi) and Mutraghata (Urinary obstruction). Similarly, when it occurs in the Guda region (Rectum), it results in diseases like Bhagandara (Fistula-in-ano) and Arsha (Hemorrhoids).

5. **Vyakta** stage, also known as the stage of disease manifestation, clinical features are well produced, and one can easily identify the disease. Diseases fully manifest through their symptoms during this stage. Basic signs and symptoms of diseases become evident, such as increased body temperature in the case of Jwara, excessive watery stool in Atisara, and unusual abdominal enlargement in Udara Roga. Treatment strategies tailored to specific diseases, known as Vyadhi Pratyanika Chikitsa, must be adopted during this stage.

6. **Bheda vastha (Stage of complication):** Bheda marks the final stage of disease progression, during which complications may arise, and the onset of other diseases may occur. Prognosis in this stage is very poor, and untreated conditions may become incurable. This stage is particularly challenging to treat, and complications can significantly impact health, potentially leading to death.

The progression of dosha vitiation ideally completes by the fifth stage itself. However, if proper treatment is not administered even after reaching the fifth stage, the dosha may progress to the sixth stage, Bheda. This final stage of Kriyakala allows for accurate diagnosis of the disease and determination of its doshic type. For instance, in Kaphaj Jwara, where

Kapha dosha is predominant, this stage confirms the doshic dominance. This stage is often considered extremely challenging to treat and may even be deemed incurable. For example, if an inflammatory condition is left untreated initially, it may progress to the formation of an abscess, eventually bursting and leaving a permanent scar. Similarly, non-inflammatory conditions like pyrexia and diarrhea, if not treated early, may lead to severe complications.

### Importance of shatkriyakala

1. This concept aids in assessing the progress of the disease.
2. It helps prevent further accumulation of causative factors.
3. Shatkriyakala provides information about disease-causing factors, allowing for preventive measures to be adopted.
4. It ensures accurate management of the disease and aids in planning suitable treatment regimens.
5. Information about Sthanasamshraya can help prevent healthy organs from being affected by the disease.
6. Sadhyasadyatva of the disease can be explored based on the stage of Shatkriyakala (progressive disease stage).
7. The concept of Shatkriyakala assists in understanding the complete pathogenesis of the disease.

**Table: Particular treatment according to shatkriyakala.**

Sr no.	Stage	Management
1	Sanchay	Nidan Parivarjana, Suitable Shamana
2	Prakop	Vata-Vatanulomana Pitta- Pitta shamana /Sukhvirechan Kapha Agnideepan, Pachana, Kaphahara
3	Prasar	Vata- Basti Pitta-Virechana. KaphaVamana
4	Sthansanshray	Samprapti vighatan
5	Vyakta avastha	Lakshanik and as per chikitsa siddhantas
6	Bheda avastha	Doshpratyanik and Vyadhipratyanik chikitsa

### DISCUSSION

Shatkriyakala is a fundamental concept in Ayurveda, representing the journey of disease formation. It holds utmost importance in achieving Ayurveda's goal of restoring disturbed homeostasis caused by imbalanced body humors due to unhealthy lifestyle practices. This process begins with the imbalance of doshas in the body due to inappropriate diet and

lifestyle choices, a concept also observed in modern science, known as the natural history of disease.

Sushruta extensively detailed the concept of Shatkriyakala in the context of abscess formation, outlining six stages of disease formation. Some Ayurvedic treatises describe this process in two stages, with Sushruta's six stages encompassing the first two. These initial stages of Shatkriyakala can be compared to the pre-pathogenesis stage in modern science, where interactions between agents, hosts, and environments initiate disease formation in humans.

Primary prevention, corresponding to intervention in the pre-pathogenesis phase of disease, can be achieved through measures promoting general health and well-being or specific protective measures. In the first two stages of Shatkriyakala, doshas accumulate in their respective sites and become vitiated due to disrupted homeostasis. Ayurveda recommends restoring homeostasis through daily and seasonal regimens as preventive measures.

Disease arises from the union of vitiated doshas and dhatus (body tissues). In the third and fourth stages of Kriyakala, accumulated doshas migrate through the body and settle where immunity is low, establishing themselves in specific organs or systems, leading to disease formation. Prodromal symptoms emerge in the fourth stage, akin to the presymptomatic phase in modern science, where disease manifestation begins but symptoms are not yet clear. Primary and secondary prevention measures can be applied during these stages.

Secondary prevention involves early diagnosis and treatment to prevent further disease formation and restore health. In the fifth stage of Kriyakala, clear signs and symptoms of the disease are observed, similar to the clinical stage in the natural history of disease. Diagnosis is established through clinical examination, and treatment, whether cleansing or palliative, is administered accordingly.

The final stage, Bheda, represents either disease complication if left untreated or recovery. It aligns with the stage of diminished capacity in modern science. Tertiary prevention, aimed at disability limitation and rehabilitation, is the mode of intervention at this stage.

## CONCLUSION

Understanding the Shatkriyakala is crucial for comprehending the progression of various diseases and diagnosing them accurately. A physician who can differentiate and understand



these six stages of dosha manifestation can diagnose and treat diseases effectively, thus becoming a successful practitioner or Bhishak. Knowledge of Shatkriyakala helps determine the appropriate treatment for each stage of dosha manifestation and provides insight into the prognosis of the disease. Acharyas emphasize the importance of not delaying treatment according to Shatkriyakala, as it may lead to incurability of the disease and failure in treatment. Therefore, the concept of Shatkriyakala outlined in classical Ayurvedic treatises holds immense significance.

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