

PANCHMAHABHOOTA SIDDHANTA IN AYURVEDA, YOGA WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO FIVE ELEMENTS IN GREEK AND CHINESE PHILOSOPHIES

Monica Salaria^{1*} and Aditya²

¹Assistant Professor, Dept. of Kriya Sharir, JIAR, Jammu, India.

²MD Kayachikitsa, Medical Officer, Govt. AYUSH Dispensary, Surinsar, Jammu, India.

Article Received on
15 October 2021,

Revised on 05 Nov 2021,
Accepted on 25 Nov 2021

DOI: 10.20959/wjpr202114-22448

*Corresponding Author

Dr. Monica Salaria

Assistant Professor, Dept. of
Kriya Sharir, JIAR, Jammu,
India.

ABSTRACT

There are many great principles given by Ayurveda, one among them is the *Panchmahabhoota siddhanta*. This is explained well in Yogic texts and Greek philosophy as well. The present study is concerned with bringing out the scattered information in different texts and these are used as material for present conceptual study. *Panchamahabhutas* are important components of the body and the universe. The different views for *Panchmahabhootsa* from different parts of world and civilizations can bring up light on how they are related and what is their significance as well. Hence significant study by author to elaborate the concept of *Panchamahabhuta* in a systemic manner is

done. It is very much essential for a good physician to develop with this concept to make the basic things clearer and stronger. This study also concludes that each and every fundamental principle of Ayurveda is based on *Panchamahabhuta* theory.

KEYWORDS: *Ayurveda, Panchamahabhuta, Lok, Purush, Universe, Mahabhoot.*

INTRODUCTION

The concept of *Panchamahabhutas* has been defined in different ways in *Ayurveda* classics. It is stated that human body is *panchabhautika* and the food we eat is also *Panchabhautik*, when the food undergoes digestion with the help of *jatharagni*, *Parthiv ansh* of food nourishes the *parthiv* parts of body. Thus, the symmetrical properties of *mahabhoota* will nourish the similar body.^[1]

The present study will show light on the principle which acts as base of several other principles like *tridosha Siddhant*, *Garbhottpatti*, *gun-karmavada* etc. In fact, every *dravya* in this universe has its *panchamahabhuta* composition doesn't matter whether they are *chetan* or *achetan*.^[2]

All the *dravyas* existing in the world are *panchabhautika*. *Panchamahabhutas* are the basic units for the formation of universe. This concept of *panchamahabhuta* can provide solution for the problems in the field of *Ayurveda* as per *Acharya Sushruta*.^[3]

Ayurveda explains the basis of *Panchamahabhuta Siddhant*. Evolution of *Panchamahabhuta Siddhanta*.^[4] It takes place in 3 levels.^[5]

- a) *Panchatanmatra* (Subtle elements) evolution
- b) *Bhutantaranupravesha* (Imitative pervasion)
- c) *Panchikaran* (Reciprocal pervasion)

Evolution of *Panchatanmatra* (Subtle elements): At the practical use level, *tanmatra* form of *mahabhutas* are eternal. The *Mahat* forms *Ahamkar* which differentiates into three charactersitics i.e., *Satva*, *Raja* and *tamas*. The *Rajas* associates *tamas* resulting in *shabda tanmatra*. *Tanmatra* is subtle/Precursor quantum of *mahabhuta*.

Bhutantaranupravesha (Imitative pervasion): At this level, *tanmatras* undergo some reactions to form the premolecules of *mahabhutas*.

Panchikaran (pentamerization or reciprocal pervasion): Now the basic units responsible in the formation of Universe are formed. These united forms of *tanmatra* are termed as *mahabhutas*. The *Mahabhutas* formed by *bhutantaranupravesa* and *panchikarana* reactions of *tanmatra* undergo specific procedures of union to form the manifested *panchabhautika dravyas* prevailing in the universe. *Acharya Chakrapani* comments that this union of *mahabhutas* takes place due to *Adrushta*.^[6]

Acharya Sushrut^[7] in this regard described 3 types of conjugations taking place among *mahabhutas* to form *panchabhautika dravya*:

Paraspara-samsarga: In this process two or more *Mahabhutas* come in contact and attach to each other to form *panchabhautika dravya*.

Paraspar-anugraha: *Anugraha* means give and take relationship, to enhance properties of each other. In this type of union, *mahabhutas* act in such a way that they will act favourable to each other.

paraspara-anupravesha: In this type of conjugation, *Mahabhutas* get submerged into each other. This *paraspar- anupravesha* procedure is of *panchikarana* again, but at *Mahabhuta* level.

Role of *panchamahabhutas* is not limited upto physical development of body but they are also involved in development of psychological properties. In *Shantiparva* of *Mahabharata*⁸ it is clearly mentioned that the person having *Prithvi mahabhut* dominance in it shows *Dhriti*(capacity to bear anything), *Jala mahabhut* dominancy shows *Soumya*(aggreableness) behaviour, individual having *Agni mahabhut* dominance reveals *Shoka*(sorrowness), *Vayu mahabhut* dominant person shows *bala* (strength) and *Swatantrata* (independent nature) property and *Akash mahabhut* dominant persons are having *Apratighat* (unopposing) nature.

Panchamahabhuta and embryonic development^[9] the amalgam of sperm and ovum when embedded in uterus along with *chetana* then *vayu Mahabhut* starts division in embryo to form *dosha* (humours) and *avayavas* (organs), *Teja mahabhuta* provides energy, *jala mahabhuta* provides *kledan* (moisture), *Prithvi mahabhuta* provides strength and *Akash mahabhuta* helps by creating hollow structures of organs.

Sushrut Acharya stated that *Virechan dravyas* are always having *Prithvi* and *Jala mahabhuta* dominancy since *Prithvi* and *Jala mahabhuta* are having *Guru gunas* and According to *vaisheshik darshan*, *adhopatana* is the prime property of guru guna. As *Agni* and *Vayu mahabhutas* are *urdhwagami* and having *laghu gunas*, therefore *dravya* with dominancy of these two *mahabhutas* helps in *vaman karma*.^[10]

Clinical importance of *panchamahabhutas*

- 1) ***Dhatuamyata***: Is the ultimate aim of our *Ayurveda* science.^[11] According to *Acharya Charak*, principle of *samanyam* helps in increasing degraded similar dhatus in body and when there is *dhatuvridhi* condition we have to use *vishesha dravyas* in treatment.^[12] To fulfil this purpose, we must know the *panchabhautik* composition of therapeutic substances.

- 2) **Tridosha Prakopa and Prasham:** *Dravyas* composed of *Prithvi*, *Agni* and *Jala mahabhuta* helps in shaman of *Vata dosha*; *Dravyas* having dominancy in *Prithvi*, *Jala* and *Vayu mahabhuta* alleviates *Pitta dosha* and *dravyas* having predominance in *Akash*, *Agni* and *Vayu mahabhutas* reduces *Kapha dosha*.^[13]

Dravyas which are rich in *Akash*, *Vayu mahabhuta* increase *Vata dosha*, *Agni mahabhut* predominant *dravyas* creates *Pitta prakopa* (Increases *Pitta*) while *Prithvi* and *Jala mahabhut* predominant *dravyas* aggravates *kapha*. In this way all *dravyas* are having different composition of *mahabhuta* properties.

- 3) **Panchamahabhutas and Trigunas**^[14]: *Satvaparikshan* is the diagnostic tool to assess the *manobal* of the patient. So, by knowing the level of *satva* one can decide what to intervene in patient.

Thus, we can predict that certain *dravyas* can help in treating the psychiatric disorders by using *panchabhautika dravyas* in corresponding *manovikara*.

- 4) **Panchamahabhutas and Rasa**^[15]: Each of the *rasas* originate with predominance of two of the *panchabhutas*.

- 5) All *saptadhatu*s are *panchabhautika*^[16] and when there is *dhatuvridhhi* and *dhatukshaya* conditions which are responsible for disease manifestations, at that time it is very much essential for physician to know the combination of *mahabhutas* of *bheshaja dravyas* which he is using to treat *panchabhautika dhatus*. Also, *dhatvagni* is also responsible for metabolic activities at the *dhatu utpatti*.^[17]

- 6) **Panchamahabhuta and Samskaar:** The drug requires some modifications according to disease, *kaal* etc situations. So, to make these modifications & formation *samskaara* is mandatory. *Samskaar* means imbibing different *Gunas* on the original *Gunas* of a *Dravya*.^[18] The alteration in *panchabhautika* composition is taking place at every moment due to *Agni Mahabhuta* present in it. It is necessary to understand basic concept behind *Samskaar* and its relation with *panchamahabhutas*. This can be well understood by an example- when *Ardraka* (ginger) is soaked in lime water and dried in sunlight then its *Jala Mahabhuta* dominance gets decreased and *Agni Mahabhuta* dominance is increased comparatively, so that *Ardraka* having *Guru Guna* is converted into *Sunthi* having *Laghu*

Guna. So by *samskaras* mentioned in classics & understanding the logic of *pancabhautika* alteration behind it, *vaidya* can use the available *dravyas* as per need.^[19]

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Panchmahabhoot in yoga^[20]

Muladhara chakra – It is told to be the place of *Prithvi tattva*.

Swadhishtana chakra- It is the place of *Jal tattva*.

Manipura chakra- It is place of *Agni tattva*

Anahata chakra – It is the place of *Vayu tattva*.

Vishuddha chakra – This one is the place of *Akash tattva*

There is explanation of five type of Dharana in Gharenda Samhita. Those are Parthivi, Ambhasi, Agneyi, Vayavyi, Akashi.^[21]

Parthivi dharna: *Prithvi tattva* has the colour of *Hartal* (Yellow). It has four-sided shape. *Beej mantra* is “*lam*”. *Brahma* is the daity.

Ambasi dharna: This *tattva* has white colour like conch shell. Shape is round like moon. *Beej mantra* is “*Va*”. *Vishnu* is the daity.

Agneyi dharna: This is red in colour with a triangular shape. *Beej mantra* is “*Ra*”. *Rudra* is the daity.

Vayavi dharna: This is black in colour. *Beej mantra* is “*Ya*”. *Ishwar* is the daity.

Akashi dharna: It has the colour of sea water and *beej mantra* is “*ha*”. *Sadashiva* is the daity. Concentrating on their shape and colour was considered the *Dharana*.

The five elements as accepted by greek are as:

The Sicilian philosopher Empedocles (ca. 450 BC) proved that air was a separate substance by observing that a bucket inverted in water did not become filled with water, a pocket of air remaining trapped inside. Prior to Empedocles, Greek philosophers had debated which substance was the arche ("first principle"), or primordial element from which everything else was made; Heraclitus championed fire, Thales supported water, and Anaximenes plumped for air. Anaximander argued that the primordial substance was not any of the known substances, but could be transformed into them, and they into each other. Empedocles was the first to propose four elements, fire, earth, air, and water. He called them the four “roots” (rhizomata).

Plato seems to have been the first to use the term “element (stoicheion)” in reference to air, fire, earth, and water. The ancient Greek word for element, stoicheion meant “smallest

division, a syllable”, as the composing unit of an alphabet it could denote a letter and the smallest unit from which a word is formed.

Aristotle added a fifth element, aether, as the quintessence, reasoning that whereas fire, earth, air, and water were earthly and corruptible, since no changes had been perceived in the heavenly regions, the stars cannot be made out of any of the four elements but must be made of a different, unchangeable, heavenly substance. It had previously been believed by pre-Socratics such as Empedocles and Anaxagoras that aether, the name applied to the material of heavenly bodies, was a form of fire. Aristotle himself did not use the term aether for the fifth element, and strongly criticised the pre-Socratics for associating the term with fire. He preferred a number of other terms that indicated eternal movement, thus emphasising the evidence for his discovery of a new element. These five elements have been associated since Plato's *Timaeus* with the five platonic solids.^[22]

The chinese five elements

The Chinese had a somewhat different series of elements, namely Wood, Fire, Earth, Metal (literally gold) and Water, which were understood as different types of energy in a state of constant interaction and flux with one another, rather than the Western notion of different kinds of material. Historians of science have noted a fundamental difference between Greek element theories and Chinese matter theories. Although it is usually translated as “element”, the Chinese word *xing* literally means something like “changing states of being”, “permutations” or “metamorphoses of being”. In fact Sinologists cannot agree on any single translation. The Chinese elements were seen as ever changing and moving – one translation of *wu xing* is simply “the five changes”.^[23]

CONCLUSION

Thus, the concept of five (Mahabhuta) elements is accepted by different cultures and philosophies. Chinese have promoted metal and wood instead of Vayu and Akash Mahabhuta. The world was known being made of these five elements. The interaction between these was known as the basis of all forms. Some views make them seem as interconvertible and changeable as a form of energy. The Yogic texts believe their dominance in Chakras and explain the way to control these five mahabhutas. So it was once recognised in different places thus seems as global concept.

REFERENCES

1. Sushruta Samhita Sutrasthana shloka, edited with Ayurveda Tattva Sandipika Hindi commentary by Kaviraja Ambikadutta Shastri and forwarded by Dr. Pranajivana Manekchanda Mehta, Reprint Year Chaukhambha Sanskrit Sansthan, Varanasi, India, 2007; 225: 46 – 533.
2. Charaka Samhita Sutrasthana shloka - Vidyotini Hindi commentary by Kashinath Shastri and Gorakhnath Chaturvedi, edited by Rajeshwardutt Shastri, Pandit Yadunandan Upadhyaya, Pandit Gangasahaya Pandeya, Dr. Banarasidas Gupta; Reprint year Chaukhambha Bharati Academy, Varanasi, India, 2008; 489: 26 – 10.
3. Sushruta. “Sushruta Samhita”, Revised by Nagarjuna with the Nibandhasangraha commentary of Dalhana, edited by Yadavji Trikamji Acharya. Varanasi: Chaukhambha Orientalia, Ed. reprint, 2002; 824, 341: 1 – 13.
4. Sushruta Samhita Sutrasthana shloka, edited with Ayurveda Tattva Sandipika Hindi commentary by Kaviraja Ambikadutta Shastri and forwarded by Dr. Pranajivana Manekchanda Mehta, Reprint Year Chaukhambha Sanskrit Sansthan, Varanasi, India, 2007; 155: 42 – 3.
5. Sushruta Samhita Sharirsthana shloka, edited with Ayurveda Tattva Sandipika Hindi commentary by Kaviraja Ambikadutta Shastri and forwarded by Dr. Pranajivana Manekchanda Mehta, Reprint Year Chaukhambha Sanskrit Sansthan, Varanasi, India, 2007; 1, 4-7: 1-2.
6. Agnivesha. “Charaka Samhita”, Revised by Charaka and Dridhabala with the Ayurvedadipika commentary of Chakrapanidatta, edited by Yadavji Trikamji Acharya. Varanasi: Chaukhambha Sanskrit Sansthan, Ed. reprint, 2004; 1, 29-37, 738 - 378.
7. Sushruta Samhita Sutrasthana edited with Ayurveda Tattva Sandipika Hindi commentary by Kaviraja Ambikadutta Shastri and forwarded by Dr. Pranajivana Manekchanda Mehta, Reprint Year Chaukhambha Sanskrit Sansthan, Varanasi, India, 2007; 155: 42 - 3.
8. Krishna-Dwaipayana Vyasa, “Mahabharata”, English translation by Kesarimohan Ganguli, Shantiparva, 55, Section CCLV [1105], 508.
9. Sushruta Samhita Sharirsthana shloka, edited with Ayurveda Tattva Sandipika Hindi commentary by Kaviraja Ambikadutta Shastri and forwarded by Dr. Pranajivana Manekchanda Mehta, Reprint Year Chaukhambha Sanskrit Sansthan, Varanasi, India, 2007; 41: 5 – 3.
10. Sushruta Samhita Sutrasthana shloka, edited with Ayurveda Tattva Sandipika Hindi commentary by Kaviraja Ambikadutta Shastri and forwarded by Dr. Pranajivana

- Manekchanda Mehta, Reprint Year Chaukhambha Sanskrit Sansthan, Varanasi, India, 2007; 154: 41 – 10.
11. Charaka Samhita Sutrasthana shloka - Vidyotini Hindi commentary by Kashinath Shastri and Gorakhnath Chaturvedi, edited by Rajeshwardutt Shastri, Pandit Yadunandan Upadhyaya, Pandit Gangasahaya Pandeya, Dr. Banarasidas Gupta; Reprint year Chaukhambha Bharati Academy, Varanasi, India, 2008; 28: 1 – 53.
 12. Charaka Samhita Sharirsthana shloka - Vidyotini Hindi commentary by Kashinath Shastri and Gorakhnath Chaturvedi, edited by Rajeshwardutt Shastri, Pandit Yadunandan Upadhyaya, Pandit Gangasahaya Pandeya, Dr. Banarasidas Gupta; Reprint year Chaukhambha Bharati Academy, Varanasi, India, 2008; 898: 6 – 9.
 13. Sushruta Samhita Sutrasthana shloka, edited with Ayurveda Tattva Sandipika Hindi commentary by Kaviraja Ambikadutta Shastri and forwarded by Dr. Pranajivana Manekchanda Mehta, Reprint Year Chaukhambha Sanskrit Sansthan, Varanasi, India, 2007; 155: 41, 11-14.
 14. Sushruta Samhita Sharirsthana shloka, edited with Ayurveda Tattva Sandipika Hindi commentary by Kaviraja Ambikadutta Shastri and forwarded by Dr. Pranajivana Manekchanda Mehta, Reprint Year Chaukhambha Sanskrit Sansthan, Varanasi, India, 2007; 7: 127.
 15. Orientalia, Ed. reprint, 2002, Shar.1/20, pp 824, Pg 343. Vagbhata. “AstangaHridayam”, with vidyotini hindi commentary by Kaviraj Atrideva Gupta Edited by Vaidya Yadunandan Upadhyaya. Varanasi: Chaukhambha Sanskrit Sansthan, Thirteenth Ed. reprint, 2000; 616, 82: 10 – 1.
 16. Charaka Samhita Chikitsasthana shloka - Vidyotini Hindi commentary by Kashinath Shastri and Gorakhnath Chaturvedi, edited by Rajeshwardutt Shastri, Pandit Yadunandan Upadhyaya, Pandit Gangasahaya Pandeya, Dr. Banarasidas Gupta; Reprint year, Chaukhambha Bharati Academy, Varanasi, India, 2008; 15, 28-35: 457-458.
 17. Astanga Hridaya Sutrasthana Shloka-Nirmala hindi commentary by Dr. Brahmanand Tripathi; Reprint Chaukhambha Sanskrit Pratishthan, Delhi, India, 2013; 152: 10 – 1.
 18. Charaka Samhita Sutrasthana shloka - Vidyotini Hindi commentary by Kashinath Shastri and Gorakhnath Chaturvedi, edited by Rajeshwardutt Shastri, Pandit Yadunandan Upadhyaya, Pandit Gangasahaya Pandeya, Dr. Banarasidas Gupta; Reprint year Chaukhambha Bharati Academy, Varanasi, India, 2008; 257: 13 – 13.
 19. Charaka Samhita Siddhisthana shloka - Vidyotini Hindi commentary by Kashinath Shastri and Gorakhnath Chaturvedi, edited by Rajeshwardutt Shastri, Pandit Yadunandan

- Upadhyaya, Pandit Gangasahaya Pandeya, Dr. Banarasidas Gupta; Reprint year Chaukhambha Bharati Academy, Varanasi, India, 2008; 455: 15 – 14.
20. Dr. Komal Sharma, Dr. Subhash Saini, Dr. Jitendra Kumar Sharma Critical study of Chakras W.S.R. to Shaarir Vigyan in Ayurveda *IRJAY*, 2020; 3(8): 52-53.
21. Gheranda Samhita Chapter Shloka English commentary by Rai Bahadur Srila Chander Vasu: Edition Sri Satguru Publications Shaktinagar, Delhi, 1979; 70-79, 30-32.
22. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Classical_element
23. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Classical_element