

AN AYURVEDIC REVIEW ON TWACHA

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ABSTRACT

Twacha (skin) is described in *Ayurveda* as an important organ of both structural and functional significance, serving as the seat of *Sparshanendriya* (sense of touch) and reflecting the overall health status of an individual. Classical *Ayurvedic* texts such as *Charaka Samhita*, *Sushruta Samhita*, and *Ashtanga Hridaya* provide a detailed description of *Twacha*, including its origin, layers, functions, and pathological involvement in various diseases. *Twacha* is said to be formed from the essence of *Rakta Dhatu* during embryological development and is closely associated with *Doshas*, *Dhatus*, and *Agni*. Different *Acharyas* have described varying numbers of layers of *Twacha*, each having specific thickness, characteristics, and disease associations. Moreover, *Twacha* plays a vital role in thermoregulation, protection, sensation, and cosmetic

appearance. This review article aims to critically analyze the *Ayurvedic* concept of *Twacha* and correlate it with modern anatomical and physiological understanding of the skin. By exploring classical references and contemporary scientific literature, this review highlights the relevance of *Ayurvedic* concepts in understanding skin health, disease manifestation, and holistic management. The integrative approach presented may help bridge the gap between traditional *Ayurvedic* knowledge and modern dermatology, opening avenues for research and clinical application.

KEYWORD: *Twacha*, *Sparshanendriya*, *Gyanendriya*, *Kriyatmak*.

INTRODUCTION

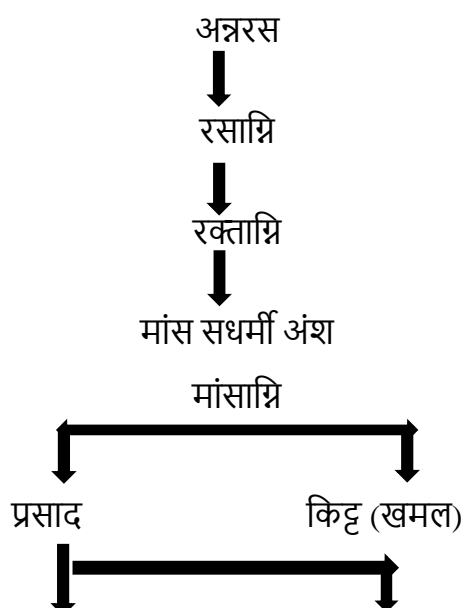
In *Ayurvedic* literature, *Twacha* is mentioned as *updhatu* of the *mansa dhatu*, to which *Charaka* described as *Shat Twak* and *Sushruta* as *Sapt Twacha*.^[1] *Twacha* covers the entire body, and they are the first to appear in the body. The *Panch Gyanendriya* in the body are stated as, *Chakshu*, *Shrotra Ghrana Rasan* and *Sparshan*, among which the *Sparshanendriya* is *adhistan* of *Twacha*. The *twacha* itself has been shown to harbor sweat-carrying sources and hair follicles. Despite being *panchbhautik*, the *twacha* has the predominance of the *vayu Mahabhuta*.^[2] *Charak* also mentioned *Twacha* as a root of *mansavahasrotas*.^[3] *Sthira*, *bahal twacha* of a child is indicative of long span of the life of bearer.^[4]

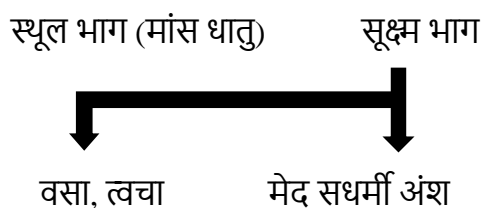
Acharya Sushruta has described that the thickness of *twacha* (skin) varies at different parts of the body; for example, in *mamsala sthana* (muscular regions) and the *lalata* (forehead), the measurement of skin thickness is not uniform.^[5]

Twak (skin) is one of the most visible indicators of health and reflects the balance of *Dosha* and *Dhatu* in the body. According to modern view, skin is the largest organ of the body. It is not uniformly thick. At some places it is thick and at some places it is thin. The average thickness of the skin is about 1 to 2 mm. In the sole of the foot, palm of the hand and in the interscapular region, it is considerably thick, measuring about 5 mm. In other areas of the body, the skin is thin. It is thinnest over eyelids and penis, measuring about 0.5 mm only.^[6]

Utpatti

In the process of *dhatu* formation, during the creation of the muscle tissue, one of the two subsidiary tissues that arise as a byproduct is the tissue called *Twacha* (skin).^[7]





Acharya Sushrut states that From fertilized zygote during digestion for differentiation seven layers of skin are produced. When milk is boiled, cream gets deposited on milk at every attempt of boiling. Similarly seven layers of skin are produced while differentiation of fertilized zygote is in process.^[8]

According to *Acharya Vagbhat* after the *paripak* of *rakt*, just as layers of cream form in boiling milk, similarly, seven layers of skin are formed in the body.^[9]

Nirukti

The word "Twacha" is derived from 'त्वक् संवरणे' dhatu along with 'तप् प्रत्यय' which belongs to feminine gender, which means covering of the body.^[10]

Synonyms

Twacha, Charma, Sparshan, Chavi, Chadani, Asrugdhara, Romabhumi, Ajin, Kruti.^[11]

Bheda

Layers of *Twacha* according to various texts.

S.No.	Charak (Bhel, Kashyap)	Sushrut	Vagbhat	Arunadatt	Sharangdhar
1	Udakadhara	Avabhasini	Udakadhara	Bhasini	Avabhasini
2	Asrigdhara	Lohitha	Asrigdhara	Lohini	Lohitha
3	Tritiya	Swetha	-	Swetha	Swetha
4	Chaturthi	Tamra	-	Tamra	Tamra
5	Panchami	Vedini	-	Vedini	Vedini
6	Shasti	Rohini		Rohini	Rohini
7		Mamsadhara	-	Mamsadhara	sthula

Acharya charak^[12] by saying "iti shat Twachah" mentioned six layer of *Twacha* in *sharir sankhya shaarir adhyay*, mentioned first two layers by their name and named the rest of the layers on the basis of numbers.

1. *Udakadhara* - Outermost layer
2. *Asrigdhara* - It holds the capillary vessel.
3. *Tritiya* – Origin site of *Sidhma* and *kilas*

4. *Chaturthi* - Origin site of *dadru*, *kushtha*
5. *Panchami* - Origin site of *alaji vidradhi*
6. *Shasti* – The sixth is that layer of skin which on being excised, one suffers violent shock and falls into a swoon and which is the seat of boils extending to the joints, dark-red in color, thick-rooted and most difficult of treatment (*dushchikitsya*).

Acharya Sushrut^[13]

1. *Avabhasini* - It manifests all types of colors and illuminates five kinds of complexion/shades. Its thickness is equal to one-eighteenth part of a grain of rice. *Sidhma* and *padmakantak* occurs in this layer.
2. *Lohitha* - This is the second layer of skin, its thickness is about 1/16 *vrihi*. It is the site for the diseases like *charmadala*, *Tilakalika*, *Neachcha*, *Vyanga* etc.
3. *Swetha* - It is the third layer of skin its thickness is about 1/12 *vrihi*. It the site for diseases like *charmadala*, *Aigallika*, *Mashaka* etc.
4. *Tamra* - It is the fourth layer of skin its thickness is about 1/8 *vrihi*, it is the site for diseases like *charmadala*, *kilasa*, *kusta* etc.
5. *Vedini* - It is the fifth layer of skin its thickness is about 1/5 *vrihi*. It is the site for diseases like *kusta*, *visarpa* etc.
6. *Rohini* - It is the sixth layer of skin it is one *vrihi*, it is the site for diseases like *Granthi*, *Apachi*, *Arbuda Slipada* etc.
7. *Mamsadhara* - It is the seventh layer of skin, it is about 2 *vrihi* thick, it is the site for diseases like *Bhagandara*, *Vidrudhi*, *Arsha*.

Acharya Sharangdha^[14]

1. *Avabhasini* – the site of occur-rence of *sidhma* (a kind of skin disease);
2. *Lohita* -, the site of occurrence of *tilkalak* (moles);
3. *Shweta* - the site of occurrence of *charmadala* (a kind of skin disease)
4. *Tamra* - the site of occurrence of *kiläsa* and *shwittra* (leucoderma);
5. *Vedini* - the site of occurrence of all types of *kustha* (leprosy);
6. *Rohini* - the site of occurrence of *granthi*, *ganda* and *apachi* (tumors and goitre
7. *Sthula* - the site of occurrence of *vidradhi* (abscesses).

Acharya Bheh^[15] mentioned six layer of *Twacha* and describe them similar to *charak*.

Kriyatmak aspect of *Twacha*

Acharya Sushruta states that the *Pitta* residing in the skin, which is called *Bhrajaka Agni*, digests the therapeutic substances or medicines applied through massage, bathing, immersion, and ointments, and also illuminates the complexion. Therefore, these are the functions of the skin.^[16] *Bhrajaka Pitta* residing in the skin maintains the body temperature (temperature of body) at a normal level; therefore, its function is considered beneficial (wholesome). When it fails to maintain normality, it is considered to perform harmful (unwholesome) actions. Similarly, in imparting complexion as well, it performs both beneficial and harmful functions.^[17]

The skin covers the entire body, giving the organs a definite shape and providing them with protection. *Twacha* is the *adhithan* of *sparshanendriya*. *Charaka* has described its functions in this regard as follows:- The characteristic of *prithavi* is *kharatva* and *dravatva* of *jala*, *chalatva* of *vayu*, *ushnatava* of *teja*, *apratighat* of *Aakash*. All these characteristics are known only by *sparshanendriya*. the absence of *Sparsha* is also known by *sparshanendriya* just as when one knows that it is hot one also knows that it is not cold. Therefore these characteristics of *panchmahabhuta* are known only by *sparshanendriya*.^[18]

Features of *Twacha* according to *prakriti*

Vata prakriti – Individuals with this *prakriti* type have *ruksha* body due to *ruksha guna*, rough body parts due to *parusha guna*, and have moistureless, cracked skin due to *vishad guna*.^[19]

Pitta prakriti: Individuals with this *prakriti* type are more prone to skin issues like *viplu vyang tila pidika*.^[20]

Kapha prakriti - Individuals with this *prakriti* type have *snigdha* body parts due to *snigdha guna*, and lustrous skin due to *shlakshan guna*.^[21]

CONCLUSION

The conceptual study of *Twacha* highlights its multidimensional role in *Ayurveda* as a protective, sensory, and metabolic organ. Rooted in *Dhatu* formation and *Dosha* balance, *Twacha* reflects internal health. Understanding its classical description supports holistic assessment and integrative dermatological approaches.

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