

## *A Critical Review of Rakt as Dhātu or Dhosh W. R. T. kriyasharir*

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### ABSTRACT

*Rakta* – One amongst the seven *Dhatavah*. Acharya Sushruta says, it is extremely important for the sustenance of life- “*Raktam Jeeva Iti Sthithi*”. It is therefore needed to protect this *Dhātu* by every possible measure. As three *Doshas* govern the living body, *Rakta Dhātu* also usually participates in governing the body. In literatures of Ayurveda, acharyas have given importance to *Rakta Dhātu* as parallel body entity with *Dosha*. They say body consists of three *Doshas*: *Vata*, *Pitta*, and *Kapha*. The commentators of these literatures explain why *Rakta*, among all other *Dhatus*, has been given so much importance of *Dosha*. By this literary study a conclusion is drawn that, *Rakta* is primarily a *Dhātu* and it has been given the noun (*Sadnya*) ‘*Dosha*’ because of its importance similar to *Doshas* in the body.

**Keywords:** *Rakta*, *Dhātu* and *Doshas*.

### AIM AND OBJECTIVES

Literary study of *Rakta dhātu* with respect to *Dosha*.

### INTRODUCTION

Ayurved studies the human body with respect to *Dosha*, *Dhātu* and *Mala*. Body consists of three *Dosha*, seven *Dhatus* and three *Malas*. Among the seven *Dhatus*, *Rakta* is of prime importance.

“*Dehasya Rudhiram Moolam Rudhirenaiva Dharyate II*

*Tasmat Yatnena Sanrakshyam Rakta Jeeva Iti Sthithi II*” Su.So. 14/45

“*Narte Dehe Kaphadasati Na Pittaana cha Marutaat II*

*Shonitaad Api Va Nityam Dehe Etaistu Dharyate II*" Su. So. 21/4

In the branch of surgery in Ayurveda, *Rakta* has been given the importance of *Doshatwa*. So a question arises whether *Rakta* can be considered as fourth *Dosha* or not. Chakrapani, Dalhana and Arundutta commented on the terms- '*Sharir Dosha Samgraha*', '*Deha Sambhava Hetava*', '*Trayo Dosha Samasataha*'. By studying the commentaries of the treatises, it is seen that all acharyas have universally accepted *Vata*, *Pitta* and *Kapha* to be the three *Doshas* of the body and *Rakta* cannot be called as *Dosha*. But, yes it has the significant importance as compared with *Doshas*.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

*Bhrutrayee* and *Laghutrayee* with their commentaries.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

### Charak Samhita

*"Vayuh Pittam Kaphaschoktam Shaarire Dosha Samgraha I"* Ch. So. 1/57

Chakrapanidutta commented on the above verse- He initially said that, Acharya Charak had included *Vata*, *Pitta* and *Kapha* in the *Dosha Samgraha*, as can be seen in the above verse, but had not

included *Rakta* in it. So he had put forth few Statements in *Poorvapaksha* which he proved to be incorrect in the *Uttarpaksha*. (As per the modern science this *Poorvapaksha* can become the null Hypothesis, which is proved to be false in the *Uttarpaksha* that gives the alternate hypothesis)

### Poorvapaksha

Like *Vata*, *Pitta* and *Kapha*, *Rakta* also have specific *Dushti Hetu* (etiological cause), *Laxna* (symptoms), *Vikaara* (disease), *Chikitsa* (treatment) and *Nirdesh* (synonym of *Dosha*) in the Samhita.

Also in other treatises like Shalya tantra, *Doshatva* is given to *Shonit* by saying '*Shonit Chaturthe*'. Then, why Charak has not included *Rakta* in *Dosha Samgraha*? Hence, *Rakta* should be considered as fourth *Doshas*.

**Null Hypothesis- *Rakta* is neither a *Dosha* nor a *Dhatu*.**

Uttarpaksha- Answers to the above questions by Chakrapanidutta,

1. "*Dosha* can independently vitiate others and aggravated *Vatadi Dosha* do not expect others for their own vitiation. *Dushya* expect others for their vitiation to become able to vitiate others. *Shonit*, expects *Doshas* for its vitiation and then become able to

vitate others. It never gets vitiated without these *Doshas*, so *Doshas* are the causatives factors of *Shonit Dushti*. Hence, *Shonit* is a *Dushya*. Even if it aggravates in its own quantity, it cannot vitiate others unless it is vitiated by aggravated *Vata*, *Pitta* and/or *Kapha*".

2. *Dushti Hetu, Laxanas and Vikaras*- "Etiological factors causing *Rakta Dushti* (vitiation) are actually the factors which vitiate *Doshas*, and these vitiated *Doshas* entering the *Rakta Dhatu* produce *Laxanas* (symptoms) according to vitiated *Dosha* in the locations of *Rakta Dhatu* (location). Thus they are termed as *Raktaj Vikaras*. Always *Vatadi Dosha* are etiological factors for the *Rakta Dushti* and because of the location of *Dosha Dushti* symptoms in *Rakta*, *Raktaj Vikaras* are explained".
3. *Chikitsa* (treatment)- "Treatment of these *Raktaj vikaras* are also with reference to the vitiated *Dosha* in the *Rakta* and not actual treatment of *Rakta*".
4. *Sneha Dagdha* (burn due to hot oleating liquids)- "When burns occurs due to hot liquids like *Ghruta* etc , it is not the *Ghruta* causing the burn , it is the heat or temperature of that *Ghruta*

which causes burn. Similarly, *Rakta* causing diseases and producing symptoms doesn't mean *Rakta* itself is doing so. It is the *Dosha Dushti* present in *Rakta* causing everything".

5. "Like *Rakta, Mamsa Meda Asthi Majja* etc should also have specific *Dushti Hetu, Laxana, Vikaras*, and *Chikitsa*, so they should also be considered as *Dosha*. But it is not so, hence *Rakta* alone cannot be considered as *Dosha* amongst other *Dhatavah*".
6. *Nirdesh* (synonyms)- "Charak has given the synonym *Dosha* to *Rakta* in *Gulma Chikitsa*. At many places in the *Samhita*, there are references of *Dosha* as a synonym to *Rakta*, which creates confusion about its identity".
7. Apart from the above statements, Chakrapanidutta also took references of other *Samhita* to prove that *Rakta* cannot be considered as a *Dosha*. He comments that,  
"According to Acharya Sushruta, *Shonit Dushti* is seen in *Vrana*. Mostly Sushruta gave importance to *Shonit* along with other *Doshas*. But when explaining *Deha Sambhava Hetu*, he said that only *Vata Pitta* and *Kapha* are responsible for the origin, sustainence and destruction of the body. Later he explains that like the three *Doshas*,

*Rakta* is an important fourth entity- *Shonit Chaturtha*.

If *Shonit* is a *Dosha*, than like *Vata*, *Pitta* and *Kapha* it should also be responsible for the formation of *Prakruti* (body constitution), but it is not so. Hence, *Doshas* are only three is proved”.

Thus from above all discussion it is proved that *Rakta* is not a *Dosha*, but yes it is a *Dhatu*.

**Alternate Hypothesis- *Rakta* is a *Dhatu* and not a *Dosha*.**

#### **Sushrut Samhita**

“*Vata Pitta Shleshmana eva deha sambhava I*

*Tairevyaapannairadhormadhyasannivisht  
ai Shariramidam dharyate aagaramiva  
sthoonaabhistasrubhiratascha  
tristhoonamaahureke I*

*Ta eva cha vyaapannah Pralaya hetavah I  
Tadebhireva Shonitaschaturtheh  
sambhavasthithipralayeshvapyavirahitam  
shariram bhavati II”*

Dalhana commented on the above verse- He said, Sushruta gave importance to *Rakta*, by saying that *Shonit* in *Avirahit* (along with) state, as fourth entity, is responsible for the origin, sustainence and destruction of the body. He clarified the

intentions of Sushruta behind considering *Shonit* as a fourth entity. Then he comments that, Sushruta used the term *Avirahitam* for explaining the relation of *Shonit* with *Doshas* in the *Sambhav*, *Sthithi* and *Pralaya* of the body.

Clarifications given by Dalhana based on the following points in commentary form:

1. Role of *Shonit* in *Deha Sambhava Hetu* - “As per Sushruta *Vata*, *Pitta* and *Kapha* are *Deha Sambhava Hetu* i.e, the resposable factors for the origin of the body (*Sambhava*). We know that *Shukra* and *Shonit* are also involved in origin of the body (*Deha Utpatti*). So the responsible factors should include *Shukra* and *Shonit* along with *Vata*, *Pitta* and *Kapha*. But it is not so, because *Vata*, *Pitta* and *Kapha*, under normal physiological conditions (*Avyapanna Sthithi*), stays within *Shukra* and *Shonit* and through them they participate in the origin of the body. Hence *Shukra* and *Shonit* become the carriers of the responsible factors, which are only three, i.e *Vata*, *Pitta* and *Kapha*. Su. So. 21/1
2. Role of *Shonit* in *Deha Sthithi*- “These *Vata*, *pita* and *Kapha*, under normal physiological

conditions (*Avyapanna* i.e., *prakrutistha avastha*) sustain the body by residing at their normal locations i.e., lower, middle, and upper portion of the body respectively. For example- a house is sustained by three pillars; similarly the body is sustained by the three pillars- *Vata*, *Pitta* and *Kapha*. So they are called *Tristhoona*, i.e., three pillars. These pillars stay within *Shonit* and sustain the body. Hence, Sushruta said *Shonit* in *Avirahit* form with *Vata*, *Pitta* and *Kapha* sustains the body”.

3. Role of *Shonit* in *Deha Pralaya*-  
“The *Dosha* when not under normal physiological conditions (*Vyapanna*) i.e. in *Vikrut Avastha* become responsible for the destruction of the body. *Shonit* which (in *Avirahit* form) always has in it the three *Doshas* is thus responsible for the destruction of the body when it gets vitiated by *Doshas*.”
4. “In *Shalya tantra*, *Shonit* (*Dushya*) is given prime importance because the place of origin of *Vrana* is said to be *Shonit*. In the process of

*Vrana Paaka* (abcess formation), pain do not occur without *Vata Dosha*, inflammation do not occur without *Pitta Dosha* and pus formation do not occur without *Kapha*. Here when *Pitta Dosha* is vitiated it reaches the *Vrana* place via *Shonit* only, hence it is said *Shonit Avirahit* (along with) *Vata*, *Pitta* and *Kapha* is involved in *Vrana Paaka*”.

### Asthang Hrudaya

“*Vayuh Pittam Kaphascheti trayo Dosha samasatah* II” A. Hr. So. 1/6

Commentary of Arundutta on the verse- he said that Vagbhatta had summed up (*Samasataha*) *Doshas* into three- *Vayu*, *Pitta* and *Kapha*. And Charaka has named *Vata*, *Pitta* and *Kapha* as *Dosha*, he did not say they are *Dhatu*, even if they do the function of sustainance (*Deha Dharan*) and development (*Vardhan*). Because, solely they can vitiate *Rasa*, *Rakta* etc *Dhatu* and can produce disease. In brief, Arundutta comments the following points giving examples and references of the various synonyms to *Dosha*.

- “*Dosha* is one who can vitiate others. One who gets vitiated is called as *Dushya*.”

- *Vata*, *Pitta* and *Kapha* can vitiate *Rasa* *Rakta* etc.
- They can get vitiated among themselves by any one of them. So they can also be called as *Dushya*. Eg. In *Pandu Roga Nidan Adhyaya*, *Pitta* dominantly vitiates *Shleshma*, *Twaka*, *Rakta* and *Mamsa*. Here *Sleshma* has become *Dushya* by the *Dosha Pitta*.
- *Vata*, *Pitta* and *Kapha* are independently dominant (*Swatantryada Pradhan*) i.e, they are independent in getting self vitiated and vitiating others. Whereas *Ras Rakta* etc are dependent on others for becoming dominant (*Partantryada Pradhan*) i.e, they need others for their vitiation.
- *Vatadi Dosha* can always vitiate *Rasadi Dhatu*, but *Rasadi Dhatu* cannot vitiate *Vatadi Dosha*".

Few examples

- "In types of *Prakruti* (body constitution) only *Vataj*, *Pittaj* and *Kaphaj Prakruti* are mentioned. *Raktaj Prakruti* is not mentioned.
- In types of *Jwara* only *Vataj*, *Pittaj* and *Kaphaj Jwara* are mentioned. *Raktaj Jwara* is not mentioned.
- *Raktaj Vikaras* are mentioned. But it is not *Rakta* producing the disease. The *Dosha Dushti* in *Rakta* is causing the disease. Just like, by saying *Ghruta*

*Dagdha* doesn't mean burn is due to *Ghruta*, it is the temperature of the *Ghruta* causing the burn".

*Nirdesh* /Synonyms to *Dosha*

- "In *Kushta Chikitsa*, *Rakta Dhatu* is given the synonym *Dosha*.
- In *Visarpa Chikitsa*, *Purisha Mala* is given the synonym *Dosha*.
- In *Udara Roga Chikitsa* from *Charak Samhita* and in *Jwara Chikitsa* from *Astanga Hrudaya*, *Aama* is the synonym given to the *Dosha*".

So this way, *Dosha* are summed up (*Samasataha*) into only three. *Rakta* cannot be called as *Dosha*. Because if we broadly classify *Dosha* there can be numerous *Dosha* entities in the body. Hence *Vata*, *Pitta* and *Kapha* are the only three *Dosha* of the body.

## DISCUSSION

1. On, Chakrapni's view on Charak's statement reveals that *Vata*, *Pitta* and *Kapha* are responsible for the specific *Hetu*, *Laxana*, *Vikaras*, *Chikitsa* and *Nirdesh* of *Rakta*. Charak has used the term *Dosha* to *Vata Pitta* and *Kapha* only. In *Vidhishoniteya Adhyaya* of Charak Samhita, *Raktaj Roga* are also called as *Shonitaja* i.e, diseases formed from vitiated *Shonit*, and *Shonitasraya* i.e, unless they are treated, they stay in vitiated *Rakta*

only. Here though these diseases are called as *Shonitaja* and *Shonitasraya*, they are ultimately produced because of the three *Doshas*.

2. Sushruta included *Rakta* as fourth entity in the origin, sustainance and destruction of the body. In the origin of the body, *Shonit* acts as the carrier of the three *Doshas* under normal physiological conditions.

In this samhita, *Deha Dharan Karma* i.e, sustainance of the body is governed by *Vata*, *Pitta*, *Kapha* and *Shonit*, is being described.

Also the important function of *Rakta Dhātu* is *Jeevan Karma*, heart is the root of this body, and body is sustained by this heart. So it is important to protect *Rakta*, which flows through the heart, for the body to remain alive. Thus in *Pralaya* also *Rakta* is inevitable component which has init the three *Dosha* (*Avirahitam*).

3. Vagbhatt's view clarifies that *Dosha* are those who vitiate others and those who get vitiated are called as *Dushyas*. *Vatadi Dosha* can vitiate *Rasadi Dhātu* but *Rasadi Dhātu* cannot vitiate *Vatadi*

*Dosha*. *Dosha* can become *Dushya*, but *Rasadi* are always *Dushya*, they cannot become *Dosha*.

4. In Sharangdhar Samhita, *Vata*, *Pitta* and *Kapha* are called as *Dosha*, *Dhātu* and *Mala* as per their functions, i.e, when they vitiate body they are called as *Dosha*, when they sustain and maintain the body they are called as *Dhātu* and when they pollute the body they are called as *Malas*.
5. *Rasa*, *Rakta* etc are called *Dhatus* as per their functions. They are not given the term *Dosha* anywhere. But still *Rakta* is an important entity, so it is given the importance of *Dosha*.

## CONCLUSION

From the above commentaries, it is understood that, all three acharyas are of the opinion that *Rakta* is not a *Dosha*. *Rakta* is an important entity of the body. Its importance is being described with respect to the three *Doshas* of the body. It is one among the seven *Dhatus*. When it gets vitiated by the *Doshas* it becomes *Dushya*.

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