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"Is Rakta a Chaturta Dosha?" - A Conceptual Study

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ABSTRACT

Ayurveda is a Science of medicine which is based upon tridoshas, SaptaDhatus and Trimalas which are elaborated in detail in Samhitas. Sushruta mentioned that the existence of body is not possible without the presence of Vata, Pitta, Kapha and rakta and rakta plays an important role in entire surgical procedures. Therefore Rakta is considered as 4thDosha. There is a lot of confusion and uncertainty among the fraternity of Ayurveda whether to consider Rakta as fourth dosha or not. Here an attempt is made to Critical and Logical reasoning of the subject...

KEYWORDS

Tridosha, Saptadhatus, Rakta, Pancha mahabhoota, Chaturtha Dosha



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INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda is based on Tridosha Siddhanta. The Tridosha are Vata, Pitta and Kapha which regulate catabolism, metabolism and anabolism in the body. The *Dhatus* which are seven in numbers are the specialized which tissues perform specialized functions. Rakta being one of the seven Dhatus perform Jeevana (oxygen supply) function. The synchronized functioning of Tridosha, Saptadhatu and Trimalas along with Agni, Atma and Manas paves for Good Health. No doubt the theory of Tridosha was developed even before Sushruta, but the status which this distinguished ancient Surgeon gave to *Rakta* was almost to that of fourth dosha. Here an attempt is made to clear the controversy regarding this.

FACTORS IN FAVOUR OF RAKTA AS DOSHA

Like other three *doshas Rakta* is having its own *Stana*, *Guna*, *Karma*, *Panchabhautikata Vikara* and *Chikitsa*, so it is considered as *Dosha*.

1. STHANA¹:

"शोणितस्य स्थानं यकृत्प्लीहानौ"- स्. स्. 21/16

As the *Tridosha* have specific Sthana in the body, *Rakta* is also has specific sthana like *Yakrit* and *Pleeha*.

2. $GUNA^2$:

"अनुश्णशीतं मधुरं स्निग्धं रक्तं च वर्णतः। शोणितं गुरु विस्रं स्याद्विदाहश्चास्य पित्तवत्"॥स्.सू 21/17

Rakta has specific gunas anushna sheeta, madhura, snighda, raktavarna, guru, visra and its vidaha is like pitta.

3. $KARMA^3$:

"देहस्य रुधिरं मूलं रुधिरेणैव् धार्यते । तस्माद्य्नेन संरक्षं रक्तं जीव इति स्थितिः॥ स्.स् 14/44

While explaining the importance of *Rakta*, *Sushruta* has mentioned that *Rakta* is root for body and does nourishment of it. It is said to be life of body so it should be protected.

4. PANCHABHAUTIKATVA⁴:

"पांचभौतिकत्वं त्वपरे जीवरक्तमाहुराचार्याः। विस्रता द्रवता रागः स्पंदनं लघुता तथा ॥ भूम्यादीनां गुणा ह्येते दृश्य्न्ते चात्र शॊणिते । सु. सू 14/8-9

All the Panchamahabhootas are contributed in the formation of *Rakta* like other *Doshas*. They are *Visrata*, *Dravata*, *Ragata*, *Spandana* and *Laghuta* are the *gunas* of *Pruthvi*, *Aap*, *Agni*, *Vayu* and *Aaksha* respectively.

5. VIKARA:

"त्वग्दोषा प्रन्थयः शोफा रोगाः शोणित्जाश्च ये । रक्तमोक्षणशीलानां न भवन्ति क्दाचन"॥ सु. सू 14/34

When *Rakta dooshana* happens directly it causes specific diseases like *Twag doshas*, *Granthi*, *Shophas* which are relieved only by *Rakta*mokshana⁵.

6. CHIKITSA:



"सिराव्यधश्चिकित्सार्धं शल्यतंन्त्रे प्रकीर्तितः। यथा प्रणिहितः सम्यग्बस्तिः कायचिकित्सिते "॥ सु. सू शा 8/23

In Shalyatantra siravyadha is considered as Ardhachikitsa for Rakta pradoshaja vyadhis, as Basti is considered Ardhachikitsa in Kayachikitsa⁶.

7. DEHA SAMBHAVA⁷:

"वातिपत्तश्चेष्माण एव देहसंभवहेतवः.... तदेभिरेव शोणितचतुर्थैः संभवस्थितिप्रलयेष्यप्यविरहितं शरीरं भवति"॥ सु. सृ. 21/3

According to *Sushruta*, *Vata- Pitta- Kapha* and *Rakta* all these four are main factors for the existence of the body and for *Utpatti*(origin), *Sthiti* (maintenance) and *Pralaya*(destruction) of body also.

8. DEHA DHARANA⁸:

"नर्ते देहः क्फादस्ति न पित्तान्न च मारुतात्। शोणितादपि वा नित्यं देह एतैस्तु धार्यते''॥ स्. स्. 21/4

According to *Sushruta* body cannot exist without *Kapha*, or *Pitta* or *Vata* or *Rakta*. They help in the maintaining of the body.

9. SHAD KRIYA KALA⁹:

"तध्यथा- वातः, पित्तः, श्रुष्मा, शोणितं...... वातपित्तकफशोणितानिति; एवं पंचद्शधा प्रसरन्ति "॥ सु. सू. 21/28

While explaining the *Prasara* stage, *Acharya Sushruta* considered 15types of *Dosha Prasara avasthas* and *Rakta prasara* is also considered.

10. " वाताद्रुते नास्ति रुजा न पाकः पित्ताद्रुते नास्ति क्फाच्च पूयः।.... पचत्यतः शोणितमेव पाको मतो अपरेषां विदुषां द्वितीयः "॥ सु. सू 17/7-8

Sushruta while explaining pakwaavastha of vrana shopha along with other Doshas he mentioned the role of Rakta in producing Pakavastha¹⁰.

11. "द्वौ व्रणौ भवतः - शारीर, आगन्तुश्चा तयोः शारीरः पवनिपत्तकफशोणीतसन्निपात निमित्तः॥" सु. चि. 1/3

While explaining classification of *nija* vranas, Acharya Sushruta considered Raktaja vrana as one of its variety¹¹.

12. VRANA VASTU¹²:

" त्वङ्गांससिरास्नाय्वस्थिसन्धिकोष्ठमर्माणित्यष्टौ व्रणवस्तूनि। अत्र सर्वव्रणसन्निवेशः"॥ सु.सू. 22/3

In the context of *Vrana*(Sites), *Acharya Sushruta* does not considered *Rakta* as *vrana vastu* because of its *amurta bhava* like that of *Doshas*.

13. CRITERIA FOR DOSHA:

Acharya Chakrapani defines the Doshas as "दोषो हि स्वतन्त्रदूषणात्मक उच्यते" 13. Dosha is named for that, which fulfills the following 4 criteria.

1) Specific causes for its vitiation 14:

"प्रदुष्टबहुतीक्ष्णोष्णैर्मध्येरन्येश्च तद्विधैः शरत्कालस्वभावाच्च शोणितं संप्रदुष्यति"॥ च . स् . 24/5-10

As like *Doshas*, *Rakta* has its own aetiological causes for its vitiation like taking more *kshaara*, *diwaswapna*, *krodha*, *chardi vega pratighata*, *sharadrutu*, *abhighata* etc.



2) Can vitiate other structures in the body 15 :

"गुल्मोपकुशवीसर्प रक्तपित्तप्रमील्काः.... विकाराः सर्व एवैते विज्ञेयाः शोणिताश्रयाः"॥ च. सू. 24/12-16

Direct *Rakta* dushti can initiate diseases like *gulma*, *visarpa*, *rakta pitta*, *vidradhi*, *raktameha*, *pradara* etc.

3) Specific signs and symptoms¹⁶:

"शीतोष्णस्निग्धरूक्षाध्यैरुपक्रान्तश्च य गदाः। सम्यक् साध्या न सिध्यन्ति रक्तजांस्तान्विभावयेत्"॥ च. सू. 24/17

Produces unique clinical symptoms which does not respond to *dosha vipareeta* treatment protocol when direct *Rakta dushti* happens.

4) Specific treatment for its alleviation 17: "कुर्याच्छोणितरोगेषु रक्तपित्तहरीं क्रियाम् । विरेकमुपवासं च स्नावणं शोणितस्य च"॥ च. स्. 24/18

Those who undergo timely rakta mokshana, the specific diseases caused by dushti rakta like twagdosha (ashtadashakushta, sheetpitta, udarda, kotha etc.), granthi rogas (apachi, galaganda, gandamaala etc.), shopharoga will not affect them.

14. *RAKTA JA NAANATMAJA VYAADHIS*¹⁸:

"रक्तस्य च दश प्रोक्ता व्याधयस्तेषु गौरवम्॥
रक्तमंडलता रक्त नेत्रत्वं रक्तमूत्रता।
रक्तनिष्ठीवनं रक्तपिडिकानां च दर्शनम्॥
औष्ययं च पूतिगन्धत्वं पीडा पाकश्च जायते। शा.सं. पू.ख
7/125-126

Acharya Sharangadhara in his Sharangadhara samhita mentioned 10 specific raktaja naanatmaja vyadhis like gaurava, rakta mandala, raktanetratva, raktamootrata, raktanishteeva, raktapidaka, aushnyam, putigandhatva, peeda and paaka.

FACTORS AGAINST TO CONSIDER RAKTA AS DOSHA

1. ORIGIN OF *RAKTA* ¹⁹:

"रसाद्रक्तं तता मांसं मांसान्मेदस्तता अस्थि च।
अस्थ्नो मज्जा ततः शुक्रं शुक्राद्गर्भः प्रसाद्जः"॥
च.चि.15/16

According to Acharya Charaka, Ksheera dadhi nyaya explains rakta forms after rasadhatu in uttarottara dhatu utpatti.

2. PRAKRUTI FORMATION²⁰:

"प्रकृत्यारम्भकत्वे सित दुष्टिकर्तृत्वं॥" मा. नि 1/14 मधुकोष टीका.

In *Madhukosha* commentary of *Madhava nidana* it has been explained that the characteristic feature of Dosha is "That which is responsible for the formation of *prakriti* at the time of birth and that which can vitiate others is called as *Dosha*".

Acharyas have explained only seven Prakritis by the Tridoshas which determines the growth, transformation and degeneration of that person. Here no reference of Rakta prakriti is found.

3. SAARA PURUSHA²¹:



"सारतञ्चेति सारण्यष्टौ पुरुषाणां बलमानविशेषज्ञानार्थमुपदिश्यन्ते;
तद्यथा- त्वप्रक्तमांसमेदो अस्थिमज्जशुक्रसत्वानीति"॥ च.वि.
8/102

Acharya Charaka explained 8 Saara purusha lakshanas consisting of 7dhatus and satwa saara. Here there is no any explanation regarding dosha saara lakshanas, but we get Rakta saara purusha lakshanas.

4. ASHRAYA-ASHRAYEE BHAVA²²:

"तत्रास्थिनि स्थितो वायुः, पित्तं तु स्वेदरक्त्योः। श्लेष्मा शेषेषु, तेनैषामाश्रयाश्रयीणां मिथः"॥ अ.ह.सू. 11/26 Acharya Vagbhata explained Doshas resides in Dhatus, but we can't get rakta gets shelter in any dhatu.

5. DHAARANA KARMA²³:

"त एते शरीरधारणाद्धातव इत्युच्यन्ते "। सु. सू. 14/20 One which does nourishment is called *Dhatu*.

"रसासृङमांसमॆदॊस्थिमज्जशुक्राणि धातवः। सप्त दूष्या:" अ. ह. सू 1/13

Acharya Vagbhata explained seven Dhatus in which Rakta also mentioned²⁴.

6. TYPES OF *DOSHAS*^{25, 26, 27}: "प्राणोदानौ

समानश्च व्यानश्चापान एव च"।स्. नि. 1/12

"पाचकरत्रजकसाधकालोचकभ्राजकत्व भेदैः पित्तम्"। अ. सं. $\pi 20/7$

"अवलम्बकक्लेदकबोधकतर्पकश्चेषकत्व भेदैः श्लेष्मा"। अ. सं. सू 20/8

Acharyas explained only 5 sub types *Vata*, *Pitta* and *Kapha* in our texts but not for *rakta*.

7. SEASONS-DOSHAS²⁸:

" चयप्रकोपप्रशमा वायोर्प्रीष्मादिषु त्रिषु॥ वर्षादिषु तु पित्तस्य, श्लेष्मणः शिशिरादिषु"। अ.ह.सू 12/24 Acharya Vagbhata explained the effect of 6 seasons on Tridosha like sanchaya, prakopa and prashama but not for rakta.

8. DOSHA DUSHTA LAKSHANAS²⁹:

Dosha dushti lakshanas are also mentioned for Rakta like vata dushti rakta, pitta dushti rakta and kaphadushtarakta.

9. In *shad-kriya kala sanchaya*, *prakopa* and *prasara lakshanas* are mentioned only for *vata*, *pitta* and *kapha doshas*³⁰.

DISCUSSION

From the above mentioned points we can infer that *Rakta* is a *Dhatu* only but it has independent pathogenesis in the initiation of diseases as dosha like in *vrana*, *vidradhi*, *rakta pitta*, *gulma* etc.

All *dhatus*, *malas* etc can directly involve as in case of *Dhatwavrita vata*, malavrita vata and take part in the manifestation of diseases. In the same way *Rakta* acts as a *dosha* in special circumstances and directly initiate the disease pathogenesis is a "VISHESHAVIDHI"³¹(Special Rule).

Considering *Rakta* as *dosha* is not a universal phenomenon but we can't deny its fulfilling of *dosha* criteria as explained by *Acharya Chakrapani* "दोषो हि स्वतन्त्रदूषणात्मक उच्यते" i.e. it has its specific causes for vitiation, can vitiate others in the body,



causes specific signs and symptoms and has specific treatment for its alleviation (i.e. दोषविपरीतचिकित्सा like बस्ति, विरेचन and वमन for वात, पित्त and कफ respectively will not help but रक्तमोक्षण is mentioned as its Specific Treatment.

So the concept of considering Rakta as fourth dosha as explained by Acharya Sushruta in specific disease context helps us for proper diagnosis of vyadhi and to give specific treatment of Rakta for the earliest producing of intended health recovery from the diseases.

CONCLUSION

- Rakta is not a Dosha but given a status of Dosha due its unique characteristics of Swatantradooshanaatmakatvam, Staana, Panchabhautikatva, Gunas, Karma, Vikara and Chikitsa by Acharya Sushruta.
- It also does *dehasambhava* (Utpatti, Sthiti and Pralaya of body also) and *dehadhaarana*.
- Acharya Chakrapani was not inclined to offer Rakta a position of fourth Dosha but it proved too difficult for him to ignore this claim of Rakta to be categorized similar to a Dosha³².

189



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