

A Conceptual Study of Shatkriyakala with Special Reference to Clinical Practices

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ABSTRACT:

Kriyakala is a unique concept of Ayurveda. The concept of *Kriyakala* can be used to achieve both the objectives of the Ayurveda, i.e. maintaining the health of the healthy person and curing diseases. The term *Kriyakala* refers to the recognition of the progress of the stage of a disease which helps to determine appropriate measure to correct the imbalance in *Dosha*'s. The word *Kriyakala* is composed of the words *Kriya* and *Kala*, where *Kriya* means the choice to treatment (medicine, food and daily-routine) used to improve the disturbance in *Doshas*, while *Kala* means the progression of the disease. This concept is mainly compared with the pathogenesis of a disease. The six stages of *Kriyakala* mentioned by *Acharya Sushruta* gives an idea regarding the state of the disease in the body and it guides us when to intervene. The purpose of this paper is to explain the significance of *Kriyakala* in the diagnosis and prognosis of disease. *Kriyakala* provides us the knowledge of diagnosis, prognosis and the level of intervention and so that to prevent the establishment of a disease.

Keywords: Ayurveda, Kriyakala, Dosha, Diagnosis, Prognosis

INTRODUCTION:

The two words *Kriya* and *Kala* make up the term *Kriyakala*. *Kriya* refers to the treatment option used to correct *Dosha* imbalances, and *Kala* refers to the stages of a disease's progression. The idea of *Kriyakala* assists with surveying the forecast of disease stages. *Kriyakala* provides information regarding disease diagnosis and treatment in accordance with the degree of *Doshas* vitiation. [1-3]

Sushruta mentioned the concept of *Kriyakala* in *Varnaprashnadhyaya*, and this idea was further developed into *Shatkriyakala*, which refers to the six stages through which a disease progresses. *Acharya Sushruta* describes the disease's state in six stages and recommends the appropriate therapeutic approach based on its progression. The upside of this idea is that it assists in early conclusion of illnesses eventually sickness can be managed in the beginning phase. The appropriate course of treatment can be planned in accordance with the disease's progression. [4-6]

As per the concept of *Shatkriyakala* the six stages of disease progression and their modern correlation is depicted in the table [7, 8] _

<i>Sanchaya</i>	stage of accumulation of <i>Doshas</i>
<i>Prakopa</i>	stage of aggregation of <i>Doshas</i>

<i>Prasara</i>	stage of dissemination of <i>Doshas</i>
<i>Sthanasamshraya</i>	stage of localization of <i>Doshas</i>
<i>Vyaktavastha</i>	stage of manifestation fully established disease
<i>Bhedavastha</i>	stage of development of complication

AIM:

To study the clinical significance of *Shatkriyakala*.

MATERIAL & METHODS:

Various Ayurvedic classic texts have been used for this study as source materials and various review and research articles were referred.

1. Sanchaya Avastha (Stage of accumulation)-

Sanchaya, the first stage of *Kriyakala*, describes the collection or accumulation of *Doshas* in their respective locations due to various causative factors.^[9] In this stage, *Doshas* accumulates but do not migrate from their own place (e.g. *Vata* accumulates in the bones, *Pitta* in the blood and *Kapha* in the lymph and muscles). The etiology of *Sanchaya* can be of either *Kala Swabhava* (natural) or *Trividha Hetu* (three causative factors). The three etiological factors are *Pragyaparadha* (misleading), *Asatmendriyarth Samyoga* (improper use of sensory organs) and *Kala* (which include seasonal changes, day-night changes and changes in food and regimen)^[10]. At this stage, there will be hatredness towards the similar *Gunas* as that of the *Sanchitha Dosha* and desire towards the opposite *Gunas*.^[11] For example in case of *Vata Sanchaya* there will be hatredness towards *Ruksadi Dravyas* and desire towards *Snigdhadhi Dravyas*. Due to which *Sanchitha Dosha* can be assessed.

The treatment of morbid *Doshas* during this stage, stops spreading of *Doshas* to the next stage, due to the low severity of the disease and the absence of *Doshas* vitiation, this stage of disease pathogenesis is easy to manage with proper *Ahara & Vihara* mentioned in Ayurveda texts as per *Dinacharya & Ritucharya*.

2. Prakopa (Stage of aggregation)

In *Prakopa* (vitiation) stage, the accumulation stage has endured for an extended period, and the causative variables have consistently existed. This stage occurs when the *Dosha* are ready to migrate but not spread from their own place to another^[12] On the basis of this observation, it is assumed that the *Prakopa* stage is developed due to continuous intake of improper *Ahara* (food), *Vihara* (regime). The *Dosha Vriddhi* (increase in biological humours) occurs in a liquid state at its own place which is of two types, i.e., *Chayapurvaka* and *Achayapurvaka Prakopa*. *Chayapurvaka* depicts arriving at *Prakopa* after going through *Sanchaya*, whereas *Achayapurvaka Prakopa* is characterized by reaching *Prakopa* without prior accumulation. In *Achayapurvaka Prakopa*, although *Doshas* become aberrant, the damage caused by these aberrant *Doshas* can be curable^[13]. The diagnosis of *Prakopa* stage can be made on the basis of persistent *Chaya Lakshanas* (features of aggravated biological factors), desire for opposite *Gunas* (fundamental attributes) and aversion to similar *Gunas*.

Since the body becomes more vulnerable to *Prakopa* due to *Dosha* accumulation, *Sanchayavastha* must be taken into consideration 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 the aggravated *Vata Dosha* during the early rainy season. *Virechana* and *Vaman Karma* help to eliminate the excited *Pitta* and *Kapha Doshas* during the autumn and spring seasons, respectively. Avoidance of specific etiological factors for specific *Dosha* is an important prophylactic measure for *Prakopavastha*.

3. Prasara (Stage of spread)

The spreading stage known as *Prasara* occurs when the *Doshas* are impacted by the *Prakopa* stage and the underlying causes persist. The *Doshas* who have been in the location up to this point get ready to move during the *Prakopa* stage. At this point in the *Prasara* stage, the *Doshas* overflow and disperse, moving to different parts of the body or organs. This stage is explained by *Acharya Sushruta* giving the simile of “*Kinvodaka- Pista Samyoga*”. *Kinva*, *Udaka* and grinded rice grains are mixed and left in a vessel overnight to initiate the fermentation process. The fermentation process causes the contents of the vessel to spread out in a similar manner to how agitated *Doshas* begin to spread from their dwelling. ^[14]. Due to its importance in the onset of disease, the pathogenesis of the *Prasara* stage has been discussed in most of the *Samhita* (ancient texts).

At this point, *Doshas* had spread throughout the entire body, from the sole to the brain. *Dhatus* and *Malas*, along with the *Pitta* and *Kapha Doshas*, are inert substances that can be multiplied but not moved. *Vata Dosha*, on the other hand, helps to move *Pitta*, *Kapha*, *Dhatus* and *Malas* to other places. Therefore, it seems that the *Vata* plays a significant role in mediating the *Prasara* stage of the illness manifestation process. If the causing agent is not treated at this point, the vitiated *Doshas* will continue to spread outside of their typical locations. However, irreversible pathogenesis may result from not treating the underlying causes at this point. With clinical involvement, a diagnosis can be made in the *Prasara* stage.

At this stage of the disease, the area or location that is affected by the *Dosha* determines the management strategy rather than the *Dosha* that spreads. For instance, if the *Pitta Dosha Amashaya* is affected by the *Vata Dosha* in *Prasaravastha*, then the *Pitta Dosha* treatment modalities should be used to mitigate the effects of *Prasarita Vata Dosha*. Again symptomatic management is also applied in this stage.

4. Sthanasamshraya (Stage of localization)

If the aggravating *Doshas* remain uncontrolled, they will eventually localize to a certain area of the body and develop prodromal symptoms of a particular illness ^[15] the causative factors that lead to the settlement of *Doshas* at a specific location are those that have sufficient potential to cause harm. There are very few locations that are susceptible to the settlement of *Doshas*, known as *Khavaigunya* (weak or defective site). Tissue depletion or specific surface irregularities may be present in these weak or faulty locations. Moreover, a particular causative factor may have a preference for certain channels or tissues, which results in a malfunctioning site at the time of disease manifestation. A particular disease is caused by the localization of aggravated *Doshas*. For example, diseases like *Gulma* (intra-abdominal tumors), *Atisara* (diarrhoea), *Visuchika* (gastro-enteritis), etc. are caused if *Doshas* are found in the abdomen. Diseases like *Jwara* (fever), *Prameha* (urinary disorders, including diabetes mellitus), etc., appear when the aggravated *Doshas* permeate the entire body. ^[16] It suggests that the localization of *Dosha* at a specific site within the body causes a particular disease. It is possible that not all etiological factors will lead to a disease; each body tissue may need its own etiological factor associated with specific involved

Doshas and *Dushyas* (body tissues, i.e., *Rasa*, *Rakta*, *Mamsa*, *Meda*, *Asthi*, *Majja* and *Shukra*). For example, a certain pathogen has a specific affinity towards a certain type of tissue, where it can cause disease. It is believed that an exogenous factor itself initiates tissue depletion, also referred to as the basis of a disease, by inducing *Dosha*. Furthermore, under circumstances where *Khavaigunya* was already present during *Dosha Prakopa* (possibly as a result of *Dhatu Kshaya* or the depletion of bodily tissue), the *Doshas* might cause any type of disease. Under these circumstances, the *Doshas/Dushyas* uniting at a specific location is referred to as *Sthanasamsraya*.

This is the stage at which *Purvarupa*, or prodromal symptoms of a disease, are developing. So the principles of treatment of various prodromal phases of various diseases should to be applied here. For instance, a light diet and depletion therapy are used if the prodromal feature of fever is manifested.

5. Vyakta (Stage of manifestation of disease)

If the underlying causes of *Sthanasamsraya* are not addressed and the condition progresses, *Dosha* enters into *Vyaktavashta* (manifestation) stage, all the symptoms of a disease appear in this stage such as elevated body temperature during a fever, excessive loose stool passage in *Atisara*, or fullness of abdomen during *Udara Roga*. etc. ^[17] therefore known as *Rupa Avastha*. Each disease is determined by the degree of a certain *Dosha's* vitiation, the interaction of a specific *Dhatu* (body tissue), and both of these factors.

Therefore, dietary restrictions specific to the disease, *Shaman Chikitsa* (internal medicine), and *Shodhan Chikitsa* (*Panchkarma*) are applied here. The clinical condition could worsen and the disease could advance to the next stage of *Bhedavastha* if appropriate therapy is not administered at this point.

6. Bheda (Stage of chronicity or complications)

Bedha is the last stage where a disease's progression comes to an end. Living with a disease can have complications that can result in the development of other diseases and ultimately in death. ^[18] At this point, the disease is typically identified by its complications; Treatment for the disease and its complications must be pursued in order to avoid treatment becoming unfeasible. But in general, the survival rate is decreased in *Bedha*.

DISCUSSION:

In terms of public health interventions, and particularly in terms of disease control strategies, the *Shatkriyakala* concept is highly significant. Every step of the disease process is an opportunity provided by *Kriyakala* to stop disease progression with appropriate measures. *Kriyakala* is comparable to the natural history of disease or the disease cycle as defined by contemporary medicine. The stages of *Sanchaya* and *Prakopa* are similar to the stage of susceptibility. Some authorities refer to the stage of susceptibility as "pre-pathogenesis." In order for the disease to progress at this point, the host and risk factors must interact in a favourable setting. The vitiated or aggravated *Dosha* moves and settles at a specific organ or organ system at the *Prasara* and *Sthanasanshraya Avastha*. The disease is neither entirely hidden nor readily visible at this point. As a result, at this point, diagnosing a disease becomes challenging. The disease cannot currently be identified using modern methods or instruments. This stage is similar to pre-symptomatic disease, in which the illness process has already commenced but the signs and symptoms are not yet noticeable. *Vyakti*, the fifth stage of *Shatkriyakala*, is when the disease first shows symptoms. This is analogous to the clinical disease stage in the disease's natural history. Early

diagnosis and treatment would be the modes of intervention at this stage because it is characterised by clinical signs and symptoms. *Bheda*, the final stage of *Shatkriyakala*, is comparable to the stage of diminished capacity. This phase could conclude in death, disability, or recovery.

By teaching about aggravated *Doshas* in their early stages, the *Shatkriyakala* helps in avoid etiological factors, maintain a disciplined daily routine, and follow a particular diet that pacifies especially vitiated *Doshas* and helps prevent the pathological manifestation of diseases. The concept of *Shatkriyakala* can be used to plan the *Samshamana* or *Shodhna Karma*. A patient's daily and dietary regimen, in addition to medical treatment, can be recommended based on their specific *Shatkriyakala* stage. *Shatkriyakala* assists in the planning of disease treatment and ensures accurate disease management. The concept of *Shatkriyakala* can be used to investigate the *Sadhyasadhyatva* of disease.

Therefore, the methods outlined in *Shatkriyakala* for the management and prevention of clinical entities can be implemented at the individual and community levels, which has significant implications for public health.

*Vyadhi Kriyakala and Dosha Lakshanas*¹⁹:

<i>Dosha</i>	<i>Sanchayavastha</i>	<i>Prakopavastha</i>	<i>Prasaravastha</i>
<i>Vata</i>	<i>Stabhakoshthta</i> (tympanitis of abdomen) <i>Poorna Koshthta</i> (fullness of abdomen)	<i>Koshthatoda</i> (abdominal pricking pain) <i>Doshasancharana</i> (<i>Doshas</i> movement in the GIT)	<i>Vimargagamana</i> (movement of <i>Dosha</i> in faulty direction) <i>Atopa</i> (fullness of abdomen)
<i>Pitta</i>	<i>Peetavabhasata</i> (yellowish discoloration) <i>Mandoshmata</i> (poor digestion))	<i>Amlika</i> (sour belching) <i>Pipasa</i> (thirst) <i>Paridaha</i> (burning sensation)	<i>Osha</i> (increased body temperature) <i>Chosha</i> <i>Paridaha</i> (burning sensation) <i>Dhoomayana</i>
<i>Kapha</i>	<i>Anga gourava</i> (heaviness of body) <i>Alasya</i> (tiredness)	<i>Annadweshya</i> (aversion towards food) <i>Hrudayotkleda</i> (fullness of heart)	<i>Arochaka</i> (anorexia) <i>Avipaka</i> (indigestion) <i>Angasada</i> (body pain) <i>Chhardi</i> (vomiting)

CONCLUSION:

The accurate application of *Shatkriyakala* knowledge aids in both disease diagnosis and comprehension of the manifestation process of different diseases. A physician will become a *Bhishak*, or successful practitioner, if they can distinguish between and comprehend these six stages of *Dosha*, as well as accurately diagnose and treat the disease in accordance with *Shatkriyakala*. The knowledge of *Shatkriyakala* is helpful in determining what kind of treatment should be given in respective stage of *Dosha*. It provides an accurate understanding of the *Sadhyasadhyatva* of disease. Following all the discussion of the subject, *Acharyas* caution the physician against delaying *Kriyakala* in any manner as this might result in *Asadhyata* of *Vyadhi* and failure in *Chikitsa*. Hence, the *Shatkriyakala* principles that are outlined in Ayurvedic classics are extremely significant.

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