



Critical Analysis Of Shatkriyakala

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Abstract

The concept of Shatkriyakala in Ayurveda explains how a disease develops in the body step by step through six stages. By understanding these stages, doctors can identify diseases early and plan treatment more effectively. The word “Kriyakala” means the right time to take action or give treatment during the development of a disease. It is similar to the idea of disease progression in modern medicine. According to Acharya Sushruta, the six stages of disease formation are Sanchaya (accumulation of doshas), Prakopa (aggravation of doshas), Prasara (spreading of doshas), Sthanasamshraya (localization of doshas at a specific site), Vyaktavastha (appearance of clear symptoms), Bhedavastha (complications or advanced disease stage).

The word “Kriya” means action or treatment. Ayurveda believes that early diagnosis makes treatment easier and more successful. The saying “Prevention is better than cure” perfectly matches this idea. The main aim of Ayurveda is twofold: To maintain the health of healthy individuals through proper daily routine (Dincharya), seasonal regimen (Ritucharya), and good conduct (Sadvritta). To cure diseases in sick individuals using suitable therapies. Before treating any illness, a physician must understand how the body works — including doshas, dushyas, and srotas (channels of the body). The concept of Kriyakala helps the physician decide the right treatment by identifying which doshas are imbalanced and at what stage the disease has reached.

Keywords: Shatkriyakala, Sanchaya, Prakopa, Prasara, Sthanasamshraya, Dosha

1. Introduction:

Ayurveda, the ancient Indian system of medicine, is not only about treating illnesses but also about preventing them. One important concept in Ayurveda is Shatkriyakala¹ which means the six stages of how a disease develops. The word comes from Shad means six Kriya means action or treatment Kala means time or stage.

These six stages help a doctor understand how far a disease has progressed and decide the best time to treat it. Just like modern medicine uses stages for illnesses like cancer, Ayurveda uses Shatkriyakala to stop diseases before they fully develop.

Shatkriyakala is mainly divided into two types:

1)Ritu Kriya Kala

2)Vyadhi Kriya Kala

Ritu Kriya Kala is explained by Vagbhata in the Astanga Sangraha (Sutra Sthana, chapter 12)². It has three stages of Chaya (increase of Dosha),Kopa (intensification of Dosha),Prashama (pacification of Dosha)

These stages happen due to natural seasonal changes (Ritu). If a person follows proper seasonal routines, these Dosha imbalances can return to normal on their own.

Vyadhi Kriya Kala is explained by Sushruta and is considered the six stages of disease. Unlike modern medicine, which usually recognizes only two stages — detecting the disease and managing its complications — Ayurveda identifies six stages. The last two stages show visible symptoms and complications of the disease³.

The main factors that contribute to disease development are:Ama (toxins formed in the body)⁴Dosha imbalance and their movement (biological factors that disturb the body)⁵By understanding these stages, Ayurveda helps prevent disease at an early stage, even before symptoms appear.

AIM AND OBJECTIVES

- To understand the concept of Shatkriyakala.
 - To understand the importance of Shatkriyakala.
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- To understand the role of Shatkriyakala in the Creation and Prevention of disorders.

2. Methodology

Literature Search

Review of Literature regarding Shatkriyakala is collected from

(1) Sushruta Samhita in the 21st chapter of Sutrasthana

(2) Astang Hrudayam.

All compiled matter is reorganized and critically analyzed for the discussion and attempt has been made to draw some fruitful conclusions.

3. Observations and Results:

As per the concept of Shatkriyakala the six stages of disease progression are as Follows:

- Sanchaya (Stage of Accumulation)
- Prakopa (Stage of Aggregation)
- Prasara (Stage of Dissemination)
- Sthanasamshraya (Stage of Localization)
- Vyaktavastha (Stage of Manifestation)
- Bhedavastha (Stage of Complication)

1. **Sanchaya** (Accumulation)

2. The increase of Doshas in their own sites is called Sanchaya ⁶And Produces a dislike for things which Causes of increase and liking for things of opposite Qualities⁷.

In this stage the disturbed Doshas start accumulation in their own sites due to improper diet and lifestyle. When these doshas increase but still remain in their own normal places, that condition is called Chaya or Sanchaya (accumulation) according to Ayurveda. During this stage, a person develops dislike (aversion) toward the causes that increased the doshas and starts to desire the opposite things — foods and lifestyles that can balance or calm those doshas.

A) In Vata Chaya the person senses abdominal bulging due to Vata accumulation and then becomes lethargic.

B) In Pitta Chaya yellowness of nails, eyes and urine is observed.

C) In Kapha Chaya body temperature is lowered. The person starts developing nausea, sites and produces dislike for things which are the causes of increase and liking for things of opposite qualities.

In this stages mild symptoms are seen. Thus it is very beneficial to cure the person in this stage itself.⁷

If we treat the disease at the stage of Sanchaya (accumulation), the disease does not spread further. This is the reason why it is said that if we can win over the disease.⁹

The Doshas should be vanquished (by effective treatment) in their stage of Chaya.¹⁰ People may also feel dislike for food or activity. This is called the first stage of disease, and it is the best time to prevent the disease from developing further.

In the stage of accumulation (Sanchaya), if the vitiated doshas are removed or treated properly at that early stage, they do not move forward to the next stages of disease development (like aggravation and spread)¹¹. In other words, if proper treatment is done in time —

Strong dosha (Bahudosha) → purification (Shodhana)

Moderate dosha (Madhyadosha) → lightening and digestion therapy (Langhana and Pachana)

Mild dosha (Alpadosha) → pacification (Shamana)

Then the disease can be stopped right there.

But, if no treatment is given, the doshas continue to grow stronger and move ahead, leading to more severe stages of disease.

The right time for treatment is when the doshas are in the accumulation (sanchaya) stage — they should be pacified at that time itself.

If, along with accumulation, any dosha has also become aggravated (kupita), then while treating the accumulated dosha, one should also treat the aggravated one — but without causing conflict between the two treatments.

If all the doshas are aggravated, then treatment should begin with the strongest dosha first. However, care must be taken that the treatment for one dosha does not worsen or disturb the others.

2.Prakopa (Aggravation)

In this stage, the doshas are ready to move from their usual place to other parts of the body. Continuous improper diet (Ahara) and lifestyle (Vihara) can cause doshas to become aggravated, called Prakopa. When the doshas move away from their natural paths or locations, this condition is called Prakopa (aggravation). At this stage, the symptoms of the aggravated dosha begin to appear, and the person starts to feel unwell. This imbalance may eventually lead to the development of specific diseases.

However, when the doshas remain balanced in their own places, diseases do not occur — this state of equilibrium is known as Samata (balance) or Shama (calm state).

Symptoms of aggravated doshas:

Vata: Movement in the intestines, constipation, bloating (Koshta toda sancharana)

Pitta: Sour taste, burning sensations (Amlika and Paridaha)

Kapha: Dislike for food, heaviness in the chest or heart (Annadwesha and Hridyotkledascha)

At this stage, the accumulated doshas are aggravated, but they still remain in their original sites.

The body's normal functions are disturbed by improper habits, which further increases dosha accumulation.

There are two types of Prakopa one is Chaya Prakopa and other is Acharya Prakopa.¹²

1.Chaya Prakopa: Gradual, natural aggravation of doshas due to seasonal changes or natural body rhythm. This can cause mild complaints if not managed. Ayurveda recommends Ritucharya (seasonal routine) to prevent this.¹³

1.Acharya Prakopa: Sudden aggravation of doshas due to overexertion or improper actions. For example, doing heavy work may instantly aggravate Vata dosha.

In short this stage shows early signs of disease, and proper care can prevent further complications

Dosha	Chaya	Prokopa	Prashama
Vata	Grishma	Varsha	Sharada
Pitta	Varsha	Sharada	Hemanta
Kapha	Shishira	Vasata	Grishma

Dosha Prakopa Karanas.

(a) Vat Prakopa Karanas

Aharajanya :By taking excessive Katu, Tikta, Kashaya, Ruksha, Laghu, Sheet, dry Ahar dravyas. By doing Anasana, Adhyasana and visamasana

Viharjanya :Ativyayama, Aptarpan, Bhagna,Praptana, jagrana, vegadharana.

Kalajanya:Vat Prakopa at rainy Season, in the evening, old age, and at the end of digestion of food.

(b) Pitta Prakopa karanas

Aharajanya: Excessive use of Katu, Amla, Lavan, ushna, Tikshna guna Ahara dravyas. Fish,goatmeat,curd, Madhya etc are Provok Pitta.

Viharjanya:Krodha, soka, Bhaya, Suryasantapa etc.

Kalajanya:Provocation is in sharatkalaIn hot Season, during digestion of food, midday, midnight and middle age. Generally Pitta

(c) Kapha Prakopa Karnas

Aharajanya :Excessive use of Madhura, Amla, Lavana, ushna, Snigdha, guru Ahara dravyas.

Viharjanya:Diwaswapna, Avyayama, Atisantarpana. Adhyasana

Kalajanya:Naturally Kapha Provacated in Vasantritu, early in the morning, immediately after meals and in childhood.

When one dosha moves into the location of another, it should be treated according to the dosha of that new location¹⁴.For example:

If Vata moves into Pitta's place, treat it like Pitta.

If Pitta spreads into Kapha's place, treat it like Kapha.

If Kapha moves into Vata's place, treat it like Vata

The causes of aggravation (prakopa) of the doshas — Vata, Pitta, and Kapha — Imbalance

The improper contact of the senses with their respective objects (asatmya indriyarthasamyoga), meaning exposure to things that are unsuitable or excessive for the senses,

The influence of time or season (kala), such as extreme cold or heat, and

The effect of improper or sinful actions (dushkrita karma).

Each of these causes can occur in three ways —

Heenayoga (deficient contact or underuse),

Ati-yoga (excessive contact or overuse), and

Mithya-yoga (wrong or improper contact or misuse).

3.Prasara (Spreading):

When Vata, Pitta, and Kapha get aggravated, they start to spread in the body. This spreading happens naturally because of the movement of Vata, which is very active, and also due to the interaction of causes that disturb the Doshas.

When a person does physical exercise or hard work, when the digestive fire (jatharagni) becomes strong, or when one eats or behaves in unhealthy ways, and due to the quick-moving nature of Vata dosha, the doshas (Vata, Pitta, and Kapha) move from their normal place — the Koshtha (internal pathway, like stomach and intestines) — to the Shakha (external pathways, like tissues and skin) or sometimes to the Asthi (bones — the middle pathway).

Just like when water overflows if it collects too much, Doshas move and spread when they increase. How they combine and move depends on their qualities and interactions.

Aggravated Doshas leave their original place and Spread To the other Parts of the body through different srotas. Dosha also moves to different places with the help of Vayu, Either alone or in combinations with other Dosha which Leads to 15 types of Prasara stage.

(1).Vata Prasara

(2) Pitta Prasara

(3) Kapha Prasara

(4) Rakta Prasara

(5) Vata Pitta Prasara

(6) Vata kapha Prasara

(7) Vata Rakta Prasara

(8) Pitta kapha Prasara

(9) Pitta Rakta Prasara

(10) Kapha Rakta Prasara

(11) Vata Pitta Kapha Prasara

(12) Pitta Kapha Rakta Prasara.

(13) Vata Pitta Kapha Prasara

(14) Vata Kapha Rakta Prasara.

(15) Vata Pitta Kapha Rakta Prasara.

Vata Prasara Lakshana: Atopa and Vimargagamana.

Pitta Prasara Lakshana: Chosha, Osha and Dhoomayanani.

Kapha Prasara Lakshana: Avipaka, Angasada And Chardi.

He same way doshas after leaving their places lonely Or may mixed with other Doshas have to overflow to Different place. While overflowing Doshas will get three

Types of gati(direction)

- **Urdhwa gati** Upward direction may manifest vomiting, cough, Hikka and disease concerned to ear, nose, throat and eye.
- **Adho gati** Downward direction, may cause diarrhoea, Gridhrashi, Bhagandara etc.
- **Tiryak gati** Transverse direction may leads skin disease etc.

Like dosh gati, Rogmarga are also of three types.¹⁵

- **Abhyantara Roga marga:-** If Doshas start to get Accumulated in visceral region, ex- kosta, they Produces The diseases like vomiting, dysentery, constipation, Mahasrotas related diseases, consider as Abhyantara Roga marga.
- **Bahya Roga Marga:-** If Doshas are start to Accumulate in tissue and Produces the disease like – Galagand, Gandmalas, Stholya, Napumsakatwa or Disease relating to blood and skin is consider as Bahya Roga Marga.
- **Madhyama Roga Marga:-** If Doshas are start to Accumulates in marmas (vital Part), Asthi, Sandhis, Manifest the disease like heart disease, Sandhigata Vyadhi is consider as madhyam Rogamarga.

4. Sthanasamshraya (Localization)

At this stage, the Doshas (body energies) start moving into weak or vulnerable tissues, which is when the first signs of disease appear. The aggravated Doshas begin to settle in specific parts of the body and cause diseases related to those areas.

When Doshas are circulating throughout the body (Prasara stage), they can get blocked in the channels (srotas) because of strotovaigunya. This strotovaigunya leads to an interaction between the Doshas and the tissues (Dosh-Dushya Sammurchana), which causes the early warning signs of disease, called Poorvarupa. The abnormality in Srotas causes obstruction of the Doshas, the vitiated Doshas can vitiate organ and Produces a disease of that particular organs in which Morbid Dosha gets accumulated. This stage exhibits Premonitory signs and symptoms (Poorva rupa) of Disease.

The type of disease that develops depends on where the Doshas have collected. For example, if the Doshas affect the digestive channels(Annavaha srotas), it may cause diarrhea; if they affect the urinary system(Mutravaha srotas), it could lead to kidney stones, and so on.

At this stage, treatments like Rasayana therapy (rejuvenation therapy) are very helpful to prevent the disease from worsening. Essentially, this stage shows the premonitory signs of disease before it fully develops

5. **Vyakti** (Manifestation)

At this stage, the disease becomes fully visible, and its symptoms are clear. A doctor can usually diagnose the illness easily. Since the main symptoms are obvious, treatment can be planned effectively.

The symptoms of conditions like swelling (shopha), tumors (arbuda), wounds (vidradhi), rashes (visarpa), as well as fever (jwara) and diarrhea (atisara), are now fully expressed and noticeable.

“Vyakti” means the disease has manifested, and “Vyadh Darshan” means the disease can now be recognized by a doctor. The specific symptoms help identify the type of disease: Swelling, tumors, etc. indicate dosha involvement in the tissue. Fever shows heat-related symptoms, ascites (udara/pudaram) shows fluid accumulation.

The Vyadhi Pratyanika Chikitsa ¹⁶(disease-specific treatment) should be used at this stage to stop the disease from getting worse. This means the treatment recommended for that particular disease should be applied.

Dalhana calls this stage the stage of disease manifestation, because the clinical signs are fully expressed, making it easy to identify the disease. In other words, the disease is completely visible through its symptoms at this point.¹⁷

6. **Bheda** (Complication or Differentiation)

If a disease is not treated, it can become chronic or complicated and may start affecting multiple body systems.

The Bheda stage is the final stage of disease progression, where complications (upadrava) can occur and sometimes new diseases may develop.

The prognosis is very poor at this stage, and if left untreated, the disease may become incurable. Treatment is very difficult, and the complications can seriously affect health, potentially leading to death.

In the Bheda stage, the disease may give rise to secondary complications, which are also called upadravas.¹⁸

4. Discussion

The Idea of Shatkriyakal shows that diseases don't appear suddenly—they develop gradually over time. If we catch them early, especially in the first three stages, treatment becomes much easier and more effective.

Early detection allows diseases to be treated successfully with less discomfort. Ayurveda recommends following daily routines and seasonal practices to prevent illness. According to Ayurveda, disease happens when Doshas (body energies) and Dushyas (body tissues) get imbalanced.

In modern healthcare, this idea is very useful:

Prevention: People can be educated about health before serious problems appear (during Sanchaya & Prakopa stages).

Early diagnosis: Subtle signs can be noticed before the disease fully develops.

Personalized treatment: Treatments can be chosen according to the person's specific Dosha imbalance and affected tissues.

Avoiding complications: Acting early can prevent chronic or severe diseases.

Treating a disease in its early stage also means using lower doses of medicine and restoring balance in the body faster. So, we should never ignore the stages of disease (Kriyakala).

For example, someone who eats a lot of oily or spicy food may not have a disease yet, but they could be in the Sanchaya or Prakopa stage. Simple lifestyle changes at this stage can prevent the disease from developing.

Conclusion

Shatkriyakala is a special concept in Ayurveda that explains how diseases develop step by step. Its main use in clinical practice is for early detection, prevention, and personalized treatment. By understanding these stages, both doctors and patients can take early action to stay healthy. This concept is unique to Ayurveda. If we understand Shatkriyakala, we can stop a disease at its early stage and prevent serious complications. Acharya Sushruta also said that knowing these stages helps a doctor decide the right treatment based on the patient's Dosha imbalance and knowledge. In short, a doctor who diagnoses and treats diseases according to Shatkriyakala is more likely to be a successful practitioner.

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