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# Agni - Key factor for Shodhananga Snehapana

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## ABSTRACT

*Agni* is termed as *Vaishwanara* as it takes the person from *Mruthyuloka* to *Swargaloka*. It is an important factor and is equitant to *Prana*; is one among *Dashaprana Ayatana*. *Agni* in *Shareera* is present in different forms with different actions. It is the responsible factor for both health and disease; on the other hand the successful outcome of treatment is also dependant on *Agni*. *Chikitsa* (treatment) is the process of bestowing normalcy which is either brought by *Shodhana* (purificatory) or *Shamana* (palliative) *Karma*. *Snehapana* is a pre-operative procedure for *Shodhana Chikitsa* where in *Sneha Dravya* (medicated fat) is administered for attainment of *Upasthita Dosha Avastha* and further ease in elimination of the vitiated *Doshas*. Assessment of *Dosha*, *Dushya*, *Vyadhi Avastha*, *Roga Bala*, *Rogi Bala*, *Agni*, *Koshta* etc. factors are essential for the attainment of *Chikitsa Phala*. Assessment of *Agni* not only helps in understanding *Vyadhi* but also enables to plan the dosage of *Sneha* to be administered. Thus this paper is an attempt to throw light on the importance of *Agni*, assessment of *Agni* and *Agni Bala* prior to *Shodhananga Snehapana*.

**Key words:** *Snehapana*, *Shodhana*, *Agni*, *Koshta*.

## INTRODUCTION

*Chikitsa* is the process adopted for bestowing *Dhatusamyata* and making the body disease free.<sup>[1]</sup> This is broadly classified into two; *Shodhana* (evacuatory or eliminatory procedures) and *Shamana* (pacificatory procedures).<sup>[2]</sup> *Shodhana* is concerned with *Dushita Dosha* or *Mala Nirharana*, while *Shamana* alleviates the aggravated *Doshas* at their place without expelling them out of the body nor disturbing the normal once.<sup>[3]</sup> As per the definition, *Dosha* are those which are susceptible for vitiation. In

normal state it provides strength whereas, if vitiated brings diseases and hence it has to be eliminated out of the body.<sup>[4]</sup>

*Shodhana* plays an important role in *Ayurveda*. The importance of *Shodhana* is justified by fact that it eradicates diseases completely and such diseases once eradicated does not reoccur unless there is a strong aetiology.<sup>[5]</sup> *Shodhana* procedure also removes the *Doshas* from the site of origin, therefore covering a wide range of preventive, curative and promotive health condition. *Purvakarma* plays a vital role for the success of *Shodhana* procedure by assigning *Doshas* to a state called as *Upasthita Doshavastha*. *Purvakarma* includes *Deepana* (digestive), *Pachana* (detoxification of *Ama*), *Rookshana*, *Snehana* (oleation) and *Swedana* (sudation). Here presence and absence of *Ama* shall determine the use of *Pachana Dravya*, where as the strength of *Agni* is taken care by *Deepana Dravya*. *Snehana* (oleation) is administration of any one of *Chatursneha*, and is the major preparatory procedure carried out before *Shodhana* (purificatory procedure). *Acharya Charaka* in *Apamargatanduliya Adhyaya* mentions the importance of *Upasthita Doshaavastha* (available humors) for proper expulsion of *Dosha* during

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*Shodhana* therapy. Here *Upasthita Dosha* refers to presence of *Dosha* in the *Koshta* for expulsion. The proper mobilization of *Dosha* from *Shakha* to *Koshta* is achieved by the action of *Snehana* and *Swedana*.

There are different methods for application of *Snehana* like *Pana*, *Nasya*, *Basti*, *Abhyanga*, *Murdni Taila* etc., which can be broadly classified as *Bahya* and *Abhyantara Snehana*. *Pravicharana* and *Accha Snehapana* is being widely practiced.

*Shodhananga Snehapana* is achieved through *Accha Snehapana*, which is dependent on *Agni*, *Koshta*, *Dosha*, *Vyadhi* etc. The applicability of which is of 4 types- *Sadhyo Snehana*, *Avara Snehana*, *Eshat Snigdha*, and *Samyak Snigdha Snehapana*.

Dosage and duration of *Snehapana* depends on the *Agni* and *Koshta* respectively, thus assessment of the *Agni* and *Koshta* is an important factor for *Snehapana* and judicious application of *Shodhana* procedure.

### Agni

According to *Shabha Kalpa Druma*, *Agni* is stated as an entity which is having *Urdwagati* and predominance of *Teja Mahabhuta*. It can be simply defined as an entity bringing out digestion in any form or it is an energy which converts one substance into another.<sup>[6]</sup>

### Sneha

'*Sneha*' is derived from *Snih Dhatu*. It has two meanings,<sup>[7]</sup>

- '*Snih-preetau*' means to render affection and
- '*Snih-Snehane*' means to render lubrication.

The term *Sneha* implies to a substance that brings oiliness or unctuousness. *Sneha* literally means oiliness, unctuousness, fattiness, greasiness, lubricity, viscosity, affection, love, kindness and tenderness.<sup>[8]</sup>

### Snehana

The procedure by which *Snigdha*, *Vishyandana*, *Mardavata* and *Kledana* is achieved is known as *Snehana*.<sup>[9]</sup>

### Types of Sneha

#### a. Yoni bheda<sup>[10]</sup>

- *Sthavara*

- *Jangama*

#### b. Matra bheda<sup>[11]</sup>

- *Hrasva matra*
- *Madhyama matra*
- *Uttama matra*

#### c. Based on route of administration<sup>[12]</sup>

- *Bahya*
- *Abyantara*

#### d. Based on action<sup>[13]</sup>

- *Shodhana*
- *Shamana*
- *Brimhana*

#### e. Prayoga Bheda

- *Accha Sneha*
- *Vicharana Sneha*

### Accha Sneha

*Accha Sneha* means intake of large quantity of *Sneha*, without mixing with other substances. *Acharya Vagbhata* in *Snehavidhi Adhyaya* defines *Accha Snehapana* as the *Snehana* that is directed for *Shodhanartha*. *Accha Snehapana* is administered in large quantity only after digestion of previous night meals.<sup>[14]</sup> This type of *Sneha* is again divided into *Shodhana Accha Sneha* and *Shamana Accha Sneha*.

### Vicharana Sneha

*Vicharana Sneha* is administration of *Sneha* along with other preparations. According to *Acharya Vagbhata* it is sixty four based on *Rasa Bheda*.<sup>[15]</sup> Where as *Acharya Charaka* has told twenty four *Pravichara*. *Acharya Chakrapani Datta* commenting on *Vicharana Sneha* quotes that, administration of *Sneha* with any compatible food article is called *Pravicharana* and states example as *Odana* etc. *Odana*, *Vilepi* etc. *Pravicharana* explained here are preparations made by adding *Sneha*. *Abhyanga* etc. external procedures though has no contact with *Jatharagni* is considered under *Pravicharana Sneha*.<sup>[16]</sup>

### Importance of Snehapana

*Shodhananga Snehapana* is a pre-operative procedure for *Panchakarma*. *Shodhana* procedure depends upon the proper mobilization of *Doshas* from the channels,

which is achieved with the help of *Snehana* and *Swedana*. *Snehana* is a procedure which leads and decides the whole outcome of *Shodhana* therapy. *Snehana* is a process of administering *Sneha* to achieve the desired effect in a precise duration prior to *Vamana* and *Virechana Karma*, with due consideration of dose, time, duration, etc. Both *Abhyantara* and *Bahya Snehana* is encompassed as the *Purvakarma* of *Shodhana Chikitsa*. *Bahya Snehana* includes *Abhyanga* which is followed by *Swedana* after the completion of *Abhyantara Snehana*. The aim of the *Snehana* therapy is to prepare the body for *Shodhana* by bringing the *Doshas* situated in peripheral tissues to the *Koshta*, thus easily expelled out.<sup>[17]</sup> *Vridhdya* and *Vishyandana Karma* of *Snehana* is responsible for this action.

*Acharya Sushruta* states importance of *Snehana* and *Swedana* that *Shodhana* if administrated without preceding *Snehana* and *Swedana* than the body will be broken like a dry wood.<sup>[18]</sup>

*Sneha* loosens the *Doshas* which are adherent to the walls of minute Channels. *Dalhanacharya* explains that to bring the *Shakhagata Doshas* into *Koshta*, *Snehana* is essential. *Acharya Charaka* gives simile that, as from a smooth container, contents easily separate without any effort. Similarly *Kaphadi Doshas* easily expelled out from the oiled body.<sup>[19]</sup>

As *Klishta Mala* of any cloth is easily washed by water, if we loosen it from its site, in the similar way, *Malas* are easily expelled out by *Shodhana* if we make them *Utklishta* by *Purvakarma* i.e. *Snehana* and *Swedana*.<sup>[20]</sup>

### Agni

*Agni* has an important role to play in the physiological, functioning of body. *Jathargni* has been considered to be prime among all *Agni's*. The functioning of other *Agni's*, *Dhatvagni* and *Bhuthagni* are dependent upon the strength of *Jatharagni*.<sup>[21]</sup> *Agni* is said to be *Pittoshma* i.e. the combination of *Pitta* and *Ushma*. In our body this *Ushma* is said to be *Agni*.<sup>[22]</sup> Even though *Agni* is part of *Pitta*. It is considered separate exclusively of *Agni* because *Agni* has separate entity and it has different properties and functions.

### Importance of Agni

*Agni* converts food in the form of energy, which is responsible for all the vital functions of our body. Therefore, *Ayurveda* considers that *Dehagni* is the cause of life, complexion, strength, health, nourishment, lusture, *Oja*, *Teja* and *Prana*.<sup>[23]</sup> About the importance of *Agni*, *Acharya Charaka* has mentioned that after stoppage of the function of *Agni*, the individual dies, and when the *Agni* of an individual is equal, then that person would be absolutely healthy and would lead a long, happy, healthy life. But, if the *Agni* of a person is vitiated, the whole metabolism in his body would be disturbed, resulting in ill health and disease. Hence, *Agni* is said to be the base of life.

### Importance of Agni in Snehapana

*Arunadatta* commenting on A. H. Su-16/18, points out that the administration of *Sneha* (fats) without the consideration of strength of *Agni* is irrational. This it is important to assess *Agni* before *Snehapana*.<sup>[24]</sup>

### Assessment of Agni

According to *Acharya Charaka* *Agni* assessment depends upon the three components viz. *Abhyavaharana Shakti*, (capacity to eat), *Jarana Shakti* (capacity to digest) and *Ruchi* (appetite). Unless all are considered, no proper assessment of *Agni* can be done. For assessment of *Agni* the *Jarana Shakti*, *Abhyavaharana Shakti*, should be assessed before commencing the *Shodhana* therapy.<sup>[25]</sup>

### Sneha Jeeryamana Lakshana and Jeerya Lakshana

The digestion of *Sneha* is assessed by the *Sneha Jeeryamana* and *Jeerna Lakshanas*. These acts as a tool for knowing the action of *Agni* on *Sneha Dravya*. *Acharya Vagbhata* has narrated the *Sneha Jeeryamana Lakshanas* as *Shirorukh* (headache), *Bhrama* (giddiness), *Nishtiva* (salivation), *Murcha*, *Saada* (pain), *Arati* (tiredness), *Klama* (fatigue). These are the *Lakshanas* seen during digestion of *sneha*. After the digestion of *Sneha* the *Jeerna Lakshanas* appears like *Vatanuloma* (passing of flatus), *Swasthyam* (feeling of wellness), *Kshudha* (appetite), *Trushna* (thirst), *Udgharashuddhi* (eructation) occurs.<sup>[25]</sup>

## DISCUSSION

*Abhyantara Snehapana* is the process of administration of *Sneha* internally employed for the purpose of *Shodhana*, *Shamana* and *Brimhana*. It is important here to understand the signs and symptoms of *Samyak Snehana* described by *Acharyas* i.e. *Snehana* indicates *Snigdha*, *Vishyandana* refers to *Vilayana* (dissolution or diffusion) *Dalhanacharya* while commenting on *Apyadravyaguna* and *Karma* quotes *Vishyandanam* as *Vishyandanam Drava Srutih*, *Mardavata* means softness. *Kleda* is moistness or wetness. Here *Kleda* signifies the increase of *Apya Guna* in the body. Considering these *Gunas* as the primary features the assessment of *Samyak Snigdha* is done.

- *Sneha* is to be considered by the unctuousness of the body, stool and skin (*Pureesha Twak and Gatra Snigdha*).
- *Vishyandana* is witnessed by excretion of stool with or without *Sneha*, (*Snigdha Mala* and *Adhastat Snehadarsana*).
- *Mardavata* is assessed by *Gatra Mardava*.
- *Kledana* is assessed by consistency of stool i.e., *Asamhat Varchas*.

It is well-known that the *Doshas* are present throughout the body. *Sneha*, by its *Sukshma Guna* and *Kledana Karma*, bring the *Doshas* to *Koshta* from other *Margas*, where *Kledana Karma* acts as a solvent of the morbid *Doshas*, here the fat soluble impurities in the body will be eliminated. As *Shodhana Dravya* bring the *Doshas* to *Koshta* for elimination. The knowledge of digestion and absorption of *Sneha Dravya* is very important before commencing *Snehana* procedure. In *Ayurveda*, the *Paka Karma* of *Sneha* is not vividly explained by *Acharya*. Instead the process of *Sneha* digestion can be considered on the basis of *Sneha Jeeryamana* and *Jeerna Lakshanas*.

The *Doshas* present in the body has its own *Gati*, and in *Vyadhita Avastha* the *Doshas* will be aggravated and may be present in *Shakhas* (periphery). The *Shodhana Chikitsa* aims at expulsion of this vitiated *Doshas* from the body either by *Urdhwamarga* (administering *Vamana*) or *Adhomarga* (administering

*Virechana*). *Acharya Vagbhata* in *Doshopakramaniya* has explained the causes for *Dosha Gati*. *Vyayama* (exercise), *Ushma* and *Tikshnata* of *Jataragni*, *Ahita Ahara Bhojana*, vitiates the *Vatadi Doshas* and takes the *Doshas* to *Shakhas* from *Koshta*. These *Doshas* are brought back to *Koshta* by *Srotomukha Vishodhana / Vivarana*, *Abhishyandi /making Dosha Dravibhuta*, *Paaka* (bringing *Pachana* of the *Dosha*), which is well delivered by *Snehana* and *Swedana Karmas*.

*Acharya Vagbhata* in *Doshopakramaniya Adhyaya* quotes the actions that makes the vitiated *Doshas Upasthita* by bringing them from *Shakha* to *Koshta*.<sup>[26]</sup>

According to *Acharya Charaka*, *Matra* (dosage) and *Kala* (duration) constitute the basis for success of *Snehapana* where *Agni* (digestive function) and *Koshta* (alimentary tract) are the parameters to be taken into consideration. For the calculation of *Agni Bala*, *Abhyavaharana Shakti* and *Kala* for digestion are the parameters and based on which *Agni Bala* can be stated as *Avara*, *Madhyama* and *Pravara*. Thus *Acharya Vagbhata* describes the *Snehana* based on *Matra* as *Hrasva Matra*, *Madhyama Matra*, and *Uttama Matra* where the digestion of *Sneha* occurs in two, four and eight *Yama* respectively. This classification of *Snehapana* is based on assessment of *Agnibala*. *Acharya Vagbhata* has also mentioned about *Hrsiyasi Matra* (test dose). *Hrsiyasi Matra* is the quantity of *Sneha* which digests within one *Yama*, and this can be used as trial dose when the *Agni* and *Koshta* are unknown.<sup>[27]</sup> During *Snehapana Agni Vriddhi* (increase in digestive function) is expected.<sup>[28]</sup> All though *Sneha* has opposite character than *Agni*, when it gets digested, it serves as a fuel and kindles the *Agni*. This kindled *Agni* has more power to digest even more quantity of *Sneha*. Therefore while calibrating *Agnibala* quantity of *Sneha* and duration for digestion plays important role. *Agnibala* and digestive period are inversely proportional i.e. as *Agnibala* increases, the digestion period is bound to decrease, even when the same dose is administered or when the dose is increased.

Though routinely used *Snehapana*, the *Ghruta* is best known for *Agni Deepana* by its *Prabhava*,<sup>[29]</sup> but in practice the administration of *Snehapana*, *Agni*

Avastha is of prime importance. The *Pachana*, *Deepana Karmas* having *Ushna*, *Katu*, *Tikta*, *Kashayarasa* and *Ushnavirya Dravyas* are employed to correct the presence of *Ama* as a prerequisite for *Shodhananga Snehapana*. In case of *Bhuri Shleshma*, *Sthoola* and *Vishamagni* the use of *Rookshana Dravya* is recommended.<sup>[30]</sup> Possessing *Laghu*, *Khara*, *Tikshna*, *Ushna Guna*, *Kashaya*, *Tikta* and *Katu Rasa*.<sup>[31]</sup> These *Dravya* will take care of *Kleda* and regulates the *Agni* along with *Deepana*, *Pachana Karma*, so that the given *Sneha* does not produce any complications. Administration of *Ghritha* added with *Kshara* and *Lavana* is stated to correct *Agnimandya* and *Kroorakoshta*.<sup>[32]</sup> *Hingu-Vachadi Choorna* etc. are ideally suitable in these context. And in extreme involvement of *Vatadosha* presenting with *Malabhadhata* etc. *Basti Karma* and *Phala Varti Prayoga* is planned to correct *Agni* prior to the administration of *Snehapana*.

## CONCLUSION

Globally a new up surge is seen in the interest of *Panchakarma* for its efficiency in addressing chronic diseases. The ailments treated by *Shodhana* is said to expel it from the root and there is less chance of recurrence of the disease. *Shodhanartha Abhyantara Snehana* is an art based on precise assessment of *Dosha-Oushada Nirupana* having 11 factors to be assessed, but dose, duration were not clearly specified. By such pivotal issues *Acharya* have interpolated *Agni* as one of the technique to define the dose schedule for *Snehana*. For the attainment of *Shodhanaphala* proper *Snehapana* is an essential factor which is directly dependent on *Agni* and *Agnibala* as a prime factor. Thus assessing *Agni* is very essential before *Shodhanartha Abhyantara Snehana*.

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