



Review Article

SHUKRA; THE ESSENCE OF ALL OTHER DHATU: A REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

Human body is made up of seven *Dhatus* (seven categories of tissues). *Shukradhatu* is located in entire body. *Shukra* is white, pure, excellent *Dhatu*, which is considered as best among all seven *Dhatus*. '*Shukra*' is word originated from '*Shucha*' *Dhatu* which means pure or excellent. *Teja*, *Reta*, *Bijam*, *Virayam*, *Indriyam* are some of the synonyms of *Shukradhatu*. *Shukra* means bright, pure and radiant. *Shukra* is the seventh and final *Dhatu* in the *Dhatu* formation cycle. In metabolism of *Shukradhatu* nutrients essential for *Shukradhatu* are digested by *Shukuradhatwagni* and forms *Shukradhatu*. For the formation of *Shukradhatu* one month period is essential. Individuals having the excellence of *Shukradhatu* are shown physical & psychological characteristics. According to texts of *Ayurveda*, *Shukradhatu* is pervading all over the body. It gives courage to a person. It creates softness in the mind. It is responsible for strength of individuals. Vitiation of *Shukradhatu* shows *Shukradhatu dusti* (pathology) in the form of *Vridhhi* (hyper state) or *Kshaya* (waning). This vitiation may leads to mainly infertility and many other physical as well as psychological disorders. Therefore, it has a vital role in context to reproduction as well as to maintain physical and mental health. It is present in our body in invisible form like *Ghee* in the milk. It is the end product of *Dhatu parinaama* or formation of *Dhatus*. So it is considered as an essence of all *Dhatus*. As it is essence of all other *Dhatus*, *Charak samhita* and *Sushrut samhita* has not described its *Mala* (waste).

KEYWORDS: Reproduction, *Shukradhatu*, *Shukravaha Strotas*, *Stree*, *Shonita*, *Artava*.

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda has described three basic physiological constituents of human body, viz., *Dosha*, *Dhatu* and *Mala*. They are compared with roots of trees, as tree roots are important for its health; same like that these three constituents are necessary for human's health. Human body is composed of *Dhatus*, i.e. basic forms of body tissues. *Dhatus* are seven in number, hence called as '*Saptadhatu*'. They are *rasa* (plasma), *Rakta* (formed blood cells), *Mamsa* (muscle tissues), *Meda* (fatty tissues), *Asthi* (bone tissue), *Majja* (bone marrow and nervous tissues) and (reproductive tissues). *Shukra* is the *Dhatu* which is highly responsible for the reproductive elements of the body. It is the most refined product or essence of all the seven *Dhatus*. It is referred by two different names wherein in male it is known as *Shukra* and includes the sperm and in female, it is known as *Shonita* and is responsible for ovum. *Shukra dhatu* (reproductive tissues) is present in whole body but its location is described around bladder opening according to *Sushruta*. Various scholars have

quoted *Vrishana* (testis), *Shepha* (penis), *Stana* (breast) and *Majja* (bone marrow) as *Moola-sthana* (origin) of *Shukravaha srotasa* (system related with reproductive tissue). These all references as cited above, reveal that *Shukra dhatu* is present in every cell of body, but it is present predominantly in reproductive organs

Shukradhara kala is important structure, which occupies in whole body. In metabolism of *Shukradhatu* nutrients essential for *Shukradhatu* are digested by *Shukuradhatwagni* and forms *Shukradhatu*. For the formation of *Shukradhatu* one month period is essential. Individuals having the excellence of *Shukradhatu* are shown physical & psychological characteristics. According to texts of *Ayurveda*, *Shukradhatu* is pervading all over the body. It gives courage to a person. It creates softness in the mind. It is responsible for strength of individuals. Vitiation of *Shukradhatu* shows *Shukradhatu dusti* (pathology) in the form of *Vridhhi* (hyper state) or *Kshaya* (waning). This vitiation may leads to mainly infertility and many

other physical as well as psychological disorders. Therefore, it has a vital role in context to the sustenance, nourishment & reproduction as well as in maintaining physical and mental health. It is present in our body in invisible form like *ghee* in the milk. It is the end product of *Dhatu parinaama* or formation of *Dhatu*. So it is considered as an Essence of all *Dhatu*.

Utpatti of Shukra Dhatu

Shukradhatu is last *Dhatu*. It gets generated in intra uterine life. Growth and nourishment is by food just like any other *Dhatu*. Food, after ingestion, is transformed into *Rasa dhatu*, which nourishes *Rakta*, & ultimately leads to *Shukradhatu* [1] This process takes around a month to complete. These two references show us the importance of food for formation of potent *Shukradhatu*.

When *Majjadhatu* takes its origin in *Majjavahastrotas*, *Majjadhatwagni* acts on its nutriments coming from *Ahararasa* and from *Asthivahastrotas*. *Majjadhatu* is produced in *Majjavahastrotas*; it takes part in production of *Shukradhatu*. Nutriment coming from *Ahararasa* and from *Majjavahastrotas* are metabolized by *Shukradhatwagni* and convert it into *Shukradhatu*. *Shukradhatu* is produced from excel part of *Ahararasa*. After the digestion of ingested food, it converted into two parts. One is essence part while another is excreted part. Essence part gives rise to all types of *Dhatu* in their own *Strotas* (channels). With the help of *Vyanvayu* this excel part is circulated all over the body. When the nutrients which are essential for the production of *Shukradhatu*, which is formed during the metabolism of *Majjadhatu* comes in contact with *Shukradhatwagni* in *Shukravaha Strotas*, and *Shukradhatu* is produced. *Charak samhita* had a very different view regarding in the nourishment of *Shukradhatu*. The unctuous substance (essence) to that *Majja* (bone marrow) thereafter gives rise to *Shukradhatu*. Porosity of bone is caused by *Vayu*, *Akash* etc., and through these porous holes, exudation of *Shukra* takes place. This happens on the analogue of the exudation of water through the porous walls of new earthen pot. [2]

Shukra Abhivyakti

Human body is made up of seven *Dhatu*s (seven categories of tissues). *Shukra* is seventh *Dhatu*. It is present in whole body. It becomes active after the age of sixteen years, even though it is present since birth. [3,4]

Shukradhatu in Male and Female

The *Shukra* in women is secreted during sexual activity. However, it is not useful in *Garbhotpatti*. [5] (Fertilization) *Shukra* (vaginal secretions) expressed during sexual activity is not capable of participating conjugation of sex gametes. *Artava* (ovum) functions for fertilization, not the secretion of female *Shukra*.

Charak commentator *Gangadhar* has explained

that, even females have seven *Dhatu*s as in males. *Rasa* produced from *Ahara* serially goes through *Dhatuparinaman* process, producing *Shukra*. *Sushruta* commentator *Dalhanacharya* has considered *Artava* in females as *Shukra*, as it is meant for conception. Therefore, he has considered *Artava* as *Shukra* in females. *Vagbhata* clarified that *Shukra* secreted by woman is useless for fertilization. [6]

It is worth noting that during *Shukrapradurbhav*, some changes in mind and body also start to appear like hair growth on pubic and axillary region, shyness etc. *Artava* is an essential factor for conception in females, gives strength to *Shukra* and is responsible for strength and complexion. This means that *Artava* and *Shukra* are different.

Stri-shukra and Shukra dhatu

Stri-shukra and *Shukra dhatu* both are very different. Because *Shukra dhatu* is responsible for fertilization (reproduction), but *Stri-shukra* is useless for it. [7] *Bhavamishra* has put forth the theory of eighth *Dhatu* in female. He has explained *Artava* as seventh *Dhatu* and *Shukra* as eighth *Dhatu*. However, he has also not mentioned its location, attributes etc. [8]

Chakrapani quoting opinion of others writes that few erudite accept development of moustache as *Mala* of *Shukra*, even women would have the moustache due to presence of *Shukra*, and however *Charaka* does not accept this. Moreover, *Shukra* of females does not take part in fertilization.

Sushrutacharya describes *Moolasthan* of *Shukravaha Strotas* as *Stana* and *Vrishana*. [9] In female, breast develops at puberty. While in males, it is rudimentary. *Shukra Pravartan* and *Stanya Pravartan Hetu* are mostly at the psychological level. Considering *Dalhanacharya's* opinion, that *Artava* is *Shukra*, the relation between *Stana* and *Shukra* becomes clear. According to the classical texts, during pregnancy, *Artava* is blocked and therefore it rises upwards and splits into two parts- One forms the placenta and the other nourishes the breasts. [10]

Shukradhatu in Children

Children will have *Shukra* in dormant stage. This is compared to buds of flowers, which have hidden fragrance in them. The visible appears when children reach adulthood. [11]

Properties of Shukradhatu

The *Shukra* which is unctuous, dense, slimy, sweet, nonirritating & white (transparent) like a crystal is to be known as pure or normal. [12]

1. Smell of pure *Shukra* is like honey. [13]
2. Colour of *Shukra* is like oil or honey. [14]
3. It is liquid in nature.
4. Physiological measure of *Shukradhatu* is half *Anjali*. [15]

Functions of *Shukradhatu*

Principle function of *Shukradhatu* is to reproduction with sustenance & nourishment of the body. It gets ejaculated smoothly. It creates softness in the mind. It gives strength to the body. It arouses a man for reproduction.^[16] Reproduction is not local function of testes to produce the sperm and penis to get erected at sexual act & ejaculation. It is function of entire body, mind & intention towards the sexual act. Therefore support of this *Dhatu Shukradharakala*, is present all over the body. It forms foetus^[17] and its sex, It can produce hereditary defects, It is responsible for betterment of skin texture. *Shukradhatu* gives rise to valour & courageous, makes a man amorously disposed towards female sex and increases his strength and amateness. A person, who has *Shukra dhatu* in healthy state, has a brightness of confidence with eyes and presence of glow on their skin.

Upadhatu of *Shukradhatu*

Sharangdhar was the lone compendium to mention *Upadhatu* of *Shukradhatu*. In his opinion, *Oja* is the *Upadhatu* of *Shukradhatu*.^[18]

Mala of *Shukradhatu*

Charak-samhita and *Sushrut samhita* take no *Mala* of *Shukradhatu* due to its purity. *Asatang hridaya* states '*Oja*' as *Mala* of *Shukradhatu*.^[19]

Characteristics of *Shukradhatu Sara* Individuals

Individuals having excellence of *Shukradhatu* are characterized by mild looking, pleasant look; their eyes are as if filled by milk, always happy, their teeth are set equally, are unctuous, look round, close to each other; their voice and color is pleasant. Their pelvic region is broad and they are daring to females. They enjoy females. They are very attractive, strong and healthy; enjoy progeny, wealth, power and status. Women love such individuals; they are strong & endowed with happiness, power, honor & children. These individuals have unctuous, tightly set white teeth and nails. They have strong desires and fertile.^[20]

Symptoms of *Shukradhatu* Disorders

Shukra vriddhi laxanas (symptoms of increased *Shukra dhatu*)

1. Increased desire for sex^[21]
2. Hardening of semen^{[22],[23]}
3. Excessive semen flow with increased prostatic secretions but low sperm content
4. Premature ejaculation
5. Premature Orgasm

Shukra kshaya Laxanas (Symptoms of decreased *Shukra dhatu*)

1. Dry mouth^[24]
2. Body ache^[24]

3. Exhaustion^[24]
4. Impotency^[24]
5. Difficulty in ejaculation of semen
6. Pain in testes and penis^[25]
7. Burning sensations in testes and penis^[26]
8. Ejaculating little quantity of semen after painful coitus.

Effect of *Rasayan* and *Vajikaran* on *Shukra Dhatu* & on Health

Rasayana Chikitsa of Ayurveda is in vogue since antiquity. The specific actions of *Rasayana* drugs (*Ashwagandha*, *Shatawari*, *Shilajit* etc.) in the *Poshaka Rasa* level (nutrient supplement), *Agni* level (metabolic appreciation) and *Srotas* level (tissue nourishment) are well acceptable. Some *Rasayana* Drugs may act directly on specific *Dhatu*s, e.g. *Vrishya*, *Balya* drugs directly acts on *Shukra Dhatu* and results in the production of *Shukra*. Good numbers of *Rasayana* drugs have shown immunomodulatory activity to boost up or restore functional immunity in response to defense mechanism. The *Rasayana* drugs have also shown tissue and disease specific immunomodulatory activity. These *Rasayana* drugs not only play a role in immunity but also exhibits its anti-stress, inotropic and antioxidant activity which helps in the quality-of-life (QOL) improvement as observed in patients.^[27]

Ashtang Ayurveda honors *Shukra* as the supreme body tissue because of its generative property. Therefore, for intimate satisfaction and for better progeny the *Dhatu* should be in good state. *Vajikaran tantra* is that branch of *Ashtang Ayurveda* that is concerned with all types of physical, and psychological sexual problems like impotence, libido, poor erection and early ejaculation in the males as well as sterility and frigidity in the females. The *Vajikaran* drugs (*Aswagandha*, *Kawach*, *Shatawari* etc.) help in giving strength and vigour to the *Dhatu* thus strengthening the reproductive potentiality.

DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

Human being has seven *Dhatu*s and it is made up of various microscopic cells. Despite the fact that all these *Dhatu*s have their exact locations in the body but they are present in subtle form in every cell. One cannot confine *Shukra Dhatu* to reproductive system in males, because *Shukra* is a *Dhatu* which is vital for sustenance of body and it provides nutrition for next factor, i.e. *Ojas*.

Shukra is the *Dhatu* which is best among all seven *Dhatu*. Etiology of this word itself explains the importance of this *Dhatu*. This *Dhatu* is pure, excellent part of all *Dhatu*. *Shukra* is the word originated from *Shucha Dhatu*, which means white, pure and excellent. Synonyms of *Shukradhatu* are *Tej*, *Ret*, *Bijam*, *Virayam*, and *Indriyam*. *Shukradhatu* is present in entire part of the body. Principle organ of *Shukravaha Srotas* is testis & penis. *Shukradhatu* which is located in entire body is

expressed when he gets sexual desire. As *ghee* is in hidden form and has to be extracted by some means; *Shukra* of human is in hidden form in entire body and has to be extruded by sexual desires. *Shukradhatu* is an important entity because it takes part in fertilization & produces the same species. By the union of *Shukra* & *Shonita* new zygote is formed. It is essential factor in the reproduction.

As every *Dhatu* is located in entire part of the body, *Shukradhatu* is also occupies the whole body. When person gets excited because of sexual urge, determination & amorous mental attitude, the semen comes out from entire body through pores to testical. This ejaculation of semen takes place because of heat that is produced during the physical exercise involved at the time of sexual intercourse. This heat causes melting of semen. The individuals having the excellence of *Shukradhatu* enjoy with all qualities described in characteristics of *Shukrasara*. They never face the problem of *Shukradusti* (pathology of *Shukradhatu*). *Shukraasara* (not having excellence of *Shukradhatu*) persons are prone to develop the infertility. These persons should be treated with the *Rasayana* and *Vajikarana Chikitsa* (Rejuvenation).

It is an important entity because it directly takes part in reproduction. Deficiency or vitiation of *Shukradhatu* directly affect on the reproduction hence vitiation of *Shukradhatu* should be avoided. In the society most of person with abnormal *Shukradhatu* are observed as discourage, because in such patients function of *Shukradhatu* is not properly carried out. The measure of *Shukradhatu* is half *Anjali* so it should be maintained with proper diet. Pure *Shukra dhatu* is soft, slimy & liquid in nature. Smell of this *Dhatu* is like honey. It is also non-irritant. The Individuals having excellence of *Shukradhatu* are popular in women & they have good physical & sexual strength. These persons are endowed with happiness, health, wealth, honour & progeny. It is pure *Dhatu* hence; it does not have any waste product. Therefore, it is important entity for the sustenance, nourishment & especially for reproduction. *Shukradhatu* is the end product of *Dhatu parinamana* (formation of *Dhatu*), so it is considered as an Essence of all *Dhatu*s. Hence, its proportion in the body has to be maintained within normal limits to keep body and mind in healthy state by consuming nutritious foods and practicing healthy sexual life.

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