



Role of *Agni* in maintenance of Health and disease process: Ayurveda Perspective

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Abstract

According to Ayurveda, Agni is critically important to our overall health. Agni is the force of intelligence within each cell, each tissue, and every system within the body. Agni is responsible for the digestion, absorption, and assimilation of ingested food, all of which are necessary for survival. According to Ayurveda, Dehagni is what makes things like life, appearance, vitality, health, sustenance, shine, oja, teja (energy), and prana possible (life energy). When Agni stops working, a person dies; when it's working normally, a person is completely healthy and may expect to live a long, happy, and healthy life. These are just a few of the many things that Acharya Charak has said on the significance of Agni. However, if a person's Agni is vitiated, his whole metabolic process would be thrown off, leading to illness and disease. Agni is called the "mool" (the foundation) of all life. Hence, attempt has been made to highlight the role of Agni in health and disease process in human beings.

Key words: *Agni, Ayurveda, digestion, life, disease*

Introduction

A healthy mind in a healthy body is the principle aim guiding all the prevailing systems of medicine. Acharya Sushruta states that the sign of a healthy body is the proper combination of Dosh, Agni, Dhatu and Mala with their proper role in the body system. Among these four, Agni is most essential in the chain of development and has the capacity to digest and transform. Various metabolic activities of our body depend on the status of Agni in our body.

In light of the teachings of Charak and Shushrut, the cells in the body may be classified as dhatu paramanus. Without a steady supply of biological energy, the body's incessant operations would grind to a halt, making it impossible for us to live. Thus, Agni plays vital role in samya dhatu nirman and hence necessary for maintenance of health. There are two forms of the biological energy delivered by Agni to the cells (dhatu paramanu) of our body: potential and kinetic. So the making and breaking of our whole body depends on only these Agni

***Agni*- types and functions**



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Fire, or Agni, is always included in the Paka ritual (digestion, transformation). Agni is responsible for the necessary metabolic processes of breaking down and assimilating the food we eat. Though our classics provide a variety of evidence suggesting Pitta is identical to Agni, there is still room for skepticism. As Agni may be found in every single one of the body's paramanus, its sheer quantity is unfathomable. However, several traditional Ayurvedic scriptures provide different counts of Agni.

- It has been said by Charaka that there are 13 Agnis. One Jatharagni, five Bhutagnis, and seven Dhatvagnis (Ch.Chi.15:38).
- Five distinct kinds of Agnis are depicted in the writings of Acharya Sushruta. They are the Pachakagni, Ranjakagni, Alochakagni, Sadhakagni, and Bhrajakagni. The short explanation of the process of food transformation, however, has an underlying allusion to five Bhutagnis. (Sh. Su.21/10.)
- There are many varieties of Agni, and Vagbhata has described them all. There are the five Bhutagnis, the seven Dhatvagnis, the three Dhoshagni, and the three Malagni.
- It is just the pittas (Pachak, Bhrajak, Ranjak, Alochaka, and Sadhak) that Sharangadhara has identified (Sha.Sa.Pu.Kh.- 5/32).

I. Jatharagni

Jatharagni is the Agni or bioenergy found in the Jathara (stomach and duodenum) (stomach and duodenum). According to Ashtanga Hridaya, Jatharagni, the seat is grahani (duodenum), so named because it withholds the food for a specific duration within the Amasaya (stomach) to aid digestion. According to Dhanvantari, this is the "Pittadhara" Kala, which is located at the beginning of the Pakvashaya (intestine) and functions as a lock on the door of the dietary passageway or channel. Life expectancy, good health, bravery, ojas (the dhatu essence), and the power of all the bhutagni and dhatvagni are all within its purview. The strength of the grahani is from Agni itself, and the power of Agni comes from grahani. Agni vitiation leads to grahani vitiation, which in turn leads to sickness (As.Hr.Sha.3/50-54). Because all food consumed initially makes its way to the Jathara, where it is acted upon by Jatharagni, it is regarded as the most crucial digestive fire. In order for the body's various tissues and organs to benefit from the nutrients provided by food, Jatharagni must break it down and change the five-element foodstuffs (tissues). According to the As.Hr.Su-12/8, Jatharagni is also in charge of breaking down our food into its essence (Prasad) and its waste products (kitta).

Tissue metabolism, or the Dhatu-Paka process, is the ultimate form of cellular metabolism, and it is inextricably linked to Jatharagni. The regular, healthy condition of Jatharagni is essential to all other Dhatvagni. If the Jatharagni is hyperactive (Tikshna) or hypoactive (Manda), it will produce an excessive or retarded activity of the Dhatvagni. Such erratic behavior inevitably results in a wide range of diseases and conditions. The function of the other 12 Agnis is regulated by Jatharagni, the most



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significant of the Agnis. (Cha. Chi. 15/39-40) The well-being of all the Agnis is contingent on that of Jatharagni.

According to how well it digest food in humans, Jatharagni are categorized into four types:

- a) **Samagni:** The Samagni is capable of timely digestion and assimilation of meals. As a result, the quality of the Dhatus produced is enhanced (supportive tissues of the body). People with Samagni never get sick or feel unwell.
- b) **Vishamagni:** This varying Agni may both swiftly and slowly break down food. A variety of udargataroga emerge when Vata Dosha interacts with this Agni.
- c) **Tikshnagni:** It's all variations on the theme of "extremely rapid" or "very sharp" or "very speedy," but "Tikshnagni" is the most common. Regardless of the kind of food consumed, rapid digestion occurs in the condition of tikshnagni. According to Acharya Shushrut, a boost in digestive capacity causes meals to be digested rapidly, leading to hunger. Dryness and a burning feeling may be felt in the throat, mouth, and lips when food is processed. According to Ayurveda, this is called Bhasmak Roga.
- d) **Mandagni:** A "mand" is a slow person. The term "Mandagni" refers to one's inability to digest food quickly. Patients with Mandagni have very reduced appetites and digestive capacities. Agni, according to Dhanvantri, takes the longest to digest food and produces the fewest digestive byproducts.

II. *Bhutagni*

Bhutagni is an elemental substance (Bhutas). Each of the five elements—Earth (Parthiva), Water (Apya), Fire (Tejas), Air (Vayu), and Space (Nabhasa)—is inhabited by one of the Agnis (akash). All human cells are built from the five mahabhutas. These five Bhutagni are naturally found in every cell (dhatu paramanu). The same five elements, each with their own Agni or bioenergies, make up all the food we consume on our planet. In this way, the five elements and their Bhutagni in our cells and all the external nutrients we take in to sustain our bodies are identical. According to Acharya Charak, each of the five Bhutagni is responsible for breaking down a different set of elements in the food they eat. Food is digested by the Bhutagni, and the byproducts are materials with constituents and properties comparable to each bhuta, which feed the corresponding bhautika elements of the body (Cha. Chi. 15/13, 14). These Bhutagnis, which follow the Jatharagni found in the stomach and duodenum, work to break down food further. From a contemporary physiological viewpoint, Jatharagni's function is analogous to that of the stomach and duodenum, whereas Bhutagni's is to that of the liver in terms of the conversion of digested materials.

III. *Dhatvagni*

All the seven Dhatus (seven element tissues of the body) contain their own Agni to metabolize the nutrient materials supplied to them through their own Srotas.



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- i. Rasagni present in the Rasa Dhatu.
- ii. Raktagni present in the Rakta Dhatu.
- iii. Mamsagni present in the Mamsa Dhatu.
- iv. Medagni present in the Meda Dhatu.
- v. Asthyagni present in the Asthi Dhatu.
- vi. Majjagni present in the Majja Dhatu.
- vii. Shukragni present in the Shukra Dhatu.

The bioenergy, or Dhatvagni, in each Dhatu is responsible for synthesizing the Rasa Dhatu needed for that Dhatu or cell from the Anna Rasa, or essence, of the food we eat. For each Dhatu, there is a corresponding Dhatvagni that can synthesis and convert the necessary components. This is a kind of arbitrary discrimination.

Agni dushti

The strength of agni is definitely influenced when its qualities are quieted by a unhealthy dietary practices, unhealthy lifestyle, emotional disturbances and weather changes.

Signs of *agni dushti*

- Low energy, weakness, or fatigue
- Suppressed or over-active appetite
- Indigestion: gas, bloating, constipation, nausea, hyperacidity, loose stools, a sense of heaviness, feeling tired or mentally foggy after meals.
- A tendency toward congestion in the sinuses, the lymph, or even the mind.
- Emotional disturbances, with an increased tendency toward fear, anxiety, anger, confusion, lethargy, or depression.

Agni dushti leads to impaired digestive process resulting in the formation of ama, accumulation of wastes, the vitiation of the doshas (vata, pitta, and kapha), and the stagnation of emotions, which are inevitably capable of disrupting health and well-being of an individual.

Conclusion

After a careful examination it becomes clear that agni performs a vast range of functions at physiological and pathological levels. When agni is balanced, it tends to support strong immunity, and a long, healthy life. Faulty agni status may result in accumulation of doshas (morbid matters) and finally precipitate in the form of disease. Ayurveda emphasizes that most of the diseases are the byproduct of *agnidushti* that is why the main principle of treatment of all diseases in Ayurveda is to restore and strengthen the agni (digestive and metabolic fire).



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