



## RELATION BETWEEN PACHKAGNI AND PACHAKA PITTA IN PURVIEW OF DIGESTION AND METABOLISM

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### ABSTRACT

*PachakPitta* and *Pachkagni* are two basic components of Digestive system which work synergistically for metabolism. The process of digestion is ascribed to *Pachkagni* while secretions mediating the process (digestive juices and hormones) are ascribed to *PachakPitta*. The *pachakapitta* is produced from the *pittadharakala* by the stimulation of *samanavata*, *pittadharakala* also known as *grahani*. In *samhitas*, *Acharyas* have mentioned various synonyms to the *pachakapitta* in the context of metabolism like *Pachakagni*, *Koshthagani*, *Kayagni*, *Jataragni*. It not only includes chemical agencies responsible for *Aaharapacana* in the *Kostha* (gastrointestinal) which leads to separation of *Sarabhaga* (Nutrient fraction) of *Aahar* (food) from the *Kittabhaga* (the indigestible residue of the food) but also metabolic events – energy, synthesis and maintenance of metabolism. Different comments have been given regarding *Pachkagni* & *Pachakapitta* like *Sushruta* has said that the direct action of *Pachkagni* and *Pitta* can be seen through *Dahana - Pachana* and through *Anumaana pramaana*.

**KEYWORDS** : *Pachakagni*, *Sarabhaga*, *Bhutagni*, *Pachaka Pitta*, *Doshas*

### INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda has described digestion and metabolism on the basis of its basic principles *Dosha* and *Agni*. Among these, *Agni* is the most important factor for digestion and metabolism as the *Ahara* (diet) which we ingest, is digested, absorbed and assimilated by *Agni* for the maintenance of body and energy purpose. The concept of *Agni* gives us basic knowledge to understand theories of ayurvedic physiology viz. *Ahara pachana*, *dhatu* and *updhatu utpatti*, *vyadhi utpatiti*, metabolic transformation etc. Different type of *Agni* plays their role at different level of digestion. After ingestion of food *Pachakagni* is the first to come in action which is situated inside the *Pitta* and does *Shubha* and *Ashubha kriyas*<sup>[1]</sup> according to its *Kupita* & *Akupita Avastha* and digests and converts to a form which can get absorbed. After this *Bhutagnis* act on their respective *bhautic* portion of the food and thereby nourishes the respective *pancha bhutas* in body. At the end *Dhatwagni* play its role. Seven *Dhatwagni's* act on their respective dhatus to form dhatu, upadhatu and their mala. *Pachakagni* has manifold functions like *Pachana* of the *Anna*, visualizing things with the help of eyes, maintenance of the body temperature, understanding many feelings such as *Shaurya*, *Bhaya*, *Krodha*, *Harsha*, *Moha*, *Dukh*, *Sukh*<sup>[2]</sup> etc. *Pachakagni* converts food to energy which is required to perform vital functions, so *ayurveda* considers *Pachakagni* as cause of life complexion strength, health nourishment Luster of *teja* and *prana* (life)<sup>[3]</sup>.

Among the three *doshas*<sup>[4]</sup> *Vata*, *Pitta*, *Kapha*; *Pitta dosha* is responsible for the conversion of food into heat, tissues and waste materials. It governs digestion and metabolism from the cellular level to the tissue level, to that of the body as a whole. If we observe the specific functions mentioned to the types of *pitta*; the digestion and metabolism of the food, is refers to the sub type of *pitta* that is *Pachaka pitta*<sup>[5]</sup>. The health of an individual is dependent on the proper functioning of the *pachakapitta*. The impairment of *pachakapitta* disturbs the integrity of the *grahani* and vice versa.

The *pachakapitta* is responsible for the digestion of the food in *annavaha srotas*. There is *adharadheyabhava* + *asrayasrayeebhava* between the *pachakapitta* and *pittadharakala grahani*. The concept of *Pachkagni* in Ayurveda which refers to the manifold functions ascribed to *Pitta* is at once comprehensive.

### REVIEW & DISCUSSION

Relation between *Pachkagni* and *Pachakapitta* can be summarized in two groups.

1. General and Physiological description of *Pachkagni* and *Pachakapitta*.
2. Relation between *Pachakagni* and *Pachakapitta* with reference to Digestion & Metabolism.

#### General & Physiological description of *Pachakagni* and *Pachakapitta*

*Agni* is a Sanskrit word, derived from "Ang" *dhatu* means everywhere present or *Aag. dhatu* means motion, thus its meaning become, it is present everywhere or it is in motion. In *shabdikalpdrum*<sup>[6]</sup>, there are 61 synonyms compiled which help in explaining nature and function of *Agni* e.g. *Vaishyanara*, *Tanoonpat*, *Sarvapak* etc. *Agni* is present in *dhatu*, *updhatu*, *malas*, *sira*, *manspesi* even in the *paramanu* in the body. The number of *Agni* varies in different ayurvedic texts. *Charak* has mentioned 13 *Agni* in three groups. *Jathragni-1*, *Bhutagni-5*, *Dhatwagni-7* (cha.chi 15/38)<sup>[7]</sup>. In description of type of *Pitta* *Acharaya Shushruta* mentions *Pita* with special reference to *Agni* as *Pachakagni*, *Ranjakagni*, *Alochakagni*, *Sadhakagni* and *Bhrajakagni*. The seat of *Pachakagni* is *Ampakyashya madhyasthan* (between the *Amashaya* and *Pakvashaya*) which means organ which comes between *Amashaya* and *Pakvashaya* is *Grahani* i.e. *Pittadharakala*. *Grahani* is the seat of *Jathragni* or *Pachkagni*, because it withholds food for a certain time, to facilitate the digestion or metabolism as it is responsible to life span, health, color, *ojas*, strength of all *bhutagni* and *dhatvagni*. The strength of *grahani* and *agni* is mutually interlinked with each other. If one gets vitiated another also gets vitiated and produces diseases. *Pachakagni* is the pradhan of all *agni* is: - *Bhutagnis* and *Dhatavagnis*. If *Pachakagni* gets *vridhi*, other *Agni* get increased and of *Kshay* of the *Pachakagni* occurs, others also get *Kshay*. When *Agni* becomes *shaant*, causes death of the person. If *Pachakagni* is working normally, the person remains *nirogi* and healthy but if *Pachakagni* is not disturbed, the person becomes unhealthy.

In Ayurveda, *Pitta* has been described as *Agni* (fire) since it performs

fire-like actions i.e. *Paka*, which refers to *Pacana* (Digestion); *Dahana* (Burning) including *Bhinna Samghata* (splitting), *Tapana* (Heat production) *Parinamana* (Conversion), *Paravritti* (Transformation) *Prakasana* (Illumination), *Ranjana* or *Varnakara* (Colouration) and *Prabhakara* (to cause luster). Chakrapani has said that the term "*Pittantargata*" does not mean that the *Pitta* of the body is flaming fire and it only refers to the phenomenon of heat which is associated with fire. By implication, heat is seen to be associated with the function of *Pitta*. The concept of *Agni* of Ayurveda, which refers to the manifold functions ascribed to *Pitta* is at once comprehensive. It not only includes chemical agencies responsible for *Aaharapacana*<sup>[8]</sup> in the *Kostha* (corresponding to gastro-intestinal digestion), which leads to separation of *Sarabhaga* (Nutrient fraction) of the *Aahara* from the *Kittabhaga* (the indigestible or undigested residue of the food) but also metabolic events, energy, synthesis and maintenance of metabolism. According to Sushruta *pitta* which is located in an area between *Amasaya* and *Pakvasaya*, is responsible for the digestion of four kinds of food ingested by living beings and the elimination of the residue in the form of urine and faeces after the completion of the process. Located in its own place (between *Amasaya* and *Pakvasaya*) it contributes to and augments the functions of other locations of *pittas*, in the performance of actions. This *pitta*, is therefore, spoken of as "*Pachakagni*". In addition, it is seen to comprehend photo and chemo synthetic processes, *Pachakapitta* known variously as *Jathragni*, *Kosthagni*, *Antaragni*, *Pachakagni*, *Dehagni* etc., while being located in its own place in an area between *Amasaya* and *Pakvasaya*. Directly participates in the digestion of food and at the same time, leads support to and augments the functions of the remaining *pittas*, present elsewhere in the body.

### **Pachakagni and Pachakapitta**

The discussion on *Pachakagni* cannot be completed without comparative discussion with *Pachakapitta*. As we see the properties and functions of *Pachakagni* and *Pachakapitta*, it seems similar to each other. There is no area exist of *Pachakagni* without *Pachakapitta*, because there is increased digestion and combustion in the body due to *Ushna guna* of *Pachakapitta*, the treatment of *Pachakagni* is also using *Aahara & Vihara* opposite to *Pachakapitta* (su.su.21/9)<sup>[9]</sup>. *Caraka* has said that it is only *Pachakagni* which is located in *Pachakapitta*, that gives rise to beneficial or adverse consequences as it is in normal or abnormal state of functioning. Acharya *Sushruta* has said that *Pachakapitta* is the same as *Pachakagni*, since it performs *Dahana* (Burning or oxidation), *Pacana* (Digestion) and similar actions as performed by fire, hence *Pitta* is known as *Antaragni*. Acharya *Maarich* has also emphasized that *Pachakagni* present in the *Pachakapitta* give good or bad result when it is normal (ch.su.15/3)<sup>[10]</sup>.

### **Conclusion**

After a detailed discussion of *Pachakagni* and *Pachakapitta*. It has been observed that, all the theory regarding *Pachakapitta* and *Pachakagni* has its own important and it is very difficult to conclude on a single point. Acharya *shushruta* has used term *Pachakagni* in the context of *Pachakapitta*. But what conclusion that can be drawn is *Pachakagni* and *Pachakapitta* are same as per the treatment is concern, but differ at other point. *Pachakagni* is inside the *Pachakapitta*. That is *Pachakagni* reside in *Pachakapitta*, but *Pachakagni* is not exactly *Pachakapitta*. There are several places where *Pachakapitta* and *Pachakagni* entirely differs to each other. Acharya *charak* has mentioned, various type of food which we ingest is digested by its own *Agni* (*Bhutagni*) which is activated and enhanced by *Jathragni*, further it is metabolized by *Dhatawagni* to provide body strength complexion and happy life & energy.

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