



Review Article

CONCEPT OF DRISHTI IN ACCORDANCE WITH MODERN OPHTHALMOLOGY: A REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

Eyes are the most important sense organ in our body. There are six Netra Patalas told in Ayurvedic classics which can be anatomically correlated with different layers of eyes as explained in modern ophthalmology. Our ancient Acharyas have explained Netra Rachna Sharir in a beautiful descriptive manner, still there is need of exploring the terminologies for proper understanding of pathogenesis of Netra Rogas and their treatments so that implementation of Ayurvedic concepts can be done in eradication of Drishtigata Rogas in a fruitful manner to serve the humanity.

Keywords: Rachna sharir, Drishtigata roga, Netra patala, Drishti

INTRODUCTION

Shalakya tantra is an important branch of Ayurveda which deals with the diseases manifesting above clavicular region. Acharya sushruta has devoted twenty six chapters of Uttar tantra to shalakya tantra and in its two third part netra rogas and their management have been described. Detailed classification of eye diseases by ancient Acharyas reflects the importance of ophthalmology since ancient time. Eye is perhaps the only organ in the body whose anatomy, diseases along with their treatment has been illustrated vividly and systematically in Ayurvedic literature. Drishti is an important part of eye. It has been used at different places with different meanings which are described below.

Drishti- The word “drishti” is derived from the root “drish” by adding the “ktin” pratyaya. The literary meaning of the drishti is the process by which we see. Different Acharyas have different viewpoints regarding meaning of drishti which are as follows:

1. Drishti mandala (pupil)
2. Drishti mani (crystalline lens)
3. Drishti (retina)
4. Drishti (vision)

Drishti mandala: Acharya Sushruta has described five Mandala's in the eye out of which innermost one is Drishti mandala¹. Drishti mandala is said to be situated just next to Krishna mandala.

As per modern ophthalmology the eyeball comprises three coats²:

Outer (Fibrous coat): anterior 1/6th cornea and posterior 5/6th sclera

Middle (vascular coat): iris, ciliary body, choroid

Inner (nervous coat): retina

Also according to modern ophthalmology as we go anteroposteriorly, the structure next to cornea is pupil.

Pramana of Drishti Mandala: Size of drishti as per some acharyas³ is 1/7th of Krishna mandala. At some places it is written 1/9th of Krishna mandala⁴. This is in accordance with the fact that pupil is reactive to light and always keep constricting and dilating physiologically. In other words pupil size is not constant throughout a day. Moreover, drishti is vivarakriti⁵ which means like a hole or like a shutter of camera, this supports that drishti is pupil.

Drishti mani: Intraocular crystalline lens placed in posterior chamber of eye.

As per Sushruta drishti is masoordal tulya⁵ (similar to cotyledons of pulses in shape), which is biconvex in shape. It supports the fact that Drishti is lens as lens is biconvex⁶ in shape.

Drishti: vision or power to see things.

Acharya Sushruta has explained that adhimantha destroys the drishti if not treated well in time⁷. From this fact it can be deduced that drishti is the power to see things.

Drishti: retina, optic nerve,

Some drishtigata rogas like pitta vidagdha drishti, shleshma vidagdha drishti can only be explained if drishti word is taken as retina or optic nerve.

According to Sushruta, there are 6 Patalas⁸ in the eyeball.

Vartma Patalas - 2

Akshi Patalas - 4

Timir is a drishtigata roga which occurs in the inner four patalas of the eye⁸. The pathogenesis of Drishtigata Rogas has been described in terms of involvement of successive Patalas. The prognosis of the disease also depends upon the involvement of respective Patala. Sushruta considers different Akshi Patalas and their constituting factors as shown below.

Name	Constituting factor
1 st Patala	Tejas + Jala (Tejojala Raktashrita – Dalhana)
2 nd Patala	Mamsa (Pishita or Mamsashrita)
3 rd Patala	Medas (Medoashrita)
4 th Patala	Asthi (Asthyashrita)

According to some scholars, the Prathama Patala can be taken as cornea and aqueous humour; as they are the seat of Tejas and Jala. The 2nd Patala, which is Mamsashrita, can be taken as iris and ciliary body. Both iris and ciliary body are mesodermal in origin and contain muscle tissue. The 3rd Patala or Medoashrita Patala can be taken as Vitreous humour, as vitreous is a jelly like structure which resembles fat. The 4th Patala or Asthyashrita Patala can be taken as lens, as it is the seat for Linganaasha.

Their opinion can be summarized as follows:

Name	Anatomical Structure
1 st Patala	Cornea and Aqueous humour
2 nd Patala	Iris, Ciliary body and choroid
3 rd Patala	Vitreous humour
4 th Patala	Retina / Lens

CONCLUSION

The word Drishti has got several meanings in context of Netra rogas. It has to be understood what it implies in relation to where the word drishti is being used. As explained above, in context of anatomy it should be referred as pupil, in context of kanch, timir, linganaash (drishtigata rogas) it should be considered as intraocular lens whereas in pitta vidagdha drishti, shleshma vidagdha drishti etc. drishtigata rogas it must be taken as optic nerve or retina as a whole. To treat any disease one should have thorough knowledge of terminologies used in ancient texts and their multiple meanings. From the above references the concept of drishti has been explained in detail to serve the mankind with the ancient life science principles.

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