

Role Of *Agni* In Ocular Physiology And Pathology

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Abstract: The human eye translates light stimuli into visual information, enabling comprehension of external world. According to Ayurvedic physiology, *Agni* - the elemental principle of fire, heat, and light- has a crucial role in vision. This study explores the structural and functional association between *Tej Mahabhoota*, and ocular physiology and pathologies, as described by classical Ayurvedic texts. The *Agni Mahabhoota* is predominant component in vascular structures of eye, supporting visual function through *Alochaka Pitta*. The *Drishti*- functional unit of vision- is enriched by *Avyaya Tej*, reflecting the integral role of agni in visual perception. *Tejojalashrit* layer among the ocular *Patalas* underscores the structural dependence of the eye on *Tej*. Disturbances in *Agni* balance, particularly due to increased vitiated *Kapha* & *kleda*

(associated with *Jala Mahabhoota*) which further affects the *Rakta* contributes to ocular pathology. This manifests into increased srava in *urdhwajatrugat* region, particularly in eyes leading to *Abhishyanda*. When this pathology exaggerates, generates *Adhimantha* and other eye diseases. Therapeutic measures like *Anjana Karma* and *Langhana* restore *Agni* equilibrium and prevent disease progression. The findings emphasize that maintaining the functional integrity of *Agni* is fundamental to preserving ocular health and preventing degenerative visual disorders within Ayurvedic framework.

Keywords: Agni, Ayurved, ocular physiology, ocular pathology, Tej, Alochak pitta, Drushti, Tejojalashrit patal.

Introduction: Eye is a vital organ which translates our surroundings into visual information and makes the world comprehensible to human brain. Anything is visible when light falls on it. Light is one of the forms of *Tej mahabhoot* which is an element of fire, heat and light. It has a pivotal role in function of eye. Hence status of *Agni (Tej) Mahabhoota* in the body becomes very crucial for proper functioning of eye.

Aim: To study the role of *Agni* in the structure and function of the eye and its involvement in the pathogenesis of ocular diseases as described in Ayurvedic texts.

Objectives:

1. To analyze the contribution of *Tej Mahabhoota* in ocular anatomy and physiology.
2. To study the role of *Alochaka Pitta* in visual function.
3. To understand the Ayurvedic pathogenesis of *Abhishyanda* and *Adhimantha* with reference to *Agnidushti*.
4. To establish the importance of *Agni*-maintaining measures in the prevention of eye diseases.

Material and Methods:

This study is a **conceptual and literary research** based on classical Ayurvedic texts and their commentaries

Materials

- Bruhatrayi:
 - Sushruta Samhita
 - Charaka Samhita
 - Ashtanga Hridaya

- Relevant commentaries such as Dalhana and Arunadatta
- Published Ayurvedic literature and review articles related to *Netra Roga and Agni*

Methods

- Critical analysis and compilation of references related to *Tej Mahabhoota, Agni, Alochaka Pitta, Drishti, Patalas, Abhishyanda, and Adhimantha*
- Logical interpretation of classical verses
- Correlation of pathological sequences described in Ayurveda

Observation & Results:

1. *Tej Mahabhoot* and eye function: All 5 elements (*Prithvi, Aap, Tej, Vayu & Aakash*) play various roles in structure and function of the body. Out of these *Agni mahabhoot* plays a key role in visual function of eye i.e. *Chakshurendriya*.

तेजश्चक्षुषि^{1,2}

2. *Tej Mahabhoot* and eye structure: Acharya Sushrut has explained about the contribution of 5 *mahabhootas* in forming the structure of the eye.³ The Vascular parts of the eye are primarily made of *Agni Mahabhoot*.

अमितो रक्तमिति अग्निगुणाद्रक्तं पित्तरूपं

3. *Alochak pitta* and eye: *pitta* embodies the *agni mahabhoot* inside the human body. In the eye it acts in the form of *Alochak pitta*

and helps in visualizing things. *Drushtistho agni* helps for vision
यदृष्ट्यां पित्तं तस्मिन्नालोचकोऽग्निरिति स
ञ्जा 4

4. *Drushti* and *Tej*. *Drushti* as described by Achary Sushrut is the functional unit of the eye which is enriched by *avyay* (everlasting) *tej*.⁵

इन्द्रां तेजोभिरव्ययैरिति; एतेन तेजोमयी दृष्टिः

त्युक्तम्

5. *Bahya patal* of eye and *tej*: Achary Sushrut has described *patalas*⁶ which are functional layers of eye namely *tejojalashrit*, *pishitashrit*, *medashrit* and *asthyashrit* which are responsible for visual function and lead to low vision if vitiated. Out of these the outermost *patal* is formed of *tej* situated in the *siragat rakt* and *jala* from *rasa dhatu*. The *Rakta* inside the *siras* gives a seat to the *alochak tej* which contributes to formation of *bahya tejojalashrit patal*.

तेजःशब्देनालोचकतेजःसमाश्रयं सिरागतं रक्तं

6. *Kapha* has *Jala* Dominance. Its antagonistic to *Tej* and adversely affects vision and causes *Agnidushti*. Early ocular disorders originate from *Agnidushti* leading to *Kleda* formation and *Dosha* vitiation. This leads to *Abhishyanda* which affects all parts of the eye and acts as the root cause of other eye diseases. When neglected it may cause *Adhimantha*

Discussion: In essence *agni* has a very crucial role in structure and function of eye. That's the reason why the increased or vitiated *kapha* (which has properties of *jala mahabhoot*) & acts against *agni mahabhoot*) poses a threat to the eye.⁷

चक्षुस्तेजोमयं तस्य विशेषाच्छलेष्मतो भयम्

ततः श्लेष्महरं कर्म हितं दृष्टेः प्रसादनम्॥१६॥

Hence for its discharge from the eye *anjan karma* is included in routine practice for preventing eye diseases.⁸ This also clarifies the reason behind prescribing *langhan* (therapeutic fasting)⁹ in early phases of eye diseases,¹⁰ as *langhan* reduces the vitiated *doshas* and enhances the power of *agni*.¹¹

When the power of *agni* reduces, due to the *jala agni* imbalance the malformed *jala* or *kleda* increases in the body. If the patient continues with the food intake and activities mentioned in the *hetu of netrarog*¹², the vitiated *doshas* along with the *kleda*¹³, vitiate *rakta dhatu* and enter the organs above the clavicle through the *siras*.^{14,15} They collectively cause excess and abnormal production of discharge in the *urdhwa jatrugat* region.¹⁶ This condition is called as *abhishyanda*.¹⁷ Since the whole *urdhwa jatrugat* region is involved, all parts of the eye -*sarv*-are affected. That's why though it presents primarily as discharge from the eyes, *abhishyanda* exhibits signs and symptoms affecting all parts of the eye. It can also become root cause of all the other eye diseases. When this condition is ignored it may cause *vat udrek*, leading to a painful condition called as *adhimantha*.¹⁸ Initial *agnidushti* due to *hetusevan* ultimately lands into ocular pathology. Thus the whole cascade of pathology of *adhimantha* and other eye diseases is originating from

decrease in power and function of *agni*. [Figure no.1]

Conclusions:

Agni (*Tej Mahabhoota*) plays a fundamental role in the structure, function, and integrity of the eye. Disturbance of *Agni* initiates a cascade of pathological events leading to ocular disorders such as *Abhishyanda* and *Adhimantha*. Maintenance of *Agni* through appropriate diet, lifestyle, and therapeutic interventions is essential for prevention and management of eye diseases. Strengthening *Agni* remains the cornerstone of ocular health in Ayurveda.

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Table and Figures

Figure no. 1

