



AN OUTLOOK OF DETERMINATION OF RASAVAHASROTAS

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ABSTRACT:

Concept of *Srotas* is one among many unique concepts of Ayurveda. Ayurveda defines health as the equilibrium of *Dosha*, *Dhatu* and *Mala* which is depended on the proper functioning of *Srotas*. Functional & Structural Integrity of this system maintains the physiological status of the Body. There is different of opinion regarding numbers of *Srotas* in the body between *Charaka Samhita* and *Sushruta Samhita* but both have described *Rasavaha Srotas* prior to other *Dhatuvaha Srotas*, that shows its importance. The function of *Rasa* is *Prinana* of entire body which is possible only with the normalcy of *Rasavaha Srotas*. This function is important to maintain physiology of all the body tissue because if it doesn't work properly, none of *Dhatu*s get proper nutrition which ultimately get results in severe illness. This is why study of *Rasavaha Srotas* is need of hour. It is very difficult to correlate the *Rasavaha Srotas* with any particular organ or system described in present day medical science. So with the aim to determine concept of *Rasavaha Srotas*, this particular work has been carried out with the help of classical description and other related available sources of information.

**Keywords:** *Rasvaha Srotas* , Ayurveda, *Srotas*

**INTRODUCTION:** *Ayurveda* has been serving the human being for more than 4000 yrs and still survives just because of its pure therapeutic knowledge. Scientific researches in the present era have proved that *Ayurvedic* medicines cure the diseases by improving the body immune system which is considered as the most scientific approach towards health. According to *Ayurvedic* philosophy human being is considered to be completely healthy only when the body constituents *Dosha*, *Dhatu* and *Mala* are in equilibrium state and *Atma*, *Man* and *Indriyas* are in pleasant state<sup>[1]</sup>. Another definition of health is the unrestricted flow of physical elements, thoughts and knowledge<sup>[2]</sup>. All the above said substances,

nutrients along with the information and intelligence are transported in and out through various physiological mechanisms by internal channel systems of the body which are known as *Srotas*<sup>[3]</sup>.

*Acharya Sushruta* was to define *Srotas*. He defines the channels originating from the cavity organ and which are other than *Sira* and *Dhamani* and extended at the whole body are called as *Srotas*<sup>[4]</sup>. According to him the channels, which are widely spread in all the spaces (intra, inter and extra- cellular spaces) of the body, where circulation and transportation of the fluid occurs continuously, are known as *Srotas*<sup>[5]</sup>. *Srotas* or channels are present in all living beings. They carry or circulate the

*Doshas* and *Dhatus* or their elements to the various organs and also remove the waste product of the body<sup>[6]</sup>. It is also through these channels that information and intelligence spontaneously flow. According to *Acharya Charaka*, the channels of circulation which carry the *Dhatus* undergoing transformation to their destination are known as *Srotas*<sup>[7]</sup>. The *Charaka Samhita* describes thirteen *Srotas*<sup>[8]</sup>. As per *Acharya Vagbhata* *Doshas* are the *Samavayi Karana* for the manifestation of diseases<sup>[9]</sup> but *Acharya Sushruta* believes that diseases manifest at the place where the aggravated *Doshas*, circulating all over the body becomes obstructed due to abnormality of the *Srotas*<sup>[10]</sup>. By knowing which *Srotas* is affected and level of its disturbance, one can understand about the etiopathology, symptomatology, prognosis as well as treatment of disease. Many efforts have been made by *Ayurvedic* scholars to compare the concept of *Srotas* with the anatomical structures described in modern literatures. Bodily system, capillaries, cell membrane, micro channels are few examples which have seen correlated with *Srotas*.

**PURPOSE:** Concept of *Srotas* is a very useful but till date unfolded concept. There is need to define and determine this concept. Keeping this view in mind, for present work, *Rasavaha Srotas* has been selected for study. Among all *Dhatuvaha Srotas*, *Rasavaha Srotas* described first that shows its importance. The function of *Rasa* is *Prinana*<sup>[11]</sup> i.e. providing nutrition to entire body which is possible only with the normalcy of *Rasavaha Srotas*. This function is important to maintain physiology of all the body tissue because if it doesn't work

properly, none of *Dhatus* get properly nourished which ultimately get resulted in severe illness. This is why study of *Rasavaha Srotas* is need of hour. Unfortunately till date there are many difference of opinion regarding *Rasa* and *Rasavaha Srotas* which created a great confusion in mind of *Ayurvedic* fraternity.

**MATERIAL:** Comprehensive review of relevant *Ayurvedic* and modern literature, previous works, journals and Internet carried out in the light of plan of study.

**CONCEPTUAL:**

**Rasa Definition**<sup>[12]</sup>: The term '*Rasa*' is derived from the verbal root '*Rasa*' meaning 'movement', since it is moving constantly it is called '*Rasa*'.

According to this derivation, any liquid element in the body which moves or flows can be treated as *Rasa*. The term '*Rasa*' also stands for any liquid element in the body, like *Rakta* (blood), lymph etc.

*Rasa-Dhatu* is the final product of the digested food. While describing its qualities it is said that *Rasa* is *Jala Mahabhoota* predominant, *Tanu* (thin), *Swachchha* (Clear or transparent), *Snigdha* (unctuous) moving substance which travels through *Dhamanis*<sup>[13]</sup>. Based on these, *Rasa* can be correlated with Plasma or Lymph.

**Rasa Savhana(circulation)**<sup>[14]</sup>: Out of the five types of *Vayu*, it is the *Vyana Vayu* which has the natural and physiological action of propelling a liquid to move quickly. It is this *Vyana Vayu* which causes simultaneous circulation of *rasa* in the entire body. This is a continuous process.

**Rasavaha Srotas** : As mentioned earlier, both the principal texts of *Ayurveda*; *Charaka Samhita* and *Sushruta Samhita*

described *Rasavaha Srotas*. As per the definition of *Srotas* from *Charaka Samhita* it can be defined as the place of transformation of *Ahararasa* to *Rasadhatu*

along with circulation of *Rasadhatu*. According to definition of *Sushruta Samhita*, it is the pathways of distribution of *Rasadhatu* in the body.

**Rasavaha Srotas Mula :**

NAME	SROTOMULA	
	Acharya Charaka <sup>[15]</sup>	Acharya Sushruta <sup>[16]</sup>
<i>Rasavaha Srotas</i>	<i>Hridaya, Dashadhamani</i>	<i>Hridaya, Rasavahidhamani</i>

**Rasavaha Srotas Dusti Nidan<sup>[17]</sup>:** *Rasavaha Srotas* gets vitiated with *Nidan* (causative factors) like *Guru* (Eating heavy foods), *Shita* (Eating leftovers or non-fresh food), *Ati Snigdha Ahara* (Oily fried food), *Atimatram* (Excessive eating), *Samashnatam* (Eating wrong combinations of food), *Chintyanam Cha Ati Chintanatham* (excessive Stress, Worries, Anxiety).

**Rasavaha Srotas Dusti Lakshna<sup>[18]</sup>:** As per *Acharya Charaka* Signs and symptoms of vitiation of *Rasavaha Srotas* are *Ashradhha* (impiety for food), *Aruchi* (loss of appetite), *Asyavairasya* (Weird taste in mouth sweet/bitter), *Arasgnata* (loss of taste), *Hrillasa* (nausea), *Gourava* (bodily heaviness), *Tandra* (drowyness), *Angamarda* (bodyche), *Jwara* (fever), *Pandutva* (Anemia), *Klaibya* (Low Libido), *Sada* (Low Agni), *Krishangata* (emaciation), *Akala Valaya Palita* (premature ageing and hair fall)etc.

**Rasavaha Srotas Vidhha Lakshna<sup>[19]</sup>:** According by *Acharya Sushruta*, the *Rasa-Vaha Srotas* are two in number and have their roots in the *Hridya* and *Rasavahi Dhamanis* (vessels). An injury to any of these ducts gives rise to *Shosha* (emaciated)

and symptoms like *Akroshana* (crying with pain), *Vinaman* (bending of body), *Mohana* (loss of consciousness), *Bhramana* (giddiness), *Vepanam* (tremors) and *Maran* (death).

**Diseases of Rasadhatu:**

Following diseases are caused by the vitiation of *Rasadhatu* i.e. *Hridroga<sup>[20]</sup>*, *Medoroga<sup>[21]</sup>*, *Prameha<sup>[22]</sup>*, *Rasagata Kushta<sup>[23]</sup>*, *Vishamajwara/Jwara<sup>[24]</sup>*, *Klaibya<sup>[25]</sup>*, *Rajayakshma<sup>[26]</sup>*, *Murcha<sup>[27]</sup>*, *Sanyasa<sup>[28]</sup>*, *Visarpa<sup>[29]</sup>*, *Pandu<sup>[30]</sup>* etc.

**Rasavaha Srotas Chikitsa Sutra<sup>[31]</sup>:** For the cure of diseases caused by the vitiation of *Rasa*, one should take recourse to fasting of all types *Langhana*.

**RASA SARA PURUSHA LAKSHANA<sup>[32]</sup>:** According to *Acharya Charaka*, individuals having the excellence of *Twak* or skin are characterized by *Snigdha*(unctuous), *Shlakshna*( smooth), *Mrudu* (soft), *Prasanna* (clear), *Sukshma*(fine), *Alpa*(less numerous), *Gambhira*, *Sukumara*, *Loma*(deep rooted and tender hair and lustrous skin). Such individuals are endowed with happiness, good fortunes, power, enjoyment, intellect, knowledge, health, excitement and longevity.

**Interpretation of Srotas according to modern science**

<i>Srotas</i>	Dr. Ghanekara <sup>[33]</sup>	Dr. Dwarakanath <sup>[34]</sup>
<i>Rasavaha</i>	Capillaries	Lymphatic channels

**DISCUSSION:** All the *Dhatu*s are stated to get nourishment from the *Rasa-Dhatu*. This *Rasa-Dhatu* is the final product of the digested food. Now the question arises as to how the *Rasa-Dhatu* moves to other *Dhatu*s to provide nourishment. The term *Rasa* also stands for any moving liquid element in the body, as the term *Rasa* is derived from the 'Rasa' 'to move' or 'to follow'. According to this derivation, any liquid element in the body which moves or flows can be considered as *Rasa*. *Rasa* represents the essence (*Tejas*) of all the six *Rasas*. *Rasa* transports throughout the body by very minute channels which are distributed extensively in the body very much similar to the fine channels and pores present in lotus stem are known as *Srotas*. According to modern medical science, internal transportation has been described earliest in modern science, because all other systems depend upon the circulation of blood. It contains circulatory and lymphatic systems. The circulatory system consists of the blood, the blood vessels and the heart. The blood contains plasma and cells. The lymphatic system is a subsidiary of the circulatory system. With parallel Ayurveda has mentioned *Rasa*, *Rakta* and *Udaka* which are contributing a major role in internal transportation.

If description of root organs i.e. *Hridaya* and *Dhamanis* is to be considered, *Rasavaha Srotas* a may be correlated with general circulatory system. Both *Rasavaha Srotas* a and circulatory system distributes nutrition to entire body. Heart (*Hridaya*) is the center part for both and arteries (*Dhamani*) are the pathways for spreading of *Rasa*. As discussed above, if *Rasa* is to be

correlated with Plasma, *Rasavaha Srotas* a may be thought as circulatory system. But still the causes of vitiation, signs & symptoms of vitiation, diseases of *Rasavaha Srotas* etc. are the points which need to be elaborated and exploration. *Srotas* is a path, through which the processed *Annarasa* is being converted into *Rasadhatu*. In respect to *Dhatuvaha Srotas* as, the *Srotas* of *Rasadhatu* can be considered as bigger and its *Mukha* is larger whereas those of the other *Dhatu*s are progressively and relatively smaller and longer. It is therefore more advisable to think that concept of *Srotas* a especially *Rasavaha Srotas* a is a unique concept which cannot be matched with any modern medical science's concept. Both the sciences have their own thinking and concepts which are not to be amalgamated.

**CONCLUSION:** *Rasadhatu* is prime substance of the body having *Prinana* (nourishing) function of the body. It can be correlated with blood plasma. *Rasavaha Srotas* has its own importance regarding growth, development and nourishment of body as well as in generation of diseases. Description of *Rasavaha Srotas* has some similarities with circulatory system but both cannot be same as diseases, causes and symptoms of vitiation cannot be correlated.

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