

A CRITICAL STUDY ON MEMORY IN AYURVEDA**¹Dr. Atul Shankar Sarokte and ²Dr. Mangalagowri V Rao***¹Lecturer, Siddhakala Ayurveda College, Sagmaner, Maharashtra.²Assistant Professor (Stage II), Department of Swasthavritta and Yoga, Faculty of Ayurveda, IMS, BHU.Article Received on
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Swasthavritta and Yoga,
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The preceptors of celestial era like Brahma, Prajapati had an excellent memory by which they were able to remember vast amount of knowledge. Ancient seers by their penance, Satvika state of mind, good code of conduct (Achara Rasayana), intake of brain tonics (Medhya Rasayana) etc. had excellence of health as well as memory. The excellence of memory can be achieved by the combined action of Buddhi (factor helping for retention of knowledge), Dhriti (understanding and withholding capacity), Medha (intelligence). The Smriti or previous experiences get consolidated in the presence of sense organs, mind and the objects of senses. The various innate and modifiable factors that influence the memory are mentioned in Ayurveda along with the Medhya Rasayanas that specially enhance the memory power of an individual. These can be very well used in the present scenario improve the memory of individuals for attaining the professional success and prevent many stress related diseases.

KEYWORDS: Memory, Smriti, Ayurveda, Medhya Rasayana, Achara Rasayana.**INTRODUCTION**

The preceptors of celestial era like Brahma, Prajapati had an excellent memory by which they were able to remember vast amount of knowledge. Ancient seers by their penance, Satvika state of mind, good code of conduct (Achara Rasayana), intake of brain tonics (Medhya Rasayana) etc. had excellence of health as well as memory. In ancient time the Guru saw the qualities like great intelligence, memory and talent in his Shishya,^[1] so that he can obey the instruction of his preacher as well as read, understand and retain

the knowledge present in the treatises. Some people are born with good memory, but not everyone have good memory. Memory is important in every stage of life. Intelligence, reasoning power and good memory are the qualities of good disciple.^[2] In Padachatushtaya the attendant should be intelligent.^[3]

The excellence of memory can be achieved by the combined action of Buddhi (factor helping for retention of knowledge), Dhriti (understanding and withholding capacity), Medha (intelligence). The Smriti or previous experiences get consolidated in the presence of sense organs, mind and the objects of senses. Avyakta is the cocoordinator par excellence of perceptual faculty sense organs, mind and the objects of senses.

The word Smriti is known since antiquity. This word is found in most of the ancient scriptures.^[4] According to Vayu Purana, different branches of Ayurveda, Jyotishya, Arthashastra, Smriti Shastra and Prasthanas are found.^[5] The Smritis and Shrutis are two types of scriptures and Smritis are the basis of Shrutis. Ex.Manusmriti, Vishnusmriti, Yajnavalkyasmriti etc.

That which is remembered by the seers is Smriti. The seers constantly think about the spiritual object. In association with that, these thoughts are written in the form of compendium and are called as Smriti.

The word Smriti is found in all the Brihatrayis and Laghutrayis in different contexts. Methods to enhance Smriti like Rasayanas are extensively dealt in Charaka Chikitsa 1/1-4, Sushruta Chikitsa 28, Ashtanga Samgraha Uttarata Tantra 49 and Ashtanga Hridaya Uttarata Tantra 39. The references of Smriti in different contexts are also found in Brihatrayis. In Bhavaprakasha various drugs to enhance Smriti have been mentioned. In Madhavanidana various diseases in which Smriti is affected have been described, which can be taken as the etiological factors for Smritinasha. Even Sharangadhara Samhita describes various Yoga's for enhancement of Smriti.

Smriti

Derivation

The Smriti word is derived from the Sanskrit root Smri and Ktin suffix

Meaning

Smriti – Remembrance, reminiscence, thinking of or upon, calling to mind, memory, Memory as one of the vyabhichari-bhavas, Memory (Daughter of Daksha and wife of Angiras or as the daughter of Dharma and Medha).

Definition**1. स्मृतिः अतीतार्थ विषयज्ञानम् ॥**

The knowledge about previously experienced object is Smriti.^[6]

2. अनुभवजन्य ज्ञानं स्मृतिः ॥

Experience based knowledge is Smriti.

3. पूर्वानुभूतस्य स्मरणम् ॥

Remembrance of previously experienced object is Smarana.

4. स्मृति शास्त्रजं ज्ञानम् ॥

Knowledge that is present in Shastra is Smriti.^[7]

5. अनुभूत विषयम् ॥

Vyasa commenting on above verse, explains memory as the retainable subject and retainable subject with knowledge and the experience of this as the initiation of impression. The experience of the subjects leads to arousal of memory in a subject of both the types. If there is predominance of knowledge then it is experience.^[8]

6. स्मृतिस्तु ग्राहयाकार विषेस्तिका भवति स घट इत्येव स्मरणात् ॥

Previously experienced or perceived objects like pot is remembered after some time by its special features is known as Smriti or memory.^[9]

The whole body of sacred tradition or what is remembered by human teachers (in contradistinction to Shruti or what is directly heard or revealed to the Rishis. Smriti includes the 6 Vedangas, the Sutras both Shrauta and Grihya.

7. अनुभूतार्थं संप्रमोषः स्मृतिः ॥ इति योगसूत्रमपि अत्रानुसंधेयम् ॥^[10]

अनुभूतं प्रियादीनामर्थानां चिन्तनं स्मृतिः ।

तत्र कम्पाङ्गवैनश्यवास्पनिश्वासितादयः ॥

इत्युज्ज्वलनीलमणिः ॥

Thinking about already experienced desirable person, object etc. is Smriti. This leads to vibrations (tremulous), state or trance, tears, sigh etc.^[11]

8. स्वाम्याश्रितक्रियाजन्यज्ञानम् । अनुभव –संस्कारजन्य ज्ञानम् ॥

स्मृतिः अनुभूत विषय ज्ञानम् ॥

Knowledge gained by the experience of an object is Smriti. The action which is similar and leaves an impression which can be recalled easily is Smriti.

9. दृष्टश्रुतानुभूतानां स्मरणात् स्मृतिरुच्यते ॥

Memory is nothing but remembrance of object i.e. directly perceived or heard or experienced.^[12]

Classification of Smriti

A. According to Patanjali's Yogasutra

1. Bhavitasmartavya
2. Abhavitasmartavya

B. According to Bhasha Parishada

1. Anubhuta Smriti
2. Ananubhuta Smriti

C. According to Bhagavadgita Buddhi is of 3 types

1. Satvika
2. Rajasika
3. Tamasika

D. According to Chakrapani Prajna bheda is of 3 types

1. Dhi
2. Dhriti
3. Smriti

A. According to Patanjali's Yogasutra

1. Bhavitsmartavya

The object which really does not exist, but is imagined during dream is Bhavitsmartavya. It is a false experience (Mithyapadarthavishayaka).

2. Abhavitsmartavya

It is the experience of real object in the state of wakefulness (Akalpita paramarthika Vishaya). The Smriti is produced due to experience in the form of Pramana, Viparyaya, Vikalpa, Nidra and Smriti. This may lead to a feeling of happiness, misery or attachment towards the world, so it is considered as one among the modifications of mind (Chittavritti).

B. According to Bhasha Parishada

In Bhasha parishad Buddhi is synonymously used in the sense of Smriti. Buddhi is ultimate having many qualities and it is of 2 types Anubhuta Smriti and Ananubhuta Smriti which is of 4 types.

D. According to Chakrapani Prajnabheda

1. Dhi
2. Dhriti
3. Smriti

Physiology of Smriti Utpatti

The physiology of Smriti Utpatti is very essential as nowhere in Ayurveda physiology of Smriti Utpatti is directly mentioned. The scattered references have been mentioned in an order to make the understanding of physiology better. The process of Smriti involves the experience or perception of an object or knowledge for the first time and then remembering its special features after certain time.

First stage- Perception of things

आत्ममनसा संयुज्यते मनं इंद्रियेण इन्द्रियमर्थेन इति ज्ञानोत्पत्तिः ॥

The perception involves a complex concomitance of soul with Mana, Mana with sense organs and sense organs with respective sense objects. According to Chakrapani Prajna or knowledge can be obtained by means of three entities i.e. Dhi, Dhriti and Smriti. Pranavayu situated in the head controls and stabilizes intellect (Buddhi), heart (Hridaya), mind (Chitta) and sense organs (Indriya). It can be correlated to different centers and areas of the brain, which are responsible for perception of knowledge. Udana Vayu situated in chest and traveling through umbilicus, throat, nose etc. is responsible for the Smriti.

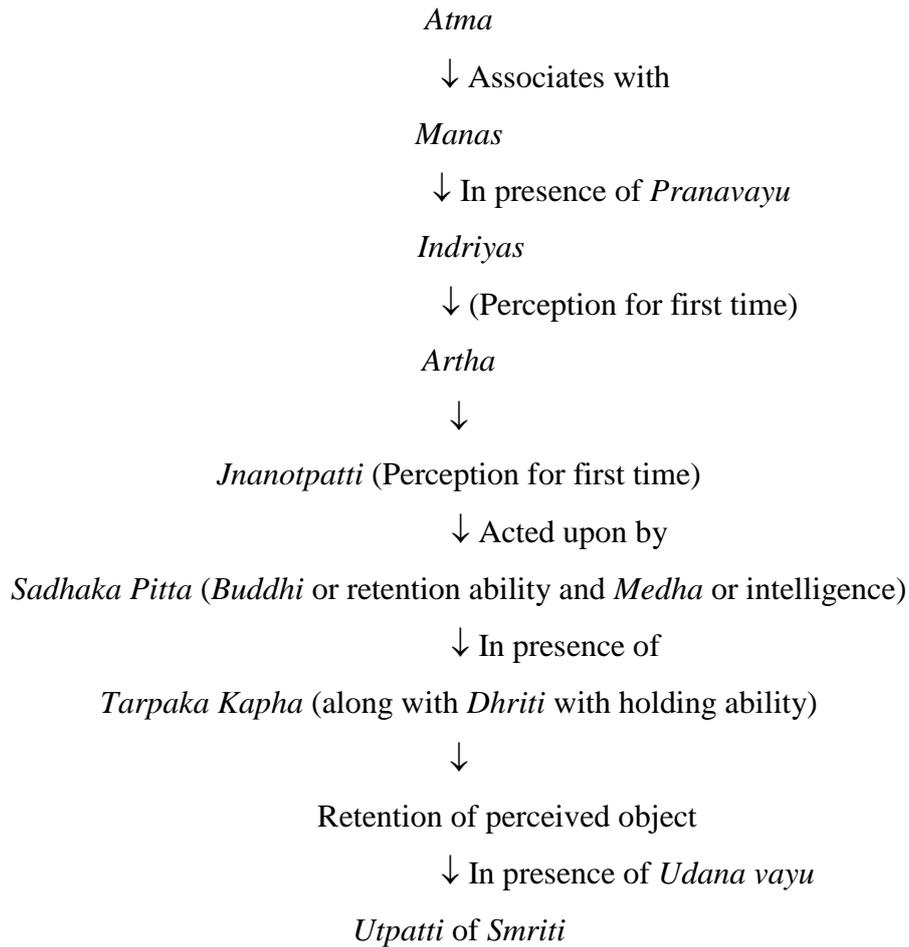
According to Acharya Sushruta, intelligence in the form of understanding of scriptures is one of the normal functions of Pitta and again specifically Sadhaka Agni or Sadhaka Pitta as specifically responsible for a good Medha (intellect). Vagbhata considers Sadhaka Pitta situated in Hridaya (heart) to be responsible for mental faculties like Buddhi (intelligence), Medha (intelligence and ability to grasp and retain the minor details), Abhimana (self-respect) etc. and also responsible for achievements of a particular goal.

Second Stage - The process of retention of experience

Tarpaka Kapha situated in the head nourishes the Indriyas and helps in perception. The retention of the perceived object is brought about by Kapha as it is the normal function of Kapha. Pitta having Ashukari (fast spreading) and Tiktoshna qualities stimulates the mind and helps in perception of the object and recollection of previous expression. This can be related to various hormones like epinephrine and nor epinephrine which are responsible for the memory.

तद्यथा-दार्ढ्य ज्ञानमज्ञानं बुद्धि मोहमेवमादीनि चापराणी द्वंद्वानीति ॥

Kapha is responsible for sturdiness, knowledge, intelligence, ignorance etc. It is responsible for retention of the previously experienced object. Further good Medha (intellect) is responsible for analysis of any related subject and remembering the Subject.^[13]

The process of *Smriti Utpatti* (memory recollection)**Smriti Pariksha – Test for memory**

Entities related to memory are to be known with inference, intelligence from power of acquisition, memory from recollection, restraint from unwavering.

स्मृतिम् स्मरणेन ॥

The Smriti can be measured by means of ability to recollect the previous Experiences.^[14]

स्मृतिं इति स्मृतिजनकं संस्कारम्, स्मरणेन हितकारणं संस्कारोनुमीयते ॥

Smriti means the impressions which lead to recollection of the impressions of previous experiences and are inferred on the basis of recollected memory.

मेधा ग्रहणेन ॥ ग्रहणेनेति ग्रंथादि धारणेन ।

The intellect or Medha is measured on the basis of ability to retain various Scriptures.^[15]

संज्ञानाम ग्रहणेन ॥

Recognizing the person by name.

Factors responsible for memory according to Charaka Samhita

स्मृतिः सत्सेवनाद्यैश्च धृत्यन्तैरुपजायते ।

स्मृत्वास्वभावं भावानां स्मरन् दुःखात् प्रमुच्यते ॥

Acharya Charaka described various means to attain Moksha or salvation beginning from devotion towards noble persons ending with perfect mental control i.e. Dhriti. These are the aids to good memory. If one remembers the real nature of things he will be able get rid of misery.^[16]

वक्ष्यन्ते कारणान्यष्टौ स्मृतिरूपजायते । निमित्तरूपग्रहणात् सादृश्यात् सविपर्ययात् ॥

सत्त्वानुबन्धादभ्यासाज्ज्ञानयोगात् पुनः श्रुतात् । दृष्टश्रुतानुभूतानां स्मरणात् स्मृतिरुच्यते ॥

The factors which lead to Smriti are

1. Nimitta – Knowledge of cause of thing and event etc.
2. Rupagrahanam – that which is perceived through eyes i.e. knowledge of form.
3. Sadrishyat – Knowledge of similarity
4. Viparyayat – knowledge of contrast.
5. Satvanubandhat – By the concentration of mind.
6. Abhyasat – By the constant practice or repetition.
7. Jnanayogat – By the attainment of spiritual knowledge.
8. Punashrutat – By the repeated hearing.

Memory is nothing but remembrance of object i.e. directly perceived or heard or experienced.^[17]

Other Factors contributing to excellence of Memory

1. Physical trait (Prakriti)

Pitta Prakriti.^[18]

2. Physiological factors

Rakta Sarata.^[19]

Satva Sarata.^[20]

3. Mental trait or Manasa Prakriti

Satvika Prakriti.^[21]

Brahma Kaya.^[22]

Yamyaya Kaya.^[23]

4. Factors derived at the time of foetal period

Atmaja Bhava.

Satvaja Bhava.

Fulfillment of desire of pregnant lady.

5. Life Style

Practicing of Yoga endows a person with Ashtasiddhi including Smriti.

Dhi (discrimination), Dhairya (courage) and Atmadi Vijnana (spiritual teachings) are the best medicines for the disorders of mind.^[13]

6. Food

Pure food (Satvika Ahara) leads to attainment of excellent Memory. (Bh.Geeta)

7. Treatment

Brahmi Ghrita, Mandukaparni Svarasa is used for improvement of Memory.

8. Rasayana

Intake of Medhya Rasayana like Mandukaparni, Yashtimadhu, Guduchi, Shankhapushpi.^[24]

9. Other method

Rhyming nature of Shlokas or hymns.

Discussion with experts Tadvidya Sambhasha.^[25]

Teacher or Acharya.^[26]

Proper Nidra.

Atma Jnana.

Shlokas or hymns that are chanted from the time immemorial are good examples for rhyming sentences which can be remembered easily.

तद्विद्यसंभाषा बुद्धिवर्धनानाम् ॥

Discussion with experts is best among the promoters or intelligence other methods (excellence memory).^[27]

आचार्यः शास्त्रागमहेतूनाम् ॥

Teacher is best among the source of learning.^[28]

The good or bad of the weapon, science and water depend upon the holder (user, receiver, vessel respectively). Hence one should enhance his knowledge by the study of many sciences.^[14] The Shastras are like lights and broad wisdom is like the eyes. If the physician uses them properly together as they should be his treatment is never prone to blame^[15] Nidra is essential because knowledge is dependent upon nidra.^[16] The Manas (mind) of the Yogis become clear from the Jnana (knowledge) of the Atma (soul).^[17]

DISCUSSION

Even though Smriti is directly related to memory power, there are other factors that aid in remembering things like Buddhi, Dhi, Medha, Dhriti, Mati. Buddhi is one among Antahkarana and is responsible for the analytical knowledge.^[29] Thus Buddhi helps to remember the things on logical and analytical basis that leads to long term retention. Even experience based memory is through Buddhi.^[30] The factor which helps in thinking is Dhi and Amarkosha considers it synonymous with Buddhi. Retention: Medha is the factor that helps to retain the experience or perception.^[31] Medha is extra ordinary intelligence and an ability to grasp and retain even the minor details continuously of all the things i.e. heard.^[32] State of mind: Always state of mind directly influences an individual's memory power. Dhriti is the quality where an individual has pleasant state of mind humbleness and good behavior in a gathering.^[33] Mati is also state of mind where one realizes that Vedas and knowledge are responsible for liberation.^[34] They all result in Sattvika state of mind where memory power is maximum. On the whole thought, perception, understanding, intelligence, retention ability, experience, analysis together help in memory and remembrance.

CONCLUSION

Memory is an outcome of combined action of Buddhi (factor helping for retention of knowledge), Dhriti (understanding and withholding capacity), Medha (intelligence). The factors like Sharira and Manasa Prakriti, Sarata, Factors derived at the time of foetal period, life Style, Practice of Yoga, Pure food (Satvika Ahara), intake Rasayana, analysis, typical method etc. influence the memory power of an individual.

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