



Review Article

**SHUKRA DHATU: THE ESSENCE OF VITALITY IN AYURVEDIC THOUGHT**

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**ABSTRACT**

In Ayurveda, the ancient Indian system of medicine, a healthy person is one who has balanced *Doshas*, a balanced *Agni* (digestive fire), well-formed *Dhatus*, appropriate *Malas* (waste product) removal, and a blissful mind, soul, and senses. *Rasa*, *Rakta*, *Mamsa*, *Meda*, *Asthi*, *Majja*, and *Shukra Dhatu* are the seven *Dhatus* explained in Ayurvedic *Kriya Sharir* (physiology). The seventh and most important of these *Dhatus* is *Shukra Dhatu*, which is in charge of vitality and reproduction. The word *Shukra* originates from the root “*Shucha*”, meaning pure or radiant. It is the end product after a complete transformation process starting from food and ending in the formation of *Shukra*, through successive nourishment and conversion of the preceding *Dhatus*. *Sukra Dhatu* is present in both men and women and it is the substance which plays a vital role for all systemic body activities including metabolism and the secretions which comes out of the body at the time of sexual act and performs specific functions of reproduction. *Suddha Shukra* provides nourishment to the entire body, while in its impure form it becomes harmful to overall well-being. In Ayurveda, *Shukra* is believed to take almost one month to form from the food consumed, after it undergoes successive transformation through all six previous *Dhatus*. As *Sukra Dhatu* the vital essence of all other *Dhatus* some Ayurveda commentators i.e. *Acharya Charaka* and *Acharya Vagbata* has not described its *Mala* (waste).

**INTRODUCTION**

Ayurveda-the ancient science of life *Shukra Dhatu* takes a place of vital importance. Reproductive health is usually related to the balance and nourishment of *Shukra Dhatu*, the vital tissue responsible for reproduction. More than just the reproductive element, *Shukra* is revered as the refined essence of all bodily tissues, the culmination of a long journey of transformation through the seven *Dhatus*. *Shukra* is formed, circulated and carried throughout the body by *Shukravaha Strotas*. *Shukra* is present in the whole body and is considered as the *Sara* of all other *Dhatu*. So, it is advised that practicing healthy sexual life, consuming healthy food and spending a healthy lifestyle help to protect *Shukra*. Vitiating of *Shukra Dhatu* results to *Shukra Dhatu Dusti* (pathology) in the form of *Vridhhi* (hyperstate) or *Kshaya* (waning).

This vitiation may lead mainly to infertility, fatigue, mental dullness and overall debility. In order to maintain the optimal *Shukra* health, Ayurveda suggests certain types of therapies and herbs described under *Rasayana* (Rejuvenation Therapy) and *Vagikarna* (Aphrodisiac Therapy) which supports the nourishment and revitalization of *Shukra*, ultimately enhancing longevity, virility and spiritual energy. By understanding the concept of *Shukra Dhatu* helps to know how closely or physical health, emotional balance and inner awareness are connected to each other. Ultimately it shows *Shukra* is more than just reproduction. It is a key part what keeps us healthy, energetic and alive.

**AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

To understand the literature regarding *Shukra Dhatu* as described in Ayurveda classics.

**MATERIAL AND METHODS**

This review article is compiled using a variety of Ayurvedic classics. Materials on *Shukra Dhatu*, formation, location, properties, drugs for increasing the production and purification of vitiated *Shukra Dhatu* and other relevant topics were gathered,

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examined to get a complete information of *Shukra Dhatu*.

### Etymological derivation of *Shukra Dhatu*

The name "*Shukra*" derived from the *Dhatu* "*Shuch*," which suggests *Kledana*, or cleanliness. It is then joined with the suffix "ran" *Pratyaya* with the use of *Sutra* "*Rijendragravcceti*," forming the word "*Shukra*."

### Synonyms of *Shukra Dhatu*

According to *Amarkosha*- *Teja*, *Retas*, *Bija*, *Virya*, *Indriya* are the synonyms of *Shukra*.<sup>[1]</sup>

- Teja*: Showing the essential nature or essence of tissue.
- Retas*: That which flows (denoting seminal fluid)
- Bija*: Denoting the germ element/ origin/ source/ cause.
- Virya*: Denoting the power/ potency/ valor/ heroism.
- Indriya*: Bodily virile power or power of the sense.

### Embryological Origin

According to *Acharya Charaka*, *Shukra* is considered as *Pitruja Bhava*.<sup>[2]</sup>

### Dosha Configuration

*Acharya Vagbhata* suggests *Shukra* as *Asraya Sthana* of *Kapha Doṣa*.<sup>[3]</sup>

### Quantity of *Shukra Dhatu*

The quantity of *Shukra Dhatu* is about *Ardha* (half) *Anjali* in the human body.<sup>[4,5]</sup>

### Panchbhautika composition of *Shukra Dhatu*

According to *Acharya Charaka* *Shukra* is composed of *Vayu*, *Jala*, *Agni* and *Pruthvi* in the state of their excellence. Each of these elements contribute one fourth of the attributes of each of the *Mahabhutas*.<sup>[6]</sup>

*Acharya Sushruta* states that *Shukra* is *Saumya* in nature.<sup>[7]</sup>

### Rasa of *Shukra Dhatu*

As per *Acharya Chakara* *Shukra Dhatu* contains all the *Sadrasa* (six tastes).<sup>[8]</sup>

### Upadhatu of *Shukra Dhatu*

*Acharya Sadangdhara* explains *Ojas* as *Upadhatu* of *Shukra*.<sup>[9]</sup>

### Mala of *Shukra Dhatu*

*Acharya Vagbhata* states *Ojas* as *Mala* of *Shukra*.<sup>[10]</sup>

### Formation of *Shukra Dhatu*

Just like *Majja Dhatu* is derived from *Asthi Dhatu* like that manner *Shukra Dhatu* forms from *Majja Dhatu* within the body. In other words, it can be said that *Majja Dhatu* consists of *Shukra Dhatu sadharmi-amsa*. When *Shukra Dhatu sadharmi-amsha* comes in contact with *Shukra Dhatu-Agni*, due to the action of *Shukra Dhatu-Agni* it is changed into *Shukra Dhatu* in the body.<sup>[11,12,13]</sup>

### Factors responsible for *Shukra strava* (ejaculation)

*Acharya Charaka* explains that the semen trickles out from its site during copulation between man and the woman, because of sex act (*Cheshta*) and because of passionate attachment (*Samkalpa*) and physical pressure (*Pidana*) are the main factors for the ejaculation of sperm. Other than this he also explains that the semen is ejaculated from the body because other eight factors namely, *Harsh* (excitement), *Tarsh* (passionate desire), *Sarta* (fluidity), *Pichilta* (sliminess), *Guruta* (heaviness), *Anubhava* (atomicity), *Pravana bhava* (the tendency to flow out) and the force of *Vayu*.<sup>[14]</sup>

### Location/ Position of *Shukra Dhatu*

Usually, a bud typically lacks fragrance. This fragrances/smells in the bud appear only when the flower blossoms. Similar to this, in the same way, since childhood, the *Shukra Dhatu* has existed throughout the body. It only emerges during puberty, at which point it begins to function normally. *Acharya Charaka* states that the entire sugarcane plant contains its own juice, ghee is found in every part of the curd, and sesame seeds contain oil.

In the same way, the *Shukra Dhatu* also present in the entire body, which gets sensation to touch. *Shukra Dhatu* is absent from the location where the sensation is absent in the body. Example: Hair, nail etc. As water comes out of a wet cloth when squeezed, similarly the semen tickles out from its site during copulation between man and woman, because of sexual act (*Cheshta*), passionate attachment (*Sankalpa*) and physical pressure (*Pidana*), The semen is ejaculated from the body because of eight factors viz. excitement, passionate desire, fluidity, sliminess, heaviness, *Anubhava* (atomicity), *Pravana bhava* (tendency of out flow) and the force of *Vayu*.<sup>[15]</sup>

### Properties/Qualities of *Shukra Dhatu*

Acharya	Colour	Taste (Rasa)	Smell (Gandha)	Consistency / Other Features
Charak <sup>[16,17]</sup>	Shweta (white), Shweta Sphatika Sannibha (like crystal)	Madhura (sweet)		Snigdha (unctuous), Ghana (thick), Picchila (slimy), Avidahi (non-burning), Bahu (abundant), Guru (heavy), Avitras (non-putrid)
Sushruta <sup>[18]</sup>	Sphatikabha	Madhura	Madhugandhi	Drava (liquid), Snigdha (unctuous),

	(like crystal)	(sweet)	(honey-like smell)	resembles <i>Taila</i> (oil) and <i>Kshaudra</i> (honey)
<i>Vagbhata</i> <sup>[19]</sup>	<i>Shukla</i> (white), like ghee/ honey / oil	<i>Madhura</i> (sweet)		<i>Snigdha</i> (unctuous), <i>Guru</i> (heavy), <i>Bahala</i> (thick)
<i>Vruddha Vagbhata</i> <sup>[20]</sup>	<i>Shukla</i> (white), like ghee/ oil/ honey	<i>Madhura</i> (sweet)	<i>Madhugandhi</i> (honey-like smell)	<i>Snigdha</i> (unctuous), <i>Guru</i> (heavy), <i>Picchila</i> (slimy), <i>Bahu</i> (plentiful), <i>Bahala</i> (dense /thick), <i>Saumya</i> (cool)

Common properties across all *Acharyas* are as follows:

**Colour:** White or crystal-like (*Sphatikabha/Shukla*)

**Taste:** Sweet (*Madhura*)

**Consistency:** Unctuous (*Snigdha*), slimy (*Picchila*), thick (*Ghana/Bahala*), heavy (*Guru*), plentiful (*Bahu*).

**Smell:** Often sweet like honey (*Madhugandhi*)—Specifically mentioned by *Acharya Sushruta*.

#### Functions of *Shukra Dhatu*

The main functions of *Shukra Dhatu* in the body are as follows:

a.) *Dhairya*- Development of patience and courage.

b.) *Dehabala*- Physical strength and working efficiency.

c.) *Priti*- Lust

d.) *Harsa*- Pleasure and love (affection into opposite sex).

e.) *Cyavana*- Ejaculation

f.) *Bijartha*- Formation of embryo. <sup>[21]</sup>

Normally *Shukra* is thought to be available in males only but both the males and females will have the seven *Dhatus*. The main function of *Shukra* is formation of *Garbha* and it is translated as semen because the

semen in the vehicle of spermetozoa but *Shukra* has got so many other functions also.

**For example:** Courage and patience (*Dhairyam*), ejaculation (*Cyvanam*) strength of the body (*Balam*) lust (*Pritim*), affection (*Harsa*) and these functions of *Shukra* are common for both of the sexes.

#### *Shukra Dhatu* in females

As per *Acharya Vagbhata*, during a sexual intercourse with men, women also secrete *Shukra*. Since this *Shukra* does not have any role in the formation of foetus, it is not further explained by our *Acharyas*.<sup>[22]</sup>

#### *Shukra Dhatu* in Children

As we are aware that the normal ejaculation of semen and appearance of masculine features are seen in adult males only but it does not mean that the children do not have *Shukra* at all. They too will certainly have *Shukra* in latent state. The flower does not perceive the smell in its budding stage and can perceive the same after it blossoms, in the same way in children also, though there is *Shukra* exists from their childhood it cannot be seen because of the non-development of the *Shukra-vaha srotas* in them.

#### *Sukrasara Purusha Lakshana*<sup>[23,24]</sup>

Characteristic	Description
Teeth ( <i>Danta Lakshana</i> )	<i>Snigdha</i> (glistening), <i>Vritta</i> (round), <i>Sara</i> (strong), <i>Sama</i> (ordered), <i>Samhata</i> (compact), <i>Shikhara</i> (sharp).
Eyes ( <i>Netra Lakshana</i> )	<i>Ksheerpurna lochana</i> (charming, as if floating in milk- lustrous conjunctiva).
Voice ( <i>Swara Lakshana</i> )	<i>Prasanna Snigdha Swara</i> (melodious, attractive voice).
Skin ( <i>Twak Lakshana</i> )	<i>Prasanna Snigdha Varna</i> (lustrous, attractive skin due to good <i>Bhrajaka Pitta</i> ).
Body structure	Glistening and compact body, broad buttocks ( <i>Mahasphicha</i> ).
Facial and general appearance	<i>Soumyata</i> (very calm), <i>Soumyaprekshina</i> (pleasing look), <i>Praharsha</i> (joyful expression/enthusiasm).
General attributes	Strong ( <i>Balavantah</i> ), pleasure-loving ( <i>Stripriyah</i> , <i>Priyopabhogah</i> )
Social and material aspects	Happy ( <i>Sukhi</i> ), wealthy ( <i>Vittavan</i> ), respected ( <i>Sammanabhajah</i> ), long life ( <i>Ayushya</i> ), fertile ( <i>Apatyabhajah</i> ).



**Shukravaha srotas**

*Shukravaha srotas* are two in number, whose root is breast, scrotum and penis. If any injury happens to the *Shukravaha srotas*, it leads to *Klibata* (unable to do coitus), and ejaculation of semen becomes so difficult and when ejaculation occurs at that time. Semen comes along with blood. [25,26]

**Dushit Shukra Lakshana**

Acharya Charaka states *Shukra Dhatu* has eight *Doshas* like *Phenila* (frothy in nature), thin, dry (i.e., absence of *Snigdhatva*), *Vivarana* (different colour), foul

smelling, excessive stickiness, mixing with other *Dhatu*, and *Avasadi* (late ejaculation). [27]

Acharya Sushruta has explained some other *Doshas*. These *Doshas* are *Vata varna* and its symptoms, *Pitta varna* and its symptoms, *Kapha varna* and its symptoms, *Rakta varna* and its symptoms, putrefied smell, granular types, foul smelling (associated with pus), less quantity, and are associated with urine, stool and blood etc. This vitiated form of *Shukra Dhatu* will never produce off springs. [28]

**Shukra Dhatu Kashaya Lakshana**

Acharya	Symptoms (Lakshana) of Shukra Kshaya
Charaka <sup>[29]</sup>	<i>Daurbalya</i> (weakness), <i>Mukha Shosha</i> (dryness of mouth), <i>Pandutva</i> (pallor), <i>Sadana</i> (lassitude), <i>Shrama</i> (exhaustion), <i>Klaibya</i> (impotency), <i>Shukra Avisarga</i> (absence of ejaculation).
Sushruta <sup>[30]</sup>	<i>Vrushana Vedana</i> (pain in scrotum), <i>Ashakti</i> (impotency), <i>Chira Praseka</i> (delayed ejaculation), <i>Alpa Shukra</i> with <i>Raktadarshana</i> (little semen with blood).
Laghu Vagbhata <sup>[31]</sup>	<i>Chira Praseka</i> (delayed ejaculation), <i>Shonita Yukta Shukra</i> (blood-mixed semen), <i>Ati Todatva</i> in <i>Vrushana</i> (severe scrotal pain), <i>Dhumayana</i> (fume-like sensation in urethra).
Vruddha Vagbhata <sup>[32]</sup>	<i>Shrama</i> (fatigue), <i>Daurbalya</i> (weakness), <i>Mukha Shosha</i> (dry mouth), <i>Timira Darshana</i> (visual darkness), <i>Angamarda</i> (body ache), <i>Pandu</i> (pallor), <i>Sadana</i> (lassitude), <i>Klaibya</i> (impotency), <i>Ushkatoda</i> (pricking pain in testes), <i>Medhro Dhumayana</i> (hot fume-like feeling in penis), <i>Chira Nishkramana</i> or <i>Rakta Yukta Shukra</i> (delayed or bloody ejaculation).

**Shukra Dhatu Vruddhi Lakshana**

Acharya	Symptoms (Lakshana) of Shukra Vruddhi
Sushruta <sup>[33]</sup>	<i>Atipradaurbhavam</i> (excessive discharge of semen), <i>Shukrashmari</i> (formation of seminal stones/calculus).
Laghu Vagbhata <sup>[34]</sup>	<i>Ati Stri Kamata</i> (intense sexual desire), <i>Shukrashmari</i> (seminal calculus).
Vruddha Vagbhata <sup>[35]</sup>	<i>Ati Stri Kamata</i> (excessive desire for women), <i>Shukrashmari Sambhava</i> (possibility of seminal calculus).

**Ayurvedic drugs for Sukra-janana and Sukradusti Chikitsa**

Acharya Charaka in *Sutrasthana* states *Shukra-Janana* and *Shukra-Shodhan Mahakashaya* for promoting production the purification of *Shukra*.

**Shukra-Janana Mahakashaya** [36]

S. No.	Sanskrit Name	Botanical Name
1.	<i>Jivaka</i>	Not known
2.	<i>Rsabhaka</i>	Not known
3.	<i>Kakoli</i>	Not known
4.	<i>Ksirakakoli</i>	Not known
5.	<i>Mudgparni</i>	<i>Phaseolus trilobus</i>
6.	<i>Masaparni</i>	<i>Teramnus labialis</i>
7.	<i>Meda</i>	Not known
8.	<i>Vrddharuha</i>	<i>Asparagus raemosus</i>
9.	<i>Jatila</i>	<i>Nardostachys jatamamsi</i>
10.	<i>Kulinga</i>	Not known

**Shukra-Sodhana Mahakashaya<sup>[37]</sup>**

S. No.	Sanskrit Name	Botanical Name
1.	<i>Kuṣṭha</i>	<i>Saussurea lappa</i>
2.	<i>Elevaluka</i>	<i>Brunus cerasus</i>
3.	<i>Katphala</i>	<i>Myrica nagi</i>
4.	<i>Samudraphena</i>	Internal cell of <i>Sepia officinalis</i>
5.	Gum of <i>Kadamba</i>	<i>Anthocephalus indicus</i>
6.	<i>Iksu</i>	<i>Saccharum officinarum</i>
7.	<i>Kandeksu</i>	<i>Saccharum spontaneum</i>
8.	<i>Ikṣuraka</i>	<i>Asteracantha longifolia</i>
9.	<i>Vasuka</i>	<i>Indigofera enneaphylla</i>
10.	<i>Usira</i>	<i>Vetiveria zizanioides</i>

**Impact of Rasayana and Vajikarana on Shukra Dhatu**

*Rasayana* (Rejuvenation Therapy) and *Vajikarana* (Aphrodisiac Therapy) are two major branches of Ayurveda that directly impact *Shukra Dhatu*. *Rasayana Chikitsa* in Ayurveda has been in practice since ancient times.

**Rasayana (Rejuvenation Therapy)**

**Goal:** It facilitates longevity, immunity, vitality, and tissue nourishment.

**Impact on Shukra Dhatu:** *Ashwagandha* (*Withania somnifera*), *Shatavari* (*Asparagus racemosus*), and *Shilajit* are examples of *Rasayana* medications whose precise activities are easily recognized at the *Poshaka Rasa* level (nutrient replacement), *Agni* level (metabolic enhancement), and *Srotas* level (tissue nourishing).

These drugs contribute to overall tissue regeneration and improved physiological function. Certain *Rasayana* drugs directly affect specific *Dhatu*s (tissues). For example, *Shukra Dhatu* is directly affected by *Vrishya* and *Balya* medications, which enhance the synthesis and health of reproductive tissue.

**Vajikarana (Aphrodisiac Therapy)**

**Goal:** It enhances sexual potency, libido, and reproductive capability.

**Impact on Shukra Dhatu:** *Vajikarana* drugs such as *Ashwagandha* (*Withania somnifera*), *Kaunch* (*Mucuna pruriens*), and *Shatavari* (*Asparagus racemosus*) play a vital role in enhancing the strength and vitality of *Shukra Dhatu*.

*Rasayana* revitalizes the body, laying the groundwork for a powerful *Shukra Dhatu* by rejuvenating the body and enhancing nutrient assimilation. *Vajikarana* enhances this effect by specifically targeting sexual and reproductive functions. When these two therapies are used together, they synergistically improve fertility, libido, and overall reproductive health.<sup>[38]</sup>

**DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

*Shukra Dhatu* is the final *Sara* of *Ahara Rasa*. *Shukra* is a substance that is discharged after ejaculation and is responsible for all systemic bodily functions, particularly metabolic activities. It is considered as the vital essence of all *Dhatu*s. It is distributed throughout the whole body, and plays a key role in reproduction. A person with well-nourished *Shukra Dhatu* has a bright look in their eyes and glowing skin. A positive mindset is needed for the proper formation of *Shukra Dhatu*. *Shukra Dhatu*, which exist in both sexes, serving as a primary tissue, pervading the entire body in invisible form as *Sukshma Shukra* or *Antah Shukra*, carrying out all systemic functions and functions related to sexual behavior along with the entire reproductive physiology. *Shukra Dhatu* is carried out in the body by *Shukravaha Srotas*. *Vrushana*, *Shepha*, and *Stana* are the *Moolsthanas* of *Shukravaha Srotas*. *Shukra Dhatu* is considered as the essence of all seven *Dhatu*s and is closely linked with *Ojas* - the subtle essence responsible for immunity and life. *Kapha Dosha* is the governing *Dosha* in *Shukra Dhatu*. Different *Nyaays* (principles) told by Ayurveda commentators describes the procedure of formation of *Shukra Dhatu*. *Shukra Kshaya* and *Shukra Vridhhi* are both pathological conditions of *Shukra Dhatu*, which cause abnormal function of *Shukra*, eventually gives rise different diseases in the human body. Thus, *Sukra Dhatu* symbolizes both the reproductive capacity and the essence of life.

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