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TITLE
A Review on Smriti (Memory) and its Affiliates in Ayurveda

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ABSTRACT

Background: Memory is the higher mental process in which information is encoded, stored and retrieved. It has a prominent role in the perception of knowledge. Scattered references about the concept of Smriti (Memory) is found in the classical texts of Ayurveda. Smriti is more related with Buddhi (Intelect) and Mana (Mind). Aim: The present review aims at analysing the concept of Smriti in various aspects as per the classics of Ayurveda. Materials & Methods: Information from Ayurveda texts and review articles from NIIMH, PubMed, and Google scholar was used for the completion of the study. The keyword used in search strategy was Smriti, smRuti. Observations: Total ninety references at various contexts were found in Samhita. The retrieved data were stratified into definition, philosophical, physiological, assessment, pathological and treatment aspect of Smriti. Conclusion: The concept of Smriti ranges from philosophical to physical and psychological levels. Memory is said to be the result of collective action of Atma (soul), Mana, Buddhi and Medha (Retentive Faculty of memory). Though various Acharya have explained Dhi (Understanding), Dhriti (Fortitude), and Smriti separately but these are to be considered as the inseparable parts of the Buddhi to perform its function.

Keywords: Ayurveda, Buddhi, Medha, Memory, Smriti

Introduction

Since time immemorial, humans have tried to understand what memory is, how it works and why it goes wrong. It is an important part of what makes an individual truly human and yet it is one of the most elusive of human attributes. In modern science, memory is compartment of mind by which information is encoded, stored and retrieved. Additionally in physiological or neurological terms, memory is a simplest, a set of encoded neural connections in the brain. It is the recreation or reconstruction of past experiences by the synchronous firing of neurons that were involved in the original experience. If one could not remember past events, he would not be able to learn or develop language relationships, nor personal identity.

Smriti has been mentioned in ancient scripture Bhagvadgita, which encodes its importance. While envisaging the objects of senses a person develops attachment for them and from such attachments lust progresses and from lust anger arises. From anger complete delusion rises and from delusion puzzlement of memory. When memory is hindered intelligence is lost and when intelligence is lost one falls down again into the acquisitive pool.[1]

In Ayurveda, the concept of Smriti is more related with Atma, Mana, Medha and Buddhi. Mana plays an important role in the process of retention of knowledge and it also coordinates the external environment with the brain through the different Gyanendriyas (sense organs). Buddhi is a powerful entity which retains the specific knowledge or the outcome of texts gained by reading, listening or repeating it. Retention of cognition takes place under the area of Medha. Smriti helps the mind to recollect the reference of any objects on the basis of concept made in past experiences.

Materials & Methods

An extensive search pertaining Smriti was carried out upon the classical literature of Charaka Samhita, Sushruta Samhita, Ashtanga Hridya and Sangraha. Research and review articles found in NIIMH, PubMed, and Google scholar were also utilized. The keyword used in search strategy was Smriti, smRuti. The citation lists from the included references were subsequently examined and a hand search was also performed in an attempt to identify additional points.

Observations

Total Ninety references at various contexts were found in Samhitas and are explained underneath. The retrieved data from the above sources have been stratified as definition, philosophical, physiological, assessment, pathological and treatment aspect of Smriti. Physiological aspect was further subdivided into Utpatti Karana (Causative factor), Utpatti (Production), Doshas (humour) involved, Smriti in different Prakriti.
(physical constitution), Sara and Vāya Āvastra (age).
Another classification of Smriti as Gana (Quality), Hetu (Cause), Lākshana of Roga (symptom of diseases)
and Chikitsa (Treatment), Arishta Lākshanas (signs of imminent death) was also found.

Definition of Smriti:
1. Vyavpatra: The seers who constantly think
about the spiritual object have written
compendium which are called as Smriti.2
2. Vaiśeṣika philosophy: Smriti is said to be
the results from a particular conjunction
between self, mind and latent impressions.3
3. Acharya Vyasa explains memory as the
retainable subject with the knowledge and
the experience of this as the initiation of
impression. The experience of the subjects
leads to arousal of memory.4
4. Yogavāśishthā describes reminding some of
the special features of an objects which has
been previously experienced or perceived is
called as Smriti.5
5. Sabdhakalpadruma mentions, thinking
about already experienced object, person
etc. is Smriti which leads to vibrations, state
or trance, tears, sigh etc.6
6. Acharya Charaka quotes Smriti as a
recollection of experience or subject to
concentrated mind is called as Smriti.7
7. Chakrapani comments Smriti as the ability
to recollect the past knowledge. 8
8. Acharya Sushruta decodes remembrance of
previous experience of object as Smriti.9
9. In Tarkaśaṅgrahā, Smriti is said to be Smriti.10

Philosophical aspect of Smriti:
While describing the list of Atma Bhava (Factors
derived from Soul), Acharya has clearly mentioned
Dhārana (Retention power), Dhriti, Buddha and Smriti.
Smriti is one among the Lakshana (feature) of
Puruṣottama’s (Absolute Soul) existence which is also
one of the factor which was said as a proof for the
existence of Atma.11

Acharya Charaka has opined that remembering of
Tattvāvyāna (Philosophy) is known as Smriti and a
person having Smriti will not only be free from Roga
(Disease) but will also attain Moksha (Salvation).14

Smriti is one of the reason for both Pravṛtti (Attachments)
and Nivṛtti (Detachments) which is nothing but Dukha (Misery) and Sukha (happiness)
respectively.16

Physiology of Smriti
Smriti Utpatti Karana (Causative factors for
the memory):
Two factors are said to be responsible for the
function of Smriti.
1. Abhyantara Karana (Intrinsic factor):
The Sannikarsha of Atma, Mana, Indriya (Sense
organs) and Indriyarthas (Object of Sense) are
responsible for Smriti.17

2. Bahya Karana (Extrinsic factor):
Acharya Charaka has explained 8 factors, the
repeated practice of these will improve Smriti. They
are as follows,
   i. Nimiitta Grahaṇa (Reaction to caused effects),
   ii. Rupa Grahaṇa (Perception similar shape
      objects),
   iii. Sadrshya (Similarity),
   iv. Saśvaparyaya (Contrast),
   v. Satvanubandha (Attention),
   vi. Abhyasa (Repetition),
   vii. Gyanayoga (Divine knowledge),
   viii. Punah Shruta (Repeated hearing).

Smriti Utpatti (Memory Process)
In Ayurveda the process of Smriti is not mentioned
directly. But it has been mentioned in scattered
manner in various texts. According to Chakrapani,
Pragya (Wisdom) can be acquired by means of
three entities i.e. Dhi, Dhriti and Smriti.

Process of Smriti initiates with the perception of
the object or subject by Indriya. Indriya carries perceived
object or subject to Mana. It passes through the
Mana Vīhaya (Functions of mind) Viz: Chintana
(Thinking), Vichārya (Analysing), Uhaya (Reasoning)
and get certain form i.e. Bhuddhi. Then it is sent to
Atma. After the knowledge is known by Atma, action
will be performed if necessary otherwise it is stored as
Medha (Retentive Faculty). In future any similar
stimuli strikes, the recollection occurs i.e. called
Smriti.22

In contemporary science, the three main
processes involved in memory production are
encoding, storage and recall (retrieval).

Doshas involved in Smriti Utpatti:
Different Doshas are involved in Smriti utpatti, either
they act on Smriti directly or helps for it by acting on
Mana, Indriya, Buddhi. Which are listed in Table no
1.
Pitta Dosha

Avastha (Grasping power)

Paurusha In (Strength)

Avastha In Smriti (mental faculties) is endowed with good memory. intellect and

Purusha Among the eight Smriti constituents. It is listed in table no. 2.

Smriti in different Deha prakriti (Body constitution):
Status of Smriti varies according to different body constituents. It is listed in table no. 2.

Table no. 2: Smriti in different Deha Prakriti

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr. No.</th>
<th>Prakriti</th>
<th>Smriti</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Vata Prakriti</td>
<td>Alpa Smriti (low memory), Chala Smriti (unstable memory), Shighra Vismarana (quick forgetting)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Pitta Prakriti</td>
<td>Medha (intelligent)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Kapha Prakriti</td>
<td>Chiragrahi (slow grasping), Smrutimantra (good memory)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Sattvika Prakriti</td>
<td>Smrutimantra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Tanya Kaya</td>
<td>Smrutimantra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Brahma Kaya</td>
<td>Smrutimantra</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Smriti and Sara (Excellence of tissue):
Among the eight Sara description, Teeka Sara Parusha (excellence of Skin) is said to have high intellect and Sataha Sara Parusha (Excellence of mental faculties) is endowed with good memory.

Smriti and Vaya (Age)
In Balyavastha (Childhood), there will be Aparipakva Avastha (Immature stage) of Dhatu, Indriya, Bala (Strength) with the predominance of Kapha Dosha.

In Madhyavasah (Middle age) Bala, Virya (Energy), Paurusha (Manliness), Parakrama (Valour), Grahana (Grasping power)-Dharaana (Retention power)-Sumaran Shakti (recollection power) will be in Puska Avastha (Mature stage) with the predominance of Pitta Dosha.

In Jara Avastha (Old age) there is a gradual depleting nature of Dhatu, Indriya and Bala with the predominance of Vata Dosha. It results in diminished Grahaana, Dharaana and Smaran, called as Smritirhasa (Diminished memory).[13-44]

Assessment of Smriti:
Entities related to memory are to be known with Anumana (Inference). [45] Smriti can be measured by means of ability to recollect the previous experience and Medha on the basis of ability to retain various scriptures.

Pathological aspect of Smriti:
Smriti Bhramsha (Perverted Memory): when the mind of an individual has been roofed by the Rajas and Moha (Confusion) its activities are being taken to such an extent that one cannot be able to recollect the memory stored as it is related to Tatwagyana (Real Knowledge). This condition is called as Smriti Bhramsha (destruction of memory). [46]

1. Nidana (Cause):
   a. Dicasscapna (Day sleep)
   b. Gramya Aahar Sevana (Urban dietary)
   c. Madhyaapana by Garbhini (Alcohol intake by pregnant woman)

2. Samprapti (Pathology): In classics specific pathophysiology of Smriti is not mentioned but scattered references from various texts concluded the pathogenesis. Mana when getting hindered by Vata Pradhan Tridosha Prakopa, leads to Rajo and Tamo Guna Vridhhi (increase in arrogance and ignorance) and causing Avarana of Manasah Sostas (oclusion in channels of psychic activities) thereby finally leading to Dhi, Dhriti and Smriti Vibhramsha.

Management of Smriti
Practicing of Yoga endows a person with Ashtasiddhi including Smriti. Abyas (Constant practice), Tadvidya Sambhasha (Discussion with experts), Acharya Sahavas (Company of Teacher) is best to promote intelligence and memory. [51] Nidra (Sleep) is essential because knowledge is dependent upon it. [52]

There are lot of dietary and medicinal prescriptions in Samhitas especially for the elevation of Smriti, Medha, Dhi and Buddha. Aaahara (Healthy diet) leads to attainment of excellent memory. [53] Regular intake of Ghrita (Ghee) is recommended recommended for strengthening the senses and also in deprivation performance of Medha and Smriti due to vitiated Vata and Pitta. [54-56]
Swarit, has been mentioned as an advantage of consuming Erunda Sneh (Castor oil),[57] Haritaki (Terminalia chebula)[58] and Karuna Mansa (Meat of tortoise).[59]

Rasayana drugs act through their intrinsic attributes in terms of Rasa (Taste), Guna (Qualities), Virya (Potency of the herb), Vipaka (Taste conversion after digestion) and Prabhava (Special effect of herb) with reference to their effects on Septadhatu. Some herbs directly act on higher mental function; like intellectual power, memory, speech, learning and some increase power of sensory organs. Intake of Medhya Rasayans Dravyas like Mandukaparni (Centella asiatica Linn.), Yashtimadhu (Glycerriza glabra Linn.), Guduchi (Tinospora cordifolia Miers) and Shankhapushpi (Conoscus maximus Chois)[60] and Rasayana preparations like Brunnhansayan[61], Chyavanaprasha[62], Emabrasayan[63], Triphala Rasayana[64], Shilajit Rasayana[65], Indriyak Rasayana[66] are used for amendment of memory.

After Shodhana Karma (Purification therapy), Shueta Bakuchi Churna (Powder of Psoralea corylifolia) with Gada (Jaggery) and Ghrita (clarified butter) for 6 months along with Pathya leads to Smritiyukta, Nirogi Mamsa (Meat of tortoise) along with Ghrita, Dugdha (Milk) on empty stomach along with Pathya as Ghrita, Dugdha and Shali (Rice) increases Smriti.[68]

As Guna (Quality):

Smriti is attribute of Hita (useful life).[69] Smriti is counted among the qualities of Parishak Vikara (Wise examiner)[70], Pranabhishar Chikitsaka (Good physician)[71], Shishya (Student)[72], Duta (Messenger)[74] and Karnaparvaskal (which is also possessed by the Rogi (Patient))[76], Uttama Vaidya (Physician)[77] and serve as an aid to get successful treatment. It is one of the attribute of Uttama Vaidya (Wise examiner).[78]

As Hetu (Causative factor):

One among the three principle and fundamental causative agents in the disease manifestation is Psogatyapadha (intellectual blasphemy). The loss of Dhi, Dhriti and Swarit hints to indecorous physical, vocal and mental exploit which is called Psogatyapadha (wilful mistake).[79]

As Lakshana (Symptom):

Swarit is implicated explicitly in two major psychosomatic disorders like Umada (Psychosis) and Apasmara (Epilepsy). In Umada[80], Swaritibhramsha will be there while in Apasmara[81] there is Smritiswastha (loss of memory). It also get laden in Atatvabhiniveshha (Psychic perversion), as Psogatyapadha is main Nidana (cause) of it.[82]

In Mada Avastha (Alcoholism), Acharya Charaka utters that Swarit will be normal in first stage which gets vulnerable in next stage.[83] It also gets affected in Vyana Vata occulded by Prana Vata[84] and later stage of Kaphaja Visarpa (variety of herpes).[85]

As Chikitsa (Treatment):

Swarit is considered as key therapeutic approach in Manasika Vyadhish (Mental disorders), known as Satwacayaya Chikitsa (Psychotherapy).[86] It is also implicated in the hindrance of exogenous diseases.[87]

As Arishta (Symptom of imminent death):

Swarit is one midst factor to be evaluated for the assessment of upshots of disease process.[88] Loss of memory without any attributable reason may be the indicator of death within 6 months[89] or imminent death.[90]

Discussion

There are similarities, dissimilarities and specificity on concept of Swarit in various classics. Even though Swarit is directly related to memory power, there are other dynamics that aid in remembering things like Budhhi, Medha and Dhriti. In the course of knowledge these are interrelated with each other. Mana is the entity that associates with Atma for the proper cognition. Budhhi decides and bifurcates it as the Hita (Good) and Ahita (Bad). Dhi is the capacity or power of retention. Dhriti is the power that controls the orientation of attitude. While Swarit helps the mind in recollecting the entire percept or experienced objects on the basis of concept formed by past experiences. If anyone of these are hampered the ultimate objective of attaining knowledge cannot be achieved.

Whenever Charaka enlightens some herbs or the Rasayana or the medicines, he quoted the terminologies like Dhritivardhana, Medhakara, Smritisra etc. separately. It shows that he has accepted the separate functional existence in Dhi, Dhriti and Swarit and their intricate interrelation.

Chakrapani and Gangadhar understood performance of Buddha as the result of the collective performance of Dhi, Dhriti and Swarit. They mentioned it as Triśidhi (Three) Buddha.[91] Hemadri’s directives of differential assessment of Dharana and Swarit are very peculiar, useful and applied in practice. He said that interrupted and uninterrupted presentation of perceived knowledge represents Swarit and Dharana respectively.
Sushruta agrees with Charaka that re-experiencing the past experienced knowledge is Smriti. He mentioned that Smriti and Anubhava i.e. memory and experience are the two types of Buddhi. He has considered the Smriti as a separate entity but considered it as type of Buddhi; on the contrary Charaka has included Smriti as integral part of Buddhi performance. He has insisted Dhi, Dhriti, and Smriti as the inseparable parts of the Buddhi performance.

Different Acharya clarified the different aspects, as the meaning of the term it has been elaborated, Smriti does not stand only for recollection but for the very much important factor to whole process involving in the formation of the faculty of memory. Smriti is well understood through the various concepts. Philosophical concept are useful for knowledge and salvation. Physiological and pathological aspects are helpful for better understanding of Smriti as these are interlinked. Thus numerous attributes of Smriti gives importance of it.

**Conclusion**

Smriti is sort of streams of previous experience which helps to recollect the facts related to present experience or object. It is a result of collective action of Atma, Mana, Buddhi and Medha. So disturbance or nourishment of any of its attribute can affect the memory power. Though various Acharya have explained Dhi, Dhriti, and Smriti separately but these are the inseparable parts of the Buddhi performance. The factors like Dosa, Prakriti, Vaya, Sara etc. influence the memory. In many disease memory gets affected and it is also one of the key factor in Psychotherapy. In Ayurveda, Adravyabhuta (Non-drug) and Dravyabhuta (Medicine) Chikitsa are mentioned for excellence of memory. Hence understanding this concept will help in proper clinical practice.

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