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## TOPIC-CRITICAL REVIEW OF GREEVA (NECK) IN AYURVEDA

### 1.DR ARCHANA SINGH

ASSISTANT PROFESSOR, SHALYA TANTRA DEPARTMENT  
MAIN CAMPUS ,UTTARAKHAND AYURVED UNIVERSITY

HARRAWALA DEHRADUN

### 2.DR.(PROF) SUNIL KUMAR JOSHI

PROFESSOR , SHALYA TANTRA DEPARTMENT  
RISHIKUL CAMPUS ,HARIDWAR,UTTARAKHAND AYURVED UNIVERSITY

HARRAWALA DEHRADUN

### 3. DR(PROF) RADHABALLABH SATI

HOD AND PROFESSOR ROGNIDAN DEPARTMENT  
MAIN CAMPUS ,UTTARAKHAND AYURVED UNIVERSITY

HARRAWALA DEHRADUN

### ABSTRACT

In *ayurveda* human body is formed of six parts (*Sadanga Sharir*) which are two upper extremities/hands (*bahu*), two lower extremities /legs (*sakthini*), head & neck (*sirogreeva* or *greeva*), & trunk (*antaradhi*). Some *acharyas* consider head and neck as a single entity while other *acharyas* consider them as two separate units. *Greeva* is the most important part of our body as it comes under "*Dash Pranayatana*" ( the place where *Prana*-resides). In this paper small attempt has been made to describe *greeva* as per different *acharyas*.

### KEY WORDS

*Sadanga Sharir, bahu , sakthini , antaradhi ,Dash Pranayatana, Prana*

### INTRODUCTION

In *ayurveda* *greeva* is called *Uttamang*.

*Greeva* is a *Sanskrit* term where *greeva* stands for neck.

*Greeva* means the back (posterior) part of the neck or tendon of the trapezium muscle<sup>[1]</sup>

## DEFINITION

*Greeva* is a structure which does the *dharan* of *shira* (head).

*Greeva*/Neck, in land vertebrates, the portion of the body which separates the head from torso. It marks the starting of spinal cord & spinal column.

*Ayurvedic* classics in many contexts have collectively taken head & neck as one entity & named it as *Sirogreeva* & placed them as *Urdhvajatrugata* organs (e.supraclavicular organs).

"तत्राय शरीरस्याङ्गविभागः तद्यथा द्वौ बाहू, द्वे सक्थिनी शिरोग्रीवम् अन्तराधिः, इति षडगमगम्<sup>2</sup> (Ch. Sa. 7/5)

*Acharya Charaka* has led great emphasis on *Greeva* as an anatomical entity by placing it as a part of "*Sadanga Sharir*," ie, according to ancient *Acharyas* view anatomical body or *Sharir* is divided into six main parts (viz., two hands, two legs, head & neck, & trunk).

## HISTORICAL REVIEW OF GREEVA

### IN VEDAS

"य ऋते चिदभिष्रिषः पुरा जन्तुभ्य आतृदः । सन्धता सन्धिं मधवा पुरुवसुर्निष्कर्ता विहुतं पुनः<sup>3</sup> *Yajurveda Samhita 14 Khand/ Sloka*:

States that Lord *Indra* could treat without any medication in cases of bleeding *Snayu* (ligaments) of neck & attach them to the joints; he could also heal completely cut parts or fractures.

### IN PURANAS

In *Vaamon Purana* , it has been specified that the *Nakshatra* related to *Greeva* is *Jyeshtha*<sup>4</sup>

*Greeva*: A daughter in bird form born to *Kasyapapraja-pati* by his wife *Tümr*. It illustrates the importance of *Greeva* in cases of birds. (*Agni Purana*)<sup>5</sup>

### IN UPNISHAD

#### *Brahmaupanishad*

"ब्रह्मणो हृदयस्थानम् कण्ठे विष्णुः समाश्रितः । तालुमध्ये स्थितो दो ललाटस्थो महेश्वरः ।

Heart (*Hriday*) is the locus for *Bramha*, throat (*Kantha*) for *Vishnu*, mid-palate (*Talu*) for *Rudra* & *Maheswar* resides in forehead (*Lalat*)<sup>6</sup>."

"अथास्य पुरुषस्य चत्वारि स्थानानि भवन्ति । नाभिहृदय कण्ठं मूर्धति ।"

In this *Purush Sharir* there are four main seats of *Ana- Nabhi, Hriday, Kantha & Murdha*.<sup>7</sup>

## GREEVA IMPORTANCE:

1. *Acharya Charak* has also placed it under "*Dash Pranayatana*" ( the place where *Prana*-resides) described in both *Sharir & Sutra Sthana*.

Given below are the ten *Pranayatana*s described by *Charaka* in two different contexts:

दशप्राणायतनानि तद्यथा -मूर्धा कण्ठः हृदयं, नाभि, गुर्द, बस्ति, ओजः शुक्रं शोणितं, मांसमिति । तेषु षट् पूर्वाणि मर्मसङ्ख्यातानि ।" (Ch. Sa. 7/9)<sup>8</sup>; (B. S. Sa. 7/3)<sup>9</sup>

But *Acharya Charaka* have further classified it: one *Avatu* (back of neck) & two *Sleshmabhuvao* as two of the *Pratyangax* out of 56 *Pratyangas* present in body. *Chakrapanidatta* have clarified *Avatu* as *Ghata* (back of neck) and *Sleshmabhuvao* as Two solid structures lying in two sides of *Kantha*.

2. *Acharya Vridhai Vagbhat* (in *AS Sa5/32*) has mentioned the same *Sloka* with just substitution of *Marsa* by *Jiabandhana* (attachment of tongue).

3. In *Astanga Hridaya* (A. H. Sa. 3/13) under the reference of *Dash Jivitadhamani* the same description is given just by replacing the word *Jivahandhana* with *Rasna* (tongue).

4. *Bhela* has categorised *Kantha* under *Das Bahirguha* or ten external openings (a unique concept of his): 2 *Chakshyushi*, 2 *Nasika*, 2 *Shravan*, 1 *Kanthanadi* or trachea, 1 *Guda*, & 1 *Medhra*, & told them as *Vayu Srotas*<sup>10</sup> (B. S. Sa. 4/27)

5. In other hand *Acharya Sushruta* in *Sharir Sthana* 5th chapter 4th *Sloka* have considered *Greeva* as a *Pratyanga* (minor part of body).

### Organogenesis

Acc. to *Sushruta* in the 3rd month of pregnancy five buds or projections develop which manifests itself as four limbs & head. Thus, major tissue differentiation is completed during this period & organogenesis starts.<sup>11</sup>

**Table 1: Ayurvedic & Pauranic anthropometry of Greeva & its related structures:**

ACHARYAS	PARTS	ANGULI PRAMANA
<i>Matsya Purana</i> <sup>12</sup>	<i>Greeva Madhya Parinah</i> <i>Greeva Pruthutya Prashsyate</i> <i>Stana-Greeva Antara</i>	24 (-47cm) 8 (15.6cm) 1 <i>Taal</i> (4 or <i>Angula</i> 7.8cm)
<i>Charaka</i> <sup>13</sup> (Ch. Vi. 8/117)	<i>Shirodhara/Greeva</i> (Height of neck) Circumference of the neck	4 An (~7.8cms); 24An (-43.2cm);
<i>Sushruta</i> <sup>14</sup> (Su. Su. 35/12)	<i>Greeva</i> (Height) <i>Greeva-Stanantara</i> (distance from neck to heart) <i>Greeva Parinaha</i> <i>Mastaka-Avatukeshanto</i> <i>Karna-Avatu Antara</i>	4 12 (23.4cm) 24 10 (19.5cm) 14 (27.3cm)
<i>Vagbhat(Astanga Samgraha)</i> <sup>15</sup> (A. S. Sa. 8/31)	<i>Greeva-Height</i> <i>Circumference</i>	4 32 (62.4cm)

The measurements of the body have been indicated in one's own *Angula* (fingers breadth only). Man or woman having these measurements will attain long life & plenty of wealth.

1 *Angula* is taken as the breadth of a finger which is 1.95cm acc. to AFL37"

**Structures Present in Greeva (acc. to Ayurveda):****Asthi:**

पंचदश ग्रीवाया..... एकं हन्वस्थि, द्वे हनुमूलबन्धने<sup>16</sup>(Ch. Sa, 7/6)

*Acharya Charaka* while describing the number of bones present in body have given a brief account of the bones present in neck & its associated structures.

ग्रीवायां नव, कण्ठनाड्यां चत्वारि, द्वे हन्वो घ्राणकर्णग्रीवाक्षिकोषेषु तरुणानि ।<sup>17</sup> (Su, Sa. 5/21-22)

*Acharya Sushruta* has described about the presence of 9 bones in *Greeva*, 4 in *Kanathanadi* & 2 bones in *Hanu*. While describing about the types of bone, *Sushruta* & *Vagbhata* (A. S. Sa. 5/46) has described that *Greeva* have *Taruna Asthi* (tender bones/cartilage) type of bones.

**Table 2: Acharyas & No. of bones**

Acharyas	Parts	No. of bones
<i>Charaka</i> (K.S. Sa.4/11.1), (B. S. Sa. 7/2)	1. <i>Greeva</i> (Neck) 2. <i>Hanu</i> (Mandible) 3. <i>Hanumulabandhana</i> (Extremities of the mandible)	15 1 2
<i>Sushruta</i>	1. <i>Greeva</i> (Neck) 2. <i>Kanathanadi</i> (Trachea) 3. <i>Hanu</i> (Lower jaw)	9 4 2
<i>Vagbhata</i> ( <i>Astanga Samgraha</i> )	1. <i>Greeva</i> (Neck) 2. <i>Kanathanadi</i> (Trachea) 3. <i>Hanubandhan</i> (Lower jaw)	13 4 2

**Sandhi:**

"सन्धयस्तु द्विविधाश्चेष्टावन्तः स्थिराश्च । शाखाषु हन्वोः कट्यां च चेष्टावन्तस्तु सन्धयः । शेषास्तु सन्धयः।<sup>18</sup>" (Su.Sa.5/26)

According to *Sushruta* *Sandhi* or joints are of two types *Sthira* (immobile) & *Chestavanta* (movable). Movable joints are present in *Shakha* (limbs), *Hanu* (jaw) & *Kati* (hip bone). Rest all joints are immobile acc. to *Sushruta*.

"उरस्यष्टौ तावन्त एवं ग्रीवायां त्रयः कण्ठे नाडीषु<sup>19</sup> (Su. Sa.5/30)

*Greeva* have & *Sandhis* or joints, while there are 3 *Sandhis* in *Kantha Nadi*. *Chakradatta* have clarified *Kantha* as *Galanalak* & *Nadi* means *Nadi* present in sides of *Kantha*.

“तावन्त एव ग्रीवायामष्टावित्यर्थः। त्रयः कण्ठे गलनलकास्थनि। नाडीषुः कण्ठपार्श्वनाडीषु”(Chakradatta))

Table 3: *Acharya* & No. of *Sandhi*

<i>Acharya</i>	Parts	Number of <i>Sandhi</i>
<i>Sushruta</i>	<i>Greeva</i>	8
	<i>Kanthanadi</i>	3
<i>Vagbhat(Astanga Samgraha)</i>	<i>Greeva</i>	8
	<i>Kanthanadi</i>	3
	<i>Kanthanadinibadha</i> (tubes attached to trachea)	18

## KANDARA

षोडश कण्डरा तासां चतस्रः पादयोः तावत्यो हस्तग्रीवापृष्ठेषु..

ग्रीवाहृदयनिबन्धिनीनामधोभागगतानां.....<sup>20</sup> (Su. Sa. 5/11)

There are 16 *Kandara* (big tendons) in body out of which four are in *Greeva* (same thing admitted by *Vagbhat* in A. S. Sa 5/33). The tip of those tendons which bind *Greeva* & *Hriday* descend downwards to *Medhra* (penis).

## Kurcha:

षट् कूर्चाः, ते हस्तपादग्रीवामेद्रेषु हस्तयोर्द्वौ पादयोर्द्वौ ग्रीवामेद्रयोरेकैकः <sup>21</sup> (Su. Sa. 5/13)

*Kurcha* (brush-like structures of tendons) are six; one each in the hands, feet, neck & penis (same concept given by *Vagbhat-A. S. Sa 5/35*).

"कूर्जा इव कूर्चाः, नाग्रीवाकृतिरून्नेयाः ते पुनर्मासास्थिसिरास्नायूनां जालकप्रभवाणां सन्ततिविरचिताः <sup>1</sup>(Chakradatta): they are brush like structures & aponeuroses of *Mamsa, Asthi, Sira, and Snayu* formed like a net.

## CONCLUSION-

*Greeva* is a important part of human body which has very complex structure. It is attached to the *shira*(head) where all the centres of all sense organ are located. It also provides support for the weight of the head. *Greeva* allows a wide range of head movement. Any pathology /disease in this region causes disturbance in our day –to-day life. So proper and detailed knowledge is necessary for the treatment of *greeva* diseases(cervical diseases).

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