

Jay Glaser Body Renewal

Reading excerpt

[Body Renewal](#)

of [Jay Glaser](#)

Publisher: Lotus Press



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APPENDIX 4

THE METABOLIC FIRES AND FORMATION OF TISSUES

*Sama-doshab sam-agnishcha
Sama-dhatu-mala-kriyah
Prasann-atma-indriya-manah
Swasthya-ity-abhidhiyate*

*Balance of the doshas, and agnis (fires)
Balance of the dhatus (tissues), malas (wastes) and kriyas (organs of action)
Coordination of the cosmic Self with the senses and mind
This is the definition of health (swasthya)*

The definition of ideal health from Susruta
Samhita, the oldest textbook of surgery

Agni - The Digestive Fire

Agni, as it is used in Vedic medicine, is the gastric fire, that consumes or sacrifices the food to create energy and tissues. Agni is commonly called pachaka pitta. Pachaka can be translated *the cooking fire*, and is derived from the root PAK meaning to cook. It is said to reside in the stomach and small intestine, but also includes salivation and esophageal actions. Pitta by nature is sharp, and a proper digestive fire should be sharp. When the authors of antiquity refer to the gastric fire, they were referring to the physiological functions that literally cook the food or otherwise break it down to prepare it for absorption and subsequent oxidation. The concept of agni thus includes the secretion and action of hydrochloric acid, gut enzymes, bile acids and biliary alkali on the food bolus.

There are three disorders of this fire: too weak (mandagni), associated with sluggish digestion; too sharp (tikshnagni), associated with too much acidity, creating burning and dyspepsia; and irregular (vishamagni), associated with both.

Dhatus and Dhatu-agnis - The Tissues and Metabolic Fires

The human physiology is the expression of Veda, the reservoir of pure intelligence that governs creation, and nowhere is this concept displayed as clearly as in the sequential emergence of refined dhatus (tissues) from primordial plasma. Modern biology understands that the plasma provides nutrients for a cell to function, proliferate, and differentiate. The ancient Ayurvedic treatises describe the same processes. Plasma is the gross matrix for the other more refined tissues such as majja (that which fills the bone, i.e. bone marrow, immune tissue and nervous tissue) and shukra (semen and ova), nourishing them and providing the milieu in which they can thrive. The immune system's recognition of hundreds of thousands of antigens that permits it to instantly mount an immune response, the complex executive functions

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of the nervous system, and the union of semen and ovum to form a new being are processes so refined they are true miracles. Ayurveda describes these phenomena as the emergence of life from pure intelligence.

The word dhatu comes from the root DHA meaning basis or foundation. Dhatus are created through the action of catalysts that convert one tissue to another. In this way, progressively refined tissues are created from their grosser precursors. The catalyst for this is another type of agni, a *dhatu-agni* or *metabolic fire*.

The Ayurvedic texts, like modern medical texts, state that proper functioning of agni, the digestive fire, breaks food down into its essence, *ahararasa*, the chyle or liquid portion of the food which passes across the mucous membrane of the intestine. *Ahararasa* is in turn transformed into *rasa*, the primordial plasma, by the first metabolic fire, the *rasa-dhatu-agni*. Think of *rasa* as the sap, similar to the colorless sap of a flower, that becomes all the various parts. The other *dhatu-agnis* sequentially catalyze *rasa* into all the other dhatus. The simplified schema goes like this:

Substrate	Catalyst	Product	English equivalent of product
food	agni (digestive fire)	rasa	plasma (sap)
rasa	rasa-dhatu-agni	rakta	Red and white blood cells
rakta	rakta-dhatu-agni	mamsa	Fleshy organs and muscle
mamsa	meda-dhatu-agni	meda	adipose tissue, fat
meda	asthi-dhatu-agni	asthi	bone and joints
asthi	majja-dhatu-agni	majja	That which fills bone (marrow, nerves)
majja	shukra-dhatu-agni	shukra	semen, ovum, reproductive tissues
shukra	a wholesome lifestyle	ojas	essence of the dhatus

Ojas - The Essence of the Tissues

Ojas is the essence of the seven dhatus, the subtlest of material substances, and is created when shukra is made properly from the action of all the *dhatu-agnis*. It is created spontaneously from the other seven tissues as a result of proper diet, lifestyle, routines, staying rested, and spiritual practices. Ojas is responsible for physical and mental strength, radiance and beauty, immunity and well-being.

Srotamsi - Channels and Cavities

Any hollow cavity or organ in the body through which matter or intelligence flows is a *srotas* (plural= *srotamsi*), according to the treatises. These include blood and lymphatic vessels, viscera, the heart, intestines, etc. *Srotamsi* are understood to be the flutes through which intelligence resonates, the physical expression of your body's ancient song. Ultimately, keeping the channels healthy and free of obstruction is the key to health according to *Charaka*. Different channels are held to be blocked by different kinds of *ama* (residues), a very modern concept.

Ama - Residues of Inefficient Digestion

Despite our best intentions, we fail to eat moderately of pure, nourishing fare. We eat too much, too heavily, too late at night, when we are still digesting a previous

Excerpt from Jay Glaser, „ Body Renewal“

Publisher: Lotus Press

Excerpted by Narayana Publishers, 79400 Kandern,

Tel.: +49 (0) 7626 974 970-0

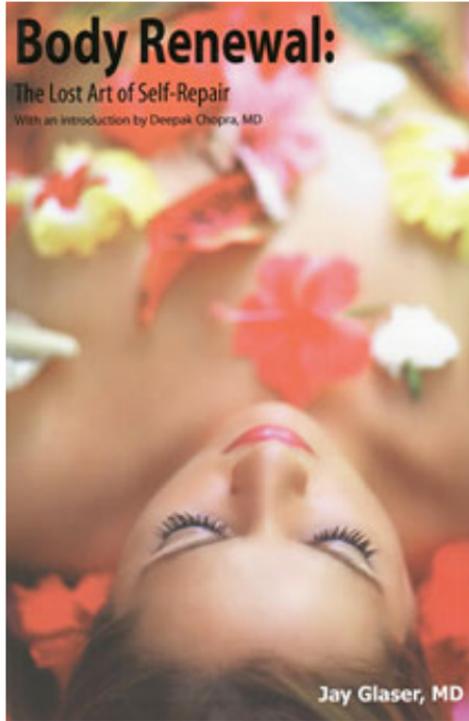
meal, or when we are anxious, upset or rushed. The result is a weak or irregular agni and inefficient digestion with the creation of an undigested byproduct, ama. The root [MA] means to ripen or cook, so ama means "uncooked products of digestion." Ama is the predictable result of failing to properly maintain agni.

Ama is what we call plaque, debris, or deposits in western terminology: substances that lodge in inappropriate locations to create pathology. We lay down plaque in coronary arteries, in nerve tissue (as in multiple sclerosis) or in the beta-amyloid tangles seen in Alzheimer's disease and in the heart muscle cells, or as the visible debris in the cytoplasm of aging cells.

The 13 Natural urges

Ayurveda describes 13 requirements of the body that should not be suppressed if good health is to be maintained. Suppression of these urges, the texts say, results in imbalance of the doshas or the agnis.

- passing urine
- passing stool
- seminal discharge or orgasm
- passing gas
- vomiting
- sneezing
- hiccoughing
- burping
- yawning
- hunger (and its corollary, the impulse to not eat if hunger is not present)
- thirst (and its corollary, the impulse to not drink if thirst is not present)
- shedding tears
- sleep (i.e. staying up doing activity at night when the need for sleep is present)



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284 pages, pb
publication 2010



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