

Smriti (Memory) and Related Concepts in Ayurveda: A Critical Analysis

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ABSTRACT

The higher mental process of encoding, storing, and retrieving information is called memory. When it comes to understanding new information, it plays a crucial part. There are a few scattered allusions to the idea of Smriti (Memory) in Ayurveda's ancient writings. Smriti is more closely associated with Buddhi and Mana than with physical matter. The purpose of this review is to examine the notion of Smriti in light of the Ayurvedic classics. Substances and Techniques: We utilized data collected from Ayurvedic texts and reviews found in NIIMH, PubMed, and Google Scholar to finish the research. Smriti, smRuti, were the keywords employed in the search strategy. The Samhita has a total of ninety allusions, all in different situations. The information gathered was organized into the following categories: definition, philosophy, physiology, evaluation, pathology, and therapy. In conclusion, Smriti is multifaceted, touching on not just the mind but also the body and spirit. Atma (soul), Mana (psyche), Buddhi (intellect), and Medha (retentive faculty of memory) are thought to work together to create memory. Despite the fact that different Acharya have given their own explanations of Dhi (Understanding), Dhriti (Tenacity), and Smriti (Knowledge), all three are necessary for Buddhi to work.

Keywords: *Ayurveda, Smriti (Memory), Buddhi, Medha, and Buddhi*

Introduction

Humans have been trying to figure out what memory is, how it works, and why it fails since the beginning of time. It's essential to being human, but it's also one of the hardest things to pin down in a person. According to current scientific understanding, memory is a specific area of the brain where data may be encoded, preserved, and later recalled. Memory is also, at its most fundamental level, a network of imprinted brain connections, from a physiological or neurological perspective. Reminiscence is the process of recalling and reliving a former event via the activation of the same neural circuits that were present during the original experience. One's ability to learn and create linguistic links and a sense of self depend on one's ability to recall prior occurrences.

Bhagvadgeeta, an ancient text, alludes to Smriti and encapsulates the text's significance. Imagining sensual items causes one to get attached to them; this leads to desire; and lust leads to rage. Anger may cause total delusion, and confusion in one's memories can result from being deluded. If you have trouble remembering things, you won't be as smart, and when you're not smart, you'll go back to wanting more and more

stuff.[1]

The Ayurvedic concepts of Atma, Mana, Medha, and Buddhi are more closely associated with the notion of Smriti. Mana is crucial in learning and memory retention, and it also controls the external environment.

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 Hridaya 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 *Vaya Avastha* (age). Another classification of *Smriti* as *Guna* (Quality), *Hetu* (Cause), *Lakshana* of *Rogas* (symptom of diseases) and *Chikitsa* (Treatment), *Arishta Lakshanas* (signs of imminent death) was also found.

Definition of *Smriti*:

1. *Vayupuran*: The seers who constantly think about the spiritual object have written compendium which are called as *Smriti*.^[2]
2. Vaisheshika philosophy: *Smriti* is said to be the results from a particular conjugation 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. *Yogavasishtha* 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 remembrance of a thing through hearing, direct perception or earlier experienced with 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 *Tarkasangraha*, remembrance by previous experience is said to be *Smriti*.^[10]

Philosophical aspect of *Smriti*:

While describing the list of *Atmaj Bhavas* (Factors derived from Soul), *Acharya* has clearly mentioned *Dharana* (Retention power), *Dhriti*, *Buddhi* and *Smriti*.

^[11] *Smriti* is one among the *Lakshana* (feature) of *Parmatma*'s (Absolute Soul) existence^[12] which is also one of the factor which was said as a proof for the existence of *Atma*.^[13]

Acharya Charaka has opined that remembering of *Tatwagynana* (Philosophy) is known as *Smriti*^[14] and a person having *Smriti* will not only be free from *Roga* (Disease) but will also attain *Moksha* (Salvation).^[15]

Smriti is one of the reason for both *Pravritti*^[16] (Attachments) and *Nivrutti*^[17] (Detachments) which is nothing but *Dukha* (Misery) and *Sukha* (happiness) respectively.^[18]

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*, *Manas*, *Indriya* (Sense organs) and *Indriyarthas* (Object of Sense) are responsible for *Smriti*.^[19]

2. *Bahya Karana* (Extrinsic factor):

Acharya Charaka has explained 8 factors ^[20], the repeated practice of these will improve *Smriti*. They are as follows,

- i. *Nimitta Grahana* (Reaction to caused effects),
- ii. *Rupa Grahana* (Perception similar shape objects),
- iii. *Sadrushya* (Similarity),
- iv. *Saviparyaya* (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.^[21]

Process of *Smriti* initiates with the perception of the object or subject by *Indriya*. *Indriya* carries perceived object or subject to *Manas*. It passes through the *Mana Vishaya* (Functions of mind) Viz: *Chintana* (Thinking), *Vicharya* (Analysing), *Uhya* (Reasoning) and get certain form i.e. *Buddhi*. 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,^[23] 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 no1.

Table no. 1: Doshas involved in Smriti Utpatti

Sr. No.	Dosha	Action
1	<i>Prana Vata</i> ^[24]	Control and stimulation of <i>Mana</i> to analyse the entire perception and action projected to <i>Karmendriyas</i> (organ of action).
2	<i>Udana Vata</i> ^[25]	Responsible for <i>Smriti</i>
3	<i>Vyana Vata</i> ^[26-27]	Stability and concentration of <i>Mana</i> .
4	<i>Sadhaka Pitta</i> ^[28]	Responsible for mental faculties like <i>Buddhi</i> , <i>Medha</i> .
5	<i>Tarpaka Kapha</i> ^[29]	Nourishes the <i>Indriyas</i> and helps in perception.

Smriti in different Deha prakriti (Bodyconstitution):

Status of *Smriti* varies according to different bodyconstituents. It is listed in table no. 2.

Table no. 2: Smriti in different Deha Prakriti

S r . No.	Prakriti	Smriti
1	<i>Vata Prakriti</i>	<i>Alpa Smruta</i> (low memory), ^[30] <i>Chala Smriti</i> (unstable memory), ^[31] <i>Shighra Vismarana</i> (quick forgetting) ^[32]
2	<i>Pitta Prakriti</i>	<i>Medhavi</i> (intelligent) ^{[33],[34]}
3	<i>Kapha Prakriti</i>	<i>Chiragrahi</i> (slow grasping) ^[35] and <i>Smrutimana</i> (good memory) ^[36]
4	<i>Satvika Prakriti</i>	<i>Smrutimana</i> ^[37]
5	<i>Yamyaya Kaya</i>	<i>Smrutimana</i> ^{[38],[39]}
6	<i>Brahma Kaya</i>	<i>Smrutimanta</i> ^[40]

Smriti and Sara (Excellence of tissue):

Among the eight *Sara* description, *Twaka Sara Purusha*^[41] (excellence of Skin) is said to have highintellect and *Satva Sara Purusha*^[42] (Excellence ofmental 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 *Madhyavasha* (Middle age) *Bala*, *Virya* (Energy), *Paurusha* (Manliness), *Parakrama* (Valour), *Grahana* (Grasping power)-*Dharana* (Retention power)- *Smarana Shakti* (recollection power) will be in *Pakva 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 *Grahana*, *Dharana* and *Smaran*, called as *Smritirhasa* (Diminished memory).^[43-44]

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 *Tatvagyaana* (Real Knowledge). This condition is called as *Smriti Bhramsha* (destruction of memory).^[46]

1. Nidana (Cause):

- Divaswapna*^[47] (Day sleep)
- Gramya Aahar Sevana*^[48] (Urban dietary)
- Madyapaan* by *Garbhini*^[49] (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 *Manovaha Srotas* (occlusion 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. Abhyas* (Constant practice), *Tadvidya Sambhasha* (Discussion with experts),^[50] *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 *Buddhi*. *Satvika Aahara* (Healthy diet) leads to attainment of excellent memory.^[53] Regular intake of *Ghrita* (Ghee) is recommended for strengthening the senses and also in deprivation performance of *Medha* and *Smriti* due to vitiated *Vata* and *Pitta*.^[54-56] *Smriti*, has been mentioned as an advantage of consuming *Eranda Sneha* (Castor oil),^[57] *Haritaki* (*Terminalia chebula*)^[58] and *Kurma Mamsa* (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 *Saptadhatu*. 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* (*Glycyrrhiza glabra* Linn.), *Guduchi* (*Tinospora cardifolia* Miers) and *Shankhapushpi* (*Convolvulus pleuricaulis* Chois)^[60] and *Rasayana* preparations like *Bramharasayana*^[61], *Chyavanaprasha*^[62], *Endrarasayana*^[63], *Triphala Rasayana*^[64], *Shilajitu Rasayana*^[65], *Indrokta Rasayana*^[66] are used for amendment of memory.

After *Shodhana Karma* (Purification therapy), *Shweta Bakuchi Churna* (Powder of *Psoralea corylifolia*) with *Guda* (Jaggery) and *Ghrita* (clarified butter) for 6 months along with *Pathya* leads to *Smritiyukta, Nirogi Shatayu Jeevan* (100 years healthy life with good memory).^[67] *Sharira Shuddhi* (purification of body) followed by 12 days intake of *Shweta Vacha* (white *Achoras calamus*) and *Amalaki* with *Dugdha* (Milk) on empty stomach along with *Pathya* as *Ghrita*, *Dugdha* and *Shali* (Rice) increases *Smriti*.^[68]

As *Guna* (Quality):

Smriti is attribute of *Hitayu* (useful life).^[69] *Smriti* is counted among the qualities of *Parishak Vidvaha* (Wise examiner)^[70], *Pranabhisar Chikitsaka* (Good physician)^[71], *Shishya* (Student)^[72,73], *Duta* (Messenger)^[74] and *Karmapurusha*^[75] which is also possessed by the *Rogi* (Patient)^[76], *Uttama Vaidya* (Physician)^[77] and serve as an aid to be get successful treatment. It is one of the attribute of *Satvika Manas* (Sound mind).^[78]

As *Hetu* (Causative factor):

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

As *Lakshana* (Symptom):

Smriti is implicated explicitly in two major psychological disorders like *Unmada* (Psychosis) and *Apasmara* (Epilepsy). In *Unmada*^[80], *Smritibhramsha* will be there while in *Apsmara*^[81] there is *Smritinasha* (loss of memory). It also get laden in *Atatvabhinivesha* (Psychic perversion), as *Pragyaparadha* is main *Nidana* (cause) of it.^[82]

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

As *Chikitsa* (Treatment):

Smriti is considered as key therapeutic approach in *Manasika Vyadhis* (Mental disorders), known as *Satvavajaya Chikitsa* (Psychotherapy).^[86] It is also implicated in the hindrance of exogenous diseases.^[87]

As *Arishta* (Symptom of imminent death):

Smriti 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 *Smriti* in various classics. Even though *Smriti* is directly related to memory power, there are other dynamics that aid in remembering things like *Buddhi*, *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 *Smriti* 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*, *Smritikara* etc. separately. It shows that he has accepted the separate functional existence in *Dhi*, *Dhriti* and *Smriti* and their intricate interrelation.

Chakrapani and Gangadhar understood performance of *Buddhi* as the result of the collective performance of *Dhi*, *Dhriti* and *Smriti*. They mentioned it as *Trividh* (Three) *Buddhi*.^[91] Hemadri's directives of differential assessment of *Dharana* and *Smriti* are very peculiar, useful and applied in practice. He said that interrupted and uninterrupted presentation of perceived knowledge represents *Smriti* 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 *Dosha*, *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, *Adravayabhuta* (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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