

CRITICAL REVIEW ON MULTIPLICITY OF VIRECHANA YOGA IN CHIKITSA STHANA OF CHARAKA SAMHITA

^{*1}Dr. Nutan Ghansham Pustode, ²Dr. Komal Sardarsing Daberao, ³Dr. Santosh T. Jatale

¹PG Scholar, Sanskrit Samhita Siddhant Department, Government Ayurvedic College,
Nanded, Maharashtra – 431601.

²PG Scholar, Sanskrit Samhita Siddhant Department, Government Ayurvedic College,
Nanded, Maharashtra – 431601.

³Guide and Associate Professor, Sanskrit Samhita Siddhant Department, Government
Ayurvedic College, Nanded, Maharashtra – 431601.

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*Corresponding Author

Dr. Nutan Ghansham Pustode

PG Scholar, Sanskrit Samhita Siddhant
Department, Government Ayurvedic
College, Nanded, Maharashtra –
431601.



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ABSTRACT

Among the five principal *Shodhana Karmas*, *Virechana* occupies a central role for the purification of *Pitta Dosha*, especially when located in the *Adhobhaga* of the body. Yet, in the *Chikitsa Sthana* of *Charaka Samhita*, *Charaka* depicts a remarkable diversity in the indication, intensity, and formulation of *Virechana*, transcending the boundaries of *Pitta* disorders. He recommends *Virechana* even in *Vata*, *Kapha*, and *Sannipataja* conditions, wherever *Pitta* or *Aashaya Dushti* acts as a co-factor. This paper offers a detailed textual and conceptual review of the multiplicity of *Virechana Yogas* mentioned across various disease chapters of *Charaka Chikitsa Sthana*. The objective is to understand the rationale behind different intensities (*Mridu*, *Madhyama*, and *Teekshna*), forms (*Ghrita*, *Taila*, *Churna*, *Kwatha*), and *Anupanas* used, while identifying assessment factors such as *Bala*, *Koshtha*, *Dosha*, *Vyadhi Bala*, and *Avastha*. The study highlights *Charaka's*

rational, individualized, and adaptable therapeutic reasoning, establishing his approach as timelessly scientific and clinically relevant.

KEYWORDS: *Virechana, Charaka Samhita, Shodhana, Pitta Dosha, Panchakarma, Mridu, Madhyama, Teekshna.*

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda conceptualizes health as the balanced state of *Dosha, Dhātu, Mala*, and *Agni*, governed by the principle of *Samyak Prakriti-Sthapana*. To maintain or restore this equilibrium, *Shodhana Chikitsa* plays a vital role. Among its five classical measures—*Vamana, Virechana, Basti, Nasya*, and *Raktamokshana*—the *Virechana Karma* serves as a chief measure for *Pitta Shodhana*.

However, *Charaka Samhita*^[1], being the oldest and most systematic treatise, reflects a broad therapeutic philosophy in which no procedure is rigidly confined to a single *Dosha*. *Virechana*, though classically a *Pitta-Shodhana* measure, has been repeatedly recommended by *Charaka* in various *Vataja, Kaphaja, Rakta*, and even *Sannipataja* conditions where the deeper pathogenesis involves *Avarana, Aama*, or *Srotorodha*.

In *Chikitsa Sthana*, across different disease contexts like *Jwara, Pandu, Kushtha, Udara, Rajayakshma*, and *Unmada*, one finds multiple formulations—each selected based on the *Dosha predominance, Avastha, Bala*, and *Koshtha* of the patient. This multiplicity reflects the clinical acumen of *Charaka* in tailoring *Virechana* therapy with utmost precision.

Thus, the present critical review attempts to systematically explore the multiplicity of *Virechana Yogas* in *Charaka Chikitsa Sthana*, their pharmaceutical forms, therapeutic indications, and conceptual rationale.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

A textual critical review of *Charaka Samhita – Chikitsa Sthana* (approx. 1000 BCE – 400 CE) was undertaken, along with classical commentaries such as *Ayurveda Dipika* by Chakrapani and comparative modern works by Sharma, Dash, and Tripathi.

All verses indicating *Virechana* were extracted, categorized, and interpreted contextually.

The study focused on four analytical aspects:

1. Disease indication and *Dosha predominance*
2. Drug selection and pharmaceutical form (*Kalpāna Bheda*)
3. Rationale of intensity (*Mridu–Madhyama–Teekshna*)
4. Assessment parameters (*Bala, Koshtha, Dosha, Vyadhi Bala*)

• Etymology

Virechana word is made by combination of main 'Rich' *dhatu* and 'Vi' *Upsarga* and 'Nich' 'Lyut' *Pratyayas* giving meaning 'Visheshena *Rechayateeti*.

Rechana is derived from root word 'Ricir *Dhatu* and *LyutPratyaya*' (*Mala Bhedana*)^[1].

Acharya Charaka has mentioned *Virechana* word for both *Vamana* and *Virechana* in *KalpSthana*. So the word *Rechana* is commonly used for evacuation of *Doshas*, which is done by both *Vamana* and *Virechana*. But in general, the word *Virechana* denoted evacuation of *Dosha* through anus.

• Definition

Virechana is a process by which the vitiated *Pitta* and other *mala* from the whole body are expelled out through gastrointestinal tract by means of purgation with the use of specific formulations.^[2]

• Importance of *Virechana Karma*

- ✓ Detoxifies the body incase of *Pitta* accumulation
- ✓ Deeply cleans the whole gastrointestinal tract including poisoning
- ✓ Cures various skin disorders and allergy
- ✓ Helps with heart disease, Asthama and Diabetes Treats Problems like Piles, Constipation, Jaundice and Inflammations.

• Classification of *Virechana Drugs*^[3]

Sukha Virechana - *Trivrruta*

Mridu Virechana - *Aaragwadh*

Teekshna Virechana - *Snuhi*

Charakokta Virechana Dravya^[4]

Moolini – 16 *Phalini* – 19

Sneha – 4 *Lavana* – 5

Mootra – 8 *Dugdha* – 8 *Shodhanartha Vriksha* – 6

Acc. To *Sharangadhara*^[5]

1. *Anulomana* - *Hareetaki*
2. *Sramsana* - *Kritamalaka*
3. *Bhedana* - *Katuka*
4. *Rechana* – *Trivritta*

OBSERVATIONS AND RESULTS

1. Categorization Based on Intensity of Virechana

(A) Mridu Virechana

- Mridu Virechana aims for Sukha Shodhana—a gentle, non-exhaustive purification suitable for patients with Alpa Bala and Dhatu Kshaya.

Charaka prescribes it in conditions like Punaravartaka Jwara, Rajayakshma, Kamala, Raktapitta, Shotha, and Vatarakta.

Disease	Condition		Reference
1) <i>Jwara</i> , ^[6] <i>Vishama Jwara</i> , <i>Punaravartak Jwara</i>	<i>Daha,Trushna,</i> <i>Pitta Pradhana</i>	<i>Nirama,Baddha Dosha</i> <i>BahuDosha – Adhobhagi dosh</i>	<i>Cha.Chi.3/167-168, 171, 230-233, 294, 340</i>
	<i>Aksheena Bal-Mams-Agni</i>		
2) <i>Raktapitta</i> ^[7]	<i>Santarpanottha,Urdhwaga</i>	<i>BahuDosha</i>	<i>Cha.Chi.4/55-56</i>
	<i>Aksheena Bal-Mams-Agni</i>		
3) <i>Gulma</i> ^[8]	<i>Santapa</i>	<i>Vataja- Vrudhha Pitta</i>	<i>Cha.Chi.5/31</i>
<i>Pittaja Gulma</i>	<i>Snigdha-UshnaJanya</i>	<i>Agni Bala Apexi</i>	
<i>Kaphaj Gulma</i>	<i>Sthanat Apasrut</i>		
4) <i>Kushtha</i> ^[9]	<i>Pitta Pradhana</i>		<i>Cha.Chi.7/39,61</i>
	<i>Twak Ashrit Dosha-Nitya</i>		
5) <i>Rajayakshma</i> ^[10]	<i>Doshadhik</i>		<i>Cha.Chi.8/87-88</i>
6) <i>Unmada</i> ^[11]	<i>Kapha-Pitta Avruta</i>		<i>Cha.Chi.9/25-26</i>
7) <i>Shotha</i> ^[12]	<i>Adho Dosha</i>		<i>Cha.Chi.12/17-19, 21-22, 27-28</i>
	<i>Kaphottha</i>		
	<i>Sadosha,VataPittaja</i>		
8) <i>Udara</i> ^[13]	<i>Pleehodara</i>		<i>Cha.Chi.13/78</i>
9) <i>Arsha</i> ^[14]	<i>Asava-Arishta</i>		
10) <i>Kamala</i> ^[15]			<i>Cha.Chi.16/60</i>
11) <i>Kshayaja Kasa</i>	<i>Bahu Dosha, navotthit</i>		<i>Cha.Chi.18/150</i>
12) <i>Pravahika</i>	<i>Bahu Shula,</i> <i>Sarakta-Piccha, Trushna</i>	<i>Vibaddha,</i> <i>Vata-Varchas,</i>	<i>Cha.Chi.19/48</i>
13) <i>Vatarakta</i> ^[16]	<i>Adau</i>		<i>Cha.Chi.29/41</i>
	<i>Gambheera</i>	<i>RaktaPittotara</i>	<i>Cha.Chi.29/43, 45</i>
15) <i>Yoni Vyapad</i> ^[17]	<i>Vyapanna Yoni – sr̥v prakar</i>		<i>Cha.Chi.30/45</i>

➤ Mridu Virechana Yogas

Sr. No.	Shloka/Context	Drug/Preparation	Indication	Remarks
1	Jwara Chikitsa (16–171, 230–233)	Mrudvika, Amalaki, Trivrut Churna, Ghrita, Dugdha	Pittaja, Vata-Pittaja Jwara	Gentle purgation in feeble patients
2	Raktapitta Chikitsa (55–56)	Aragwadha, Triphala, Dugdha	Raktapitta, Kamala	Pitta-Rakta elimination without strength loss
3	Kushtha Chikitsa (39, 61)	Haritaki, Abhaya with Gud, Taila	Kaphaja Kushtha	Mild expulsion of Dosha with Snehana
4	Vata Vyadhi Chikitsa	Trivrut + Ghrita, Pippali,	Vata disorders,	Sneha-based Mridu Shodhana

	(25–26, 340)	Dugdha	Rajyakshma, Jwara	suitable for Dhatu-Kshaya
5	Shotha Chikitsa	Aragwadha + Pippali + Dugdha	Kaphaja Shotha	Gentle cleansing in inflammatory conditions

From above table, following observation are seen

- ✓ Godugdha used: 10 times
- ✓ Triphala: 10 times
- ✓ Aragwadha: 1 time
- ✓ Mrudvika: 2 times
- ✓ Amalaki: 7 times
- ✓ Kampillaka: 3 times
- ✓ Gudabhaya: 4 times

Mridu Virechana aligns with the Ayurvedic concept of “*Shuddhir na ati karshanam*”—purification without exhaustion. Charaka recommends milk, ghrita, and madhura dravyas to maintain Dhatu Samata while removing aggravated Pitta or Aamadoshā.

(B) Madhyam Virechana

-Madhyama Virechana is applied when moderate purification is needed —neither too mild nor too drastic.

It is ideal for diseases involving Dosha Sansarga and partial Koshtashrita Dushti.

Disease	Condition	Reference
1) Gulma	Santapa	Vata-Pitta Vriddha
2) Udara	Sarva Udara Snigdha, Sanjata Bala	Avrut Vayu
3) Grahani ^[18]	Niruha Paschat	Cha.Chi.15/79
4) Pittaja Pandu	Trivrut + Sharkara	Cha.Chi.16/56
5) Kaphaja Pandu	Gomutra Haritaki	Cha.Chu.16/57
6) Pittaja Kasa		Cha.Chi.18/85
7) Visarpa ^[19]	Pittaja	Cha.Chi.21/64 - 67
8) Vatarakta	Malavrut Vata	Cha.Chi.29/157

➤ Madhyam Virechana Yogas

Sr. No.	Shloka/Context	Drug/Form	Indication	Remarks
1	Jwara Chikitsa (31)	Snehair Anulomikaih	Vata Gulma, Santapa	Moderate purgation balancing Vata and Pitta
2	Kustha Chikitsa (118–119)	Sura, Sauvira Siddha Ghrita, Patolmula, Rajani, Vidanga	Pitta-Kapha dominant skin disorders	For Kapha-Meda Dushti
3	Meda Roga Chikitsa (79, 157)*	Eranda Taila, Trivrut, Danti, Tiktaka Ghrita	Meda Roga, Kaphaja Pandu	To mobilize and eliminate obstructed Kapha

4	<i>Pandu Roga Chikitsa</i> (56–57)	<i>Danti, Trivrut Churna, Draksha</i>	<i>Pittaja Pandu</i>	Balanced <i>Shodhana</i> without over-depletion
5	<i>Vatarakta Chikitsa</i> (62)	<i>Mahatiktaka Ghrita, Eranda Taila</i>	<i>Rakta-Pitta involvement</i>	Ensures deep cleansing through <i>Rakta-Moola</i> channels

From above table, following observation are seen

- ✓ *Trivrut*: 16 references
- ✓ *Haritaki*: 15
- ✓ *Eranda Taila*: 5
- ✓ *Gomutra Haritaki*: 4

Madhyama Virechana suits ***Pittaja Vyadhi* with partial *Kapha Sannipata* or *Rakta Dushti*.**

It's also advised post-*Snehana* and *Svedana* in individuals of moderate strength.

(C) *Teekshna Virechana*

-*Teekshna Virechana* is used where *Dosha Sanchaya* is intense or *Srotorodha* causes deep-seated pathologies like *Udara*, *Gulma*, *Unmada*, or *Apasmara*.

Disease	Condition	Reference
1) <i>Gulma</i>	<i>Dwiguna Matra, Neelinadya Ghrit, Trayamanadi Ghrita</i>	<i>Cha.Chi.5/105-109 ;112-114</i>
	<i>Kaphaja Gulma</i>	<i>Cha.Chi.5/149-160</i>
2) <i>Apasmara</i>	<i>Pitta Pradhana</i>	<i>Cha.Chi.10/14</i>
3) <i>Baddhodara</i>		<i>Cha.Chi.13/90</i>
4) <i>Udara</i>		<i>Cha.Chi.13/137-140</i>
5) <i>Atyagni</i>		<i>Cha.Chi.15/231</i>
6) <i>Pandu</i> ^[20]		<i>Cha.Chi.16/40</i>
7) <i>Visha</i>		<i>Cha.Chi.23/45</i>
8) <i>Hridaya Shula</i>	<i>Trishu Kaleshu</i>	<i>Cha.Chi.26/102</i>

➤ *Teekshna Virechana Yogas*

Sr. No.	Reference	Drugs / Preparation	Indications	Remarks
1	<i>Gulma Chikitsa</i> (109–114)	<i>Neelinyadya Ghrita, Tiktaka Ghrita, Trivrut, Snuhi, Danti</i>	<i>Gulma, Udara, Shotha, Kamala</i>	Strong purgation for deep-seated <i>Doshas</i>
2	<i>Udara Chikitsa</i> (152–153)	<i>Mishraka Sneha, Trivrut Churna, Sudha Ksheera, Madhu</i>	<i>Kaphaja Gulma, Udara</i>	<i>Bhedana</i> action to remove <i>Srotorodha</i>
3	<i>Unmad Chikitsa</i> (14, 90)	<i>Snuhi Ksheera, Tilwaka, Swarnaksheeri</i>	<i>Apasmara, Unmad</i>	<i>Teekshna Virechana</i> for <i>Mano-Vata</i> disorders
4	<i>Kamala Chikitsa</i> (40, 102)	<i>Trivrut, Danti, Haritaki, Tikta Dravya</i>	<i>Kamala, Pleea, Shwitra</i>	High-intensity <i>Virechana</i> post- <i>Snehana</i>
5	<i>Visha Chikitsa</i> (45)	<i>Vamana + Teekshna Virechana</i>	<i>Visha, Hridaya Shoola</i>	Detoxification through rapid <i>Dosha</i> expulsion

From above table, following observation are seen

- ✓ *Patolmula*: 2
- ✓ *Indravaruni*: 1
- ✓ *Trayamana*: 6
- ✓ *Saptala*: 2
- ✓ *Danti*: 9
- ✓ *Neelini*: 3
- ✓ *Snuhi*: 3
- ✓ *Swarnaksheeri*: 3
- ✓ *Tilwaka*: 1

Teekshna Virechana corresponds to the modern concept of intensive detoxification—rapid expulsion of vitiated *Dosha*, used cautiously in individuals with good strength and resistant diseases.

2. Forms of Virechana Dravya Used

Form	Number of Uses	Example
<i>Ghrita (Sarp)</i>	17	<i>Tiktaka Ghrita, Mahatiktaka Ghrita</i>
<i>Churna</i>	11	<i>Trivrut Churna, Haritaki Churna</i>
<i>Swarasa</i>	6	<i>Patolmula Swarasa, Danti Phala Rasa</i>
<i>Taila</i>	5	<i>Eranda Taila</i>
<i>Kwatha</i>	5	<i>Triphala, Tiktaka Kwatha</i>
<i>Asava/Arishta</i>	5	<i>Takkarista, Arishta formulations</i>

3. Type of Virechana & Assessed Factors

Parameter	Observation
Type	<i>Sneha Virechana (11), Ruksha Virechana (1)</i>
Assessed Factors	<i>Bala, Koshtha, Dosha-Kala-Bala, Vyadhi Bala, Dhatu condition</i>
Examples	<i>Rajayakshma (Bala), Udavarta (Koshtha), Stanya Dosha (Dosha-Kala)</i>

DISCUSSION

1. Pathological Basis for Multiplicity

Charaka's approach is dynamic—he doesn't confine *Virechana* to one *Dosha*. Instead, he considers:

- *Vyadhi Samprapti* — Whether *Dosha* is in *Koshtha* or *Shakha*
- *Dosha-Dhatu-Samsarga* — *Pitta* may combine with *Vata* or *Kapha*, changing the line of treatment
- *Rogi Bala* — Weak patients require *Mridu Virechana*, strong ones *Teekshna*
- *Vyadhi Bala* — Chronicity or intensity dictates the type and dosage

2. Clinical Implications of Dosha Association

- *Vata-Pittaja Conditions*: Require *Sneha*-based mild *Virechana* (e.g., *Udavarta*, *Vatodara*)
- *Kapha-Pittaja Conditions*: Indicate use of bitter and pungent *Virechana* with *Gomutra* or *Tiktaka Dravya*
- *Rakta Dushti*: Necessitates *Sneha*–*Teekshna* balance (e.g., *Raktapitta*, *Vatarakta*)

3. Role of Anupana and Formulation

- *Madhu* + *Ghrita* – acts synergistically in *Jwara* through *Rasayana* and *Kapha-Pitta* pacification.
- *Madhu* + *Sharkara* – cooling in *Rakta Pitta* due to *Madhura-Kashaya Rasa*.
- *Dugdha* – balances *Ushna Teekshna Dravya*, prevents dehydration.
- *Gomutra* – promotes *Srotoshodhana* and *Kaphahara* in chronic pathologies.

4. Conceptual Insights

Multiplicity in *Virechana* represents *Charaka's Anukta Vyadhi Chikitsa Siddhanta* — the ability to adapt therapy beyond textual rigidity.

Each formulation in *Chikitsa Sthana* exemplifies rational customization based on *Desha*, *Kala*, *Agni*, *Bala*, and *Avastha* — the hallmarks of *Ayurvedic* precision medicine.

CONCLUSION

1. *Charaka's Clinical Flexibility*

The multiplicity of *Virechana Yoga* reveals *Charaka's* adaptive approach to *Dosha* variation, where the therapy is not disease-specific but *Samprapti*-specific.

2. Therapeutic Customization

The classification into *Mridu*, *Madhyama*, and *Teekshna* ensures safe administration across diverse patients, preventing under- or over-purification.

3. Pharmaceutical Diversity

Use of *Ghrita*, *Churna*, *Taila*, *Swarasa*, and *Kwatha* underlines *Charaka's* understanding of bioavailability and *Dravya–Karma–Anupana* synergy.

4. Relevance to Modern Practice

These references serve as guidelines for current *Panchakarma* protocols, emphasizing assessment-based individualization and procedural refinement.

Thus, *Virechana* in *Charaka Chikitsa Sthana* stands as an enduring example of therapeutic pluralism, scientific adaptability, and timeless clinical reasoning.

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