

A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF MARMA

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ABSTRACT

Ayurveda is a science of life which believes in treating body, mind & soul. In *Ayurveda*, *Marmas* are the vital area of body. As any injury to these parts may lead to severe pain, disability and even death. *Marmas* (vital area) are considered as *Shalya vishayardha*. *Marma* science, an extraordinary gem in the vast treasure of *Ayurvedic* knowledge, represents the science of specific vital places in the body (*Marmas*), that are the 'seats of life' (*Prana* - the vital life force). These are not only anatomical landmarks *Marma stanas* (vital area) are the seat of *Soma*, *Maruta*, *Tejas*. They represent the *Tridosha* and three *Gunas* namely *Sattva*, *Rajas*, *Tamas*. Other than this the supreme power within the *Marmasthana* is *Bhutatma* this is a force which controls body & mind both. Detail description of *Marma* is available in

Sushruta Samhita. *Sushruta* has explained definition of *Marma* their sites, functions & *Marma viddha laxanas* in detail.

KEYWORDS: *Marma*, *Tridosha*, *Triguna*, *Prana*, *Marma stana*.

INTRODUCTION

The concept of *Marma* has been explained in all the three great *Ayurveda* classics of *Charaka*, *Sushruta* and *Vagbhata*.

Marma are the critical points of the body associated with different organs and nerves. *Marma* is one of the unique and important topic discussed in *Ayurveda*.

Acharya Sushruta states *Marma* means anatomical area where *Mamsa* (muscle), *Sira* (blood vessels), *Snayu* (ligament), *Asthi* (bone) and *Sandhi* (joint) meet together.^[1]

Vagbhata said that *Marma* is a place where *Vishama spandana* can be felt & *Peedita ruja* (pain on pressing) is there.^[2]

As any injury to these parts may lead to severe pain, disability, loss of function, loss of sensation or death, therefore they hold an important place in the science of surgery.^[3]

Knowledge of the *Marma* is described as half of knowledge of *Shalya tantra* (*shalya vishayardha*), since persons injured in the *Marma stana* (vital area) dies quickly.^[4]

If anyone survives by the efficacy of the physician, he is sure to suffer with deformities.^[5]

Marma points are specific areas on the body which has relation through pranic channels to various internal organs, *Doshas* & *Srotas*(channels).^[6]

Acharya sushruta states that *Marma sthana* (vital area) is the vital point, should not be injured and should be kept intact even while doing surgeries.^[7]

Definition of *Marma*

Marmani mamsa sira snayvasthisandhisannipata.

teshu swabhavata eva visheshena pranastistanti.

tasmanmarmaswabhihatastanstan bhavanapadyante:(Su sha 6/15).

Acharya Sushruta states *Marma* means anatomical area where *Mamsa* (Muscle), *Sira* (blood vessels), *Snayu* (ligament), *Asthi*(Bone) and *Sandhi*(Joint) meet together.^[8]

According to *Acharya Vagbhata* – *Marma* means ‘what can cause death if injured is a *Marma*’. While *Marmas* do not always results in death, their impairment causes various diseases that can be difficult to treat.^[9]

Importance of *Marma*

Sushruta- Highlighted the importance of *Marmas* in surgical practice, he stated that in any surgical procedure knowledge of *Marmas* is as essential as knowledge of the nerves, muscles, bones and blood vessels.^[10]

Classification of *Marma*

Saptottaram marma shatam||

Total - 107 *Marmas*.^[11,12]

Table N0. 1: Structural classification (*Rachana bheda*).^[13]

TYPE OF MARMA	NUMBER
1. <i>Mamsa marma</i>	11
2. <i>Sira marma</i>	41
3. <i>Snayu marma</i>	27
4. <i>Asthi marma</i>	8
5. <i>Sandhi marma</i>	20

Vagbhata has explained one extra type of marma i.e *Dhamani marma*, they are – 9 in number.^[14]

Table N0 2: Prognostic classification (*Sadhyasadhyata*).^[15]

Type of Marma	Number	Mahabhuta
1. <i>Sadhyh pranahara marma</i>	19	<i>Agni</i>
2. <i>Kalantara pranahara marma</i>	33	<i>Agni & soma</i>
3. <i>Visalyaghna marma</i>	3	<i>Vayu</i>
4. <i>Vaikalyakara marma</i>	44	<i>Soma</i>
5. <i>Rujakara marma</i>	8	<i>Agni, vayu</i>

Table N0 3: Regional classification (*Shadanga bheda*).^[16]

Marma	Number
1. Upper extremity	22
2. Lower extremity	22
3. Abdomen & thorax	12
4. Back of the trunk	14
5. Neck & head	37

Table N0- 4: Metrical Classification (*Parivistara Bhedha*).^[17]

Size of Marma	Number
1. One <i>Anguli</i>	12
2. Two <i>Anguli</i>	6
3. Three <i>Anguli</i>	4
4. Four <i>Anguli</i>	29
5. Half <i>Anguli</i>	56

***Samanya Marma viddha lakshanas*^[18]**

- *Acharya Sushruta* has mentioned *Marma viddha laxanas* (injury to marma) are

- Bleeding,
- Disorientation,
- Loss of coordination,
- Loss of consciousness
- Long term disability

Table N0. 5: Specific *Marma* and there *Viddha laxana's*.^[19]

Number	<i>Marma</i>	<i>Marma viddha laxana's</i>
1	<i>Ksipra</i>	<i>Aksepa, marana</i>
2	<i>Talahrudaya</i>	<i>Ruja, marana</i>
3	<i>Kurca</i>	<i>Bhramana, vepana</i>
4	<i>Kurchasira</i>	<i>Ruja, sophia</i>
5	<i>Gulpha</i>	<i>Ruja, stambha, kanja</i>
6	<i>Indrabasti</i>	<i>Sonitaksaya, marana</i>
7	<i>Janu</i>	<i>Khanja</i>
8	<i>Ani</i>	<i>Sopha sakthi, stadhata</i>
9	<i>Urvi</i>	<i>Rakta ksaya, marana</i>
10	<i>Lohitaksa</i>	<i>Pakshaghata</i>
11	<i>Vitapa / kakshadara</i>	<i>Sandatva</i>
12	<i>Guda</i>	<i>Sadya marana</i>
13	<i>Apalapa</i>	<i>Rakta puya, marana</i>
14	<i>Apastambha</i>	<i>Vatapurna kosta,</i>
15	<i>Kukundara</i>	<i>Sparsa agyana `</i>
16	<i>Katikataruna</i>	<i>Pandu</i>
17	<i>Nitamba</i>	<i>Kaya shosa, daurbalya</i>
18	<i>Parsva sandhi</i>	<i>Lohitapurna kothata</i>
19	<i>Basthi, nabhi, hrudaya</i>	<i>Sadyo marana</i>
20	<i>Vidhura</i>	<i>Badhirya</i>
21	<i>Apanga</i>	<i>Andhanta</i>
22	<i>Avarta</i>	<i>Andhata</i>
23	<i>Utksepa</i>	<i>Pakat patitasalyo nodhritsaya</i>
24	<i>Simanta</i>	<i>Unmada</i>
25	<i>Sankha, shrngataka, adhipati</i>	<i>Sadyo pranahara</i>
26	<i>Nila, manya</i>	<i>Mukata, svara vaikrita, rasa grahita</i>
27	<i>Matrika</i>	<i>Sadyo marana</i>
28	<i>Krikatika</i>	<i>Calamurdhata</i>
29	<i>Phana</i>	<i>Agandhadnyana</i>
30	<i>Basti</i>	<i>Asmari</i>
31	<i>Amsa</i>	<i>Skandhastabdhata</i>
32	<i>Amsaphalaka</i>	<i>Bahusosa, svapna</i>
33	<i>Stanamula</i>	<i>Kasa, shwasa</i>
34	<i>Stanarohita</i>	<i>Lohita purna kosta, kasa, shwasa</i>

Prognostic status^[20]

Period of fatality after an *Abhigatha* to a *Marma stana* varies from *Marma* to *Marma*. Therefore, *Sushruta* has classified these *Marma* points into various categories depending upon the period of fatality.

1. *Sadyo pranahara marma* – Death occurs within One week.
2. *Kalantara pranahara marma*- 15 days to one month.
3. *Vishalagna marma*- May kill after removal of shalya or foreign body.
4. *Vaikalyakara* – May kill due to severe trauma and disability.

5. *Rujakara marma*- No fatality but acute pain.

Panchabhautika composition of Marma^[21]

Marma have their *Panchabhautika* constitution. Whichever *Mahabhuta* is dominantly present, plays its role and provides its properties to that particular *Marma*.

Sadyah pranahara marma has agni property. As the *Agni-guna* extinguishes quickly, any injury to such a *Marma* proves instantly fatal.

Kalantara pranahara marma has *Apya* property. As already said fire gets rapidly extinguished, but watery property diminishes gradually, therefore such *Marmas* having watery property if injured prove fatal after a gap of some time.

Visalyaghna marmas are predominantly having *Vatika* properties presence of a *Salya* inside the body after injury shall obstruct the *Vata* and patient will survive, but as soon as the *Salya* is extracted out, the obstructed *Vata* gets outlet to escape from the injured vulnerable area and patient expires. Therefore, the presence of foreign body allows the patient to survive. Whereas its extraction causes death.

Vaikalyakara marmas have got only *Apya* property. Soma or water maintains life because it has virtues of establishing and cooling properties.

Rujakara marma possesses firey as well as pitta predominant property. Thus it is always painful or *Rujakara*.

Trimarma^[22]: *Acharya caraka* has mentioned three main *Marmas*, those are *Shira*, *Hrudaya*, *Basti*. Any injury to these three *Marmas* causes destruction of the body.

Relations of Marma with Dosha^[23]

Vata

- *Prana vata* – *Adhipati & Sthapani*.
- *udana vata* – *Nila, Manya, Krikatika & Amsa*.
- *Vyana vata* – *Hridaya, Brihati, Amsaphalaka*.
- *Samana vata*- *Nabhi, Apastambha, Kurchashira*.
- *Apana vata*- *Basti, Guda, Vitapa*.

Pitta

- *Sadhaka pitta- Simantha, Adipati, Hridaya.*
- *Alochaka –Kurcha, Kurchashira, Sthapani, Apanga.*
- *Bhrajaka pitta- Nila Manya, Talahridaya, Amsa.*
- *Pachaka pitta - Nabhi, Apastambha, Kurchashira, Indrabasti.*
- *Ranjaka pitta - Nabhi, Kurpura, Janu, Kukundara.*

Kapha

- *Tarpaka kapha- Adhipati, Simantha, Hridaya.*
- *Bodhaka kapha – Shringataka, Manya, Phana.*
- *Avalambhaka kapha - Hridaya, Stanamula, Talahridaya.*
- *Kledaka kapha- Nabhi, Apastambha.*
- *Sleshaka kapha – Janu, Kurpara, Manibandha, Gulpha, Katikataruna.*

DISCUSSION

The science of *Marma* is one of the exclusive concepts of *Ayurveda*. *Marmas* are the very special and vital points, situated throughout the body. *Marmas* are important from traumatological point of view. Any injury to these *Marma stana* causes deformities and sometimes even causes death. Among all 107 *Marmas*, *Basti*, *Hrudaya* and *Shiras* are given prime importance by eminent scholars. If any injury to these 107 *Marmas* based on traumatic effect and site of *Marma*, prognosis will vary.

CONCLUSION

Marma science, an extraordinary gem in the *Ayurvedic treatise*. *Marmas* represents the science of specific vital places in the body, are mainly the seats of *Prana* (life).

Marmas can specifically use for diagnosis & treatment of many diseases or promoting health and longevity. As any injury to these parts may lead to severe pain, disability, loss of function etc.

Marma points also represent the junction of mind, body and consciousness; thus, the *Marma* points may hold vital information with regards to thoughts, emotions and feelings, and their link with the overall health.

Marmas are integral to all *Ayurvedic* therapies from simple self-treatments to complex clinical procedures.

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