



Mini-review article

Significance of *Marma Sharir* in Ayurvedic classical text

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ABSTRACT

Ayurveda is an ancient science which deals with the maintenance of health as well as the cure of a diseased person. It also deals with the thorough study of *Sharir Rachana* which comprises of human body and its constituents like *asthi*, *sandhi*, *marma*, *kala* etc. Ayurveda also explained different terminologies like *koorcha*, *sira*, *dhamani*, *seemantha*, etc. These all deal with scientific study of the subject *Sharira Rachana* which is compared to human anatomy in modern science. An important concept explained in Ayurveda is called *Marma*. *Marma Vigyan* deals with the position and utilization of different vital points in the body. According to our *Acharayas*, there is one hundred seven *marma* present in our body. Especially, we get the complete explanation of *marma* in the *Trimarmiya Sidhi Adhyaya*. In this chapter, there is an explanation of the definition of the *marma*, its types, relation to the *panchamahabhutas*, effects after injury and treatment. Their *sadhyata* and *asadhyata* are also explained in this section. *Marma* is basically classified into five types depending on the anatomical structures that are *mamsa*, *sira*, *sanayu*, *asthi* and *sandhi*. In addition, *marma* are also classified depending on their location. Hence, we are going to rewind the complete knowledge of *Marma* explained in *Ayurvedic* literature.

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INTRODUCTION

The concept of *marma* is very important in Ayurveda. *Marma* word literally means the junction where important parts of the body such as muscles, tendons, ligaments, nerves, *sira*, *snayu*, *asthi*, and *sandhi* meet. All *Acharayas* i.e. *Charaka*, *Sushruta*, and *Vagbhata* have explained the concept of *marma* (Tripathi, 1999; Kanjiv, 2018; Shastri, 2019). *Acharya Sushruta* has explained 107 *marmas*. In the *marma* explanation, *Acharya Sushruta* has given detailed information about identification, outcome after injury and their *sadhya asadhayata*. However, in modern science, there is no concept of *marma* explained yet but in *Ayurvedic Samhitas*, *marma* is explained and considered as an important entity (Joshi, 2019).

MARMA SHARIR

The word “*Marma*” originates from the Sanskrit word “*mri*” which means death. *Marma* are the indispensable zones of the body. *Marma* are the vital points present in the body on which if any injury occurs then it will lead to immediate death of the person. *Marma* is a specified anatomical location where five structures of the human body viz. *Mamsa*, *Sira*, *Snayu*, *Asthi* and *Sandhi* meet together at one point. According to *Acharya Vagbhata*, the anatomical sites on which any pressure causes pain or other abnormalities should be understood as *marma* (Kunte, 1997).

CONCEPT OF MARMA

Marma means *prana* or life. *Marma* are called for crucial in five anatomical assemble i.e. *Mamsa*, *Sira*, *Snayu*, *Asthi*, *Sandhi*. In all Ayurvedic texts, the total number of *marma* is 107. According to *Acharya Vagbhata*, *marma* is defined as the junction where *mamsa*, *asthi*, *sira*, *snayu*, *dhamni* and *sandhi* meet, and on this junction, the *prana* of a human being is present. According to *Acharya Vagbhata*, these points are very crucial and if injured or any external force is applied then it will cause abnormal pulsation (Kunte, 1997). This *Marma* concept was first mentioned by *Acharya Charak* (Shukla, 2008) but *Acharya Sushrut* (Shastri, 2019) and *Acharya Vagbhata* (Kanjiv, 2018) have described in detail about *Marma* in their respective *Sharir Sthan*. In *shabadkosha*, the literal meaning of the word *marma* is “*Marman*” which denotes the mortal point or the point which is very sensitive or vulnerable. According to *Acharya Dalhan*, the word *Marma* is defined as “*Maryanti iti Marmani*” which signifies that any point over the human body which if injured causes sudden death. Hence, these points are very crucial and hence should be protected from any type of injury. According to *Arundatta*, *marma* are the so-called important points of the body which on any injury causes death. He also explained the same as other *Acharyas* that *Marma* is the point of the human body where the *prana* of the human being resides and is the meeting point of *mamsa*, *sira*, *snayu*, *asthi* and *sandhi*.

CLASSIFICATION OF MARMA

According to different texts, *marmas* have been classified as under.

1. Structural classification - based on *aashraya* or *rachana*.
2. Regional classification - based on *Shadanga Bhedena*
3. Prognostic classification - based on *Vepath Bhedena*
4. Dimensional classification - based on *mana*
5. Numerical classification - based on *Sankhya Bhedena*

Marma are comprised of mainly *mamsa*, *sira*, *snayu*, *asthi* and *sandhi*. Depending upon the structure involved, *marma* are classified into five types. *Mamsa marma* or muscle *marma*, *sira marma* or blood vessel *marma*, *snayu marma* or ligament *marma*, *asthi marma* or bone *marma* and *sandhi marma* or joint *marma*.

Depending upon the prognosis, *Acharya Susruta* has classified *marmas* in five subtypes (Shastri, 1999). These are *sadyapranhara marma* which are 19 in number. Any injury to these *marma* will lead to immediate death. Second one is *Kalantara Pranahara Marma*. These are 33 in number and if injured then will lead to death after some time. The third *marma* is *Vishalyaghna Marma*. These are 3 in number and if any injury occurs in *vishalyaghna marma* then death will occur after the removal of the *shalya* that is any external thing. The fourth *marma* is *Vaikalyakara Marma* and these are 44 in number and on injury, precipitating restlessness will occur. The last one is *Rujakara Marma* which are 8 in number and on injury, there will be severe pain at specific point but no death will occur.

The next classification is done on the basis of *pramana* which is the size of *marma*. *Urvi*, *Kurcha Sira*, *Vitapa* and *Kakshadhara Marmas* have one *angula pramana*. *Sthanamula*, *Manibandha* and *Gulpha* measure two *angula pramana*. Two *Kurpara* and two *Janu Marmas* are three *angula pramana*. *Hridaya*, *Vasti*, *Kurcha*, *Guda*, *Nabhi* and four *Marmas* of the head (*Sringataka*) and five *Simantas*, twelve *Marmas* of the neck (two *Nila*, two *Manya* and eight *Matrika*) are measured equal to the size of the *mushthi pramana* and are four *angula* each. The remaining *Marmas* are thought to be measuring *ardha angula pramana* only.

Depending upon the sites and location *Marma* are classified into these parts. *Acharya Sushruta* mentioned these five regions, the head and neck, the chest, the abdomen, the back and the extremities. A further number of *marma* in each segment is told as 37 in the head and neck, 12 in *Uddara pradesh* and *Ura pradesh*, 14 in *Prustha* and 11 in each of the extremities (Acharya, 2014; Dalai, 2019).

On the basis of properties, *Marma* are classified as *Soumaya marma*. These *marma* are *kapha* predominant. *Marmas* having predominance of *vayu* are called *vayavya Marma*. *Pitta* predominance *Marma* are *Agneya Marma* and lastly, *Soumayagneya Marma* are those having both *Kapha Dosha* and *Pitta Dosha* predominancy (Mamatha et al., 2018).

INJURY TO MARMA (*MARMABHIGHATA*)

The term *Marmabhighata* denotes any injury to the *marma* in the body. Injury may be mild or severe in terms of incision, stabbing, burning or external force. *Acharya Sushruta* explained the *Marmabhighata* in three broad headings namely, (1) General symptoms (2) Particular symptoms (3) Consequential prognosis. More emphasis has been given to dealing with the manifestations based on the consequences precipitating during the course of the trauma. Certain general manifestations like *Bhrama* (confusion), *Pralapa* (delirium), *Dourvalya* (weakness), *Chittanasha* (lack of consciousness), *Strastanga* (restlessness), loss of sensation of parts, rise in body temperature, loss of function of the joints, unconsciousness, shallow breathing, severe pain, bleeding, loss of perception of senses, giddiness, paleness of the body, burning sensation over the cardiac area and postural instability are commonly seen in *Marmabhighata*. These signs and symptoms are produced when *Marma* is injured (Sharma, 2008).

THERAPY OF MARMA

Marma therapy includes the techniques like Utilization of external stimulation, pulling techniques, *Panchkarma* and massage etc. along with *Abhyanga* and *Mardana*. *Marma* is comprised of *vata dosha* significantly. *Marma* is related to *prana* which is associated with *Vata dosha*. Many *vata vyadhi* are treated on the basis of *marma* depending upon the subtypes of the *vata* which are *Prana Vata*, *Udana Vata*, *Vyana Vata*, *Samana Vata* and *Apana Vata*. Along with this, *Marma* therapy helps in clearing the channels and circulation in the body. It helps in the overall flexibility of the body along with mental well-being. Thus *marma* therapy helps in the removal of *ama* which refers to the toxins in the body and hence helps in the gradual cure of the disease from the human body.

Marma therapy helps in the stimulation of vital points, and removal of blockages from the channels and results in physical and psychological well-being. *Marma* therapy is applied around the bones, tendons, ligaments joints etc. (Muley et al., 2011). *Marma Chikitsa* helps in the proper flow of positive *Prana* through the various channels using constraints on essential *Marma* points and this *Prana* will be in charge of treating ailments such as; pain in the head region, pain over the joint area, paralysis, heart-related problems, mental stress and pain along with sprain in the muscles, etc. Various therapies like hot fomentation, massaging and *pizhichil* are recommended in the traditional text of Ayurveda as *Marma Chikitsa*. *Abhyanga* helps with diseases such as *Shirshoola*, *Hanustambha*, *Manyastambha*, *Badhirya*, etc. *Marma* helps to treat different disease conditions including joint pain, respiratory obstructions, nervous system disorders, muscular pain, headaches and migraines, fatigue, mental stress, paralysis, blood pressure and cardiovascular diseases.

CONCLUSION

Marmas are the important body points where from simple self-treatments to complex clinical procedures are introduced according to *Ayurvedic* contexts. *Marma* are

the meeting points of different organs and nerves which are associated to different organs and nerves. In Ayurveda, all *Acharyas* like *Sushruta*, *Vagbhata*, *Charaka* has explained the concept of *marma* and the diseases which can be cure by *Marma* therapy. They have identified the *Marma* points and mentioned each and every factor related to their injury, management and prognosis. Hence, *Marma* concept is the important pillar of the Ayurvedic treatment. *Marma* therapy helps in the cleansing of blocked channels of the body. *Marma* points communicate to the seven *chakras* of the body which are also known as the energy centers of the whole body.

During *Marma* therapy, there is a stimulation of these vital points done either by massage or by applying pressure over these points. Hence, this helps in the stimulation of the chain of positive evolution. *Marma* helps in the relieving of removal of pain which may be acute or chronic. It also helps in the detoxification of the body by opening the channels. *Marma* therapy helps in balancing the *Tridoshas* hence helps in the overall wellbeing of the human body.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The author(s) declare(s) no conflicts of interest.

DECLARATION

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