

**AN AYURVEDIC REVIEW ON THE UNIQUE CONCEPT OF ASHTA VIDHA SHASTRA  
KARMA - A CONTRIBUTION BY ACHARYA SUSHRUTA**

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**ABSTRACT**

Shalya Tantra is one of which involve surgical and para-surgical interventions. The Shalya Tantra deals different surgical approaches for the management of various diseases such as; bhagandara, arsha, charmakeela and kshara, etc. In Sushruta Samhita described 8 kinds of surgical procedures which include Chedana, Bhedana, Lekhana, Vedhana, Eshana, Aharana, Visravan, and Sivan. This karma is eight in numbers called as Asthavidha Shastra Karma. This article summarizes role of Asta Vidha Shastra Karma in shalya kriya for the management of various surgical problems.

**KEYWORDS:** Sushruta Samhita, Shastra Karma, Asta Vidha Shastra Karma

**INTRODUCTION**

Sushruta Samhita is one of the three great classics (Brihatrayees) of Ayurveda predominantly following surgical tradition.<sup>1</sup> It is the most ancient document in the field of Surgery not merely of India but also of the whole world. It Due to its contribution in the field of Surgery Sushruta, the writer of Sushruta Samhita is acknowledged as the “Father of Surgery”.<sup>2</sup> The contribution of Sushruta in the field of medical science specially surgery is most valuable and unparallel. Sushruta was the first person in the ancient world who advocated and brought into practice the dissection of the human cadaver by students of surgery – this certainly was the oldest lesson in dissection

known to history <sup>3</sup> which was very important to earn complete knowledge of human anatomy and simultaneously to get perfection in the field of surgery. Sushruta was the first person to identify the importance of Preoperative (Purvakarma) and Postoperative (Paschatkarma) procedures for better outcome of the main surgical procedure (Pradhana karma) <sup>4</sup>. As main surgical procedures he has specified eight principal techniques and named them as “Astavidha shastra karma”.<sup>5</sup> these eight basic procedures are used as single or combinedly in all operative procedures.

### **Astavidha Shastra Karma<sup>6</sup>**

This includes mainly ashtavidhashastra Karma (eight surgical procedures) and every surgeon must be familiar with these eight surgical procedures. Almost all surgeries performed today are conducted by modern surgeons with these eight techniques of Sushruta.

These ashta vidha shastra Karma are as follows

#### **1. Chhedana Karma** (Excision or Amputation):

Chhedana means excision of abnormal or diseased part from the normal body part with the help of mandalagra, karpatra, vrudhipatra, mudrika, utpalpatraka etc. The following are treatable by excision- fistula in ano, cyst caused by kapha, mole, margin of ulcer, tumors, hemorrhoids, fleshy growth, enlarged uvala, necrosed ligament, muscle and vessel etc.

#### **2. Bhedana Karma** (Incision):

It means incision taken for opening a cavity or tapping of cavity to drain out pus, rakta, removing calculus etc. with the help of vrudhipatra, nakhgashastra, utpalpatrak etc. The following disorders are treatable by incision- abscesses, cysts, scrotal enlargements, carbuncles, inflammatory swellings, breast diseases, avamanthaka, kumbhika, two types of vrinda, puskarika, alaji, most of the minor diseases, talupupputa, dantapupputa, tundikeri, gilayu, aforesaid diseases which are suppurating, urinary bladder for extracting calculus.

#### **3. Vyadhana** (Paracentesis or Puncturing):

It means puncturing or paracentesis with the help of needle, kutharika, eshani, aara etc. Puncturable are different types of vessels, hydrocele, ascites etc.

#### **4. Lekhana** (Scrapping):

It means scrapping with the help of mandalagra, vrudhipatra, karapatra etc. Those treatable by scraping are as follows – Rohini, upajihvika, dantavaidarbha caused by medas, cyst, ulcer margin, adhijihvika, hemorrhoids, and patches on skin, keloid and hypertrophied muscle etc.

**5. Eshana** (Probing):

It means probing with the help of eshani. Sinuses and wounds, with oblique course and foreign body are subjected to probing.

**6. Aharana** (Extraction):

It means extraction with the help of badish, dantashanku, nakha, anguli etc. The following are to be extracted- Urinary calculi, tartar of teeth, ear wax, foreign bodies, confounded foetus ( in abnormal position ) and faeces accumulated in rectum.

**7. Visravana** (Bloodletting or draining of pus)

It means bloodletting or draining of pus with the help of needle, trikurchak, shararimukh, aatimukh etc. Draining is indicated in abscess, Skin diseases, localized inflammatory swelling, diseases of pinnae, elephantiasis, poisoned blood, tumours, erysipelas, cysts and soft chancre, breast diseases etc.

**8. Sivana** (Suturing):

It means suturing with the help of different types of needles and threads. Sutures are applied in incised and well scraped lesions, fresh wounds and those situated in moving joints. Suturing should not be done in wounds affected with caustics, cauterization or poison, carrying air and having inside blood or foreign body.

**CONCLUSION**

Ashta Vidha Shastra Karma has been explained with great importance in Sushruta Samhita. Acharya Sushruta has given clear cut instructions on surgical procedures, different types of incisions and methods of suturing. Ashta vidha Shastrakarm as are not the eight surgical procedures, rather these are the eight basic principles of all the surgical procedures which can be used for any surgery. These Karmas contain a short but full description of all the surgeries. Each and every surgical procedure comprises either one or more of them. This is why Sushruta is considered truly as the “Father of Surgery”. It is extremely essential that we put his principles into practice, and preserve the dignity of our noble profession.

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