

REVIEW ARTICLE

The *Shiroroga Pratikara Prakarana* of *Chikitsanjan*: An Annotated Review

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ABSTRACT

Background: *Chikitsanjan* is a concise textbook of formulations that covers accessible medicines and comfortable treatments, written by Upadhyaya Vidyapati probably in the 17th century. This text has been published only twice. In this effort, the second and currently available publication has been considered for review, which contains 267 verses. This text describes the treatment of a total of 42 diseases. Where the maximum number of verses are in *Jvara Prakarana* (fever), *Striroga Prakarana* (gynecological disorders), and *Shiroroga Prakarana* (diseases of the head).

Materials and Methods: *Shiroroga Pratikara Prakarana* from *Chikitsanjan* published by Sastusahitya Prakashana, Ahmedabad, Gujarat, in the year 1979 has been used for detailed review. *Shiroroga Pratikara Prakarana* has been selected due to the high prevalence of diseases in the present era, the maximum number of verses, and the unique concept of treatment.

Observation and Results: Treatment of *Shiroroga* has been described in 13 verses which contain mainly external applications in the form of *Lepa* (11 out of 13). Only one *Nasya* (formulation for nasal administration) is described. One unique treatment with *Yantra* (a geometrical diagram used in Hindu rituals) is also used.

Conclusion: The *Shiroroga Pratikara Prakarana* of *Chikitsanjan* outlines the treatment of eight types of diseases of the head, scalp, and hair using *Lepa*, *Nasya*, and *Yantra*. Furthermore, the treatment of diseases by the invisible power of the *Yantra* can develop and complement the *Daivavyapashraya Chikitsa* (Spiritual therapy) of Ayurveda.

1. INTRODUCTION

Chikitsanjan is a concise compendium of Ayurvedic formulations composed by Upadhyaya Vidyapati, likely in the 17th century. This text, focusing on accessible medicines and practical treatments, has been published twice. In this effort, the second and currently available publication, which has been published by Sastusahitya Prakashana, Ahmedabad, Gujarat, in the year 1979 with Gujarati translation has been considered for review. The text comprises 267 verses, which describe more than 200 formulations for 42 diseases.^[1] Among all the diseases, the maximum number of verses have been dedicated to *Jvara*

Prakarana (fever), *Striroga Prakarana* (gynecological disorders), and *Shiroroga prakarana* (diseases of the head). Out of that, based on the high prevalence of disorders in the present era, a significant number of verses is devoted to this subject, and the unique or unexplored concept of treatment, the *Shiroroga Pratikara Prakarana* (treatment of head diseases) has been picked up here for review.

The *Shirah* (head) holds paramount importance in Ayurvedic literature. It is considered one of the three *Pradhana Marma*^[2] (main vital points) and the seat of five *Gyanendriya* (five sense organs) and *Prana*.^[3] In the *Charaka Samhita*, the body is described with the words “*Urdhvamulam Adhah Shakha*” (the tree with roots upwards and branches below), emphasizing the role of the head as the control center for the entire body.^[3] Further Acharya Charaka refers to the head as *Uttamanga*^[3] (the best organ or the most superior part). The *Tridosha* (three *doshas*) residing in the *Shirah Pradesh* (head region)

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can be affected by various *Nidana* (causative factors), which lead to the manifestation of various *Shiroroga* (head diseases).

Acharya Charak and Acharya Sushruta have included only those diseases in the *Shiroroga* chapter whose main symptoms are pain. Acharya Charak has described *Shiroroga* in various contexts, i.e., *Sutrasthana* (five types),^[4] *Chikitsasthana* (five types),^[5] and *Siddhisthana* (four types).^[6] The details of *Shiroroga* are given at *Siddhisthana*.^[6] Acharya Sushruta has described 11 types of *Shiroroga*.^[7] It is interesting to note that these two major texts do not include scalp or hair diseases among the diseases of the head. Charaka Samhita has a separate description of *Khalitya* (hair fall or baldness) in the *Trimarmiya* chapter of *Chikitsasthana*,^[8] while Sushruta Samhita includes *Khalitya* and *Indralupta* (patchy hair loss) among the *Kshudraroga*.^[9] Both the texts of Vagbhata describe 10 types of diseases of the head.^[10] Vagbhata has also described diseases of the scalp in the same chapter, which include *Indralupta*, *Darunaka* (*pytiriasis capitis*), and *Khalitya*. Vagbhata has mentioned the types of *Khalitya* according to the dosha.^[11] Thus, it is observed that in Ayurveda literature, *Khalitya*, *Palitya* (graying of hairs), and *Indrolupta* are categorized under different types of diseases by various Acharya. It is in *Shirohkapalaroga* by Vagbhata^[12] and Sharangdhara^[13] *Kshudra Roga* by Bhavaprakash,^[14] Madhava Nidana,^[15] and Chakradatta.^[16]

Therefore, the primary aim of this paper is to provide details about *Shiroroga Pratikara Prakarana* of the Chikitsanjan and to draw attention toward those medicines that have never been discussed in the context of Ayurveda and that treat the disease by influence or invisible power.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

In this work, *Shiroroga Pratikara Prakarana* of the Chikitsanjan chapter has been selected for detailed review. For this, Chikitsanjan published by Sastusahitya Prakashana, Ahmedabad, Gujarat, in the year 1979 was used as principal material.

3. OBSERVATION AND RESULTS

In *Shiroroga Pratikara Prakarana* of Chikitsanjan, primarily *Yuktivyapashraya Chikitsa* (logical use of food and medicines) has been mentioned. *Daivavyapashraya Chikitsa* (spiritual therapy) has been mentioned in two verses. Of the three methods or ways to use the medicines (i.e., *Antahparimarjan*, *Bahirparimarjan*, and *Shastrpranidhan*),^[17] here the author has mainly focused on external application (*Lepa Kalpana* (topical paste formulation) with one *Nasya* (nasal administration) formulation. Of which, few formulations are taken from previous classical texts,^[18] but many are original and significant. The incorporation of *Yantra* (geometric diagrams) for therapeutic purposes is a unique concept, not been described by any other text in this context.

Thirteen (13) sutras are dedicated to *Shiroroga Pratikara Prakarana*, among them, *Yuktivyapashraya Chikitsa* contains 11 verses and *Daivavyapashraya Chikitsa* contains two (02) verses. Among 11 verses of *Yuktivyapashraya Chikitsa*, 10 verses describe *Lepa Kalpana* while the remaining 01 verse is related with *Nasya*. In *Daivavyapashraya Chikitsa*, the author has described *Chhattisa Yantra* for the treatment of *Shiroroga*. The other name of this *Yantra* is “*Rahuyantra*.” However, for the first time in Ayurvedic literature or classics, the concept of *Yantra* has been used to treat diseases.

After reviewing this text, it can be said that the author has followed the Acharya Vagbhata while describing the *Shiroroga*. He described eight

types of *Shiroroga* including diseases of *Shirahkapala* (scalp) such as *Khalitya*, *Palitya*, and *Indralupta* under the heading of *Shiroroga*.^[19]

The author has described 8 types of *Shiroroga* [Table 1]. *Krimija Shiroroga*, *Shankhaka*, *Suryavarta*, and *Ananatvata* are not described by the author. From a treatment point of view, the author has given preference to external applications. A total of 11 *Lepa* (plastering) have been mentioned to treat the ailments [Tables 2 and 3],^[20,21] out of which one *Lepa* is indicated to be used with a *Yantra* [Table 4 and 5]. In addition, *Nasya* treatment is also described in one verse [Table 6].^[22] The description of *Yantra* as a specific therapy for the treatment of head diseases can be considered a unique contribution.

Out of 10 *Lepa*, there are 08 *Lepa* formulations, which contain only herbal ingredients [Table 2], whereas 03 formulations contain herbomineral ingredients [Table 3]. Liquid mediums for applying the *Lepa* also vary. Water (normal, cold, and warm), *Kanji* (sour gruel), *Goadugdha* (cow's milk), *Mahisha Dadhi* (buffalo curd), *Goaghrta* (cow's ghee), *Ajamutra* (goat's urine), *Erantail* (*Ricinus communis* seed oil), *Tila Tail* (sesame seed oil), and *Sarpi* and *Madhu* (Honey) have been used for this purpose. Hot water has been used in 02 types of *Lepa*, *Kanji* (sour rice gruel) in 03 types of *Lepa*, normal water 03 types of *Lepa*, and *Mashisha Dadhi* (buffalo curd) used in 01 type of *Lepa*. There is no mention of any such liquid medium for one *Lepa*, so according to the *Anukta Paribhasha*, plain water should be understood there.

3.1. Probable Mode of Action of *Nasya* in *Shiroroga Chikitsa*

Acharya Charak, in *Siddhisthana*, has referred to the nose as the door of the head in reference to *Shiroroga*.^[23] This shows the importance of treatment given through the nasal route in head diseases. The drugs, which are administered through the nose, act locally as well as systemically. According to Astanga Samgraha, medicine administered through the nose reaches the *Sringataka* Marma, from where all the *Srotasa* (pathways) leading to the eyes, ears, and throat spread, and from there it spreads throughout the head, thereby removing the accumulated *Dosha*, localized in the head, and exerting its effect on head diseases.^[24]

According to contemporary science, the intranasal route of administration for antimigraine drugs offers many theoretical and practical advantages. A drug that is administered intranasally is absorbed by the highly vascular mucous membranes of the nose, which allows for rapid delivery of unmetabolized drugs to the central nervous system. The onset of action is thus considerably earlier than with oral administration requiring gastrointestinal absorption.^[25]

3.2. Probable Mode of Action of *Lepa* in *Shiroroga Chikitsa*

Acharya Sushruta has mentioned the importance of *Lepa Kalpana* through an example that, when poring the water over the burning house, the fire is extinguished immediately or may be control, in the same manner, the *Lepa* pacifies the local *Doshas* by the instant/initial stage of local application.^[26] Furthermore, Acharya Sushruta has indicated that *Alepa* is the initial and best topical application in *Shotha* and as pain relievers.^[27]

According to Sushruta, *Lepa* (a topical Ayurvedic paste) is assumed to work primarily through the absorption of its active ingredients into the skin through *Romakupa* (hair follicles), *Svedavahini* (sweat glands), and *Siramukha* (capillaries) at the scalp.^[28] This absorption is facilitated by gentle rubbing against the direction of hair growth,^[29] increasing local temperature and blood circulation,^[30] and ultimately exerting a local effect on the affected area by balancing *Doshas* (*Vata*, *Pitta*, and *Kapha*) and possibly influencing the underlying pathology causing the headache, *Indralupta*, and *Palitya*.

Another way, *Twak* (Skin) is one of the abodes of *Vata Dosha*^[31] and *Pitta Dosha* (specifically *Bhrajaka pitta*).^[32] Furthermore, *Twak* is one of the five *Gnyanendriyas* (sensory organs) responsible for the perception of touch. When the *Lepa* (paste) is applied on the skin, it is absorbed by *Aaharanakarma* of *Pranavayu*,^[33] which is subsequently digested and activated by *Bhrajaka Pitta*.^[32] *Smanavayu*^[33] then separates the active ingredients from the digested *Lepa* (paste), which has a local effect before spreading throughout the body with the help of *Vyanavayu*.^[34]

3.2.1. Modern view

A *Lepa* (paste) is absorbed by the skin through a process called passive diffusion, where the active ingredients in the *Lepa* move from an area of high concentration to an area of low concentration by passing through the skin's outer layer, the stratum corneum, primarily through tiny gaps between skin cells, allowing the paste to gradually penetrate and be absorbed into the skin depending on the composition of the paste and the condition of the skin itself.

3.2.2. Media/Base

In *Lepa Kalpana*, the media/base is crucial because it acts as the vehicle to deliver the active ingredients of the herbal drugs directly to the skin, allowing for targeted treatment of skin conditions by facilitating penetration and enhancing the efficacy of the *Lepa* application, depending on the chosen base material and its properties; essentially, the right base can optimize the therapeutic action of the *Lepa* on the affected area.

3.3. The Importance of the Base in *Lepa Kalpana* is as Below

3.3.1. Delivery mechanism

The base helps to carry the powdered herbs and other medicinal components to the skin's surface, allowing them to interact with the targeted area effectively.

3.3.2. Skin penetration

Different bases have varying penetration abilities, allowing practitioners to choose the most suitable one based on the desired depth of action.

3.3.3. Balancing doshas

The properties of the base can be selected to address specific *Dosha* imbalances in the skin, such as using cooling bases for *Pitta* conditions or hydrating bases for *Vata* imbalances.

3.3.4. Consistency and application

The base provides the right consistency for easy application of the *Lepa* onto the affected area, ensuring even distribution of the medicinal ingredients.

3.4. Unique Concept of *Yantra* in *Shiroroga Chikitsa*

In Tantra/Shashtra, deities are worshipped using geometric diagrams called *Yantras*. There are two types of *Yantras*. One is constructed based on the god or deity and is, therefore, worshipped. The other is worn on the body as a *Kavacha*, for different kinds of wishes, like to cure diseases, appease the *Grahas*, obtain wealth, and protect oneself. The *Yantra* discussed herein falls under the second category, serving a therapeutic rather than a purely devotional purpose.

Ayurvedic literature does not specifically mention *Yantra* as a therapeutic method. This absence suggests that the *Yantra* represents a unique aspect of Ayurvedic practice. However, Acharya Charak classifies medicines into three categories.^[35] *Daivavyapashraya*

Daivavyapashraya Aushadha includes *Mantra*, *Aushadhi* (talisman), *Mani* (wearing of gemstones), *Mangala* (auspicious offerings), *Bali* (offerings), *Upahara* (gift), *Homa* (oblation), *Niyama* (observance of scriptural rules), *Prayashchitta* (atonement), *Upavasa* (fasting), *Swastipatha*-(chanting of auspicious hymns), *Pranipata* (obeisance to the gods), and *Gamana* (going on pilgrimage). The term *Daiva* refers to unseen or divine forces. Explaining how this works, commentator Chakrapani writes that all these remedies work through the mightiness of God. This means that the medicine cures the disease by producing invisible effects. Based on this conceptual framework, *Yantra* could be considered within the scope of *Daivavyapashraya Chikitsa* due to its ability to influence health through symbolic ways.

Acharya Vidyapati, while describing *Chhattisa Yantra* (36-digit *Yantra*) in this chapter, has said that all types of headaches can be cured by writing *Chhattisa Yantra* on *Bhorjpatra* and tying it on the head with a black thread. The classical name of this *Yantra* is *Rahuyantra*. It is known as *Chhattisa Yantra* because the sum of all the rows and columns is 36. Even the sum of two diagonal axes (from right upper corner to left lower corner and left upper corner to right lower corner) is also 36. The inclusion of numerological elements within the text suggests that these practices would have been prevalent in the author's region (possibly Bengal and Odisha) and considered relevant to disease treatment at the time of writing. This implies that the author had knowledge of these subjects and considered them relevant to the treatment of diseases.

3.5. Yantra

10	17	02	07
06	03	14	13
16	11	08	01
04	05	12	15

4. CONCLUSION

This *Shiroroga Pratikara Prakarana* of the *Chikitsanjan* describes the treatment of eight types of *Shiroroga* (head diseases) through *Lepa* (topical pastes), *Nasya* (nasal administration), and *Yantra* (geometric diagrams). The use of the yantra suggests the integration of spiritual healing principles (*Daivavyapashraya Chikitsa*) and the influence of other knowledge systems (*Paratantra Shastra Avalokana*). *Chikitsanjan* contributes to a comprehensive understanding of Ayurvedic treatment by encompassing both physical and spiritual. Further research is needed to explore the mechanisms and efficacy of these treatments.

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All the authors contributed equally in the design and execution of the article.

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8. ETHICAL APPROVALS

This study not require ethical clearance as it is a review study.

9. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Nil.

10. DATA AVAILABILITY

This is an original manuscript and all data are available for only review purposes from principal investigators.

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Table 1: The classification of *Shiroroga* according to *Chikitsanjan*

S. No.	Diseases	Verse no.	Described Treatment Modality
1.	<i>Vataj Shiroroga</i>	221	1 <i>Lepa</i>
2.	<i>Kaphaj Shiroroga</i>	222	1 <i>Lepa</i>
3.	<i>Pittaj Shiroroga</i>	223	1 <i>Lepa</i>
4.	<i>Tridoshaj/Sarvarti</i>	224	1 <i>Lepa</i>
5.	<i>Ardhavybhedak</i>	225-226	2 <i>Lepa</i>
6.	<i>Ardhavybhedak</i>	227	1 <i>Nasya</i>
7.	<i>Sarvarti</i>	228	1 <i>Yantra</i>
8.	<i>Sarvarti</i>	229	1 <i>Lepa</i> + <i>Yantra</i>
9.	<i>Kality/Keshsamvardhana</i>	230-231	2 <i>Lepa</i>
10.	<i>Indrolupta</i>	232	1 <i>Lepa</i>
11.	<i>Palitya</i>	233	1 <i>Lepa</i>

Table 2: Eight types of *Lepa* in *Shiroroga* with herbal ingredients

S. No.	Indication	Ingredients	Liquid media/base
1.	<i>Vataj Shiroroga</i>	<i>Devadaru</i> (<i>Shorea robusta</i>), <i>Katphala</i> (<i>Gmelina arborea</i>), <i>Kushtha</i> (<i>Saussurea lappa</i>)	<i>Erand tail</i> and <i>Kanji</i>
2.	<i>Kaphaj Shiroroga</i>	<i>Vridhdaru</i> (Elephant Creeper) <i>Musta</i> (<i>Cyperus rotundus</i>), <i>Chitraka</i> (<i>Plumbago zeylanica</i>), <i>Erand Beej</i> (<i>Ricinus communis</i> seed), <i>Rasna</i> (<i>Alpinia galanga</i>), <i>Jatamansi</i> (<i>Nardostachys jatamansi</i>), <i>Abhaya</i> (<i>Terminalia chebula</i>)	Hot Water
3.	<i>Pittaj Shiroroga</i>	<i>Padma beej</i> (<i>Nelumbo nucifera</i> GAERTN), <i>Amalki</i> (<i>Emblca officinalis</i>), <i>Haritaki</i> (<i>Terminalia chebula</i>), <i>Durva</i> (<i>Cynodon dactylon</i>), <i>Ushira</i> (<i>Vetiveria zizanioides</i>), <i>Kaseruka</i> (<i>Scirpus grossus</i>)	Water
4.	<i>Sarva Shiroharti-1</i>	<i>Katphala</i> (<i>Myrica esculenta</i>), <i>Maricha</i> (<i>Piper nigrum</i>), <i>Erand Mula</i> (<i>Ricinus communis</i> root), <i>Abhaya</i> (<i>Terminalia chebula</i>)	Hot water
5.	<i>Ardhavybhedaka-1</i>	<i>Pipli</i> (<i>Piper Longum</i>), <i>Maricha</i> (<i>Piper Nigrum</i>), <i>Pathya</i> (<i>Terminalia chebula</i>)	<i>Kanji</i>
6.	<i>Ardhavybhedaka-2</i>	<i>Yastimadhu</i> (<i>Glycyrrhiza glabra</i>), <i>Sariva</i> (<i>Hemidesmus indicus</i>), <i>Vacha</i> (<i>Acorus calamus</i>), <i>Maricha</i> (<i>Piper Nigrum</i>)	<i>Kanji</i>
7.	<i>Keshasamvardhini-1</i>	<i>Gokshura</i> (<i>Tribulus terrestris</i>), <i>Tila Pushpa</i> (<i>Sesamum indicum</i> flower)	<i>Sarpi</i> + <i>Honey</i>
8.	<i>Keshasamvardhini-2</i>	<i>Karkata Jata</i> (<i>Momordica dioica</i>)	<i>Mahisha Dadhi</i>

Table 3: Types of *Lepa* in *Shirahroga* of herbal- mineral ingredients

S. No.	Indication	Ingredients	Liquid media/base
1.	<i>Sarva Shiroharti-2</i>	<i>Daruharidra</i> (<i>Berberis aristata</i>), <i>Haridra</i> (<i>Curcuma longa</i> .) <i>Ativisha</i> (<i>Nelumbo nucifera</i>), <i>Tuttha</i> (<i>Cupri Sulphus</i>), <i>Jaypala</i> (<i>Myristica fragrans</i> HOUTT), <i>Vatcshnabha</i> (<i>Aconitum ferox</i> .) + <i>Rahu Yantra</i>	Not mentioned
2.	<i>Indralupta</i>	<i>Hastidanta Masi</i> (Carbon of elephant's teeth), <i>Rasanjana</i> (concentrated extract of the <i>Daruharidra</i> plant (<i>Berberis aristata</i>))	<i>Ghee</i> (butter) <i>Kshira</i> (Milk)
3.	<i>Keshya</i>	<i>Bhringraj</i> (<i>Eclipta alba</i>), <i>Nilipatra</i> (<i>Indigofera tinctoria</i>), <i>Loha raja</i> (Iron dust)	<i>Ajamutra</i> (goat's urine)

Table 4: Ingredient of *Yantra* on *Shirahpradash*^[20]

Sr. No.	Indication	Ingredients	Preparing and tying materials
1.	<i>Shiroharti</i>	<i>Chattish Yantra</i> (<i>Rahu yantra</i>)	<i>Bhrujapatra</i> with Black thread

Table 6: *Nasya* in *Shiroroga*^[22]

S. No.	Indication	Ingredients
1.	<i>Ardhavybhedaka</i>	<i>Ghee</i> , <i>Saindhava</i>

Table 5: *Yantra* with *Lepa* in *Shiroroga*^[21]

S. No.	Indication	Ingredients	Liquid media/base
1.	<i>Sarva Shiroharti-2</i>	<i>Daruharidra</i> , <i>Haridra</i> (<i>Curcuma longa</i> .) <i>Ativisha</i> (<i>Nelumbo nucifera</i>), <i>Tuttha</i> (<i>Cupri Sulphus</i>), <i>Jaypala</i> , <i>Vatcshnabha</i> (<i>Aconitum ferox</i>) + <i>Rahu Yantra</i>	Not Mentioned