



Marma: The Vital Points in Ayurvedic Rachana Sharir

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Abstract

The human body consists of **107 Marma (vital points)**, among which **Trimarma—Shirah (head), Hridaya (heart), and Basti (urinary bladder)**—are considered **Sadyopranahara Marma** (instantly fatal points). Any injury to these vital points can result in life-threatening consequences. **Acharya Vagbhata** compares the human body to a tree, where the **head** functions as the root, and the rest of the body branches downward. Since all sense organs and Prana (life force) reside in the head, it is regarded as the supreme organ. Just as a tree collapses when its roots are destroyed, damage to any of the **Trimarma** can lead to the loss of life.

These **Trimarma** represent the **nervous, cardiovascular, and urinary systems**, making them crucial for survival and gaining recognition as the "**tripod of life**." In **Marma therapy**, stimulating the nearby **Marma points** can help alleviate pain and discomfort associated with a diseased or injured Marma. Various **ancient texts** like the **Vedas, Upanishads, Puranas, and Samhitas** highlight the significance of Marma, emphasizing their therapeutic applications in both physical and mental ailments. Given their importance in **surgical procedures** and their potential as an effective therapeutic approach, this study delves into the **science of Marma** and its relevance in traditional and modern healing practices.

Key Words: Ayurveda Marma, Ayurveda science of Marma, Trimarma, Ayurvedic Rachana Sharir

Introduction

Marma are specific anatomical locations where **Mamsa (muscles)**, **Sira (vessels)**, **Snayu (ligaments)**, **Asthi (bones)**, and **Sandhi (joints)** converge, serving as the vital seats of **Prana (life force)**. These Marma points are composed of six fundamental elements—**Soma (cooling energy)**, **Maruta (air)**, **Tejas (heat)**, **Satva (purity)**, **Raja (activity)**, and **Tama (inertia)**—where **Jivatma (soul)** resides. As stated in **Sushruta Samhita (Su. Sha. 6/46)**, any injury to these Marma can be fatal.

While **107 Marma points** are recognized in the classical texts, particular emphasis is given to only three—**Trimarma** (Shirah, Hridaya, and Basti). The **Marma of the trunk** hold greater significance than those of the extremities since the limbs are functionally and structurally dependent on the trunk. Among these, the **Trimarma** are considered the most critical, as they play a vital role in sustaining life.^{1,2}

History of Marma

Marma science is an ancient **Vedic discipline** that has significantly influenced various fields, including **Ayurveda, Yoga, Martial Arts, and the Siddha medical system**. The earliest references to **Marma or Drapi**, a form of **body armor or corselet** designed to protect against enemy weapons, can be found in the **Rig Veda (400 BCE)**. Similarly, the term **Kavacha**, meaning **breastplate or protective covering**, is mentioned in the **Atharva Veda**.

Numerous references to **Marma or Varma** appear throughout the **Mahabharata**, indicating its historical significance in warfare and medicine. The mastery of **Marma points** played a crucial role in self-defense, allowing **monks and warriors** to protect themselves effectively. This knowledge contributed to the evolution of **martial arts**, making it a powerful and strategic discipline for both **combat and self-preservation**. REF

Definition-

According to Acharya Sushruta

Marma (fatal spots) are confluence of muscles, veins, ligaments, bones and joints. These are the places where the Prana (vital life force) resides naturally.

According to Ashtanga Sangraha

Marmas are the sites where muscles, veins, ligaments, bones and joints meet. If they get traumatized, Prana gets

destroyed.

According to Acharya Bhava Prakash

The meeting point of vein, ligament, joint, muscle and bone is called Marma point. Prana especially resides in these Points

Types of Marmas and Their Significance in Ayurveda

Several ancient Acharyas of Ayurveda, including Charaka and Vagbhata, have described Marma in detail. However, the most comprehensive explanation is found in the Sushruta Samhita, where Acharya Sushruta, known as the 'Father of Surgery,' provides an in-depth classification and significance of Marma.

Marma are the vital points where Mamsa (muscle), Sira (vessels), Snayu (ligaments), Asthi (bones), and Sandhi (joints) intersect, making them highly sensitive and crucial for life functions. Any injury to these points can lead to severe pain, functional impairment, or even death.

Healing and Therapeutics: Marma therapy is used for pain relief, injury recovery, and enhancing vitality.

Surgical Considerations: Surgeons avoid injuring Marma points to prevent life-threatening complications.

Martial Arts & Kalari Payattu: Ancient warriors used Marma knowledge for self-defense and combat strategies. **Psychological & Neurological Impact:** Stimulating certain Marma points influences the nervous system, promoting mental well-being.

Marma is defined by Acharya Sushruta as the key area of the body that produces numerous deadly signs and symptoms in the event of catastrophic damage. The location or flow of Prana (vital energy). Despite its prominence, Ayurvedic literature makes no clear reference to therapeutic application. Various forms of Marmas are discussed in Ayurveda based on traumatic consequences and prognosis.

1. Sadhyapranahara
2. Kalantarpranahara
3. Vaikalyakara
4. Vishalyaghna
5. Rujakara

These are body locations that are both superficial and deeply rooted.

- Mamsa (10 numbers)
- Sira (41 numbers)
- Snayu (27 numbers)
- Asthi (8 numbers)
- Sandhi (20 numbers)

<i>Shakha Marma (44)</i>	<i>Marma</i>	<i>Location of Marma</i>	<i>Marmabhighat Lakshan</i>
1	<i>Kshipra</i>	<i>Angusta Anguli Madhaya</i>	<i>Aakashepaen Maranam</i>
2	<i>Talhritya</i>	<i>Madyamaangul im Anupurvaena Talasaya Madyae</i>	<i>Rujabhi Marnam</i>
3	<i>Kurcha</i>	<i>Kshiprasayopari stat Ubhayatah</i>	<i>Bhramana, Vaepanae</i>
4	<i>Kurchasira</i>	<i>Gulpha Sandhaeraadha Ubhyatah</i>	<i>Ruja, Shofa</i>
5	<i>Gulfa (Manibandha Upper Limb)</i>	<i>Paadjangyo Sandhanae</i>	<i>Ruja, Stabda Padata, Khanjata</i>
6	<i>Inderavasti</i>	<i>Janga Madhyae</i>	<i>Shonit Kshyae Maranam</i>
7	<i>Janu (Kurpar)</i>	<i>Jangourvu Sandhanae</i>	<i>Khanjata</i>
8	<i>Aani</i>	<i>Jaanunurdavam ubyat Trayangulam</i>	<i>Shophabhivridh i, Stabdha Sakthi</i>
9	<i>Urv</i>	<i>Urumadhyae</i>	<i>Shonitkshyata Sakthishosh</i>
10	<i>Lohitaksha</i>	<i>Urvyourdavama dhovankshan Sandhaer Moolae</i>	<i>Lohikshyan Pakshaghata</i>
11	<i>Vitap (Kakshadhar)</i>	<i>Vankashana Vrishanyor Antarae</i>	<i>Shandaya, Alpasukarata</i>
<i>Udarar- Ura Marma (12)</i>	<i>Marma</i>	<i>Location of Marma</i>	<i>Marmabhighat lakshan</i>
1	<i>Guda</i>	<i>Vatavarchonirs nam, Sthulantra Pratibadham</i>	<i>Sadyomarnam</i>
2	<i>Vasti</i>	<i>Alpamansashon ito Abhyantartah Katyam Mutrashayo</i>	<i>Sadyomarnam</i>
3	<i>Nabhi</i>	<i>Pakvaamashay ormadhyae Shira Prabhava</i>	<i>Sadyomarnam</i>

4	Hridya	Stanyormadhya m, Satvarajatama Adhistanam	Sadyamamarna m
5	Stanamool (2)	Stanyoradastad Dwayangulam Ubayataha	Kaphapuran Kostataya Kasa Swasabhyam Mriyatae
6	Stana Rohit(2)	Stanachuchaka yorurdhavam Dwayangulam Ubayatah	Lohitapuranako staya Kasa Swasabhyam Mriyatae
7	Aplap (2)	Ansakutyo Adastad Pasharvo Upari Bhag	Raktaenpuyabh avam Marnam
8	Apstambha (2)	Urso Ubhya, Nadyo Vatavahae	Vatapurankosta ya Kasaswasabya m Marnam
Prista Marma (14)	Marma	Location of Marma	Marmabhighat lakshan
1	Kukunder	Parsharvajagha nbahirbagae Pristavanshamu byatah Natinimnae	Saparshagyana m, Adhakayae Chesto Upgatah
2	Nitamba	Sronikandyaupa ryaashayaaacha danae Parshavaantar Pratibadho	Adhakayashos o Daurbalyanch Cha Marnam
3	Parshava Sandhi	Jagahan Parsharvamadh yo Tiryak Udharvam Cha Jaghanat	Lohitapurnakos taya Mriyatae
4	Katikaturuna	Pristavanshamu bayatah Pratishronikand am Asthini	Shonitakshayat Panduvivrano, Heenaroopa Mriyatae.
5	Vrihati	Stanmoolatubay ata Pristavanshasya	Shonit Atipravriti Nimitair Updravye Mriyatae
6	Ansaphalaka	Presto Upari Pristavansham Ubyata Trikasambdhae Ansapalakae	Bahvo Swapa Shosho
7	Ansa	Bahumurdha Grivamadhyae Nibandhanansa peethaskandha	Stabadha Bahuta

<i>Udarva jatrugat Marma (37)</i>	<i>Marma</i>	<i>Location of Marma</i>	<i>Marmabhigat lakshan</i>
1	<i>Dhamaninela Manya - 4</i>	<i>Kanthanadimau bayatochatsro Damnayo</i>	<i>Mookta, Swaravaikrita m, Ras Agrahita</i>
2	<i>Siramatrika -8</i>	<i>Grivayam Ubayatah</i>	<i>Sadhyo Marnam</i>
3	<i>Krikatika - 2</i>	<i>Shiro Grivyo Sandhanae</i>	<i>Chalmurdhvata</i>
4	<i>Vidura - 2</i>	<i>Karnapristto Adhah</i>	<i>Badhirta</i>
5	<i>Fana - 2</i>	<i>Ghranamargaub ayatah Srotomargaprati badhae Abyantartah</i>	<i>Gandhaagyana m</i>
6	<i>Apanga - 2</i>	<i>Brupuchantayo Akshanobahyat o</i>	<i>Aandhya, Dristiupghata</i>
7	<i>Aavarta - 2</i>	<i>Bruvoupari Nimnayor</i>	<i>Aandhayam, Dristiupghato</i>
8	<i>Shankha - 2</i>	<i>Bruvoantryoupa ri Karnlalatmadha yae</i>	<i>Sadhyomarna m</i>
9	<i>Utkshep - 2</i>	<i>Shankhyo Upari Keshanta</i>	<i>Sashalyojivetpa katpatita Shalyova, Na Udris Shalya</i>
10	<i>Sthapani - 1</i>	<i>Bruvo Madhyae</i>	<i>Like Utkshep Marma</i>
11	<i>Simanta -5</i>	<i>Pancha Sandhyah Shirsi Vibhakta</i>	<i>Unmad, Bhaya, Chitanasha</i>
12	<i>Shringataka - 4</i>	<i>Ghranashrotaks hijihva Santarpaninama</i>	<i>Sadhyomarna m</i>
13	<i>Adhipati - 1</i>	<i>Mastakabyantar atuparistata Sirasandhisanni pato Romavartavata</i>	<i>Sadhyomarna m</i>

The Marma opinions: Here's how the 107 Marma points are classified based on one's constitution, or the primary tissue or physical matrix present.

- In the muscular tissue, there are 11 Marma Mamsa Marma is the name for these.
- In the blood arteries, 41 Marma points are prevalent. Sira Marma is the name for them.
- In the ligaments and tendons, 27 Marma points are prevalent. Snayu Marma is the name for them.
- In the bones, eight Marma points are very prominent. Asthi Marma is the name given to them.
- In the joints, there are 20 Sandhi Marmas or Marma

Location

- In both upper limbs, there are 22 Marma points (11 Marma in each upper limb).
- In both lower limbs, there are 22 Marma points (11 Marma in each lower limb).
- In the thorax and abdomen, there are 26 Marma
- In the head and neck, there are 37 Marma

Lakshanas-

According to Acharya Sushruta³

Marma (fatal spots) are confluence of muscles, veins, ligaments, bones and joints. Prana (vital life force) especially resides in these locations; hence if the Marmas are injured, they produce their respective effect.

According to Acharya Charaka

In case of affliction in any marma point, there is more pain (excruciating type) than any other part of the body, because of the specific attachment of chetana (consciousness) to these spots.

The Marma points to the effect of Injury

This description was more appropriate in ancient times when people lived in forests and tribes and there were conflicts and warfare. It is no longer valid in current times since medical care of wounds and injuries has evolved dramatically

with the introduction of modern surgery, trauma management, life-saving equipment, drugs, and procedures.

These Marma, on the other hand, might be seen as those who require protection against unintentional accidents. These Marma require rapid medical treatment and management if they are harmed, to reduce death and morbidity.

- Sadhya Pranahara Marma - Marmas that induce instant death when afflicted with damage.
- Kaalantar Pranhar Marma - When these Marma are harmed, they die slowly and gradually.
- Marma Vishalyaghana - If these Marma are damaged, they may die.

- If these 44 Vaikalyakar Marma are harmed, deformity and suffering may follow.
- Rujakara Marma, when these eight Marma are harmed, it causes agony.

Trimarma ^{4,5,6}

Trimarma refers to the three most vital **Marma points**—**Shirah (head)**, **Hridaya (heart)**, and **Basti (bladder)**—which are crucial sites of **Prana (life force)** and are categorized under **Sadyahpranahara Marma** (immediately fatal Marma). The destruction of any one of these Marma can lead to the cessation of life, emphasizing the need to protect them from both **external and internal injuries**.

1. **Shirah (Head):** The **Shirah** serves as the center of all **sensory and vital impulses**, with its pathways extending like the **rays of the sun**. This highlights its direct correlation to the **brain**, making it a vital Trimarma.
2. **Hridaya (Heart):** The **Hridaya** is described as resembling an **inverted lotus (Pundarika, Kamalamukulakara)** that expands and contracts with bodily activity. It plays a key role in sustaining life through circulation.
3. **Basti (Bladder):** Acharya Charaka emphasizes the importance of **Basti** as a **Trimarma**, describing it as being situated in the **middle of the Sthula Guda (rectum)**, **Mushka (testes)**, and **Sevani (perineum)**. It functions as the **reservoir of Mutra (urine)**, similar to how rivers merge into the ocean, receiving fluids from **Ambuvaha Srotas (water-transporting channels)**.

Classification of Marma

1. Classification According to Acharya Sushruta:

Acharya Sushruta classified **Marma** into five types based on the predominant **Dhatu (tissue)**:

- **Mamsa Marma** – Associated with **muscles**
- **Asthi Marma** – Associated with **bones**
- **Snayu Marma** – Associated with **ligaments**
- **Sira Marma** – Associated with **blood vessels (veins)**
- **Sandhi Marma** – Associated with **joints**

2. Classification According to Acharya Vagbhata:

Acharya Vagbhata expanded the classification by including an additional category, **Dhamani Marma** (arteries), making it six types:

- **Mamsa Marma** – **Muscular Marma**
- **Asthi Marma** – **Bony Marma**
- **Snayu Marma** – **Ligamentous Marma**

- **Dhamani Marma – Arterial Marma**
- **Sira Marma – Venous Marma**
- **Sandhi Marma – Joint Marma**

3. Classification Based on Location:

Marma points are also classified according to their **anatomical regions**:

- **Upper limbs – 22 Marma**
- **Lower limbs – 22 Marma**
- **Abdomen and chest – 12 Marma**
- **Back – 14 Marma**
- **Supra-clavicular region (head and neck) – 37 Marma**

Discussion

The present article explores the fundamental aspects of **Marma science**, including the classification, anatomical locations, associated structures, and their correlation with **Panchamahabhutas**. It provides a comprehensive analysis of **Marma Ghata (trauma to Marma)** and **Viddha Lakshanas (symptoms of injury)** as described in classical **Samhita** texts. Additionally, the article presents an anatomical correlation between Marma points and modern scientific understanding.

Marma points vary in size, ranging from **Ardha-Anguli (half a finger)** to **Hataheli (palm)**. Trauma to different **Marma points** can result in varying degrees of impact, from localized pain to **instant fatality**. Classical texts also describe various treatment modalities for **Marmabhighata (Marma injuries)**, highlighting their therapeutic significance. Thus, the **scriptures provide an in-depth understanding** of the properties, physiological relevance, and clinical applications of **Marma science**.

Conclusion

Marma points encompass both superficial structures and internal systemic organs, with Trimarma being the core center of life. Trimarma are classified as Sadyahpranahara Marma, meaning injury to these points can lead to fatality within seven days. In the modern era, the understanding of Marma science is applied in various fields, including sports medicine, Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), martial arts, and Kalari Payattu, where it is used for both protection and therapeutic interventions.

External trauma affecting Marma points disrupts homeostasis, and severe trauma over time can affect Trimarma, leading to systemic dysfunction due to their role as seats of Doshas. Any disease involving Pranayatana (vital organs) results in more severe complications and complex diagnoses than other conditions. Unlike Sushruta, who emphasized external injuries to Marma, Charaka focused on the internal trauma caused by vitiated Tridoshas, which significantly impacts the function of Trimarma.

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