



A Comprehensive Review on Anatomical Perspectives of Koshta and Koshtanga According to Brihatrayi's

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Abstract

The concept of Koshta (body cavities) and Koshtanga (visceral organs) represents the architectural blueprint of the human torso in Ayurvedic anatomy. This review aims to systematically analyze the structural and functional characteristics of the Madhyamanga (middle body). Koshta is defined as the space created by the Dhatu “Kush–Avarova,” signifying a protective covering for vital internal organs. While Acharya Sushruta identifies eight primary Koshtangas, Acharya Charaka expands this to fifteen, highlighting the clinical significance of organs like the Hridaya, Kloma, and Vrikka. This article elaborates on the embryological origins (Utpatti) of these organs—such as Phupphusa from blood froth and Unduka from blood waste—and explores their roles as the Abhyantara Roga Marga (internal pathway of disease). By integrating classical references from the Brihatrayi with anatomical observations, this study provides a comprehensive understanding of how Koshta facilitates physiological homeostasis.

Keywords: Koshta, Koshtanga, Rachana Shareera, Abhyantara Roga Marga, Madhyamanga, Ayurvedic Anatomy.

Introduction

In Ayurveda, **Koshta** refers to the internal cavities of the human body that house vital organs. Considered a central part of the body (*Madhyamanga*) and one of the **Shadangas** (six major divisions), Koshta extends from below the root of the neck to the pelvic region. According to **Acharya Sushruta**, the Koshta is the site of the **Koshtangas**, highlighting its structural and functional significance.

Anatomically, Koshta includes the **thoracic, abdominal, and pelvic cavities**. The thoracic cavity contains the heart, lungs, and part of the food passage; the abdominal cavity houses the stomach, intestines, liver, spleen, pancreas, and associated glands; and the pelvic cavity accommodates the urinary bladder, uterus, and lower intestines. Organs within these cavities are called **Koshtangas or Ashayas**, meaning the visceral organs of the body.

In **Rachana Sharira**, Koshta forms the **central pillar** of the body and is closely linked with **Mahasrotas** and **Abhyantara Rogamarga**, the internal channels through which diseases manifest¹. Many systemic and metabolic disorders, known as **Koshthashrita Rogas**—such as **Jwara** (fever) and **Atisara** (diarrhea)—originate in this region. Understanding Koshta and its organs is therefore essential for both anatomical knowledge and Ayurvedic diagnosis and therapy.

Classification and Organ Study

The classification of Koshtangas varies slightly among the Acharyas, reflecting different clinical and anatomical priorities.

Sushruta's² View: Focuses on 8 primary organs, emphasizing surgical relevance.

Amasaya, Agni Asaya, Pakwasaya, Mootrasaya, Rudhirasaya, Hridayam, Undukam, Phuppusam.

Charaka's³ View: Lists 15 components, incorporating a wider physiological and systemic perspective.

Nabhi, Hridaya, Kloma, Yakrit, Pleea, Vrikka, Vasthi, Pureeshadara, Amasaya, Pakwasaya, Uttarakudha, Adharakudha, Kushdranthram, Stoolandram, Vapavahanam.

Number and Name of Koshthanga by Brihatrayi's

Charaka	Sushruta	Vagbhata	Kashyapa
Nabhi	-	Nabhi	Nabhi
Hridaya	Hruth	Hridaya	Hridaya
Kloma	-	Kloma	Kloma
Yakrit	Rudirasthana	Yakrit	Yakrit
Pleea		Pleea	Pleea
Vrikka	-	Vrikka	Vrikka
Basti	Mutrasthana	Basti	Basti
Purishadara		-	-
Amashaya	Amashaya/Ama Stahana	-	Amashaya
Pakwashaya	Pakwashaya/Pakwasthana/Pavanashaya	-	Pakwashaya
Uttara Guda	-	-	Guda
Adhara Guda	-	-	-
Kshudrantra	Agnisthana	Antra	Kshudrantra
Sthulantra	-	-	Sthulantra
Vapavahanam	-	-	Vapavahanam
-	Puppusa	Puppusa	-
-	-	Dimbha	-
-	Unduka	Unduka	-

Comprehensive Study of Individual Koshtangas

The following organs are categorized based on their anatomical location⁴ and embryological origin Utpatti as described in the Brihatrayi's.

1. Nabhi

- The Nabhi is considered the most vital structural center of the body.
- Anatomical Significance: Acharya Sushruta compares the Nabhi to the hub of a wheel, where the Siras (vessels) are attached like spokes (Chakranabhirivarkeh)⁵.
- Physiological Role: It is the seat of Prana (life force). In fetal life, the Garbha-Nabhi-Nadi (umbilical cord) provides essential nourishment^{6,7}.
- Vascular Connection: Twenty-four Dhamanis (arteries/nerves) originate from this center⁷.

2. Hridaya

- Embryology: Formed from the essence of Rakta (blood) and Kapha⁴.
- Anatomy: Located in the thoracic cavity, resembling an inverted lotus flower (Pundarika)⁸.
- Functions: The word Hridaya means. Harana: Receiving fluids. Daana: Distributing oxygenated blood and Ojas. Yaana: Maintaining constant rhythmic motion.
- Significance: It is the primary seat of Chetana (consciousness) and Manas (mind).
- Para ojas is located in hridaya⁹.

3. Kloma

- Kloma is the mulasthan of Udakavaha Srothas^{10,11}. (Cha.Vi 5/8) and (Su.sha9/12)
 - Kloma is formed from Shonita¹².
 - Below the heart, on its right side is the liver and Kloma¹³. (Su.Sh4/30)
 - Right side of the heart yakrit, kloma and puppusa is situated¹⁴. (A.H.Sh3/12)
 - Kloma is situated just below the yakrit in the right side called by name tilaka¹⁵. (SU.Ni9/28)
- Dalhana

4. & 5. Yakrit and Pleeha/Rudirasthana

- Origin: Formed from the thick, concentrated part of blood (Rakta).
- Topography: Yakrit (right side) and Pleeha (left side)⁴.
- Clinical Value: They are the Moola (roots) of Raktavaha Srotas. Pathology here leads to Pandu (anemia) and Kamala (jaundice)^{16,17}.

6. Vrikka

- Origin: Formed from the essence of Rakta and Meda (fat) and Vrikka are lump of mamsa and 2 in number and situated in left and right side of the abdomen⁴.
- Function: Serves as the root of Medovaha Srotas, linking renal function to fat metabolism^{16,17}.

7. Basti

- Anatomy: Located in the pelvic cavity. It is a Marma (vital point) and the reservoir for Mutra (urine).
- "The urethra is a single, narrow passage running in the middle from the bladder to its opening at the underside of the penis, and its tip is supported by muscles and ligaments arranged in the shape of a small pod¹⁸.

8. Purishadara

- It is one among the 15 Koshtangas according to Charaka.
- It can be considered Unduka of Acharya Sushruta.

9. Amashaya

- Location: Between the Nabhi and Stana (breasts)⁴.
- Whatever is eaten, chewed, drunk, or licked is digested here (in the stomach). After reaching the *Āmāśaya* (stomach), the ingested food undergoes complete digestion. Once properly processed, it is distributed throughout the body via the channels (*dhamanīs*)¹⁹.
- Physiology: The site for Kledaka Kapha²⁰ and the initial stage of digestion starts here (Avasthapaka)²¹.

10. Pakwashaya/ Pavanashaya

- Location: Below the Pittashaya and Nabhi⁴.
- Physiology: Principal site for Vata Dosha. It is the area where Katu Avasthapaka (final stage of digestion) occurs²¹.

11. & 12. Uttara Guda & Adhara Guda

- Chakrapāṇi clarifies that Charaka's division of *Guda* is based on function: **Uttara Guda**: The upper part of the rectum, where feces remain stored. **Adhara Guda**: The lower part of the rectum/anal canal, through which feces are expelled. Thus, the commentary confirms an anatomical as well as physiological differentiation of the lower gastrointestinal tract. Chakrapāṇi commented on **Charaka Shareera 7/10**.
- The Guda (rectum) is a thick and firmly attached organ measuring four and a half *aṅgulas* in length. Within it, there are folds arranged one above the other, resembling the spiral turns of a conch shell (*śaṅkhāvarta*). In appearance and texture, these folds are also compared to the palate of an elephant (*gaja-tālu*)²².
- **Guda** is mula of Purishava shrothas^{16,17}.

13. & 14. Kshudrantra and Sthulantra

- In males, the intestines measure three and a half *vyāma* in length, while in females they are half a *vyāma* shorter²³.
- Dhalana has explained that there are 2 types of antra they are Sukshmantra and Sthulantra.
- They are nothing but Kshudrantra and Sthulantra of Charaka which are considered Koshtangas².
- The pure essence (*prasāda*) of blood (*asṛk*) and kapha is considered superior. When this essence is cooked or transformed by *pitta*, it is further regulated and moved by *vāyu*. From this processed essence, the intestines (*āntra*), anus (*guda*), and urinary bladder (*basti*) are formed in the developing body²⁴.
- The pittashaya is the agnisthana and its located in between Amashaya and Pakvashaya²⁵.

15. Vapavahanam

- Chakrapani commented on Charaka shareera 7th chapter 10th Shloka Vapavahana is described as the principal seat of medas and it is likened to the taila vartika, indicating its work in holding and conveying unctuousness within the body.²⁶
- Vrikka and vapavahanam are the moola of medavaha srotas²⁷. (Ch.Vi.5/18)
- Anatomically correlates with the Greater Omentum, protecting the Koshtangas.

16. Phupphusa

- Origin: Created from the frothy part of the blood (Phenas-shonita prabhava)²⁸.
- Location: Situated in the chest cavity; it is the root of the Pranavaha Srotas (respiratory system)⁴.

17. Unduka

- Origin: Formed from the waste product of blood (Shonita-kitta prabhava)²⁸.
- Structure: Described by Dalhana as a Pottalaka (pouch-like structure). It is where nutrients are separated from waste. Dalhana commented on **Sushruta Shareera 4/25**.

18 Dimba

- Ācārya Vāgbhaṭa includes **Dimbha** among the important **Koṣṭhāṅgas**²⁹ (visceral organs) situated within the abdominal cavity. Although the term is mentioned in the text, its exact anatomical identity is not clearly defined in the original verse.
- According to the **Sarvāṅgasundarī commentary**, Dimbha is formed from the **prasāda bhāga of Rakta and Māṃsa dhātus** (“**डिम्बं स्याद्रक्तमांसस्य प्रसादात्**”). The commentator places Dimbha in close association with the intestines, indicating that it is an abdominal structure related to the support or attachment of the intestinal tract.

Conclusions

1. The study of Koshta and Koshtanga provides a bridge between gross anatomy and subtle physiological functions. The classical descriptions of organ origins—such as Phupphusa from blood froth—demonstrate an advanced understanding of tissue differentiation.
2. Mastering Koshta Shareera is essential for performing Shodhana (purification) therapies, as these treatments aim to move toxins from the Shakha (extremities) back to the Koshta for elimination. Ayurveda's functional layering of these organs remains vital for holistic patient management.
3. The concept of **Koshtanga** in Ayurveda represents a highly systematic understanding of the internal visceral organs situated within the **Koshta**, the central cavity of the body. Classical Acharyas such as **Charaka and Sushruta** have described these organs not only in terms of their anatomical location and structural features but also through their embryological origin, physiological roles, and clinical significance.
4. Vital structures such as **Nabhi, Hridaya, Phupphusa, Yakrit, Pleeha, Amashaya, Pakwashaya, Vrikka, Basti, Garbhashaya, Antra, and Guda** are explained as essential functional centers governing digestion, circulation, respiration, reproduction, excretion, and metabolic balance. The descriptions of **Srotomūla**, Dosha-sthana, and developmental formation from Dhatu-prasada highlight the integrated approach of Ayurveda, where anatomy is inseparably linked with physiology and pathology.

5. Furthermore, detailed references such as the role of **Grahaṇī in digestion**, **Guda as the root of Purīṣavaha Srotas**, and **Hridaya as the seat of Chetana and Ojas** emphasize the profound depth of Ayurvedic structural science. Thus, the study of Koshtangas forms the foundation for understanding disease manifestation within the Abhyantara Rogamarga and provides essential guidance for diagnosis, prognosis, and therapeutic interventions.
6. In conclusion, Koshtanga Sharira reflects Ayurveda's holistic and functional perspective of human anatomy, where each organ is viewed as a vital contributor to the maintenance of life, health, and homeostasis.

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