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Review Article

Pharmaco-Textual Analysis of Padabhyanga as Drishti Prasadaka: Charak and Sushruta Samhita Perspectives with Tila Taila Rasapanchaka Correlation

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ABSTRACT:

Netra roga (ocular disorders) are increasingly prevalent due to modern lifestyle factors, particularly prolonged digital screen exposure. Ayurveda's Dinacharya prescribes Padabhyanga (therapeutic foot massage) as a preventive Sadvritta practice for ocular health, described independently in both Charak and Sushruta Samhita.

Aim: To critically and comparatively analyze the classical basis and pharmacological rationale of Padabhyanga as a Drishti Prasadaka (vision-clarifying) procedure across Charak Samhita and Sushruta Samhita.

Methodology: Classical references were compiled from Charak Samhita (Sutra Sthana, Chapter 5) and Sushruta Samhita (Chikitsa Sthana, Chapter 24), cross-referenced with Ashtanga Hridaya (Sutra Sthana, Chapter 2), and correlated with the Rasapanchaka of Tila Taila as described in Charak's Snehadhyaya (Sutra Sthana, Chapter 13).

Results: Charak Samhita (Su. 5/91) states that Padabhyanga confers "dṛṣṭi prasāda" (clarity of vision) along with Vata-shamana. Sushruta Samhita (Chi. 24/70-71) independently terms it "cakṣuṣya" (beneficial for the eyes). Ashtanga Hridaya corroborates the principle through its general Abhyanga verse. Tila Taila's Ushna-Snigdha-Guru properties pharmacologically support the Vata-pacifying mechanism underlying this benefit.

Conclusion: Padabhyanga is a textually convergent, pharmacologically rational, low-cost preventive

practice for ocular wellbeing that merits further clinical validation.

Keywords: Padabhyanga, Drishti Prasadaka, Chakshushya, Tila Taila, Rasapanchaka

1. Introduction

Ayurveda regards the feet as a vital, marma-rich region whose care influences whole-body physiology through classical Sadvritta and Dinacharya practices. Among the daily regimens prescribed in the Swastha Chatushka (tetrad of health-preservation chapters), Padabhyanga (therapeutic foot massage with medicated oil) occupies a distinctive place. Acharya Charak, in the Matrashiteeya Adhyaya (Sutra Sthana, Chapter 5), explicitly states that regular Padabhyanga not only strengthens and stabilizes the lower limbs but also confers "dṛṣṭi prasāda" — clarity and brightness of vision — while simultaneously pacifying vitiated Vata dosha. This ocular benefit is independently corroborated in Sushruta Samhita, where Padabhyanga is termed "cakṣuṣya" (beneficial to the eyes), and finds further support in Ashtanga Hridaya's general Abhyanga verse.

In an era of escalating digital screen exposure and rising prevalence of asthenopia (eye strain) across all age groups, this classical, low-cost, side-effect-free intervention merits renewed scholarly attention. The present study undertakes a comparative textual analysis of Padabhyanga's role as Drishti Prasadaka across the Brihatrayi, further correlating classical rationale with the pharmacological (Rasapanchaka) profile of Tila Taila, the classically preferred base oil for Abhyanga.

2. Aim and Objectives

Aim: To critically and comparatively analyze the classical basis and probable pharmacological rationale of Padabhyanga as a Drishti Prasadaka procedure.

Objectives:

- To compile and compare references on Padabhyanga's ocular benefit across Charak Samhita and Sushruta Samhita.
- To examine corroborative evidence from Ashtanga Hridaya.
- To correlate the classical rationale with the Rasapanchaka (pharmacological profile) of Tila Taila, the classically indicated base oil for Abhyanga.

3. Materials and Methods

Classical references were compiled from Charak Samhita (Sutra Sthana, Chapter 5 — Matrashiteeya Adhyaya) and Sushruta Samhita (Chikitsa Sthana, Chapter 24 — Anagatabadha Pratishedha Adhyaya), with cross-reference to Ashtanga Hridaya (Sutra Sthana, Chapter 2 — Dinacharya Adhyaya). Textual analysis followed standard commentaries [insert: Chakrapani for Charak Samhita; Dalhana / Anant Ram Sharma's Susrutavimarsini for Sushruta Samhita; Sarvangasundara of Arunadatta for Ashtanga Hridaya]. The pharmacological (Rasapanchaka) profile of Tila Taila was compiled from Charak Samhita's Snehadhyaya (Sutra Sthana, Chapter 13). Supporting contemporary literature on foot reflexology was identified through a search of PubMed and Google Scholar.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Textual Findings — Comparative Analysis

The compiled classical references demonstrate a convergent, independently corroborated position across the Brihatrayi on Padabhyanga's role in ocular health, expressed through distinct terminology in each text.

Table 1: Comparative Textual Evidence for Padabhyanga as Drishti Prasadaka

Text	Reference	Key Term	Benefit Stated
Charak Samhita	Su. 5/90-92	dṛṣṭiḥ prasādaṁ labhate	Vision attains clarity; Vata is pacified
Sushruta Samhita	Chi. 24/70-71	cakṣuṣyaḥ	Beneficial for the eyes; removes fatigue and numbness
Sushruta Samhita (Pada Prakshalana, adjacent verse)	Chi. 24/69-70	cakṣuḥ prasādanam	Bestows clear vision

Two independent Acharyas — Charak (Kayachikitsa tradition) and Sushruta (Shalya tradition) — arrive at the same clinical conclusion via different descriptive language: Charak uses the verb phrase "dṛṣṭiḥ prasādaṁ labhate," while Sushruta uses the adjectival "cakṣuṣya," notably applying it to both Pada Prakshalana and Padabhyanga as adjacent, reinforcing procedures. This textual convergence, arrived at independently rather than through cross-citation, strengthens the classical evidentiary weight of the claim beyond what either text alone would provide.

4.2 Original Verses

Charak Samhita, Sutra Sthana 5/90-92:

खरत्वं स्तब्धता रौक्ष्यं श्रमः सुप्तिश्च पादयोः।

सद्य एवोपशाम्यन्ति पादाभ्यङ्गनिषेवणात्॥९०॥

जायते सौकुमार्यं च बलं स्थैर्यं च पादयोः।

दृष्टिः प्रसादं लभते मारुतश्चोपशाम्यति॥९१॥

न च स्यादृगृध्रसीवातः पादयोः स्फुटनं न च।

न सिरास्नायुसङ्कोचः पादाभ्यङ्गेन पादयोः॥९२॥

Sushruta Samhita, Chikitsa Sthana 24/69-71:

पादप्रक्षालनं पादमलरोगश्रमापहम्॥६९॥

चक्षुःप्रसादनं वृष्यं रक्षोघ्नं प्रीतिवर्धनम्॥७०॥

निद्राकरो देहसुखश्चक्षुष्यः श्रमसुप्तिनुत्॥७०॥

पादत्वङ्मृदुकारी च पादाभ्यङ्गः सदा हितः॥७१॥

4.3 Corroborative Evidence from Ashtanga Hridaya

While Vagbhata's Ashtanga Hridaya does not employ the specific term Padabhyanga, its general Abhyanga verse (Su. 2/8) independently corroborates the principle, listing Drishti Prasada among Abhyanga's general benefits and explicitly naming Pada (alongside Shira and Shravana) as a site warranting special emphasis in daily oleation.

अभ्यङ्गमाचरेन्नित्यं, स जराश्रमवातहा।

दृष्टिप्रसादपुष्ट्यायुःस्वप्नसुत्वक्त्वदार्ढ्यकृत्॥८॥

शिरःश्रवणपादेषु तं विशेषेण शीलयेत्।

(Ashtanga Hridaya, Sutra Sthana 2/8 — Dinacharya Adhyaya)

4.4 Rasapanchaka Vivechana of Tila Taila in the Context of Padabhyanga

Since Padabhyanga is fundamentally a Sneha-based (oleation) procedure, its therapeutic efficacy cannot be fully appreciated without examining the Dravya Guna (pharmacological properties) of the Sneha Dravya classically employed. Acharya Charak, in the Snehadhyaya (Sutra Sthana, Chapter 13), identifies Tila Taila (sesame oil, Sesamum indicum) as the most efficacious oil for Abhyanga and bodily strength among all available Sneha Dravyas. A Rasapanchaka (five-point pharmacological) analysis of Tila Taila offers a formulation-science rationale that complements the textual evidence presented above.

Table 2: Rasapanchaka of Tila Taila

Parameter	Property	Source
Rasa (taste)	Madhura, Kashaya, Tikta	Charak Samhita
Virya (potency)	Ushna	Charak Samhita
Vipaka (post-digestive effect)	Madhura	Charak Samhita
Guna (qualities)	Guru, Snigdha	Charak Samhita
Karma (action)	Vata-shamaka	Charak Samhita, Su. 13

Both Charak (Su. 5/91: "mārutaścopaśāmyati" — Vata is pacified) and Sushruta (Chi. 24/70-71) attribute part of Padabhyanga's therapeutic action to Vata-shamana. Tila Taila's own Ushna-Snigdha-Guru Rasapanchaka profile is pharmacologically Vata-pacifying by its inherent qualities: Ushna and Snigdha directly oppose Vata's Sheeta (cold) and Ruksha (dry) attributes, while Guru counters Vata's Laghu (light) quality. This offers a formulation-level (Bhaishajya Kalpana) rationale for why the classically prescribed medium — not merely the massage technique — contributes to the Drishti Prasada and Vata-shamana effects described in both Samhitas.

Where a medicated (Siddha) Taila is used for Padabhyanga rather than plain Tila Taila, its preparation would classically follow the three-stage Sneha Kalpana process described in Charak's Snehadhyaya — Sneha Murchana (purification of the base oil), Sneha Paka (cooking with Kwatha and Kalka of indicated drugs), and Paka Siddhi (assessed via Siddhi Lakshana across Mridu, Madhyama, and Khara Paka stages, depending on intended use). This procedural framework, foundational to Bhaishajya Kalpana, underlies how a Padabhyanga-specific formulation would be rendered fit for therapeutic application.

4.5 Contemporary Correlates (Supportive Evidence)

Modern literature on foot reflexology — though not eye-specific — reports measurable effects on fatigue, sleep quality, and relaxation via foot massage (Lee et al., 2011, systematic review and meta-analysis), consistent with the systemic Vata-pacifying, fatigue-relieving effects both classical texts describe alongside the ocular benefit. This is offered as supportive, not primary, evidence, since no modern study has directly tested Padabhyanga's effect on visual parameters — a gap this review identifies as meriting future clinical investigation.

5. Conclusion

Padabhyanga emerges as a textually convergent practice across the Brihatrayi — independently affirmed by Charak Samhita and Sushruta Samhita, and corroborated by Ashtanga Hridaya — for its role as a Drishti Prasadaka (vision-clarifying) procedure. The Rasapanchaka analysis of Tila Taila, its

classically preferred medium, offers a coherent pharmacological rationale for this benefit via Vata-shamana. As a low-cost, accessible, and side-effect-free preventive practice, Padabhyanga merits further clinical investigation, particularly in the context of rising digital-era ocular strain.

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