

# A Literary Review on the Concept of Marmas of Paada (Foot)

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**Abstract:** *Marma is one of the most important subjects in Ayurveda. Marma points have been universally recognized as the 'seats of life' (Prana, the vital life force). If these areas are harmed, it could result in extreme pain, impairment, loss of function, loss of feeling, or death. As a result, the ancient scriptures have clearly stated that these essential regions should not be harmed, and that proper precautions should be followed even when performing procedures. Marma its definition, types of Marmas, symptoms produced after injuries to these Marmas, and their treatment are described by all Ayurvedic texts, especially "Trimarmiya Siddhi." There are one hundred and seven (107) marmas(vital spots) are present in human body. In Ayurveda Paada terminology has come in various contexts like it is one of the shadanga, it is one of the indriya i.e. karmeindriya. It is one of the pratyanga. In embryonic life during month wise development of garbha, panchapindka are formed. Out of that paada is one of the pindka. In Paada Kshipra, Talahridaya, Kurcha, Kurchashira, Gulphamarma are present*

**Keywords:** Paada, Marma, Shadanga, Panchpindka, Trimarmiya sidhhi

## I. INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda is the ancient Indian medical system that rely on a natural and holistic approach to physical and mental health. Sharir Rachana is the branch of Ayurveda which deals with the structure of human body. Acharya Sushruta, one amongst the Brihatrayees has paid great attention towards the structural organization of the human body. Ayurvedic literature pertaining to Sharir Rachana furnishes detailed description on measurements of body and its elements.

In Ayurveda anterior portion of *paada*s called as *prapadam* or *padagram*. *Paada*, *pad*, *angrhi*, *charana* are synonyms of *paada*. *Parshni* is situated inferior to *gulpha* portion of a *paada* which is also root of *paada* of both men and women. It is also called as posterior portion of *paada*.<sup>[1]</sup> Bones described by *Charaka* for *paada*- *anguli* are 30 and for *paada-shalaka* are 10.<sup>[2]</sup> Same description is given by Sushruta for number of *Pada* *anguli*. Next *Charaka* has described the bones of *pada adhisthana* as 2 and of *Parshni*- 2, *Gulpha*-4. *Sushruta* has quoted number of bones as 10 of *tala*, *kurcha* and *gulpha* region.<sup>[3]</sup> According to *Kashyapa* *parshni* are 2 in number.<sup>[4]</sup> The number of *Parshni* is also same as per *Sushruta*. The *Parshni* region denotes the heel region. *Paada* is considered as one of the *karmeindriya*.<sup>[5]</sup> During the 2nd month of intra embryonic life *panchapindka* is formed i.e. *hast*, *pada*, *shira*.<sup>[6]</sup> According to Sushruta *paada* is one of the part of *shadangasharir*.<sup>[7]</sup> There are 16 *kandara* out of these 4 are present in foot region.<sup>[8]</sup> Also out of six *kurcha* two are present in *paada* region.<sup>[9]</sup> In each limb there are 150 *snayu*, out of that 30 *snayu* are present in all toes each toe having 6 *snayu*. 30 are present in *tala*, *kurcha*, *gulpha* region.<sup>[10]</sup>

The *paada* (foot) holds great importance in both anatomy and cultural symbolism across various traditions. In the human body, the foot is a complex structure comprising 26 bones, numerous joints, muscles, tendons, and ligaments, all working together to support posture, movement, and balance. Anatomically, the foot functions as the primary foundation, enabling locomotion, weight-bearing, and shock absorption, making it crucial for overall physical stability and coordination.<sup>[11]</sup> The concept of *marmas*—vital points in the body—is a cornerstone of ancient Ayurvedic and martial traditions in India. *Marmas* are believed to hold energy and play critical roles in maintaining both physical and energetic balance. The study of *paada* (foot) *marmas* is especially significant as the feet are foundational to posture, movement, and overall health, linking body and mind through complex networks of nerves and vessels.<sup>[12]</sup>

This article provides a literary review of the *marmas* of the foot, exploring classical Ayurvedic texts and contemporary perspectives. By examining the historical insights and modern interpretations, we aim to deepen the understanding of *paadmarmas* and their influence on health.

### CONCEPT OF MARMA

The origin of word 'Marma' can be traced in various texts as follows:

1. Amarakosha मृ - मिनिन्, मृ + प्राणत्यागे (Amarakosha 3/5/30)

Amarakosha explains that the word marma is derived from the sanskrit term 'mri- manin' or 'mri- pranatyage'. It means that which causes death or death like miseries.<sup>[13]</sup>

2. Shabdakalpadruma मृ + 'सर्वधातुभ्यो मिनिन्' (Shabdakalpadruma 4/144, chapter 3, pg. 941)

Shabdakalpadruma mentions that the word marma is derived from 'mri' dhatu. Its meaning is explained as sandhistanam (i.e. joining point of various structures) or jeevasthanam (seats of life).<sup>[14]</sup>

### Definitions of 'Marma' -

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.<sup>[15]</sup>

According to Acharya Chakrapani, The meeting point of muscle, vein, ligament, bone and joint is called Marma, which are dependent on these components<sup>[16]</sup>.

According to Ashtanga Hridaya, Marmas are the sites where muscles, bones, ligaments, artery, veins and joints meet each other. Prana is especially located there, and if they get afflicted, it may lead to death.<sup>[17]</sup>

According to Acharya Aruna Dutta, those locations, which when injured lead to destruction of life, are called Marmas.<sup>[18]</sup>

**MARMA SANKHYA** - Marmas are 107 in number. They are - Asthi marma, Sandhi marma, Snayu marma, Mans marma, and Sira marma. Indeed, there are no other Marmas other than the preceding ones.<sup>[19]</sup>

In Samhitas, Marmas have been classified in different ways, such as their location in different regions of the body, anatomy, size, effect of trauma.

Classification of Marmas according to their location in different regions of the body, i.e. upper limbs (22), lower limbs (22), abdomen and chest (12), back (14), supraclavicular region (neck and head) (37).

Marmas in paada (foot) are as follows – 1. Kshipra 2. Talhridaya 3. Kurcha

4. Kurchshira.

**Table 1: Sankhya, Praman, Prakar and Marmaghat Lakshani of Paada (foot) marmas.**

Sr. No.	Name of paadamarma	Sankhya <sup>20</sup>	Praman <sup>21</sup> (Anguli)	Marma Prakar		Marmaghat lakshane <sup>24</sup>
				According to Rachana <sup>22</sup>	According to Parinam <sup>23</sup>	
1.	Kshipra	2	½	Snayu marma	Kalantar pranhar	Death due to convulsions
2.	Kurcha	2	½	Snayu marma	Vaikalyakar	Death due to severe pain
3.	Kurchshira	2	1	Snayu marma	Rujakar	Foot drop and tremors
4.	Talhridaya	2	1	Mans marma	Kalantar pranhar	Pain and swelling
5.	Gulpha	2	2	Sandhi Marma	Rujakar	Pain, restricted ankle movement and deformity

Sr. No.	Name of paadmarma	Location <sup>25</sup>	Anatomical correlation <sup>26</sup>	Tissues Involved <sup>27</sup>
1	Kshipra	Between 2nd toe and big toe (in the web)	Long Planter Ligament	- Adductor Hallucis brevis - Lumbrical muscles - Posterior tibial nerve - Dorsal metatarsal artery - Plantar arch and medial plantar artery -Metatarsophalangeal joint
2	Kurcha	About 1 finger proximal to metatarsophalangeal joint of big toe, over the sole	Tarsometatarsal & Intertarsal ligament	-Tendon of flexor hallucis longus - Abductor hallucis muscle - Medial plantar nerve - Medial plantar, dorsal metatarsal and Arcuate arteries
3	Kurchshira	On either side (medial and lateral) over the heel, below ankle joint	Lateral Ligament of the Ankle joint.	- Peroneous brevis and longus muscles - Peroneal artery and tributaries of short cephanous vein. - Peroneal nerve
4	Talhridaya	6 fingers proximal to 3rd toe, center of sole	1 <sup>st</sup> Inter Metatarsal Ligament	- Flexor digitorum brevis and longus muscle - Adductor Hallucis - Flexor digitorum accessors muscles
5	Gulpha	Ankle joint	Ankle joint	- Flexor hallucis brevis and longus - Tibialis posterior and flexor or digiti longus muscle

**Table 2: Location, anatomical correlation and tissues involved Marmas of paada (foot).**

### Chikitsa of Marmabhighata

The chikitsa (treatment) of Marmabhighata is done in the following ways [28,29]

Lakshanika chikitsa (symptomatic treatment) according to marmavidhalakshanas

Vata vyadhi chikitsa

Judicial selection of Shashti upakrama, for vranopachar

## II. DISCUSSION

The anatomy of the foot is intricate, comprising 26 bones, numerous joints, and various soft tissues, which work synergistically to facilitate movement. The paada (foot) marmas, *Kshipra*, *Kurcha*, *Kurchashira*, *Gulpha* and *Talhridaya* stand out as vital points. The *talahridaya*, located at the center of the foot, is particularly significant as it is associated with grounding and stability, connecting the foot's physical structure to the body's overall vitality. The *kshipramarma*, located on the dorsal aspect, serves as an important point for energy flow, influencing not only the foot's functionality but also the health of the organs and systems it corresponds to it. The *Gulphamarmas* importance being the sandhi marma and playing important role in weight bearing. The *Kurchamarma* can be correlated with flexors and extensors of feet. The *Kurchshira* can be correlated with retinaculae of feet.

The relationship between the foot's anatomy and the *marmas* emphasizes the importance of foot health in maintaining balance within the body. Any dysfunction or injury to these *marmas* can lead to imbalances that affect not only physical movement but also emotional and psychological states. For example, injuries to the *talahridaya* can lead to instability and anxiety, highlighting how physical health and emotional well-being are interconnected.

### III. CONCLUSION

The present article explored the foundational elements of the Science of Paada(foot) Marma with regards to the number of marmas, their location, structures involved, classification, as well as a detailed explanation of marmaghata or viddhalakshanas (effect of trauma), as given in classical texts written during Samhita kala. The anatomical correlation with modern science has also been presented.

Understanding these points allows practitioners to tap into holistic healing approaches, offering insights into preventive care and treatment of various ailments. By exploring *paadmarmas*, we highlight the foot's critical role in whole-body wellness and how targeted stimulation of these points can enhance overall vitality.

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