



Review Article

MARDANA- THE MASSAGE TECHNIQUE

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ABSTRACT

Snehana is a substance that brings oiliness or unctuousness. It is mainly of two types based on *Prayoga* (Mode of Application), *Abhyantara* and *Bahya Sneha*. *Mardana* is one among the *Bahya Sneha*, where it is a therapeutic massage with pressure performed simultaneously on both sides of the patient's body with strokes synchronized in the same direction. There is very little explanation about *Mardana* in *Samhitas*. It is exclusively explained by *Acharya Tiruka* in his work '*Angamardana*' where he explains different types of *Mardana* like *Shushkanga Mardana* (dry massage), *Ksheeranga Mardana* (massage using milk), *Tailanga Mardana* (massage using oil), *Svayamanga Mardana* (self massage), *Yamalanga Mardana* (mutual massage) and *Samanyanga Mardana* (common massage) consisting of 26 *Hastas*. *Mardana* provides relief from ailments and soothes the patient, both mentally and physically. Because of the lack of adequate review and analysis, this method of *Bahya Sneha* is losing its significance from practices and concept remains unexplored. The reason for not being practiced like other *Snehana* procedures are because of the less understanding of the concept of administration, scattered and minimal textual references.

Aims and Objectives: This article is aimed to elaborate the concept of *Mardana* in health and disease. **Materials and Methods:** Data are collected from ancient texts and recent research articles, supported with discussion and presented. **Result:** The present article is an attempt to understand *Mardana* in detail in terms of textual references and bring down *Mardana* into mainstream of practice.

KEYWORDS: *Bahya Sneha, Mardana, Angamardana.*

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda is not only an ancient medical science but it is a science which gives understanding about life. The scope of Ayurveda is to maintain the health of a healthy person and to cure those who are suffering from diseases. Since last decades due to drastic change in lifestyle, dietary habits and working pattern overall human population is facing increased burden of several diseases. Late night sleeping habits, increased fast food consumption, overeating and sedentary lifestyle are major changes observed in current era. Lifestyle disorder is a broad term given to all diseases which arises because of unhealthy lifestyle.

Snehana has a vital role in Ayurveda treatments in both preventive and curative aspect. It can be broadly divided into *Bahya Snehana* (external oleation) and *Abhyantara Snehana* (internal oleation). *Mardana* is one among the *Bahya Snehana*.

Charaka defines *Snehana* as the procedure by which *Snigdhatta* (oiliness), *Vishyandana*

(liquefaction), *Mardavata* (softness) and *Kledana* (moistness) are produced in the body.

Mardana:

Mardana is derived from मृद्+भावे ल्युट् *Pratyaya*^[1], meaning *Angamardana* according to *Shabdakalpadruma*.

In Sanskrit-English dictionary, *Mardana* means- Pressing, Kneading, Tormenting etc.^[2]

Gunas of Mardana are *Nidrakara, Sukrakara, Rakta Mamsa Twak Prasadakara, Vata-Kaphahara*.^[3]

Definition

Performing pressure massage in downward direction after the application of oil with the palm is called as *Mardana*.

Angamardana

Massage is considered as one of the ancient therapy used to treat various disorders. It was not only used in healthy individuals but also to cure diseases. In Ayurveda various uses of massage are explained in different conditions. In Ayurveda

massage is explained as *Abhyanga* which means anointing the body. *Abhyanga* is not only *Jarahara* (prevents and corrects ageing process) but also *Shramahara* (cure tiredness), *Pushtikara* (nourishment of the body) and *Ayushyakara* (promotes longevity). Various terms are used in Ayurveda to indicate massage techniques viz., *Samvahana*, *Mardana*, *Unmardana* and *Padaghata*.

Samvahana is a variety of massage technique in which gentle or very little pressure is put on the body with the hands. Whereas *Mardana* is hard massage done with firm pressure in downward direction and *Unmardana* is pressure massage done in opposite direction. *Padaghata* is a unique massage technique done using foot. Ayurveda hardly explains techniques on massage or *Mardana* in any context but scattered references of indications of *Mardana* can be obtained which are explained in specific conditions. The detail explanation about the procedure was explained by Acharya Raghavender Swami under pen name 'Tiruka' in his work '*Angamardana*' written in Kannada language. A review article on this book was published in the 'Ancient Science of Life' by B S Praveen^[4]. In this total of 26 *Hastas* are explained for *Sarvanga Mardana*.

The book '*Angamardana*' consists of seven chapters namely *Bhumike* (Introduction), *Angamardanada Vishayadali Purathana Ayurveda Granthagala Abhipraya* (View of Ayurveda texts on massage therapy), *Anagamardana Kshetradali Videshiyara Abhipraya* (Opinion of Western tradition on massage), *Anagamardana Mattu Abhyanganavannu Kuritu Kelavu Mahatvada Suchanegalu* (Introduction to *Angamardana* and massage), *Anagamardanada Vividha Hastagalu* (Different methodology of *Angamardana*), *Anagamardanada Vaividya* (Types of *Angamardana*) and *Upayukta Tailagalu* (Useful oils). Different varieties of massages which are practiced are mentioned in the text '*Angamardhana*' viz.,

- *Shushkanga Mardana* (dry massage)
- *Ksheeranga Mardana* (massage using milk)
- *Tailanga Mardana* (massage using oil)
- *Svayamanga Mardana* (self massage)
- *Yamalanga Mardana* (mutual massage)
- *Samanyanga Mardana* (common massage)
- Massage to diseased person are explained

The word '*Hasta*' is explained as technique of massage. In chapter 5, *Angamardanada Vividha Hastagalu*– the elaborate explanation of various *Hastas* of *Mardana* or *Angamardana* is quoted.^[5,6] There are 26 *Hastas* explained in total, performed over different parts of the body. The 26 *Hastas* are explained below:

1. ***Taranga Hasta***: This *Hasta* resembles the waves in the ocean, hence the name *Taranga Hasta*. In this the massage is done with the base of the little finger and thumb which comes in contact with the surface to be treated by rapid movements of the hand. The touch should be as that of the lotus flower. This can be done over any part of the body but more specifically done over head. This helps in proper circulation in the area where there is improper blood circulation, relieves stiffness, provides happiness to the person and enthusiasm. It produces less complication.
2. ***Anguli Kridana Hasta***: As the name implies here only movement of the fingers takes place. In this gentle strokes are placed with the palmar aspect of the fingers of both hands in the area to be treated. This *Hasta* is mainly done over head but can be done over any other parts where small area is affected. This helps in relieving strain and sprain.
3. ***Mrdvanguli Tadana Hasta***: In this fingers of both the hands are moved as if picking up tuft of hair. This massage should be gentle producing mild traction effect on the hair. '*Tadana*' means exerting more pressure or force hence '*Mrudu*' is added to guide the performer that more force should not be exerted. This *Hasta* is also done over the head. This helps in relieving tension created on the nerve endings, provides relaxation and soothing effect.
4. ***Dvihasta Tadana***: In this the strokes are gently done by tapping or brisk hacking of both hands either simultaneously or alternatively. Strokes are placed on the head. This helps in relieving tension and heaviness of the head.
5. ***Garshana Hasta***: After smearing the oil to the hair roots and entire scalp, the whole head is massaged with the palmar surface of the hand from before backwards applying gentle and firm pressure and producing friction with the hand. Care should be taken not to exert more pressure and tangle the hair during the procedure. Mainly done over the head, provides lightness to the head and creates enthusiasm.
6. ***Ghatita Hasta***: In this the entire palmar aspect of the hand along with fingers should come in contact with the head and cover the scalp. Gentle and firm pressure is exerted over the head. Likewise the entire head is pressed in all directions. Helps in relieving headache, heaviness and pain in the head.
7. ***Vijayamala Hasta***: In this the masseur places his right palm on the left backside of the patient's neck with his fingers reaching up to the right side of the neck. Applying firm pressure on the neck,

- therapist pulls his hand anteriorly toward the front of the neck through the left side. Same procedure is performed on the other side also alternatively. This is mainly done over the neck. The movement of the hands indicates that of a *Mala* /Garland hence the name *Vijayamala Hasta*. Provides stability, strength, beauty and firmness to the neck. Enables to withstand more weight and stress over the area.
8. **Viparita Vijayamala Hasta:** This is opposite to *Vijayamala Hasta*. In this therapist places his right palm obliquely on the right backside of the patient's neck. Then by applying firm pressure he moves his palm towards the anterior of the neck. This looks like cross movements of both the hands. In this way pressure massage is done to the neck alternatively. More pressure should not be exerted over the neck as it is delicate and having more vital spots (*Marma Pradesha*). Strengthens *Vishuda Chakra* and stability to neck region.
 9. **Shaila Hasta:** Here the masseur places his right palm over the area just left of the patient's neck or near the bony prominence of the clavicle and then moves his palm to the front by applying firm pressure. Same is done on the other side. This *Hasta* is compared with that of the mountain as it provides good shape, strength and firmness to the neck.
 10. **Dheera Hasta:** It is also known as *Veera Hasta*. In this the therapist moves his palm in circular fashion over the shoulder applying firm pressure, both in clockwise and anticlockwise direction. The same is repeated on the other shoulder. Prevents the wear and tear of the shoulder joint. Lubricates the joint and provides enough strength to ligaments to keep the joint intact.
 11. **Chakra Hasta:** Here the Patient is asked to place his outstretched hand on the shoulder of the therapist. Then therapist holds the arm by cupping both of his palms and moves his one of the palms from back to front applying firm pressure. This causes the muscle to rotate from back to front. In this way the whole arm is treated from shoulder to elbow. Same is repeated on the other side. Same amount of pressure should be exerted on both the arms i.e., there should not be less or more pressure in one another. This *Hasta* strengthens and stabilize the muscles of both the arms.
 12. **Viparita Chakra Hasta:** As the name implies this is opposite to *Chakra Hasta*. Here therapist grasps patient's arms with his palms and moves his palms from before backwards applying firm pressure. Same is repeated on the other arm. This provides strength to the arm and prevents strain and pain over the wrist joint.
 13. **Achala Hasta:** Here therapist locks his hands with that of the patient's hand and by rubbing and squeezing action massages the patient's hand. Hence known as *Achala Hasta*. Provides strength to palms as that of the tiger's paws.
 14. **Viruddha Hasta Chalana:** In this therapist moves his palms on the body of the patient in such a manner where the hands move in opposite direction i.e., one hand moving from chest to abdomen and another moving from abdomen to chest with firm pressure. The movement is done alternatively in linear fashion with right and left hand. This *Hasta* is mainly done over chest, abdomen and back. Care should be taken not to exert more pressure as vital organs are present in these regions. Equal pressure should be exerted. This is also done on the lateral sides of the trunk.
 15. **Dvihasta Chalana:** Therapist moves his both palms simultaneously in linear fashion over the chest as well as abdomen applying firm pressure from above downwards. This *Hasta* is mainly done over chest, abdomen and back region. It is also done over lateral sides of the body. These both provide strength to the *Snayu* and remove the aggravated *Doshas*. Makes spine strong and stiff.
 16. **Pradakshina Hasta** and 17. **Apradakshina Hasta:** By placing one or both palms over the abdomen of the patient, therapist moves his hand in clockwise and anticlockwise direction in and around the umbilicus. Clockwise is *Pradakshina Hasta* and anticlockwise is *Apradakshina Hasta*. While doing this procedure the patient should be on empty stomach or would have digested the previous food. Helps in relieving *Udara Shoola*, *Ajirna*, *Agnimandya* and *Vibhandha*.
 18. **Dhara Hasta:** In this the lateral aspect of the hand i.e., lateral border of little fingers is used and strokes are placed in rapid succession. Care should be taken not to exert harder strokes. It should resemble with the lightning speed and should produce soothing effect. It is mainly done over back region.
 19. **Mrudu Mushtitadana Hasta:** This is also done over the back region. Here the strokes are placed with semi closed fists. The strokes should be light as that of the lotus flower touch and not hard strokes. Provides strength to the spine and relaxing effect.
 20. **Bhadra Hasta:** Here therapist places his both the thumbs at the spine and palms encircling the waist. Then both palms are moved along the course of the spine by applying firm pressure. This helps in relieving *Katishoola*, back strain and sprain and stabilizes the *Manipura Chakra*.

- 21. Meru Hasta:** The two thumbs are placed on the spine in such a manner that they lie opposite to each other. When one thumb is pressed on the spine another thumb is moved in semicircle around the previous thumb by applying firm pressure over the spine. In this way whole spine is massaged. Helps in relieving *Katishoola*. Stimulates all the Chakras present in the spine like *Mooladhara Chakra*, *Swadishtana Chakra*, *Manipura Chakra*, *Anahata Chakra*, *Vishudda Chakra*, *Aghna Chakra*, *Manaschakra*, *Somachakra* and *Sahasra Chakra*.
- 22. Sudarshana Hasta:** In this one palm is placed on the thigh in front with the fingers facing the other thigh and the other placed on back of the thigh. The palm on the front is moved through the lateral of the thigh to reach the back of the thigh. The hand on the back is moved through medial aspect of the thigh to reach the front of the thigh by applying firm pressure. This is done same on the other leg. The movement of the hands resembles the *Sudarshana Chakra* hence the name *Sudarshana Hasta*.
- 23. Viparita Sudarshana Hasta:** This is opposite to *Sudarshana Hasta*, one palm is placed on the front of the leg and other on the back of the leg. The palm on the front is moved through the medial of the leg to reach the back of the leg and the other palm on the back is moved through the lateral of the leg to reach front of the leg by applying firm pressure. Similar procedure is done on the other leg. Strengthens the thigh and calf muscles.
- 24. Dhandha Hasta:** In this one palm is placed on the back of the heel and it is moved upwards up to the back of the knee by applying firm pressure. Likewise same procedure is done with the other palm. Same is repeated on the other leg. Strengthens the calf muscles. Helps in relieving strain, sprain and pain in calf muscles.
- 25. Trikona Hasta:** Both palms are placed above the flexed knee joint and moved to the back of the knee by applying firm pressure. Same procedure is done on the other side. Helps in relieving knee joint pain.
- 26. Pallava Hasta:** This *Hasta* involves three steps, collectively it is called as *Pallava Hasta*. Ankle is grasped with both the palms and moved distally by gently pulling the foot and toes. This is repeated for some time and later the ankle is stabilized with one hand and with the other hand the foot is rotated in circular manner. This is followed by briskly rubbing the sole. This procedure is done same on the other leg. Provides strength to the ankle joint and helps in healing cracks in heels, heel pain, foot pain etc. Hence these are the 26 *Hastas* explained elaborately.
- Indications of *Mardana*^[7]:** There are no specific indication of *Mardana* explained in the *Samhitas* hence the indications explained in *Tiruka's 'Angamardana'* are considered and listed in Table No.1.
- Contraindications:** There is no specific explanation for Contraindication of *Mardana* explained in '*Angamardana*' hence the conditions contraindicated for *Abhyanga* are considered and listed in Table No.1.

Table1: Indications and Contraindications of *Mardana*

Indication	Contraindication
✓ <i>Malabhadata</i>	✗ Patients suffering from <i>Kaphaja</i> or <i>Kapha</i> dominant diseases.
✓ <i>Udara Shoola</i>	✗ After <i>Samshodhana</i> i.e., immediately after <i>Vamana</i> , <i>Virechana</i> and <i>Niruha Basti</i> .
✓ <i>Mutravarodha</i>	✗ Persons suffering from <i>Ajeerna</i> , <i>Nava</i> or <i>Taruna Jwara</i> .
✓ <i>Anidra</i>	✗ Persons suffering from <i>Netra Roga</i> , <i>Karna Roga</i> , <i>Atisara</i> , <i>Adhmana</i> , <i>Peenasa</i> , <i>Agnimandya</i> and other <i>Saamadosha</i> condition.
✓ <i>Vibhrama</i>	✗ Immediately after consumption of food.
✓ <i>Parshva Shoola</i>	✗ After <i>Snana</i> , <i>Vyayama</i> , <i>Diwaswapna</i> , <i>Vegadharana</i> , <i>Prajagara</i> , <i>Sheeta Vayusevana</i> .
✓ <i>Katishoola</i>	✗ After <i>Snehapana</i> .
✓ <i>Hrdaya Sthambha</i>	✗ <i>Santarpanotha Roga</i> .
✓ <i>Sandhishoola</i>	
✓ <i>Pitta Vikaras</i>	
✓ <i>Kapha Vikaras</i>	
✓ <i>Mandagni</i>	
✓ <i>Gulma</i>	
✓ <i>Prameha</i>	
✓ <i>Kampa Vata</i>	
✓ <i>Sthoulya</i>	
✓ <i>Kanta Roga</i>	

DISCUSSION

Hasta's Stipulated to Particular Areas:^[8] The *Hastas* performed in particular areas as explained in the work '*Angamardana*' are listed in the Table No.2.

Table 2: Hastas in Particular Areas

Area	Hastas
Neck	<i>Vijayamala Hasta, Viparita Vijayamala Hasta</i>
Shoulders	<i>Shaila Hasta</i>
Shoulder joint	<i>Dheera Hasta, Taranga Hasta, Trikona Hasta</i>
Arm	<i>Chakra Hasta, Taranga Hasta</i>
Wrist joint	<i>Viparita Chakra Hasta, Taranga Hasta</i>
Palm and Fingers	<i>Achala Hasta, Taranga Hasta, Chakra Hasta</i>
Chest	<i>Viruddha Hasta Chalana, Eka Hasta Chalana, Taranga Hasta</i>
Abdomen	<i>Viruddha Hasta Chalana, Eka Hasta Chalana, Pradakshina Hasta, Apradakshina Hasta, Taranga Hasta</i>
Waist	<i>Bhadra Hasta, Taranga Hasta, Dwihasta Chalana, Eka Hasta</i>
Thighs	<i>Sudarshana Hasta, Taranga Hasta, Dwihasta Tadana, Dhara Hasta</i>
Leg	<i>Viparita Sudarshana Hasta, Danda Hasta</i>
Knee joint	<i>Trikona Hasta, Taranga Hasta, Dheera Hasta</i>
Heel	<i>Trikona Hasta</i>
Foot and Toes	<i>Pallava Hasta, Dwihasta Chalana, Viruddha Hasta Chalana</i>
Sole	<i>Garshana Hasta</i>
Head	<i>Garshana Hasta, Dwihasta Tadana, Angulikridana Hasta, Anguli Tadana Hasta</i>
Forehead and Temples	<i>Dwihasta Chalana, Taranga Hasta, Garshana Hasta</i>
Eyes, Nose and Cheeks	<i>Eka Hasta Chalana</i>

Based on Disease conditions applicability of Hastas: ^[9] Various *Hastas* are explained based on the disease condition in *Tiruka's 'Anagamardana'* and listed in the table no.3.

Table 3: Applicability of Hastas in Disease conditions

Diseases	Hastas
<i>Vibandha, Udara Shoola</i>	<i>Pradakshina Hasta, Apradakshina Hasta, Viruddha Hasta Chalana, Taranga Hasta</i>
<i>Mutravarodha</i>	<i>Bhadra Hasta, Taranga Hasta, Dwihasta Tadana, Eka Hasta Chalana</i>
<i>Katigraha, Katishoola</i>	<i>Bhadra Hasta, Taranga Hasta, Viruddha Hasta Chalana, Dwihasta Chalana, Dhara Hasta, Mrudu Mushti Tadana, Angulikridana Hasta</i>
<i>Parshva Shoola</i>	<i>Viruddha Hasta Chalana, Taranga Hasta, Angulikridana, Eka Hasta Chalana</i>
<i>Anidra</i>	<i>Taranga Hasta, Dwihasta Tadana, Mrudvanguli Kridana Hasta, Pallava Hasta, Garshana Hasta</i>
<i>Vibhrama</i>	<i>Taranga Hasta, Dwihasta Tadana, Anguli Kridana Hasta</i>
<i>Hrut Stambha</i>	<i>Taranga Hasta, Viruddha Hasta Chalana</i>
Any joint pain	<i>Trikona Hasta, Dheera Hasta, Taranga Hasta</i>
Strain and Sprain	<i>Taranga Hasta, Eka Hasta Chalana, Anguli Kridana Hasta</i>
<i>Pittaja Vikaras</i>	<i>Pradakshina Hasta, Apradakshina Hasta</i>

<i>Kapha Vikaras</i>	<i>Taranga Hasta, Viruddha Hasta Chalana</i>
<i>Mandagni, Gulma</i>	Same as <i>Vibhanda</i>
<i>Prameha</i>	<i>Bhadra Hasta, Viruddha Hasta Chalana</i>
<i>Kampavata</i>	<i>Sarva Shareera Tailanga Mardana</i>
<i>Sthoulya</i>	<i>Sarvanga Sushkanga Mardana</i>
<i>Gala Roga</i>	<i>Vijayamala Hasta Viparita Vijayamala Hasta, Anguli Kridana Hasta</i>

By the above descriptions it can be observed that *Mardana* is done in the *Swastha* as well as disease conditions. The proper administration of the procedure helps in relieving the diseases and maintains the health of the healthy individual.

CONCLUSION

Mardana practice or procedure is vanishing day by day. Proper practice and procedure will retain its speciality and will be beneficial in treating the different conditions. There is need for the further research in this regard, to through light over this age old practice. More researches and practices of *Mardana* should be carried out as well as more number of therapist or physicians should be trained in this field of massage technique.

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