

# A Comprehensive Review of Shastrakrita Raktamokshana with Special Reference to Pracchana in Ayurveda

Dr. Pooja Rajendran

Assistant Professor, Department of Shalyatantra, Prasanna College of Ayurveda and Hospital, Laila, Belthangady, Karnataka, India  
Corresponding Author Email: [pooja.rajendran\[at\]gmail.com](mailto:pooja.rajendran[at]gmail.com)  
Mob. 9400556430

**Abstract:** Raktamokshana is one of the ancient and salient parasurgical procedures described in Ayurveda, which is still widely used for the treatment of various diseases. Raktamokshana consists of two words - 'Rakta' meaning blood and 'Mokshana' which means to set free, hence Raktamokshana is the free flow of blood out of the body. Raktamokshana therapy can be performed in two ways - using sharp instruments and without using sharp instruments. Among the different blood letting techniques like Siravyadha, Pracchana, Jalaukavacharana, Shringa and Alabu, Pracchana holds a significant place. Pracchana is the technique of Raktamokshana in which Kurcha shastra is used to make multiple pricks over affected area to ooze out vitiated blood. This review highlights the significance of Pracchana, technique within Shastrakrita Raktamokshana as described in classical Ayurvedic texts. The procedure, its indications, and its therapeutic benefits are discussed to emphasize its relevance in modern Ayurvedic practice.

**Keywords:** Raktamokshana, Pracchana, Ayurveda, Bloodletting, Shastrakrita

## 1. Introduction

Anushastra karma was routinely practiced in the past and so much importance is given to it in the Ayurveda samhitas. Among the Anushastras, Raktamokshana holds a place of prominence. Raktamokshana is made of two words - Rakta and Mokshana. Rakta means blood and Mokshana means to expel. Thus, Raktamokshana means the process in which vitiated blood is expelled out of the body.<sup>1</sup> This review aims to explore and evaluate the traditional Ayurvedic procedure of Shastrakrita Raktamokshana, with a specific focus on the technique of Pracchana, as described in classical texts, to assess its relevance and application in contemporary practice.

‘प्रच्छानैरिति उपरिष्ठाद्बद्ध्वा अधस्तादूर्ध्वप्रसृतेन बहुशोऽवचारितेन शस्त्रेण त्वचि कृतैः सरलविरलैश्छेदैरिति यावत्’ इति हाराणचन्द्रः।

Of the various techniques for bloodletting, Pracchana is a method of Shastrakrita Raktamokshana i.e., bloodletting done by using sharp instruments. It is performed as a treatment modality to remove the vitiated blood and is usually endorsed as a Sthanika chikitsa. Pracchana is the procedure of Scarification and is also known as Pada/Shastrapada as it involves pricking/ making incisions for bloodletting.

### Scarificator

There was also a specific bloodletting tool called a scarificator, used primarily in 19<sup>th</sup> century medicine. It had a spring-loaded mechanism with gears that snaps the blades out through slits in the front cover and back in a circular motion. The case is cast brass, and blades steel. One knife bar gear has slipped teeth, turning the blades in a different direction than those on other bars.<sup>2</sup>

### Procedure of Pracchana

A tourniquet (Rajju/Patta) is applied firmly above the affected area.<sup>3</sup> By using a sharp pointed edged instrument, multiple pricks are made over the disease area. Thus, blood letting is done.

- The incision should be put following certain rules:
  - It should be done in straight line, such lines not joining together, being even, not very deep, not very superficial.<sup>4</sup>
  - The incision should not be made one over the other.<sup>5</sup>
  - It should be done from below upwards.<sup>6</sup>
  - The incision should not be too deep, too close and to the sideways.<sup>7</sup>
  - It should be done with promptness taking care not to injure Marma (vital areas), Sira, Snayu, Sandhi<sup>8</sup> and asthi<sup>9</sup>
- Pracchana can bring out blood from an area of 1 Angula.<sup>10</sup>

### Indications

- It is indicated in case of Vatarakta, Pidaka, Kotha, Raktamandala, Kushta, Abhighata and Shotha.<sup>11</sup>
- The blood which has got localised over an area (Ekadeshastha) should be removed by Pracchana.<sup>12</sup>
- Pracchana is done when the vitiated blood has become clotted (Pinditha).<sup>13</sup>
- According to the depth of morbidity, Pada is indicated in Uttana avastha, when it is superficial.<sup>14</sup>
- Pracchana is useful in Sashopha, Kathina, Dhyama, Sarakta vedanavati samrabdhha vishama vrana and in Savisha vrana.<sup>15</sup>
- In cases of vitiation by two doshas (Dwidoshaja) and all the three doshas (Tridoshaja) together, Pracchana can be adopted for letting out blood.<sup>16</sup>
- It is indicated as a purvakarma for Shrngavacharana.<sup>17</sup>

## 2. Discussion

Raktamokshana is one of the parasurgical procedure (Anushastra Karma) - a treatment modality included in the line of management of many diseases. Raktamokshana purifies the Rakta and subsequently, the other Doshas associated with the disease process, thereby alleviating the disease more effectively than Shamana medications alone. Also, it is told in the Samhitas that one who undergoes Raktamokshana periodically, doesn't suffer with Twakroga, Granthi, Shopha etc. which is explaining the preventive aspect of Raktamokshana. There are different techniques of Raktamokshana mentioned in the Samhita, of which Pracchana is Shastrakrita – bloodletting using sharp instruments. Sushruta Samhita, Astanga Hridaya and Astanga Sangraha included Raktamokshana as a Shodhana karma and explains the procedure of Pracchana and its benefits in detail. In Charaka Samhita, Pracchana is mentioned as one among the Shastrapranidhana under Trividhoushadha and also included as one among the six shastrakarma.<sup>18</sup>

## 3. Conclusion

Shastrakrita Raktamokshana, particularly the technique of Pracchana, plays a vital role in Ayurvedas parasurgical procedures. This review highlights its therapeutic importance and practical applications in modern Ayurvedic practice. Further studies and clinical applications are encouraged to validate and expand upon the benefits of Pracchana in contemporary settings.

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