



# A CRITICAL REVIEW ON THE CLASSIFICATIONS OF NASYA KARMA BY DIFFERENT ACHARYAS

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## ABSTRACT

*Nasya* is the most important therapy as it is used for the treatment of *urdhvajatrugata* diseases. So in some places, it has been given first place in the sequence of *Panchakarma*, as in the *Apamargatanduliya adhyaya* of *Charaka Samhita Sutrsthana*. *Nasya* is not only beneficial for *urdhvajatrugata rogas*, but also for some systemic diseases like *kampavata*, *hikka*, etc. and also for *pumsavana karma*. *Nasya karma* has been classified mainly on the basis of its pharmacological action, form of medicine, part of drug used, etc. and each of which has got its own salient features. The references regarding the *Nasya karma* were collected, analysed and interpreted. There are five ways of differentiating the various forms of *nasya karma*- *Dravya bhedanusara*, *Prayoga bhedanusara*, *Matra bhedanusara*, *Karma bhedanusara* and *Ashraya bhedanusara*. The various classifications of *nasya* by different *Acharyas* are based on these five forms. *Vagbhata's* concept of *dvidividhopakramaniya* emphasises the importance, as this classification of *chikitsa* holds well because diseases are being explained as *santarpanajanya vyadhi* and *apatarpanajanya vyadhi*. *Nasya karma* as a whole enhances the drug to reach the site and then either it eliminates the *dosas* responsible for producing the diseases or nourishes the area. *Sarangdhara's* classification of *nasya* into *Karshana* and *Brimhana* can be considered as the base line classification of *nasya*, as the treatment modalities are of two types- *Langhana* and *Brimhana*. All other divisions and varieties of *nasya* can be incorporated under these two heads of *Langhana* and *Brimhana*.

**Keywords:** *Nasya*, *Panchakarma*, *Ayurveda*, Nasal administration

## INTRODUCTION

Every individual constitution has its own unique balance of *vata*, *pitta* and *kapha* according to its own nature. When this *doshic* balance is disturbed, it creates imbalance, which is disorder. The internal environment is

governed by *vata*, *pitta* and *kapha*, which are constantly reacting to the external environment. The wrong diet, habits, life style, incompatible food combinations, seasonal changes, repressed emotions and stress factors can all act either together or separately to change the balance of *vata*, *pitta* and *kapha*. According to the nature of cause, *vata*, *pitta* or *kapha* undergo aggravation or derangement, which affects the *agni* and produces *ama*. To stop the further production of *ama*, *Ayurveda* suggests putting the person on a proper diet with appropriate lifestyle, habits and exercise, and administering a proper cleansing programme called *Panchasodhana/Panchakarma*. *Panchakarma* presents a unique approach of *Ayurveda* with specially designed five procedures of internal purification of the body through the nearest possible route. Such purification allows the biological system to return to homeostasis and to rejuvenate rapidly and also facilitates the desired pharmacotherapeutic effects of medicines administered thereafter. *Panchakarma* has a full therapy role as promotive, preventive and curative procedure.<sup>1</sup> As always, with our *Ayurvedic* practice, our focus, intentions and habits center around *Prana*, the vital force that enters through the breath. Cleansing the breath is the foundation of all health, and the nose, with its passages that lead directly to the brain, our consciousness, is the doorway where *Prana* enters our body. Just like we sweep and clean the entryway of our home before guests arrive, we should cleanse and nourish our nasal passages to restore and balance our *Prana*. This offers multitudes of beneficial side effects for our overall health. *Nasya* involves applying medicinal herbs, decoctions, oils, etc. to our nasal passages to support the sinus, nose, throat and head. *Nasya* is the most important therapy as it is used for the treatment of *urdhvajatrugata* diseases. So in some places, it has been given first place in the sequence of *Panchakarma*, as in the *Apamargatanduliya adhyaya* of *Charaka Samhita Sutrsthana*. According to *Charaka*, nose is the gateway of head. The drug administered through the nose as *nasya* reaches the brain and eliminates the morbid *dosas* responsible for producing the disease. *Nasya* is not only beneficial for *urdhvajatrugata rogas*, but also for some systemic diseases like *kampavata*, *hikka*, etc. and also for *pumsavana karma*. *Nasya karma* has been classified mainly on the basis of its pharmacological action, form of medicine, part of drug used, etc. and each of which has got its own salient features.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

The references regarding the *Nasya karma* were collected, analysed and interpreted.

## CLASSIFICATION OF NASYA KARMA BY CHARAKA

*Acharya Charaka* in *Charaka Samhita Siddhithana Trimarmiyasiddhi adhyaya*, classified *nasya karma* into five types- *Navana*, *Avapida*, *Dhmapana*, *Dhuma* and *Pratimarsha*. *Navana* is administered by instilling the medicated *sneha* into both the nostrils in a specific dose using a *pranadi* or *pichu*. Depending on therapeutic action, it is further classified into two types- *Snehana navana* and *Sodhana navana*. *Snehana navana* is employed to bring about *snehana* effect by using the *sneha* processed with any of the *vatapittahara dravyas* mentioned in the classics. *Sneha* prepared out of *shirovirechaka dravyas* like *Apamarga*, *Pippali*, *Shigru*, etc. are used in *Sodhana navana*. Fresh herbs are pounded into a paste and then squeezed to extract the juice, which

is dropped into the nostrils. This unique procedure of administering the medicines is known as *Avapida Nasya*. It is mainly of two types- *Sodhana avapida* and *Stambhana avapida*. For *sodhana* purpose, *kalka* or *kwatha* of *tikshna dravyas* like *saindhava*, *pippali*, *vidanga*, etc. should be used. For *stambhana* purpose, *stambhana* drugs like *sharkara*, *ikshurasa*, *kshira*, *kshaudra*, *mamsarasa*, etc. are used. The procedure in which the fine powder of medicinal drugs are blown into the nostrils is known as *Dhmapana Nasya*. It cleanses the *deha srotas* by eliminating the morbid *dosas*. It has no further categorization. There are two methods of administration of *dhmapana nasya*- *Nadi* method and *Pottali* method. *Dhuma nasya* has been mentioned as a variety of *nasya karma* by *Charaka*. The process of inhaling the medicated fumes through the nostrils and expelling through the mouth, with the help of *Dhuma yantra* is known as *Dhuma nasya*. If fumes are inhaled through mouth, it cannot be considered as *Dhuma nasya*, instead it refers to *Dhumapana*. Based on the drugs used, it is classified into three types- *Prayogika/Shamana*, *Snaihika* and *Vairechanika*. Medicated *sneha* when dropped into the nostrils in a small and specific dose is known as *Pratimarsha nasya*. It is described as the most convenient and well tolerated form of *nasya*, as it does not lead to any discomfort or complications. It is administered by dipping the index finger into the specified medicated *sneha* and then dropped into the nostrils.<sup>2</sup>

According to action of *nasya karma*, *Charaka* in the same chapter (*Siddhithana Trimarmiyasiddhi adhyaya*) classified *nasya karma* into *Rechana*, *Tarpana* and *Shamana*. *Rechana nasya* can be defined as the procedure of administration of medicine into the nostrils in order to eliminate the vitiated *dosas* located in *urdhvajatru bhaga*. Drugs like *apamarga*, *pippali*, *maricha*, etc. may be used either in the form of *churna* or by preparing *sneha*. It may also given with *tikshna sneha*, *kwatha*, *churna* or *swarasa* of *shirovirechana* drugs or by dissolving these drugs in *madya*, *saindhava*, *asava*, *pitta* and *mutra* or mixed with the drugs specified to treat respective diseases. *Tarpana nasya* can be defined as the procedure of *nasya karma*, which is intended to bring about nourishing effect to the parts above *jatru* region. The *sneha* prepared with *vatapittahara* or *madhura skandha* drugs may be employed. As the name indicates, *Shamana nasya* is that variety of *nasya karma*, which is employed for the alleviation of aggravated *dosas* situated in the *jatrurdhwa bhaga*. *Sneha*, *swarasa*, *kshira*, etc. can be used as per the condition of the patient.<sup>3</sup>

In *Charaka Samhita Vimanasthana Rogabhishakjitiya adhyaya*, *Charaka* had classified *nasya*, according to various parts of the drugs utilized in *nasya karma* (*ashrayabhedena*) into seven categories- *phala* (fruit), *patra* (leaf), *mula* (root), *kanda* (rhizome), *pushpa* (flower), *niryasa* (exudate) and *twak* (bark).<sup>4</sup>

## CLASSIFICATION OF NASYA KARMA BY SUSRUTA

In *Susruta Samhita Chikitsasthana Dhumanasyakavalagrahavidhi adhyaya*, *Acharya Susruta* has classified *nasya karma* into two broad categories – *Shirovirechana* and *Snehana* and further classified into five- *Nasya*, *Shirovirechana*, *Pratimarsha*, *Avapida* and *Pradhamana*. *Shirovirechana* is subdivided into three types – *Shirovirechana*, *Avapida* and *Pradhamana* and *Snehana* is subdivided into *Nasya* and *Pratimarsha*. As all these involve nasal administration of medicine, the term *Nasya* is used for all these five.<sup>5</sup>

## CLASSIFICATION OF NASYA KARMA BY VAGBHATA

*Ashtanga Sangraha* and *Ashtanga Hridaya* has classified *nasya*, mainly into three varieties based on its effects- *Virechana*, *Brimhana* and *Shamana*. *Virechana nasya* is indicated in *shirashula*, *shirojadya*, *syanda*, *gala amaya*, *spoha*, *ganda*, *krimigranthi*, *kushta*, *apasmara* and *pinasa*. It is done with *sneha*, *kalka*, *kwatha*, *madhu*, *patu* and *asava*, which are suitable to the disease and processed with appropriate drugs. *Brimhana nasya* is indicated in *vataja shirashula*, *suryavarta*, *swarakshaya*, *nasa sosha*, *asya sosha*, *vaksangha*, *krichrabodha* and *apabahuka*. *Dhanva mamsarasa*, *khapura* (plant extracts, resins, gums), etc. are used for *Brimhana nasya*. *Shamana nasya* is prescribed in *nilika*, *vyanga*, *kesha dosa* and *akshi raji*. *Shamana* is prepared by the earlier ingredients, with milk or even water.

*Snehana* or *Brimhana nasya* is further subdivided into two types on the basis of dose- *Marsha* and *Pratimarsha*. *Marsha nasya* is done in three doses- *Uttama matra* (10 *bindu*), *Madhyama matra* (8 *bindu*) and *Avara matra* (6 *bindu*). For *Pratimarsha nasya*, it is 2 *bindu*. *Avapida nasya* can be administered for both *virechana* and *shamana* purpose, whereas *Pradhmana nasya* is employed only for *shirovirechana*.<sup>6,7</sup>

## CLASSIFICATION OF NASYA KARMA BY SARANGDHARA

*Sarangdhara* has classified *nasya karma* into two types- *Rechana* (*Karshana*) and *Snehana* (*Brimhana*). *Rechana nasya* is again subdivided into *Avapida* and *Pradhmana* whereas *Snehana nasya* is subdivided into *Marsha* and *Pratimarsha*.<sup>8</sup>

## CLASSIFICATION OF NASYA KARMA BY OTHER ACHARYAS

According to *Kashyapa Samhita*<sup>9</sup> and *Bhava Prakasha*<sup>10</sup>, *nasya* is classified into two groups- *Brimhana* and *Karshana*, which are also known as *Purana* and *Sodhana* respectively. *Bhela* classifies *nasya karma* into four types- *Avapida*, *Anuvasa*, *Dhuma* and *Pradhmana*.<sup>11</sup> *Chakradatta*<sup>12</sup> and *Vangasena*<sup>13</sup> has classified *nasya* same as that of *Charaka*- *Navana*, *Avapidana*, *Dhmapana*, *Dhooma* and *Pratimarsha*. *Chakradatta*, *Vangasena* and *Bhavamishra* also classified *nasya* into *Marsha* and *Pratimarsha*. *Bhoja* classifies *nasya* as *Prayogika* and *Snaihika*.<sup>14</sup> According to *Videha*, *nasya* is of two types- *Sajnprabodhaka* and *Stambhana*.<sup>15</sup>

## OBSERVATIONS AND ANALYSIS

TABLE 1: Classification of *nasya* according to mechanism of action

Acharya	Types	References	Classification
Charaka	3	C.S. Si. 9/89, 92	<i>Rechana</i> , <i>Tarpana</i> , <i>Shamana</i>
Vagbhata	3	A.H.Su. 20/2 A.S.Su. 29/4	<i>Virechana</i> , <i>Brimhana</i> , <i>Shamana</i>
Kashyapa	2	K.S.Si. 2 & 4	<i>Brimhana</i> , <i>Karshana</i>

<i>Bhavamishra</i>		<i>B.P.Pu. 5/190</i>	
<i>Sarangadhara</i>	2	<i>Sa.S.Utt. 8/2</i>	<i>Rechana, Snehana</i>
<i>Bhoja</i>	2	<i>Dalhana</i> <i>S.S.Ci. 40/31</i>	<i>Prayogika, Snaihika</i>

TABLE 2: Classification of *nasya* according to method of administration

<i>Acharya</i>	Types	References	Classification
<i>Charaka</i>	5	<i>C.S. Si. 9/89, 92</i>	<i>Navana, Avapidana, Dhmapana, Dhuma, Pratimarsha</i>
<i>Chakradatta</i>	5	<i>C.D. 73/1</i>	<i>Navana, Avapidana, Dhmapana, Dhuma, Pratimarsha</i>
<i>Vangasena</i>	5	<i>V.S. 86/1</i>	<i>Navana, Avapidana, Dhmapana, Dhuma, Pratimarsha</i>
<i>Susruta</i>	5	<i>S.S.Ci. 40/21</i>	<i>Sirovirechana, Pradhamana, Avapida, Nasya, Pratimarsha</i>

TABLE 3: Classification of *nasya* according to various parts of drugs utilized

<i>Acharya</i>	Types	References	Classification
<i>Charaka</i>	7	<i>C.S. Vi. 9/154</i>	<i>Phala, Patra, Mula, Kanda, Pushpa, Nirayasa, Twak</i>

TABLE 4: Classification of *nasya* according to dose of *sneha dravya* used

<i>Acharya</i>	Types	References	Classification
<i>Vagbhata</i>	2	<i>A.H.Su. 20/6</i> <i>A.S.Su. 29/14</i>	<i>Marsha, Pratimarsha</i>
<i>Chakradatta</i>	2	<i>C.D. 73/10</i>	<i>Marsha, Pratimarsha</i>
<i>Vangasena</i>	2	<i>V.S. 86/15</i>	<i>Marsha, Pratimarsha</i>
<i>Bhavaprakaasa</i>	2	<i>B.P.Pu. 5/190</i>	<i>Marsha, Pratimarsha</i>
<i>Sarangadhara</i>	2	<i>Sa.S.Ut. 8/11</i>	<i>Marsha, Pratimarsha</i>

## DISCUSSION

From the above descriptions, it is very clear that there are five ways of differentiating the various forms of *nasya karma*- *Dravya bhedanusara*, *Prayoga bhedanusara*, *Matra bhedanusara*, *Karma bhedanusara* and *Ashraya bhedanusara*.

*Charaka's* classification of *nasya karma* into *Navana*, *Avapida*, *Dhmapana*, *Dhuma* and *Pratimarsha* as well as the classification according to *Susruta* and *Bhela* seems to be based on the type of preparation utilized or the way in which it is administered. For example, in *Avapida nasya* as the name it indicates that the juice extracted from *kalka* is used for *nasya karma*. *Pradhamana* is so named because it requires blowing. *Vagbhata* has described *Marsha* and *Pratimarsha* mainly on the basis of difference in the dose. All the varieties of *nasya karma* mentioned by different *Acharyas* may be incorporated under *Charaka's* classification only.

On the basis of pharmacological action, *Charaka* and *Vagbhata* have classified *nasya karma* into three types- *Virechana/Rechana*, *Brimhana/Tarpana* and *Shamana*. *Sushruta* and *Sarangdhara* have omitted *Shamana* from their classification and divided *nasya karma* into only two groups- *Shirovirechana* and *Snehana*. *Kashyapa* stated *Brimhana* and *Karshana* types of *nasya*. *Acharya Videha* described two types of *nasya karma* according to their pharmacological action- *Sajnaprabodhana* and *Stambhana*. According to *Chakrapani*, all these types can be included under the following classification only. *Rechana nasya* incorporates *Shodhana navana*, *Shodhana avapida*, *Pradhamana*, *Vairechanika dhuma*, *Shirovirechana*, *Sajnaprabodana* and *Karshana*. *Tarpana nasya* incorporates *Snehana navana*, *Snaihika dhuma*, *Pratimarsha*, *Nasya*, *Anuvasa*, *Marsha* and *Prayogika*. *Shamana nasya* incorporates *Stambhana avapida*, *Shamana dhuma* and *Stambhana*. *Vagbhata's* concept of *dvividhopakramaniya* embraces the importance as this classification of *chikitsa* holds well because diseases are being explained as *santarpanajanya vyadhi* and *apatarpanajanya vyadhi*. Hence to manage *santarpanajanya vyadhis*, *apatarpana/langhana* is the line of management and in *apatarpanajanya vyadhis*, *santarpana* is the line of management. The term *Brimhana* refers to the use of substances and procedures which will substantiate the growth of the body. The procedure or substances which create lightness in the body is called *Langhana*. *Panchakarma* procedures except *anuvasana* are generally *langhana* in nature. But the *nasya* and *basti karmas* exhibits both *langhana* and *brimhana* properties depending upon the drugs used.

*Nasya karma* as a whole enhances the drug to reach the site and then either it eliminates the *dosas* responsible for producing the diseases or nourishes the area. *Sarangdhara's* classification of *nasya* into *Karshana* and *Brimhana* can be considered as the base line classification of *nasya*, as the treatment modalities are of two types- *Langhana* and *Brimhana*. While commentating on the classification of *nasya karma* in *Charaka Samhita Siddhithana*, *Chakrapani* also holds the same view that *nasya* can be broadly classified into *Karshana* and *Snehana*. All other divisions and varieties of *nasya* can be incorporated under these two heads.

## CONCLUSION

*Nasya karma*, one among the *Panchakarma* carries very high importance as it deals with the organ of high importance, the *Shiras* and is the treatment of choice in *Urdhwajatrugata vikaras*. *Acharyas* had classified *nasya* based on different parameters into many types suitable for the particular diseases and basically all the types of *nasyas* can be incorporated under the heading of *dvidivha upakrama- Langhana* and *Brimhana*.

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