

# A Comparative Study of Netra Kriyā Kalpa Procedures

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## Abstract

*Netra Kriyā Kalpa* constitutes a unique group of local therapeutic procedures described in Ayurveda for the management of ocular disorders. These procedures form an integral part of *Śhālākya Tantra* and are classified under *Bāhya Parimarjana Chikitsā*. Classical texts describe various *Netra Kriyā Kalpa* procedures such as *Aschyotana*, *Seka*, *Tarpana*, *Putapāka*, *Anjana*, and *Vidalaka*, each having specific indications based on disease stage, *Doṣha* predominance, and severity. The present article aims to provide a comparative study of different *Netra Kriyā Kalpa* procedures with respect to their indications, mode of application, therapeutic action, and clinical utility, supported by classical Ayurvedic references.

**Keywords:** *Netra Kriyā Kalpa*, *Aschyotana*, *Tarpana*, *Putapāka*, *Anjana*, *Śhālākya Tantra*

## Introduction

Ayurveda considers the eye as the most important among the sense organs, as vision is essential for perception of the external world.

“*Sarvendriyāṅām nayanam pradhānam*”<sup>1</sup> (Su. Sa. Utt. 1/3)

*Śhālākya Tantra*, one of the eight branches of *Aṣṭāṅga Ayurveda*, deals with diseases of *Urdhva Jatrugata Sthāna*. The *Uttaratantra of Suśhruta Samhitā* dedicates its first nineteen chapters to eye diseases, emphasizing the importance of localized ocular therapies.

*Netra Kriyā Kalpa* refers to specialized ophthalmic procedures where medicaments are applied directly to the eyes to achieve rapid and effective results.

## Concept of *Netra Kriyā Kalpa*

The term *Kriyā* denotes therapeutic action, while *Kalpa* refers to a specific pharmaceutical formulation or method. These procedures are particularly beneficial due to their direct action on ocular tissues.

“*Aschyotanādi kriyāḥ sarvā netrarogeshu pūjitāḥ*”<sup>2</sup> (Su. Sa. Utt. 18/4–6)

## Types of Netra Kriyā Kalpa

Classical texts describe the following *Netra Kriyā Kalpa* procedures:

### According to *Charaka* – There are 3 types

- *Vidalaka*
- *Aschyotana*
- *Anjana*

### According to *Sushruta*- there are 5 types

- *Tarpana*
- *Putapaka*
- *Seka*
- *Aschyotana*
- *Anjana*

### According to *Sharangdhar*- There are 7 types

- *Seka*
- *Aschyotan*
- *Pindi*
- *Vidalaka*
- *Tarpana*
- *Putapaka*
- *Anjana*

## ***Kriyakalpa Room***

*Kriyakalpa Room* should have proper ventilation, but devoid of excessively blowing wind, sun rays or dust. There should be curtains (*Javanika*) of dark colours like blue or yellow<sup>3</sup>. It should be equipped with materials and medicaments for treatment and to manage complications (like *Mithyayoga*, *Atiyoga* or *Hinayoga*)

## ***Purvakaram***

*Kriyākalpa* should be administered to patients only after proper purification of the head through *Nasya* therapy and purification of the body by procedures such as *Vamana*, *Virechana*, and *Basti*.

## **Duration**

Each *Kriyākalpa* is performed for a predetermined duration, which is assessed in terms of *Mātrākāla*.

### **1. *Tarpana***

**Definition:** Retention of medicated ghee over the eyes within a boundary made of dough.

“*Tarpanam chakshushyam balavardhanam*”<sup>4</sup> (Su. Sa. Utt. 18/15–17)

**Indications:** *Vata*-dominant disorders, eye strain, dryness, *Timira*

**Action:** *Brimhana*, *Snehana*, *Rasayana*

**Utility:** Chronic degenerative eye disorders

### Procedure

Akshi Tarpana is carried out during moderate climatic conditions, either in the morning or evening. The patient is positioned in the supine posture with the face directed upward, in an environment free from wind, sunlight, and dust. A circular boundary resembling a well is constructed around the eye socket using Māsa flour, with a height of two fingers and adequate width, while keeping the eyelids closed. Liquefied Go-ghṛita or an appropriate medicated oil, warmed using hot water, is then gently poured into this enclosure up to the level of the eyelash tips. Thereafter, the patient is instructed to slowly open the eyes and retain the medicated substance for the prescribed duration.

**Table no. 1 Sneha Dharana Kala according to Dosha Prakopa**

<i>Doshbheda</i>	<i>Su. Sa.</i>	<i>As. Hr.</i>	<i>Sh. Sa.</i>	<i>B.P.</i>
Healthy eye	500	500	500	500
<i>Kapha Prakopa</i>	600	500	500	500
<i>Pitta Prakopa</i>	800	600	-	600
<i>Vata Prakopa</i>	1000	1000	1000	1000

**Table no. 2 Sneha Dharan Kala according to Adhishthana of Disease**

<i>Adhishthan</i>	<i>Su. Sa.</i>	<i>As. Hr.</i>	<i>Sh. Sa.</i>	<i>B.P.</i>
<i>Sandhigata</i>	300	300	500	500
<i>Vartmagata</i>	100	100	100	100
<i>Shuklagata</i>	500	500	600	-
<i>Krishnagata</i>	700	700	700	700
<i>Drishtigata</i>	800/1000	800	800	800
<i>Sarvagata</i>	1000	1000	1000	1000

### 2. Putapāka

**Definition:** Application of medicated juice prepared by *Putapāka* method after *Tarpana*<sup>5</sup>.

**Indications:** Weak vision, ocular fatigue

**Action:** Nourishment and strengthening of ocular tissues

**Utility:** Post-*Tarpana* rejuvenation

### Procedure

The procedure of *Putapāka* closely resembles that of *Tarpana*; however, it differs in terms of the ingredients used, the method of drug preparation, and the duration of application. *Putapāka* may be performed either following *Tarpana* or as an independent therapeutic procedure. The indications and contraindications prescribed for *Tarpana* are equally applicable to *Putapāka*. Classical Ayurvedic texts describe three types of *Putapāka*, namely *Snehana*, *Lekhana*, and *Ropana*<sup>6</sup>. However, *Vāgbhaṭa* has mentioned *Prasādana* in place of *Ropana*.<sup>7</sup>

### *Dharan Kala of Putapaka*

1. Lekhana- 100 Matrakala
2. Snehana- 200 Matrakala
3. Ropana- 300 Matrakala

### 3. Seka

Definition:

“*Sekastu Sukashamadharabhi Sarvasaminanayane hita*”<sup>8</sup> (Yg. Ra. Ut., Sha. Sa. Ut. 13/2)

Continuous pouring of medicated liquid over closed eyes for a fixed duration.

**Indications:** Acute inflammation, pain, redness

**Action:** *Shothahara, Vedanāsthāpana*

**Utility:** Acute inflammatory conditions

#### Procedure

*Parisheka* is a therapeutic procedure in which medicated liquids are gently poured over the open eyes from a height of four *Angula*. It is primarily indicated in acute ocular conditions. Classical Ayurvedic texts describe three types of *Seka*, namely *Lekhana*, *Ropana*, and *Prasādana*. *Aṣṭāṅga Saṅgraha* additionally mentions *Snehana* as the fourth type.

- *Snehanā Parisheka* is indicated in conditions dominated by *Vāta Doṣha* and 400 *Matrakala* duration.
- *Lekhanā Parisheka* is advised in *Kaphaja Netra Rogas* and is administered for a duration of 200 *Mātrākāla*.
- *Ropana Parisheka* is indicated in *Pittaja and Raktaja Netra Rogas* and is performed for a duration of 600 *Mātrākāl*

### 4. Aschyotana

Definition: Instillation of medicated liquid drops into the open eye from a specified height.

“*Netra rogeṣu sarveṣu prathamam aschyotanam hitam*”<sup>9</sup> (Aṣ. Hṛ. Sū. 23/1)

**Indications:** Early-stage *Netra Rogas*, *Netra Daha*, *Shushkākṣipāka*, *Abhishyanda*

**Action:** *Vata–Pitta Shamana*, lubrication, soothing effect

**Utility:** First-line therapy

#### Procedure

Instillation of few drops of medicines to the open eye from a height of two *Angula* (inches) is called as *Aschyotana*. It is the first line of treatment in eye diseases and it should be done on the fourth day of disease manifestation or after *Amalaksanas* are settled down. When *Doshas* are not severely vitiated and the disease is in the early stage, it is beneficial. There are 3 types of *Aschyotana* and quantity mentioned in classics like;

1. *Snehan Aschyotana*- 10 drops
2. *Lekhana Aschyotana* – 8 drops
3. *Ropana Aschyotana*- 12 drops

### 5. Anjana

Definition:

Application of medicated collyrium to the inner surface of eyelids.

“*Anjanam netrayor balam*”<sup>10</sup> (Su. Sa. Utt. 12/5)

**Indications:** *Kleda*, *Kapha*-dominant disorders, itching

**Action:** *Lekhana, Kapha Shamana*

**Utility:** Chronic conjunctival conditions

#### Procedure

*Anjana* is a procedure of applying medicinal pastes or powders to the inner side of lower lid from inner

canthus to outer canthus or vice versa, either by fingertip or with an applicator (*Anjana Shalaka*). *Anjana* mainly have *Lekhana* properties.

**Table no. 3 Anjana Types**

Acc. To <i>Gunakaram(Su.)</i>	Acc. To <i>Kalpana(Su.)</i>	Acc. To <i>Prabhav(As. Sa.)</i>	Acc to <i>Ras (As. Sa.)</i>	Acc to <i>Rasshastriya Vargikaran(R.R.Sa.)</i>
<i>Lekhana</i>	<i>Gutika</i>	<i>Tikshana</i>	<i>Madhur</i>	<i>Sauviranjan</i>
<i>Ropana</i>	<i>Raskriya</i>	<i>Mridu</i>	<i>Amla</i>	<i>Strotoanjana</i>
<i>Prasadana</i>	<i>Churana</i>	<i>Madhyam(B.P.)</i>	<i>Lavana</i>	<i>Rasanjana</i>
<i>Snehana(As.Sa.)</i>			<i>Katu, Tikta, Kashya</i>	<i>Puashpanjana Neelanjana</i>

**Table no. 4 Anjana Matra Kala**

S. No.	<i>Matra</i>	<i>Churna</i>	<i>Gutika</i>	<i>Raskriya</i>
1	<i>Uttama</i>	4 <i>Shalaka</i>	2 <i>Matar</i>	3 <i>Vayavidang</i>
2	<i>Madhyam</i>	3 <i>Shalaka</i>	1.5 <i>Matar</i>	2 <i>Vayavidang</i>
3	<i>Hina</i>	2 <i>Shalaka</i>	1 <i>Matar</i>	1 <i>Vayavidang</i>

## 6. *Bidalaka*

Definition: Application of medicated paste over eyelids.<sup>11</sup>

**Indications:** Swelling, pain, inflammation

**Action:** *Shothahara, Dahashamana*

**Utility:** Supportive therapy in inflammatory conditions

### Procedure

*Vidalaka* is the application of medicated paste to the outer surface of the eye lids except at eye lashes. It is indicated in *Daha, Upadeha, Asru, Sopha, Raga, Toda, Bheda, Kandu, Gharsa*. Thickness of the paste in *Vidalaka* is similar to that of *Mukhalepa* like *Dosagna Vidalaka* is 4 *Angula*, *Vishagna* is 2 *Angula*, *Varnya* is ½ *Angula*.

### Advantages of Netra Kriyā Kalpa

- Direct drug delivery to ocular tissues
- Rapid onset of action
- Minimal systemic side effects
- Cost-effective and safe

### Discussion

*Kriyā Kalpa* procedures represent a valuable therapeutic contribution of Ayurveda in the management of ocular disorders. These therapies possess a distinct mode of action that facilitates effective treatment of eye diseases. The fundamental objective of *Kriyā Kalpa* appears to be tissue-oriented drug delivery, wherein optimal therapeutic drug concentration is achieved at the target site. This is influenced by factors such as drug concentration, duration of tissue contact, molecular size of the drug, its absorption, and overall bioavailability.

In *Kriyā Kalpa*, the selection of drugs is tailored according to the vitiated *Doṣhas* and the specific nature of the disease. Furthermore, the procedures and methods of drug administration are carefully modified to enhance local retention and ensure maximum absorption of the medicaments, thereby improving therapeutic efficacy.

### Conclusion

*Netra Kriyā Kalpa* procedures represent a specialized and systematic approach to ocular therapeutics in Ayurveda. Each procedure is unique in its method, indication, and therapeutic effect. A comparative understanding enables rational selection of appropriate therapy based on disease stage, *Doṣha* involvement, and patient condition. Thus, *Netra Kriyā Kalpa* holds immense clinical significance in the effective management of *Netra Rogas*.

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