



Unit 1 · Strī Viśiṣṭa Śarīra Vijñāna, Topic (a): Introduction to Prasūti Tantra and Strīroga

Unit 1 · Strī-viśiṣṭa Śarīra-vijñāna — Introduction to Prasūti Tantra & Strī-roga, Nirukti of “Strī”, and Vayobheden Strī-saṃjñā

Learning goals

By the end of this chapter you should be able to: (i) define *Prasūti Tantra* and *Strī-roga* within Aṣṭāṅga-Ayurveda; (ii) explain the **nirukti (vyutpatti)** of the word “**Strī**” using Sanskrit grammatical tradition; (iii) quote and interpret the **classic verse on vayobheden (age-wise) strī-saṃjñā** and relate it to Ayurvedic practice.

1) What are *Prasūti Tantra* and *Strī-roga*?

Ayurveda is traditionally organised into eight branches (*aṣṭāṅga*). *Prasūti Tantra* (obstetrics) and *Strī-roga* (gynaecology) are taught together as the science dealing with women’s reproductive health, pregnancy, childbirth and the puerperium. Vagbhata enumerates the eight branches succinctly:

“कायबालग्रहोर्ध्वाङ्ग शल्यदंष्ट्रा जरावृषान् ।
अष्टावङ्गानि तस्याहुः चिकित्सायेषु संस्थिताः ॥”
kāyabālagrahordhvāṅga śalyadaṃṣṭrā jarāvṛṣān |
aṣṭāvaṅgāni tasyāhuḥ cikitsāyeṣu saṃśritāḥ ||

Here, *bāla* refers to *Kaumāra-bhṛtya* (paediatrics), *vṛṣa* to *Vājīkaraṇa* and so forth; *Prasūti Tantra* and *Strī-roga* are subsumed primarily under *Kāyacikitsā* and share interfaces with *Kaumāra-bhṛtya*, *Rasāyana*, and *Bhūta-vidyā* for psychophysical well-being.

Scope for the BAMS student:

- Normal and abnormal menstruation (*ṛtucakra*, *artava*), conception (*garbhādhāna*), antenatal care (*garbhiṇī-paricaryā*), labour and delivery (*prasava-vidhi*), puerperium (*sūtikā-paricaryā*), lactation (*stanya-pravṛtti/dūṣṭi*), and diseases of the female genital tract.
- Classical nosology connects each topic with *doṣa-dhātu-mala-srotas* and *saṃprāpti*, which is why the subject is placed early in 3rd BAMS.

2) Nirukti (vyutpatti) of the word “Strī”

In Ayurvedic writing we preserve Sanskrit technical terms. For academic rigour, *nirukti* must come from **vyākaraṇa** tradition—“from where and how the word is derived,” not merely its poetic meaning.

2.1 Dhātu and affixes involved

- **Dhātu (verbal root): styai / ṣṭyai** (*śabda-saṅghātayoḥ* — ‘aggregation/compaction’) given in the **Uṇādi-sūtra** tradition.
- **Uṇādi affix: dṛaṭ** is added to the root by the rule **styāyater dṛaṭ (Uṇādi 4.167)**; by elision rules only **r** remains from *dṛaṭ*. Subsequent phonetic operations delete *ai* and *y* (rules **ṭeḥ 6.4.143** and **lopo vyor vali 6.1.66**). Finally, the **feminine affix ṅīp** (Pāṇini 4.1.15 under the *striyām* adhikāra, 4.1.3) is applied, yielding the stem **strī**.

Summary derivation: *styai* + *dṛaṭ* → (phonetic elisions) → base with **r** → + **ṅīp** → **strī**.

Grammarians gloss it as “**styāyate 'syām garbhaḥ**”—“in whom the embryo expands”—a semantic explanation attached to the grammatical derivation.

2.2 Notes from the grammatical tradition

- Many everyday nouns are explained only through **Uṇādi-sūtras**, an auxiliary to Pāṇini’s *Aṣṭādhyāyī* used to account for difficult derivations without forcing etymology.
- Pāṇini’s **striyām (4.1.3)** governs the use of feminine affixes; *strī* is a canonical example cited by commentators.

Exam tip: When asked “*Strī-śabdasya niruktiḥ*,” write the root **styai/ṣṭyai**, cite **Uṇādi 4.167 (styāyater draṭ)**, and mention application of **ñip** under **striyām**.

3) Vayobheden Strī-saṃjñā — classic age-wise nomenclature

Traditional sources give special names to a girl according to age, widely used in *saṃskāra* and *vivāha* literature. The most cited verse (attributed to **Samvarta** in *Dharma Bindu* compilations) reads:

“अष्टवर्षा भवेद् गौरी नववर्षा तु रोहिणी ।
दशवर्षा भवेत् कन्या अथोर्ध्वं रजस्वला ॥”
aṣṭavarṣā bhaved gaurī navavarṣā tu rohiṇī |
daśavarṣā bhavet kanyā athordhvaṃ rajasvalā ||

(*Variant readings replace “atho/ata” with “ata” and the last pāda with “कन्यादानं प्रशस्यते” in other compendia such as *Lakṣmī-Nārāyaṇa Saṃhitā* 1.513.55. For teaching in *Prasūti Tantra*, the above reading—ending with **rajasvalā**—is preferred when explaining age-bound female appellations.)

3.1 Explanation of the terms

Samjñā	Age indicated	Sense/usage
Gaurī	8 years	A pre-pubescent girl of eight. Cultural appellation in <i>saṃskāra</i> contexts.
Rohiṇī	9 years	Nine-year-old girl.
Kanyā	10 years	Ten-year-old maiden; <i>kanyā-dāna</i> discussions in <i>smṛti</i> texts relate to this stage.
Rajasvalā / Ṛtumatī	Above 10	One who has attained menarche (onset of rajas/artava).

Pedagogical note: This *saṃjñā* system is **normative-cum-ritual**; it is not a clinical claim about the biological age of menarche in all populations. In clinical *Strī-roga*, menarche is treated empirically, and Ayurvedic physiology explains *artava* as *upadhātu* of *rasa* with its own *kāla* and *srotas*. (See §4.)

4) Linking the saṃjñā to Ayurvedic physiology

1. Artava (Rajas) as upadhātu of Rasa

Classical teaching (as preserved in standard treatises and commentaries) identifies **Artava (Rajas)** and **Stanya** as the two *upadhātus* of **Rasa**. This is consistently presented in modern scholarly summaries of the classics and is crucial to *Strī-roga* pathophysiology (vitiation of *rasa* → effect on *artava/stanya*).

2. Monthly artava flow

The monthly accumulation and outward flow of *rakta/artava* from the uterus at a proper time is described by Vagbhata (*Aṣṭāṅga Saṃgraha* tradition) and echoed in compendia: in each month *rakta* gathers in the *garbhāśaya* and, at the due time, flows out—this physiologic rhythm is the basis for normal *ṛtucakra* and for *garbhādhāna*

timing.

3. Clinical utility of *vayobheda* saṃjñā

- **Counselling & consent:** Terminology helps frame age-appropriate counselling during *ṛtumatī*-onset education and menarche-related anxieties (*rajodarśana* guidance).
- **Doṣa-anubandha:** Early menarche with *ati-darśana* may indicate *pitta-rakta* provocation; delayed menarche with *alpādarśana* may involve *vāta-kapha* and *agni* disturbances—tie your short notes to *rasa/artava* concepts for scoring.
- **Sāmprāpti-vighatana:** After assessing *āhāra-vihāra*, correct *agni* and *rasa-vaha srotas* to normalise *artava*.

How to write a 10-marker: Quote the *vayobheda* verse; give 2-3 lines explaining each term; then connect to *artava* as *rasa-upadhātu*, *srotas*, and *doṣa* implications. Add one contemporary remark on menarche variability (without statistics) to show clinical maturity.

5) Key definitions you should remember

- **Strī (स्त्री):** *styai/ṣṭyai* + *ḍraṭ* (Uṇādi 4.167) + **ñip** → **strī**; woman—the person in whom the embryo (*garbha*) may expand (*styāyate*), per the grammatical gloss.
- **Artava / Rajas:** Menstrual blood and, by context, ovum; considered *upadhātu* of **Rasa**.
- **Rajasvalā/Ṛtumatī:** One who has the cyclic manifestation of *artava* (menstruation).
- **Prasūti Tantra:** Branch covering conception to puerperium; interfaces with *Kaumāra-bhṛtya* and *Rasāyana*.
- **Strī-roga:** Diseases of the female reproductive system including *artava-vyāpada*, *yonivyāpad*, *vandhyatva*, etc.

6) Worked exemplar — how to cite in your answer

If asked “*Vayobhedena strī-saṃjñā vyākhyāyatām*”, write the verse neatly, in **Devanāgarī**, then gloss:

गौरी (८ वर्षे): प्रौढत्वपूर्व अवस्था; रोहिणी (९ वर्षे): नववयस्का; कन्या (१० वर्षे): विवाह-पूर्वा; रजस्वला (अथोर्ध्वम्): *artava*-प्रादुर्भावानन्तरं
This nomenclature is from *saṃskāra/vivāha* literature (*Samvarta, Dharma Bindu*). Clinically, menarche marks entry into **ṛtumatī** stage; in Ayurveda, *artava* is *rasa-upadhātu*, so *rasa-agni* and *rasa-vaha srotas* status govern menstrual health.

7) Quick review (3-2-1)

- **3 takeaways:** (i) *Strī*—derive it correctly from *styai/ṣṭyai* (Uṇādi 4.167) + **ñip**; (ii) Memorise the *vayobheda* shloka; (iii) Tie menarche to *rasa-artava-srotas*.
- **2 linkages:** *Prasūti Tantra* ↔ *Kaumāra-bhṛtya* (continuum mother-child); *Strī-roga* ↔ *Kāyacikitsā* (systemic *doṣa/agnī*).
- **1 examiner’s favourite line:** “*Artava*, as *rasa-upadhātu*, reflects *rasa* status; therefore correcting *āhāra-vihāra-agni* restores *ṛtucakra*.”

Self-assessment

**A. Short-answer prompts**

1. Write the **nirukti** of “Strī,” naming the **dhātu** and **pratyaya** used.
2. Explain *Rajasvalā* and relate it to *ṛtucakra* and *artava* physiology.
3. Enumerate the eight branches of Ayurveda with the **exact** Sanskrit half-verse.

B. MCQs (single best answer)

1. The Uṇādi rule cited for forming **strī** from **styai/ṣṭyai** is—
 - a) *jāgrbhyo kvin* (Uṇādi 4.55)
 - b) *styāyater draṭ* (Uṇādi 4.167)
 - c) *gamer inih* (Uṇādi 4.6)
 - d) *pātṭitudivaciricisicibhyas thak* (Uṇādi 2.7)**Ans:** b.
2. In the *vayobheda* verse, **Rohiṇī** denotes a girl of—
 - a) 7 years b) **9 years** c) 10 years d) Above 10 years**Ans:** b.
3. The *adhikāra* sūtra of Pāṇini under which **ṅīp** is applied for feminine forms is—
 - a) *striyām* (4.1.3) b) *uraṇ raparaḥ* (1.1.51) c) *ṭeḥ* (6.4.143) d) *lopo vyor vali* (6.1.66)**Ans:** a.
4. In Aṣṭāṅga enumeration, **Vājīkaraṇa** is indicated by the term—
 - a) *bāla* b) *graha* c) *jarā* d) **vṛṣa****Ans:** d.
5. According to classical teaching summarised in standard texts, **Artava** is an *upadhātu* of—
 - a) *Rakta* b) **Rasa** c) *Māṃsa* d) *Meda***Ans:** b.

References**Classical / primary**

- **Vāgbhaṭa, Aṣṭāṅga Hṛdaya, Sūtrasthāna 1** - enumeration of *Aṣṭāṅga Ayurveda* (cf. verse “कायबालग्रहोर्ध्वाङ्ग...”) with standard commentaries.
- **Uṇādi-sūtra** tradition (rule **4.167: styāyater draṭ**), with derivational steps for **strī**; Pāṇinian references **4.1.3 (striyām), 4.1.15, 6.1.66, 6.4.143**.
- **Samvarta-smṛti (as compiled in Dharma Bindu): Vayobhedena strī-saṃjñā** verse—“अष्टवर्षा भवेद् गौरी... अथोर्ध्वं रजस्वला.”
- **Lakṣmī-Nārāyaṇa Saṃhitā** 1.513.55 records a close variant (“...कन्यादानं प्रशस्यते”).