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: ḍraṭ** is added to the root by the rule **styāyater ḍraṭ (Uṇādi 4.167)**; by elision rules only **r** remains from ḍraṭ. 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* + ḍraṭ → (phonetic elisions) → base with **r** → + **ṅīp** → **strī**.

Grammarians gloss it as **"styāyate 'syāṃ 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 ḍraṭ)**, and mention application of **ṅīp** under **striyām**.

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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 **Saṃvarta** 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

Saṃjñā	Age indicated	Sense/usage
Gaurī	8 years	A pre-pubescent girl of eight. Cultural appellation in *saṃskāra* contexts.
Rohiṇī	9 years	Nine-year-old girl.
Kanyā	10 years	Ten-year-old maiden; *kanyā-dāna* discussions in *smṛti* 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.)

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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 *vayobheden* 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) + **ṅīp → 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 (Saṃvarta, *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) + **ṅīp**; (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) *jāgṛbhyo kvin* (Uṇādi 4.55)
   b) *styāyater ḍraṭ* (Uṇādi 4.167)
   c) *gamer iniḥ* (Uṇādi 4.6)
   d) *pātṛtudivaciricisicibhyas 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 ḍraṭ***), with derivational steps for **strī**; Pāṇinian references **4.1.3** (*striyām*), **4.1.15**, **6.1.66**, **6.4.143**.
- **Saṃvarta-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").