

Unit 32. Karṇa Racanā Śarīra, Nidāna Pañcaka and Samānya Cikitsā of Karṇaroga

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A) Racanā of Karṇa (Anatomy of the Ear)

1) Classical (Āyurvedic) description

- **Śrotrendriya (organ of hearing):** The ear (Karṇa) is the external seat of **Śrotrendriya** whose viśaya (object) is **Śabda** (sound). Śrotrendriya is said to be **Ākāśa-pradhāna** (space-dominant) and is nourished by **Ākāśa Mahābhūta**; its derangement expresses as defects of hearing and equilibrium.
- **Karṇa-deśa (ear region) terms used in texts:**
 - **Karṇapālī** — external auricle (pinna).
 - **Karṇa-mūla** — root of the ear (retro-auricular/tragal region).
 - **Karṇa-srotas / Karṇa-nāḍī** — external auditory canal leading to the tympanic membrane.
 - **Karṇāśrita marmāṇi** — important marma in the vicinity (e.g., **Vidhura, Śaṅkha, Apāṅga** close to ear-eye zone), whose injury leads to rjvā-śabda-bādha and hearing loss (traditional prognosis).

Chapter colophon incipit (Karṇaroga-Vijñāniya):

“अथातः कर्णगतरोगविज्ञानं व्याख्यास्यामः ।” (Suśruta Saṃhitā, Uttara-tantra 20/1)

(This signals the start of the Karṇaroga section that classifies ear diseases and describes their nidāna-lakṣaṇa.)

2) Modern anatomical correlation

[Coronal Cross section Ear anatomy 3D model](#)

- **External ear:** Auricle (helix, antihelix, tragus, lobule), **external auditory canal** (cartilaginous outer 1/3, bony inner 2/3), lined by skin and ceruminous glands (classical **karṇa-gutha** correlates to impacted cerumen).
- **Middle ear:** Tympanic membrane, ossicles (malleus, incus, stapes), Eustachian tube (pressure equalization; dysfunction relates to **pratināha** in classical nosology), mastoid air cells.
- **Inner ear:** Cochlea (hearing), vestibule & semicircular canals (equilibrium), vestibulocochlear nerve (CN VIII). Vascular and neural proximity to facial nerve (CN VII) is clinically crucial.
- **Vascular supply & lymphatics:** External carotid branches (superficial temporal, posterior auricular) and deep tympanic arteries; lymphatics to pre- and post-auricular nodes — correlate with **śopha** (inflammations) in classics.

B) Karṇaroga: Enumeration, Nidāna Pañcaka, Classification, Sādhyā-Asādhyā, Pathyāpathyā, and Samānya Cikitsā

1) Enumeration / Classification (Suśruta Uttara-tantra, Karṇaroga-Vijñāniya)

Suśruta describes **28** ear diseases. The list, with practical correlations:

1. **Karṇaśūla** — earache (otalgia)
2. **Praṇāda / Karṇanāda** — ringing/noise (tinnitus)
3. **Badhīrya** — deafness / significant hearing loss
4. **Kṣveda** — whistling-type noise
5. **Karṇasrāva** — otorrhoea (discharge/pus)
6. **Karṇakaṇḍū** — itching (otitis externa/dermatitis)
7. **Karṇagūtha** — impacted cerumen



8. **Kṛmikarṇa** — maggots/vermin in ear (myiasis)
9. **Pratināha** — block/obstruction (often post-nasal pathway/Eustachian dysfunction)
10. 10-11. **Karṇavidradhi** — two kinds of abscess (external/internal)
12. **Karṇapāka** — suppurative disease of ear
13. **Puṭīkarṇa** — fetid ear with thick offensive discharge
- 14-17. **Arśaḥ** — four types of polypoid growths
- 18-24. **Arbuda** — seven types of tumours
- 25-28. **Śopha** — four types of swellings

Chapter colophon close:

“इति सुश्रुतसंहितायामुत्तरतन्त्रे कर्णगतद्वयविज्ञानो नाम विंशोऽध्यायः ।” (Suśruta Saṃhitā, Uttara-tantra 20 — colophon)

2) Samānya Nidāna (general etiological factors)

- **Doṣa-prakopa:**
 - **Vāta** — cold exposure, excessive Vātagena vyāyāma, fasting, dry astringent diet; sudden pressure changes → severe **karṇaśūla**, **nāda**, **badhirya**.
 - **Pitta** — infections, heat, trauma → **karṇapāka**, burning pain, reddish-yellow discharge.
 - **Kapha** — dampness, jalakrīḍā (water entry), day sleep, heavy-unctuous diet → **karṇakaṇḍū**, **karṇagūtha**, thick discharge.
- **Kṛmi nidāna:** poor hygiene → **kṛmikarṇa** (maggots).
- **Nāsā-nāsyā sambandha:** Eustachian dysfunction following **pratiśyāya** (rhinitis) and faulty **nasya** can aggravate ear disorders (classical linkage of **śīras-nāsa-karṇa**).

Therapeutics incipit (Karṇaroga-Pratiśedha):

“अथातः कर्णरोगप्रतिषेधं व्याख्यास्यामः ।” (Suśruta Saṃhitā, Uttara-tantra 21/1)

3) Samprāpti (pathogenesis) — pattern by doṣa

- **Vātaja karṇaśūla:** Vāta vitiation (śoṣa-rūkṣa-śīta) in **karṇa-srotas** → spasmodic, stabbing pain; tinnitus, variable hearing; relief by warmth/uncting.
- **Pittaja karṇasrāva/karṇapāka:** Pitta with rakta → inflammation, burning pain, fever, red canal, **pīta/haridrā** discharge.
- **Kaphaja:** Heaviness, pricking itch, **śveta/ghana** discharge; wax impaction/edema.
- **Samnipātaja:** Mixed signs; chronicity, deformity, and variable prognosis.
- **Complication channels:** **Pratināha** (tube block), **vidradhi** (abscess), **arśa/arbuda** (granulation/polyp/tumour), **śopha** (cellulitis/mastoiditis).

4) Sāmānya Lakṣaṇāḥ

- **Karṇaśūla** — teevra (colicky) or toda (pricking) pain, worse at night, better with warmth (Vātaja); burning pain & tenderness (Pittaja); dull heavy ache with itching (Kaphaja).
- **Śrava** — color/consistency points doṣa: **pīta-rakta** (Pitta), **śveta-ghana** (Kapha), thin/serous with pain (Vāta).
- **Nāda/Kṣveda** — ringing/whistling; **Badhirya** — progressive hypoacusis; **Kṛmikarṇa** — crawling, foul smell; **Arśa/Arbuda** — fleshy mass, bleeding touch; **Śopha** — erythema/heat/pain.

5) Nidāna-Pañcaka application

- **Hetu:** cold water exposure, faulty pramathana of ear, dust/smoke, trauma, post-nasal infections, day sleep, heavy snigdha-guru āhāra (Kapha).
- **Pūrvārūpa:** ear fullness, intermittent **nāda**, mild ache, heaviness, pricking itch, sense of block.
- **Rūpa:** described above (per doṣa/disease).



- **Upaśaya-Anupaśaya:** warmth/uncting relieves Vātaja; cooling/antiseptic soothes Pittaja; lekhana-śodhana and dry-light diet relieve Kaphaja.
- **Samprāpti:** doṣa-duṣya-saṃmūrchanā in **karna-srotas** with **āvaraṇa** (obstruction) or **saṅga** (stasis), sometimes spreading from **nāsa-kaṅṭha**.

6) Sādhyā-Asādhyā (Prognosis)

- **Sādhyā:** recent **Vātaja karnaśūla**, simple **karna-gūṭha**, **karna-kaṅṭhū**, non-suppurative catarrhal conditions, early **pratināha**.
- **Kṛcchra-sādhyā:** **karnaśrāva/karna-pāka** without bone involvement; small **arśa** (polyp).
- **Yāpya:** chronic **badhīrya**, recurrent otorrhoea with Eustachian dysfunction.
- **Asādhyā:** neglected/malignant **arbuda**, advanced **mastoiditis/intracranial spread**, gross congenital deafness (classically **badhīrya** with irreversible śrotrendriya-kṣaya).

Pathyāpathyā (Diet-Regimen)

Pathya (doṣa-wise):

- **Vātānulomana & snehana:** warm gṛṭa, warm milk with saindhava, mṛdu svedana, gentle local **abhyanga** (avoid force).
- **Pitta-samana:** cool but not cold fluids, tikta-madhura dravyas; avoid sun/heat; local sterile cooling fomentations in acute inflammation.
- **Kapha-hara:** laghu, uṣṇa, kaṭu-tikta-kaṣāya āhāra; avoid day sleep; steam inhalation for naso-pharyngeal clearance (indirectly improves Eustachian function).

Apathyā:

- Cold bath/wind exposure, swimming during active disease, forceful ear cleaning, loud sound exposure, night-wakefulness (for Vāta), spicy-sour (for Pitta), heavy, curd, banana, bakery items (for Kapha), and indiscriminate **nasya** when ear is acutely inflamed.

Samānya Cikitsā of Karṇaroga (Step-wise)

Therapeutics incipit:

“अथातः कर्णरोगप्रतिषेधं व्याख्यास्यामः ।” (Suśruta Saṃhitā, Uttara-tantra 21/1)

1) Pūrvakarma

- **Doṣa-samana through sārīra-śiro-upakrama:**
 - **Vātaja karnaśūla:** gentle **uṣṇa snehana** (sarvāṅga & periauricular), **mṛdu svedana**, followed by **karna-pūraṇa** with **uṣṇa taila/gṛṭa** (see below).
 - **Pittaja: śīta-upacāra;** avoid oil-pouring in presence of acute pus; prefer **kaṣāya-pralepa** around ear, antiseptic lavage after perforation supervised.
 - **Kaphaja: lekhana-upakrama** — fumigation, warm dry heat, decongesting **dhoomapāna** (when no acute suppuration), cautious ear toileting.

2) Pradhāna-kriyā

- **Karna-pūraṇa / Karna-tarpana (instillation/retention):**
 - **Vātaja: Saindhavādi taila, Bala-taila**, warm **pūrṇa gṛṭa**; 5-10 drops lukewarm; 1-2×/day until pain subsides.
 - **Pittaja:** when discharge reduces and membrane status allows, use **yaṣṭimadhu-gṛṭa, nimba-patra-**



svarasa-sahita ghṛta (coolant/ropañīya).

- **Kaphaja: Trikatu-siddha taila, Haridrā-taila** after wax/debris removal; **pippalī-arka** diluted for decongestion.
- **Śodhana (when indicated):**
 - **Karṇagūtha:** softening with warm sesame/olive oil or **bala-taila**, then gentle toileting (avoid pressure).
 - **Karṇavidradhi/karṇapāka:** surgical drainage when abscess localizes; sterilized wicks; **kaśāya-pralepa** (nimba-patra, daruharidrā) around ear; systemic **dīpana-pācana**.
 - **Arśa/Arbuda:** evaluation for **kṣāra-karma, agnikarma**, or modern polypectomy/biopsy as per lesion.

3) Anuśaṅga-cikitsā (adjuvants)

- **Nāśya** (only after pain, fever, and acute discharge settle): **Anu-taila/śadbindu-taila** for Eustachian clearance and prevention of **pratināha**.
- **Gandūṣa/Kavala** with **yaṣṭimadhu-kaśāya** or **triphala-kaśāya** to reduce oropharyngeal sepsis (source for tubotympanic issues).
- **Dhoomapāna** (kapha-vāta states without suppuration) with **guggulu-haridrā** based medicated smokes for decongestion.
- **Rasāyana: Bhṛṅgarāja, Aśvagandhā, Amalaki** in chronic **badhīrya** to strengthen **indriya** (supportive).

4) Doṣa-wise snapshots

- **Vātaja karṇasūla:** uṣṇa snehana + karṇa-pūraṇa; **rasna-daśamūla-kaśāya** internal; warm fomentation; strict wind-cold avoidance.
- **Pittaja karṇapāka/karṇasrāva:** anti-inflammatory **nimba-triphala-kaśāya, gudūcī**; local antiseptic care; **dīpana-pācana** (mustā, parpaṭa); avoid oils until acute phase resolves.
- **Kaphaja karṇasrāva/kaṇḍū/gūtha: trikaṭu, pañkolā;** steam inhalation; careful wick toileting; later **karṇa-pūraṇa** with light, uṣṇa taila.
- **Samnipātaja / chronic suppurative:** staged care with culture-sensitive modern antibiotics (institutional), adjuvant Ayurvedic **śodhana-śamana**, polyp management, and hearing rehab.

Differential diagnosis pointers

- **Tinnitus (karṇanāda/pranāda)** vs **kṣveda:** various vs whistling quality; check anemia, thyroid, drugs, and noise exposure.
- **Otitis externa** vs **media:** tragal tenderness, canal edema (external) vs tympanic signs, fever, post-URTI (media).
- **Red flags (urgent referral):** mastoid pain/swelling, facial palsy, vertigo with fever, severe otalgia not settling — suspect **śopha/vidradhi** spread.

Quick textual anchors

- **Opening of classification chapter:**
“अथातः कर्णगत रोगविज्ञानं व्याख्यास्यामः ।” (SS Ut. 20/1)
- **Opening of therapeutics chapter:**
“अथातः कर्णरोगप्रतिषेधं व्याख्यास्यामः ।” (SS Ut. 21/1)
- **Colophon tags for answers:**
“...कर्णगत रोगविज्ञानो नाम विंशोऽध्यायः ।” (SS Ut. 20, end)
“...कर्णरोगप्रतिषेधो नाम एकविंशोऽध्यायः ।” (SS Ut. 21, end)

(Use these to show textual grounding when writing answers; then present your doṣa-wise analysis.)



Assessment

Long Essay (10 marks)

1. **Enumerate the Karṇaroga as per Suśruta and discuss the Nidāna-Pañcaka and Samprāpti of Karṇasrāva.**

Outline: 28 types; general hetu; doṣa-wise samprāpti; lakṣaṇa; upaśaya; prognosis; samānya and viśeṣa cikitsā.

2. **Explain the Samānya Cikitsā of Karṇaroga with emphasis on Karṇa-pūraṇa and its indications/contraindications.**

Outline: pūrvakarma; doṣa-wise oil/ghṛta choices; when to avoid oils; role of śodhana; adjuvants (nāśya, dhoomapāna); follow-up and relapse prevention.

Short Essays (5 marks)

1. **Describe Vātaja Karṇasūla — lakṣaṇa, upaśaya and line of management.**
2. **Write a note on Karṇagūtha (impacted cerumen) — nidāna, lakṣaṇa, and management.**
3. **Discuss Kaphaja Karṇakaṇḍū — differential diagnosis and pathyāpathyā.**
4. **Explain Pratināha with clinical correlation to Eustachian tube dysfunction.**

Short Answers (2 marks)

1. Define **Karṇanāda** and **Kṣveda**.
2. List four **red flags** in Karṇaroga requiring urgent referral.
3. Mention two **kapha-hara** kaṣāya for Karṇasrāva.
4. What is **Kṛmīkarṇa**? Give one key sign.
5. Name four **Arśa (polyp)-like** lesions of the ear in Suśruta.
6. State **two apathyā** in acute Karṇapāka.

MCQs (1 mark each)

1. Suśruta enumerates **Karṇaroga** as:
a) 18 b) 24 c) **28** d) 32
2. **Karṇagūtha** correlates best with:
a) Granulation b) **Impacted cerumen** c) Fungal otitis d) Membrane perforation
3. **Vātaja Karṇasūla** is generally relieved by:
a) Cold applications b) **Warm snehana** c) Amla-rasa diet d) Day sleep
4. **Puṭīkarṇa** indicates:
a) Normal ear b) **Fetid thick discharge** c) Itching only d) Vertigo only
5. **Pratināha** most closely matches:
a) Otosclerosis b) **Eustachian obstruction** c) Otomycosis d) Acoustic neuroma

Model viva points

- Always start with **doṣa-doṣya-deśa-kāla** when building **Nidāna-pañcaka**.
- Quote the **chapter incipits/colophons** to show textual anchoring, then present **clinical correlations**.
- In management, state **when oils are avoided** (acute purulent stage), and when **karṇa-pūraṇa** is re-introduced.