

Vipareeta Avipareeta Swapna Nidarshaneeyam chapter of Sushruta Sutra Sthana - An explorative study

Abstract

Vipareeta Avipareeta Swapna Nidarshaneeyam (VASN) is the 29th chapter of *Sutra Sthana* of *Sushruta Samhita*. This chapter has 81 verses that deal with various *Shakunas* (omens), *Doota* (caregiver) and *Swapna* (dreams). The aim of the present work is to provide a comprehensive and critical analysis of the contents of VASN chapter with the help of contemporary prognostic and dream literature. Characteristic features of a caregiver and their influence on patient's clinical outcome, various omens (both good and bad) and dreams (both auspicious and inauspicious) and their positive or negative prognostic consequences are documented in the VASN chapter. *Shakunas* of the VASN chapter denote the belief systems that were prevalent in ancient India and the prognostic significance needs to be evaluated further. Interpretation of dreams that are documented in VASN chapter seems to be congruent with the findings of contemporary dream research. Interdisciplinary studies among *Ayurveda*, *Jyotishya Shastra* (medical astrology) and modern prognostic science are required to authenticate the good and bad omens and their association with the positive or negative clinical outcomes.

Keywords: *Ayurveda*, caregiver, dream, *Doota*, *Shakuna*, *Swapna*

Volume 6 Issue 1 - 2023

Kshama Gupta, Prasad Mamidi

R.B.Ayurvedic Medical College & Hospital, Agra, Uttar Pradesh, India

Correspondence: Prasad Mamidi, Department of Kayachikitsa, R.B.Ayurvedic Medical College and Hospital, Agra, Uttar Pradesh, India, Tel +91-7567222856, Email drprasadmamidi@gmail.com

Received: March 23, 2023 | Published: May 15, 2023

Introduction

Maharshi Sushruta has practiced surgery during 5th century BC in India.¹ He is a great sage surgeon, teacher and renowned all over the world for his contributions to surgery. *Sushruta Samhita*, the treatise compiled by *Maharshi Sushruta* had various commentaries.² It was translated into nine foreign languages apart from various Indian languages.¹ Apart from *Shalya* (*Ayurvedic* surgery) and *Shalakyia* (*Ayurvedic* ophthalmology, ENT and dentistry), the *Sushruta Samhita* encompass other specialities such as medicine (*Kayachikitsa*), paediatrics (*Kaumarabhritya*), geriatrics (*Rasayana/Jara*), toxicology (*Agada Tantra*), reproductive medicine (*Vajikarana*) and psychiatry (*Graha Chikitsa/Bhuta Vidya*). The compendium of *Maharshi Sushruta* (*Sushruta Samhita*) consists of 184 chapters, description of 300 surgical procedures, details of 650 drugs (animal, plant, and mineral origin) and the description of 121 types of surgical instruments.³ *Maharshi Sushruta* is recognized today as 'Father of plastic surgery'³ and he was far ahead of his time in the field of surgery.²

Prognostic concepts (*Arishta Vijnana*) were documented in the chapters from 28th to 33rd of *Sutra Sthana* (a section that deals with the basic principles of *Ayurveda*) of *Sushruta Samhita*. *Vipareeta Avipareeta Swapna Nidarshaneeyam* (VASN) is the 29th chapter of *Sushruta Sutra Sthana* (SSS). *Vipareeta Swapna* denotes 'abnormal dreams' and the word *Nidarshaneeyam* indicates 'illustration,' hence VASN chapter is the documentation of dreams that are having prognostic importance. VASN chapter consists of 81 verses those deal with the description of various good & bad omens (*Shakuna*) related to *Doota* (messenger or a caregiver), *Bhishak* (physician), *Swapna* (dreams) and other factors along with their prognostic significance.^{4,5} Previous studies have explored the prognostic importance of *Avaaraneeya*,⁶ *Swabhava Vipratipatti*,⁷ *Chaaya Vipratipatti*,⁸ and *Panchendriyarth Vipratipatti*.⁹ chapters of SSS. The contents of VASN chapter also seem to have prognostic potential and further exploration is the need of the hour. The present study aims to analyze and interpret the prognostic importance of the contents of VASN chapter of SSS with the help of contemporary prognostic literature. The hypotheses generated from the present work may pave the way for future research works in the field of an *Ayurvedic* prognostic science.

Review methodology

Literature search has been carried out to find out relevant articles in databases and search engines including Scopus, Web of science, PubMed, Google Scholar and EMBASE by using different key words pertaining to *Ayurveda* and contemporary prognostic literature. Open-access, full text articles and abstracts published in English language only were considered. *Sushruta Samhita* with *Nibandha Sangraha* and *Bhanumati* commentary and other *Ayurvedic* classical texts such as *Ashtanga Samgraha*, *Charaka Samhita*, *Ashtanga Hrudaya*, *Bhela Samhita*, and *Kashyapa Samhita* have been referred. Data obtained from these studies is compiled, interpreted and presented as a narrative review.

Discussion

Arishta denotes fatality and *Arishta Lakshanas* are the fatal signs and symptoms those indicate an imminent death. *Indriya Sthana*, a separate section that consists of few chapters describing various *Arishta Lakshanas* in major *Ayurvedic* classical texts but *Sushruta Samhita* has no *Indriya Sthana*. *Maharshi Sushruta* has dedicated 6 chapters (28th to 33rd chapters) to describe various *Arishta Lakshanas* in SSS. VASN is the 29th chapter that deals with the description of *Arishta Lakshanas* pertaining to *Doota* (a messenger and/or a caregiver) and dreams (*Swapna*).^{4,5} In ancient India, a *Doota* from patient's family used to go to the physician's home to inform him about the illness of the ailing family member. *Doota* also would take the physician with him to the patient's home by carrying his medicinal kit and giving him lift in his cart/carriage and also drop him back. Various auspicious and inauspicious signs pertaining to the personality, appearance (*Darshana*), attire (*Vesha*), speech or communication skills (*Sambhasha*), time of the arrival and other activities (*Cheshta*) of *Doota* are documented in various *Ayurvedic* classical texts along with their prognostic importance.¹⁰⁻¹³ Prognosis based on the condition of the physician when *Doota* arrives, omens occurring on the way to patient's home, inauspicious events occurring at the patient's house during physician's home visit, and various auspicious and inauspicious dreams along with their prognostic significance are described in VASN chapter of SSS. VASN chapter

of SSS consists of 81 verses.^{4,5} Critical analysis with interpretation of each verse of VASN chapter has been provided in the following sections (Table 1, 2 & 3).

Athaato Vipareetaavipareeta – Bhagavaan Dhanwantari (Verse 1-2)

The current chapter (VASN) deals with the bad/inauspicious (*Vipareeta*) and good/auspicious (*Avipareeta*) prognostic features pertaining to dreams (*Swapna*) and *Doota* (messenger and/or caregiver) as narrated by Lord *Dhanwantari*. A detailed description is provided in the following sections.^{4,5} The current chapter is named as ‘*Vipareeta Avipareeta Doota Swapna Nidarshaneeyam*’ by *Chakrapani* (written *Bhanumati* commentary on *Sushruta Samhita*), ‘*Vipareeta Avipareeta Swapna Nidarshaneeyam*’ by *Dalhana* (written *Nibandha Samgraha* commentary on *Sushruta Samhita*) and ‘*Vipareeta Avipareeta Doota Shakuna Swapna Nidarshaneeyam*’ by *Harana Chandra*.¹⁴

Doota Darshana – Yadi Vaashubham (Verse 3-4)

Appearance (*Darshana*), mode of conversation (*Sambhasha*), dressing (*Vesha*), and behaviour (*Cheshta*) of a *Doota*; condition of the stars (*Ruksham*), time & date (*Vela & Tithi*), wind direction (*Anila*) and other omens (*Shakuna*) at the time of *Doota*'s arrival at physician's house; factors related to the physician (*Vaidya*) such as his place of stay (*Desha*), manner of speech (*Vaak*), behaviour (*Cheshta*), and physical (*Deha*) & mental state (*Manasaam*) at the time of *Doota*'s arrival etc all these denote (*Kathayanti*) the favourable (*Shubham*) and unfavourable (*Ashubham*) clinical patient outcomes (*Aaturagatam*).^{4,5}

Paakhanda Aashrama – Yadi Vaashubham (Verse 5-6)

Similarity or equality of (*Sapaksha*) sociocultural factors such as religion, caste, age etc in between *Doota* and *Bhishak* (physician) denote favourable prognosis (*Karma Siddhi*) whereas dissimilarity (*Vipareeta*) denote an unfavourable clinical outcome (*Karma Vipatti*). An eunuch (*Napumsaka*) or a lady (*Stree*) *Doota* or multiple *Doota*'s (*Bahavo*) or *Doota* engaged in multiple tasks (*Naikakaarya*) or having an aggressive nature (*Asuyaka*) or *Doota* arrives on a chariot (*Ratha*) driven by a donkey (*Gaardhabha*) or a camel (*Aushtra*) or arriving in quick succession (*Parampara*) to meet (*Upasarpanti*) the physician (*Vaidya*) denotes an unfavourable prognosis (*Garhita*).^{4,5}

Paasha Dandaayudha – Amangalya Abhidhaayina (Verse 7-8)

Having or displaying features such as carrying a rope (*Paasha*) or a stick (*Danda*) or a weapon (*Aayudha*); wearing colourful dresses rather than white (*Paanduretara Vaasasa*); wearing apparel (*Vaasasa*) that is drenched (*Aardra*) or old (*Jeerna*) or torn (*Jeerna*) or dirty (*Malina*); wearing only a single dress or dress made up of a single-piece (*Eka*); wearing a dress improperly (*Apasavya*); physically handicapped or disabled (*Nyunaanga*); having supernumerary digits (*Adhikaanga*); agitated (*Udvigna*) or deformed (*Vikruta*) or fierce-looking (*Raudra Rupina*); having an unpleasant (*Ruksha*) or harsh (*Nishthura*) or inauspicious speech (*Amangalya Abhidhaayina*) etc of a *Doota* indicate an imminent death of the concerned patient or an unfavourable prognosis (*Garhita*).^{4,5}

Chindanti Trina – Dootaaste Chaapi Garhita (Verse 9-14)

Doing activities such as plucking (*Chindanti*) grass (*Trina*) or splitting (*Chindanti*) a wood (*Kaashtha*) into pieces; frequently touching (*Sprushanti*) his nose (*Nasika*), breasts (*Stanam*), ring finger (*Anamika*), nails (*Nakha*), scalp hair (*Kesha*), body hair (*Roma*), teeth (*Dashana*) and playing with margins of the dress (*Vastraanta*); closing body orifices with hands (*Sroto Avarodha*) or putting hands (*Paanaya*) over his body parts such as cardiac region (*Hrut*), cheeks (*Ganda*), head (*Moordha*), chest (*Urah*), and abdomen (*Kukshi*); carrying

a skull (*Kapaala*), stone or cow dung cake (*Upala*), ash (*Bhasma*), bones (*Asthi*), husk (*Tusha*) and burning charcoal (*Angaaraka*) in his hands (*Karaashcha*); scratching (*Vilikhanti*) the earth (*Maheem*) with fingers or toes, dropping objects (*Munchanti*) and breaking (*Bhedina*) clumps of clay (*Loshta*); smeared (*Digdhaanga*) with oil (*Taila*) or mud (*Kardama*), wearing a red garland (*Rakta*) or applied a red paste (*Rakta*) all over the body (*Anulepana*); holding (*Gruheetva*) an over ripened (*Pakwam*) or juiceless (*Asaaram*) fruit (*Phalam*) or any similar such type of useless things (*Anyashcha Tadvidham*); rubbing the nails together (*Nakhairnakhaantaram*) or touching feet with his own hands (*Karena Charanam*); holding or touching shoes (*Upaana*) or leather (*Charma*); suffering (*Peedita*) with a deforming illness (*Vikruta Vyadhi*) (leprosy?); having an abnormal behaviour (*Vamachara*), crying (*Rudanta*), suffering with dyspnoea (*Shwasino*) and having deformed eyes or cataract (*Vikrutekshana*); folding his hands together and pointing them towards (*Praanjalayo*) the south direction (*Yaamyam Dish*); standing (*Sthita*) in asymmetrical posture (*Vishama*) or standing on single leg (*Eka Paada*); *Doota* approaching (*Upasarpanti*) a physician (*Vaidyam*) with displaying or having the above said features should be considered as inauspicious (*Garhita*) (indicates an unfavourable clinical outcome to the concerned patient).^{4,5}

Dakshinaabhimukham – Dootaaste Chaapi Garhita (Verse 15-19)

A physician (*Vaidyam*), who is sitting facing the south direction (*Dakshinaabhimukham*) or sitting at an unhygienic (*Ashuchi*) place (*Deshe*); physician (*Vaidyam*) kindling fire (*Jwalayantam*) or cooking (*Pachantam*) or engaged (*Udyatam*) in a barbarous activity (*Krura Karmaani*) or naked (*Nagnam*) or lying (*Shayanam*) on the ground (*Bhumau*) or unhygienic (*Ashuchim*) after urination or defecation (*Vegotsargeshu*); physician, whose hair is dishevelled (*Prakeerna Kesham*) or smeared with oil (*Abhyaktam*) or sweating (*Swinnam*) or restless (*Viklavam*); *Doota* approaching (*Upasarpanti*) a physician (*Vaidyam*) at the above mentioned times should be considered inauspicious (*Garhita*). *Doota* approaching a physician (*Vaidya*) when he is engaged in reverential offerings to the ancestors (*Pitru Karya*) or while performing sacred ceremonies (*Daiva Karya*) or during the times of natural calamities (*Utpaata Darshana*) or approaching at the time of a afternoon (*Madhyahna*) or midnight (*Ardha Ratri*) or early morning (*Sandhya*) or at twilight (*Sandhya*) or approaching a physician when specific asterisms predominate (*Krittika, Aardra, Aaslesha, Maagha, Mula, Purva* and *Bharani*) or approaching during specific days of the month (4th, 6th and 9th) or during a full moon or the new moon days (*Sandhi Dineshu*) should be considered as inauspicious (*Garhita*).^{4,5}

Swinnaabhitapta – Budhyeta Pandita (Verse 20-22)

Doota representing a patient, who has been suffering with a *Pitta Roga* (disease caused by the vitiation of *Pitta*) and approaches (*Upagata*) a physician (*Vaidya*) with excessive perspiration (*Swinna*) or having an elevated body temperature (*Abhitapta*) (either due to exposure of mid-afternoon heat or staying near fire) indicate an imminent death to the concerned patient or it should be considered as inauspicious (*Garhita*). *Doota* approaching a physician with the similar situation as mentioned above but representing a patient suffering with *Kapha Roga* (disease caused by the vitiation of *Kapha*) instead of *Pitta Roga*, should be considered auspicious. *Doota* representing a patient, who has been suffering with *Raktapitta* (haemorrhagic disease) or *Atisara* (diarrhoea) or *Prameha* (diabetes or renal diseases) and approaches or meets physician near water dam (*Jala Rodha*), should be considered auspicious (*Prashasta*). The symbolic description provided here is for example purposes only,

all the other such situations (*Sesham*) should be analysed carefully and interpreted (*Budhyeta*) accordingly (*Evam*) by the concerned and skilled physician (*Pandita*) while prognosticating.^{4,5}

Shuklavaasaa – Sa Cha Karayakara Smrita (Verse 23-26)

Doota dressed in white clothes (*Shukla Vaasa*), hygienic (*Shuchi*), having fair complexion (*Gaura*), looks handsome (*Priya Darshana*) though having dark complexion (*Shyaama*), healthy (*Swastha*) and belongs to the same caste and/or sub caste (*Gotra*) as that of the physician (*Jaatau Swagotrau Vaa*) indicates auspiciousness (*Karyakara*). *Doota*, who comes on a bullock cart (*Go Yaana*) or by walk (*Paadaabhyaam*) to visit the physician; *Doota* having contentment (*Tushita*), good manners or behaviour (*Shubha Cheshtita*), good memory (*Smrutimaan*), skilful (*Vidhi Kaalajna*), independent (*Swatantra*) and intelligence (*Pratipattimaan*); *Doota*, who is adorned (*Alankruta*) and show good omens (*Mangalavaan*) should be considered as auspicious (*Karyakara*). *Doota* approaches (*Upasarpati*) a physician (*Vaidyam*), who is at ease (*Swastham*), sitting (*Aaseenam*) towards the east direction (*Praagmukham*), seated

on a plain (*Same Deshe*) and hygienic ground (*Shuchau Deshe*) should be considered as auspicious (*Karyakara*).^{4,5}

Characteristics of Doota and their impact on patient's clinical outcome

Doota is either a messenger (who comes to call the physician to the patient's house) or a caregiver (either a family member or a relative or a friend or a nurse, who provides care to the patient) and the words *Doota*, caregiver and messenger have been used synonymously throughout the present article. Prognostic assessment of a remote unseen patient could be done by the physician by observing the phenotypic or behavioural characteristics displayed by a *Doota*. In ancient India, due to the lack of communication media the way of communicating information was manual only. *Doota* conveys the message regarding patient's general condition and requests the physician to visit patient's house.¹¹ Various good and bad omens pertaining to *Doota* and their influences on patient's clinical outcome are described in the VASN chapter. (Table 1)

Table 1 Features of *Doota* and their impact on caregiving process

Features of Doota	Impact on caregiving process
Paakhanda Aashrama – Yadi Vaashubham (S. Su. 29 / 5)	Cultural or religious differences or incompetence between caregiver and care recipient (patient) lead to conflicts and may impact caregiving process adversely. Negative relations between caregivers and patients are linked to lack of awareness, cultural misunderstandings and linguistic issues.
Napumsakam Stree Bahavo Naikakaarya Asuyaka (S. Su. 29 / 6)	Female gender (<i>Stree</i>) and transgender (<i>Napumsaka</i>) are more at risk for caregiver burden; multiple caregivers (<i>Bahavo</i>) for a single patient may create confusion or miscommunication and may interfere with quality caregiving; <i>Naikakaarya</i> may denote caregiver facing multiple concurrent stressful events and unrelenting stress or caregiver burden or distress; <i>Asuyaka</i> denote disrespectful or aggressive behaviour of a caregiver that may influence the caregiving process adversely;
Gaardhabha Aushtra – Amangalya Abhidhaayina (S. Su. 29 / 7-8)	Using carts driven by donkey or camels denote lack of resources; wearing torn and old clothes may denote poor financial status; wearing dirty clothes may denote lack of hygiene; <i>Nyunaanga & Adhikaanga</i> denote physical deformities; <i>Udvigna, Vikruta, Aayudha Dhara</i> etc denote psychological illness; <i>Ruksha, Nishthura</i> and <i>Amangalya</i> denote negative attitudes or personality traits or poor communication or language abilities of a caregiver; All these factors ultimately affects caregiving process and negative health outcomes in a care recipient;
Chindanti Trina – Dootaaste Chaapi Garhita (S. Su. 29 / 9-14)	Inadequate resources, poverty or poor financial conditions (using <i>Trina, Kaashtha, Tusha, Asthi, Bhasma, Kapaala</i> etc objects) of caregiver affects caregiving process and quality; Stereotypic motor behaviours (<i>Karena Charanam, Nakhairnakaantaram, Vilikhanti Maheem</i> etc), poor physical (<i>Vikruta Vyadhi Peedita</i>) and psychological health status (<i>Rudanta, Vamachara</i> etc) of a caregiver denotes caregiver burden or stress that ultimately affects the quality of caregiving and may hasten patients mortality;
Dakshinaabhimukham – Sa Cha Karayakara Smrita (S. Su. 29 / 15-26)	Various omens pertaining to a caregiver and concerned physician and their influences on the patients' clinical outcome;

(S. Su. 29 / XX): S - Sushruta Samhita; Su - Sutra Sthana; 29 - 29th chapter; XX - Verse number.

Due to the multiple stressful events and unrelenting stress, caregivers often experience negative health effects. The caregiver stress process generated by the care situation, socio-demographic characteristics (i.e., as age, gender, marital status, educational level, and social class of the caregiver, relationship with and gender of the patient) are related to primary stressors (i.e., the patient's disease, dependence level of the patient, daily hours and duration of care), and that primary and secondary stressors (i.e., employment, monthly family income and caregivers' self-esteem) are related to caregivers' emotional state.¹⁵ Caregiver burden is a multidimensional response to physical, psychological, emotional, financial and social stressors associated with the caregiving. Caregiver burden is more prevalent

in caregivers of patients presenting with dementias or with more comorbidities. Most of the caregivers are usually untrained and unable to perform caregiving tasks. Decline in caregiver mental health is a risk factor for patient mortality in several ways. The stresses and burden of caregiving create increased risk for poor caregiver mental health that may leads to greater mortality among patients.¹⁶

Doota context of VASN chapter provides new insights in areas such as the impact of caregiver's health on the quality of caregiving, caregiver burden and distress (due to care recipients worse health status), caregiver roles & impacts, caregiver-receiver mutuality, religious & cultural diversity between caregiver and care recipient (patient) and its impact on caregiving quality, and impact of various

other factors that are related to a caregiver such as physical & mental health, employment and socio-economic status, personality traits, dressing, speech & communication skills, behaviour and nursing skill etc on the quality of caregiving as well as on the patients clinical outcomes. Caregiving burden could have a significant negative impact on the physical and mental health of caregivers that may ultimately leads to negative health outcomes in the care recipient. The complex interrelationships between the caregiver (*Doota*), care recipient (patient) and physician (*Vaidya/Bhishak*) are described in this chapter. Some of the omens related to *Doota* (such as Verse 25 & 26) are not related to caregiving process and their impact on patient's clinical outcome (either positive or negative) needs to be authenticated by retrospective cohort studies or cross-sectional studies. Various factors impacting the caregiving process and ultimately the clinical outcomes are documented in VASN chapter as *Doota* related omens in an indirect manner. (Table 1)

Maamsodakumbha – Hrudayangamaa (Verse 27-31)

If (the physician) happens to see (*Darshanam*) any objects or people such as meat (*Maamsa*), earthen pot filled with water (*Udakumbha*), an umbrella (*Aatapatra*), a *Brahmana* (a priest or a person, who performs *Vedic* rituals and sacrifices), an elephant (*Vaarana*), a cow (*Go*), a bullock (*Vrishha*), and objects that are white in colour (*Shukla Varna*) while departing (*Prasthaane*) (to visit the patient) should be considered as auspicious omens (*Pujyante*). If (the physician) happens to see (*Darshanam*) any objects/people/animals such as a woman with a child (*Stree Putreeni*), a cow with a calf (*Gau Savatsa*), a well adorned girl (*Vardhamana Alankruta*), fish (*Matsya*), unripe fruit (*Phalam Amam*), *Swastika* symbol, sweets (*Modaka*), yoghurt (*Dadhi*), gold (*Hiranyam*), a vessel filled with puffed rice or cereals (*Akshata Paatram*), jewellery or gem stones (*Ratnaani*), the king (*Nrupa*), burning fire (*Aprashaanta Anala*), a horse (*Vaji*), a swan (*Hamsa*), a blue jay (*Chaasha*), and a peacock (*Shikhi*) while departing (*Prasthaane*) (to visit the patient) should be considered as auspicious omens (*Pujyante*). If (the physician) hears any sounds (*Svanaah*) such as sounds of *Vedic* chanting (*Brahma*) or the drum (*Dundubhi*) or clouds (*Jeemuta*) or a conch shell (*Shankha*) or a flute (*Venu*) and sounds of the chariot (*Ratha*); roaring of a lion (*Simha Naada*), lowing of a cow (*Go Naada*) or a bullock (*Vrishha Naada*), neighing of a horse (*Vaji Dhwani*), roaring of an elephant (*Hasti Svana*), cackling of a geese (*Kaushikam Rutam*), hooting of an owl towards left side (*Ullukam Rutam Vaamata*), and hearing any other such noble (*Sreshtha Vaacha*) and pleasing conversations (*Hrudayangama Vaacha*) while departing (*Prasthaane*) (to visit the patient) should be considered as auspicious omens (*Pujyante*).^{4,5}

Patra Pushpa Phalopetaan – Andha Ripavastathaa (Verse 32-40)

Birds sitting on the trees (*Drumaan*) those are full of leaves (*Patra*), flowers (*Pushpa*), fruits (*Phala*), latex (*Ksheera*) and disease-free (*Neerujo*); birds in the sky (*Nabha*), on a house (*Veshma*) or sitting on the flagstaff (*Dhwaja*) or sitting on the decorated, arched doorways (*Torana*) or on the rostrum (*Vedika*); birds those are making melodious sounds (*Madhuram*) from auspicious directions (east and north) or birds coming from behind (*Prushtatoanuga*) or from the left (*Vama*) or right side (*Dakshina*) denotes auspiciousness or considered as good omens (*Shakuna Karmasiddhaye*). Birds sitting on the trees (*Vriksha*) those are dry (*Shushka*), withered by lightening (*Ashani Hate*), shorn of their leaves (*Apatre*), encircled by tendrils (*Vallinaddhe*) and having thorns (*Sa Kantake*); birds sitting (*Sthita*) on slabs of stones (*Ashma*), ashes (*Bhasma*), bones (*Asthi*), faeces (*Vit*), chaff (*Tusha*), charcoal (*Angaara*), dust (*Paanshu*), over a sacrificial shed (*Chaitya*), anthill (*Valmika*) and on uneven places (*Vishama*); birds those are

making loud, harsh noises (*Khara Swara*) from the inauspicious directions (*Aagneya*-south-east, *Yamya*-south and *Nairuti*-south-west) and flying towards (*Purato*) should be considered as inauspicious (*Naartha Sadhaka*). Birds having masculine names (*Punnaama*) and flying towards the left side (*Vama*) as well as birds having feminine names (*Stree Sanjna*) and flying towards right side (*Dakshina*) of the physician (on the way to the patient's house) is auspicious (*Shubha*). Dogs (*Shva*) and jackals (*Shrigaala*) crossing (*Gamanam*) the road from the right (*Dakshinaat*) to the left side (*Vama*) in front of the physician are auspicious (*Prashastam*). Mongoose (*Nakula*) crossing and the blue jay (*Chaasha*) birds flying towards the left side (*Vama*) in front of the physician is auspicious (*Prashastam*). Passage of rabbits (*Shasha*) and snakes (*Sarpa*) and flying of a vulture (*Bhaasa*) and an owl (*Kaushika*) in any direction in front of the physician is inauspicious (*Na Prashastam*). Sight (*Darshanam*) or sound (*Rutam*) of an iguana (*Godha*) and a lizard (*Krukalaasa*), while the physician is on the way to the patient's house should be considered inauspicious or indicate unfavourable clinical outcome (*Na Prashastam*). Seeing of (*Darshanam*) other people similar (*Tulya*) to inauspicious *Doota* (*Anishtai*) is also considered inauspicious (*Ashastam*). Sight of *Kuluttha* (*Dolichos biflorus* Linn.), sesame seeds (*Sesamum indicum*), cotton (*Karpasa*), chaff (*Tusha*), stone (*Paashaana*), ash (*Bhasma*), a pot (*Paatram*) filled with charcoal (*Angaara*), oil (*Taila*), mud (*Kardama*), utensils filled (*Paatram Puritam*) with alcoholic beverages (except *Prasanna* type) (*Prasannetara Madyaanaam*) or filled (*Purnam*) with red mustard (*Rakta Sarshapa*) are inauspicious (on the way to the patient's house). Seeing (when the physician is on the way to the patient's house) (*Pathi*) a corpse (*Shava*), wood (*Kaashta*), dry leaves (*Palaasham*), a wicked or immoral person (*Patita*), a person of low caste (*Antahsthaa*), a person having depression or weakness (*Deena*), a blind person (*Andha*) and an enemy (*Ripava*) is inauspicious (*Neshyante*).^{4,5}

Mrudu Sheeta – Neshyante Darshanam Gataah (Verse 41-48)

Mild (*Mrudu*), cool (*Sheeta*) wind (*Anila*) blowing at physician's back (*Anukula*) having nice fragrance (*Sugandhi*) is auspicious (*Shubha*). Strong (*Khara*), hot (*Ushna*) wind with bad odour (*Anishta Gandha*) and blowing towards the physician (*Pratiloma*) is inauspicious (*Garhita*). If a patient has been suffering with diseases such as *Granthi* (benign tumour) and *Arbuda* (malignant tumour) and the physician arrives at patient's house for visit, during that time if physician hear sounds such as 'excision' that denote favourable outcome or considered to be auspicious. Similarly the word 'incision' is auspicious for the conditions like *Vidradhi* (abscesses) and *Gulma* (intra-abdominal growths). Words such as 'checked' or 'stopped' or 'controlled' are auspicious for the diseases like *Raktapitta* and *Atisara*. In the same way, similar words of omens should be understood of their good or bad prognostic significance in other diseases also. Hearing screaming (*Aakrushta*), lamentation (*Haakashta*) and weeping (*Aakranda*) sounds (*Svanaa*); vomiting sounds (*Chardyaam*), sounds of passing flatus (*Vata*) and cries of (*Shabdo*) animals like donkey and camel are inauspicious. Things such as dissuasion (*Pratishiddham*), breakage (*Bhagnam*), sneezing (*Kshutam*), slipping (*Skhalitam*), injury (*Aahatam*) and psychological stress (*Daurmanasyam*) are inauspicious (*Na Prashasyate*) when the physician (*Vaidyasya*) is on the way (*Yaatraayaam*) to the patient's house. All these symbolic omens should only be considered at the time of entering (*Praveshe*) the patient's house (main entrance or main door) but need not be taken in to account (*Na Ganyate*) at every door (*Pratidwaaram*) of the patient's house (*Aature Gruhe*). The following people or things or objects such as hair (*Kesha*), ash (*Bhasma*), bones (*Asthi*), wood (*Kashta*), stone (*Ashma*), chaff (*Tusha*), cotton (*Karpasa*), thorns

(*Kantaka*), cat with its legs pointing upwards (*Katvordhwapaada*), wine (*Madya*), water (*Apa*), fat (*Vasa*), oil (*Tailam*), sesame seeds (*Tila*) or straw (*Trinam*), an eunuch (*Napumsaka*), a person with deformity or broken limbs (*Bhagna*), a naked person (*Nagna*), a person with shaved head (*Munda*) and a person wearing non-white or red clothes (*Asitaambara*) are inauspicious (*Neshyante*) while the physician arrives at (*Praveshe*) patient's house and while departure (*Prasthaane*).^{4,5}

Bhaandaanaam – Lakshayet Bhishak (Verse 49-53)

The following are the bad prognostic omens such as movement of the stored utensils (*Bhaandaanaam*) from one place to another (*Sthaanaat Sancharanam*) or digging them out (*Nikhaata Utpatanam*) or their breakage (*Bhanga*) or falling (*Patanam*) or bringing them outside (*Nirgama*); breakage of (*Avasaado*) physician's chair (*Vaidyaasana*), patient (*Rogi*) lying on prone position (*Adhomukha*) or scratching his body parts (*Pramrujyaad*) to the wall (*Kudyam*) or bed sheet (*Aastarana*) during the time of conversation (*Sambhaashamaano*) with physician (*Vaidyam*); patient shaking (*Dhuneeya*) his hands (*Karau*) vigorously or holding the hands (*Hastam Aakrushya*) of the physician (*Vaidyasya*) and keeping (*Nyaset*) them on his chest (*Uras*) or on head (*Shiras*) or rubbing of physician's body (*Vaidya*) with the patient while the patient (*Aatura*) looking towards or facing the physician (*Unmukha*) is inauspicious. Patients won't get relief (*Na Siddhyati*) from their illness in such houses (*Gruhe*) where the physician is not respected (*Na Pujyate*) and vice versa (*Sa Siddhyati*). Hence the physician (*Bhishak*) should consider (*Lakshayet*) all those auspicious (*Shubham*) and inauspicious omens (*Ashubham*) related to *Doota* and patient (*Aatura*).^{4,5}

Shakunas (omens) and their impact on patients' clinical outcome

Various auspicious and inauspicious signs or omens explained in the VASN chapter (*Verse 27 to 53*) could be understood by *Jyotishya Shastra* (astrology) that deals with the influences of planetary positions on human life and their destiny. The word *Shakuna* denotes a bird and omens related to birds are called as *Shakunas*. The word *Nimitta* denotes either a cause or *Karma* or consequences of past deeds. *Shakuna shastra* or *Nimitta shashtra* is part of the *Jyotishya Shastra* and they predict the future events by observing the changes in the environment carefully. The omens can be classified as good (*Shubha*) or bad (*Ashubha*) and based on which predictions can be

made. If physician confronts with such type of omens (good or bad) in his clinical practice, he should keep his patient under observation for long time to check for any untoward incidents. All these *Shakunas* (*Verse 27 to 53*) gives a clue towards the past deeds of the patient and outcome of patient's clinical condition, hence physician should keep an eye on those signs.^{10,11} There is rich corpus of texts (on omens) incorporating various injunctions, instructions, prescriptions, regulations and even taboos throughout the medieval period of Indian history. In ancient India, omens have guided common people about appropriate ways to live their lives, maximize gains and minimize loses. Omens have enjoyed universal appeal across economic strata's of society in ancient India and people have used them to make predictions regarding gaining wealth, preserving health, to avoid mishaps or tragedies etc.¹⁷

Varahamihira is a well known scientist of the ancient period in India and he belongs to the *Gupta* period (505-587 A.D). He has made great contributions in the fields of geology, hydrology and ecology. *Jyotishya Shastra* is one of the fields where *Varahamihira's* contribution is worth mentioning. *Jyotishya Shastra* is the science of predicting the future.¹⁸

Brihat Samhita, a prodigious creation mainly on *Jyotishya Shastra* composed by *Varahamihira*. *Ayurveda* and *Jyotishya* are two different sciences indeed share unspoken bond by means of *Vedic* origin. Inter-relation between *Jyotishya Shastra* and *Ayurveda* puts curiosity on how they function together, *Varahamihira* makes us to rely upon him completely to know the depth at which both are related.¹⁹ *Shakunas* are classified in to ten types i.e., *Kshana Deepta*, *Tithi Deepta*, *Nakshatra Deepta*, *Vayu Deepta*, *Surya Deepta*, *Gati Deepta*, *Sthana Deepta*, *Bhava Deepta*, *Swara Deepta* and *Cheshta Deepta* in *Brihat Samhita*. The first five types (*Kshana Deepta*, *Tithi Deepta*, *Nakshatra Deepta*, *Vayu Deepta*, and *Surya Deepta*) comes under the category of *Deva Deepta* and the later five (*Gati Deepta*, *Sthana Deepta*, *Bhava Deepta*, *Swara Deepta* and *Cheshta Deepta*) comes under *Kriya Deepta* category. *Shakunas* are also classified in to four types i.e., *Graha/Nakshatra* (omens related to planetary positions), *Pashu/Pakshi* (omens related to animals and birds), *Shareeraka Lakshana* (omens related to physical signs and symptoms) and *Swapna* (dream related omens) in *Brihat Samhita*.²⁰ Various good and bad omens explained in the VASN chapter (*Verse 27 to 53*) come under these ten or four types of *Shakunas* of *Brihat Samhita*. (Table 2)

Table 2 Shakunas of VASN chapter and their relationship with shakunas classification of Varahamihira's Brihat Samhita

Type of Shakunas according to the classification of Varahamihira's Brihat Samhita	Shakunas of VASN chapter	
DEVA DEEPTA	<i>Kshana Deepta</i>	Omens related to clock time such as seconds, minutes, hours, morning, afternoon etc; e.g., Verse 3, 17, 20
	<i>Tithi Deepta</i>	Omens related to the lunar date of the Hindu calendar; e.g., Verse 19
	<i>Nakshatra Deepta</i>	Omens related to the lunar mansion in Hindu astrology and Indian astronomy; e.g., Verse 18
	<i>Vayu Deepta</i>	Omens related to the direction of wind flow; e.g., Verse 41;
	<i>Surya Deepta</i>	Omens related to the planetary position of sun or horoscope related
KRIYA DEEPTA	<i>Gati Deepta</i>	Omens related to the movement of humans or animals or birds or objects; e.g., Verse 6, 35, 36
	<i>Sthana Deepta</i>	Omens related to the place or location of humans or animals or objects; e.g., Verse 16, 22, 25
	<i>Bhava Deepta</i>	Omens related to the emotional tone or attitude or intentions; e.g., Verse 8, 23
	<i>Swara Deepta</i>	Omens related to the sounds of birds or animals or humans or others; e.g., Verse 8, 29, 32, 44
	<i>Cheshta Deepta</i>	Omens related to the activity of humans or birds or animals; e.g., Verse 9, 10, 11 12, 13, 49, 50, 51, 52

Swapnaanata Pravakshyaami – Sa Vinashyati (Verse 54-70)

Dreams (*Swapnaan*) seen (*Pashyanti*) by the patient (*Iyadhito Swayam*) or his friends (*Suhrudo*) that predict death (*Maranaaya*)

or well being (*Shubhaaya*) are narrated here (*Pravakshyami*). If a health person sees the following dreams, he would become sick; if he is already sick, he would almost die. The patient, who dreams of being applied oil (*Snehabhyakta*) all over his body (*Shareera*) and

going (*Yaayaat*) towards the south direction (*Dakshinaamukha*) on a camel (*Karabha*), or any carnivorous animal (*Vyaala*), or of riding on a boar (*Varaha*) or on a buffalo (*Mahisha*), or sees himself carried towards (*Aakarshati*) the south direction (*Dakshinaamukha*) by a dark woman (*Krishna*) with dishevelled hair (*Muktamurdhaja*) and clad in a red colour dress (*Raktambaradhara*) with laughing (*Hasanti*) and dancing (*Nrutyanti*) or being pulled towards (*Aakrushyate*) south (*Dakshinamukha*) by a low caste person (*Antaahvasa*), is going to die. A dream by a patient that ghosts (*Preta*) or anchorites (*Pravrajita*) have embraced (*Parishvaja*) him, or that savage beasts (*Shvaapada*) with fierce faces (*Vikrutaanana*) have smelt (*Aaghraayate*) his head (*Moordha*), indicates an imminent death; The patient, who dreams of drinking (*Pibet*) oil (*Tailam*) or honey (*Madhu*), or sinking (*Avaseedati*) in the mud (*Panke*) or of laughing (*Prahaset*) and dancing (*Pranrutyeta*) or having applied mud (*Panka*) all over his body (*Pradigdha Gaatra*), indicate an imminent death. A dream of having entwined a wreath of red flowers (*Raktaam Srajam*) round one's head (*Shirasaa*), or seeing himself as nude (*Nirambara*), or of seeing reeds (*Nala*), bamboos (*Vamsha*), or palm trees (*Taala*) growing on his chest (*Uraasi Jaayate*), indicate an impending death of a patient. Similar dreams, occurring in a healthy subject, indicate an impending disease. The patient, who dreams of being eaten up (*Graset*) by a fish (*Matsya*), or who fancies himself again entering (*Pravishet*) into the womb of his mother (*Jananeem*), or thinks he is falling (*Patet*) from the summit of a mountain (*Parvataagraat*) or into a dark (*Tamasaavrute*) and dismal cave (*Shvabhre*), or as being carried away by (*Hriyeta*) the current of a river (*Srotasaa*), or assailed (*Badhyeta*) and overwhelmed (*Paraajeeyate*) by a pack of crows (*Kaakaadyai*), is going to die. The dream of a clean shaved head (*Maundyam*), or of falling (*Patanam*) stars (*Taaraka*), or of a dying lamp (*Pranaasham Deepa*), or of the extraction of (*Pranaasham*) one's own eyes (*Chakshusho*), or of seeing (*Pashyeta*) divine images (*Devataanaam*), or of earthquakes (*Prakampam Avane*), purgings (*Vireka*), vomitings (*Chardi*) or falling out (*Prapatanti*) of one's own teeth (*Dashana*), indicate an impending death. The patient, who dreams of climbing (*Adhirohanti*) a *Salmalia malabarica* (*Shalmali*), *Butea monosperma* (*Kimshuka*), or *Erythrina indica* (*Paribhadra*) or a flowering (*Pushpaadhyam*) *Bauhinia purpurea* (*Kovidara*) tree, or of ascending an ant-hill (*Valmika*) or a funeral pyre (*Chitaam*), or of receiving (*Labheta*) or eating (*Ashneeta*), cotton (*Karpasa*), paste made up of sesame seeds (*Pinyaka*), iron (*Loha*), salt (*Lavana*), sesame (*Tila*), boiled rice (*Pakvamannam*), or drinking oil (*Tailam*) or any alcoholic beverage (*Sura*), should indicate an impending death (*Mrutyu*) and such dreams in a healthy person (*Swastha*) indicate an impending disease (*Vyadhita*). A dream (*Swapna*) should be regarded as futile (*Aphalada*) that is quite in conformity with the body constitution type (*Yathasvam Prakruti*) of the dreamer or the one that has been forgotten (*Vismruto*) or followed by another of an auspicious dream (*Vihata*) or is the outcome of premeditated thought (*Chintaakruto*) like one dreamt in the day time (*Diva Drushto*). A fever patient (*Jwaritanaam*) dreaming of friendship (*Sakhyam*) with a dog (*Shunaa*), a patient with consumption (*Shoshinaam*) dreaming of making friendship with a monkey (*Kapi*); a psychiatric patient (*Unmada*) who dreams of making friendship with a demon (*Rakshasa*) and a patient of epilepsy (*Apasmara*) dreams of making friendship with a ghost (*Preta*); a patient having diarrhoea (*Atisara*) and *Prameha* dreaming of drinking water (*Toyapaanam*); a leper (*Kushtinaam*) dreaming of drinking oil (*Sneha*), or a *Gulma* patient dreaming of a shrub growing on (*Sthavarotpatti*) his abdomen (*Koshta*), and a patient with headache (*Shiroruja*) dreaming of a tree growing on his head (*Moordha*), or one suffering from vomiting (*Chardyaam*) and dreaming of eating (*Bakshanam*) *Shashkuli* (a spiral flour recipe with crispiness); or a dyspnoea patient (*Shwasa*), or a person, afflicted with

thirst (*Pipaasayo*), dreaming of making a journey on foot (*Adhwaat*); or an anaemic patient (*Pandu Rogi*) dreaming of eating a food (*Bhojanam*) prepared with turmeric (*Haridram*); or a patient having *Raktapitta* and dreaming of drinking blood (*Pibet Shonitam*), should be considered as about to depart this life (*Sa Vinashyati*).^{4,5}

Swapnaanevamvidhaan – Pravimuchyate (Verse 71-74)

Having seen (*Drushtva*) the above mentioned (*Evam Vidhaan*) dreams (*Swapnaan*), the alert patient should get up in the morning (*Praataruthaaya*) and offer (*Dadyat*) *Masha* (Vigna mungo), Sesame, iron (*Loha*) and gold (*Kanchanam*) to the *Brahmanas* (*Vipra*). *Tripada Gayatri Mantra* and other sacred texts need to be recited (*Japet*). Having dreamt a bad dream (*Drushtva*) in the first part (*Pradhame Yaame*) of the night, a person should meditate (*Dhyaatva*) upon a holy or auspicious subject (*Punah Shubham*), and then sleep again (*Swapyaat*) with all his senses fully controlled (*Samaahita*), and repeat (*Japet*) the Mantras sacred to any of the gods (*Anyatamam Vedam*). Inauspicious (*Ashobhanam*) dream (*Swapnam*) should not be revealed (*Achaksheeta*) to anyone. One should reside (*Vaset*) in a holy temple (*Devataayatane*) for three consecutive nights (*Ratri Trayam*), and worship (*Pujayet*) the deity with the most fervent devotion to nullify (*Pravimuchyate*) the deleterious effects of inauspicious dreams (*Duhswapnaat*).^{4,5}

Ata Urdhwam Pravakshyami – Karma Samaacharet (Verse 75-81)

Auspicious (*Prashastam*) dreams (*Swapnam*) are described here. Members of the twice born castes (*Dvijaan*), gods (*Devaan*), cows (*Go*), bullocks (*Vrishabhaan*), kings (*Nrupaan*), one's own living friends and relations (*Jeevata Suhrudo*), a blazing fire (*Samiddham Agnim*), a *Brahmana*, or a sheet of clear water (*Nirmalaani Jalaani*) seen (*Pashyeta*) in a dream by a healthy person indicate a pecuniary gain (*Kalyanalaabha*), and such dreams occurring in a diseased person (*Vyadhe*) indicate a speedy recovery of the disease (*Apagamaaya*). Similarly, dreams of meat (*Maamsa*), fish (*Matsya*), garlands (*Sraja*) of white flowers (*Shweta*), cloths (*Vaasaamsi*) and fruits (*Phalaani*) predict a gain (*Dhana Laabhaaya*) or a speedy cure (*Vyadherapagamaaya*). Dreams of ascending (*Aarohet*) the terrace of a royal palace (*Maha Praasaada*), of climbing a tree (*Vruksha*) or a hill (*Parvata*), or of riding an elephant (*Vaarana*) predict similar results (*Dravya Laabhaaya*) as above. A dream of one's sailing over a river (*Nadee*), pool (*Nada*) or sea (*Samudra*) of turbid water (*Kshubhitaan*) predicts a money gain (*Kalyanalaabha*) or cure (*Vyadherapagamaaya*). A dream of having been bit or stung (*Dashet*) by a serpent (*Uraga*), by leeches (*Jaluka*), or by a bee (*Bhramara*), indicates money gain (*Dhana Laabham*) or cure (*Arogyam*). The man, who usually gets such auspicious dreams (*Evam Shubhaan Swapnaan*), should be looked upon as a long-lived man (*Deerghayu*), and may be unhesitatingly taken under medical treatment (*Karma Samaacharet*) by a physician.^{4,5}

Swapna (dreams) and their prognostic significance

Dreams can be a source of personal insight and the dream content reflects or is relatable to previous waking life experiences.²¹ Dream content analysis includes dream bizarreness/realism (occurrence of two or more fantasy objects, bizarre connections, or actions which are impossible in waking life), dream emotions (positive or negative or neutral/balanced), dream characters (number), interactions (like fighting or caressing), aggression (physical or verbal), health-related themes, temperature perception etc. Spatial distortions and threats (dogs, big spheres, insects, terrorists etc) are the common themes of fever dreams (*Verse 68*). Fever dreams contain more intense negative emotions that might reflect the negative waking emotions (fever

related). There is a link between waking emotional tone and dream emotions and poor health is related to more negatively toned dreams (Verse 54-65). The severity of psychotic symptoms during the day is directly related to dream bizarreness in Schizophrenic patients (Verse 68).²² In dreams, good fortune is defined as when there is an acquisition of goods or something beneficial happens to a character (Verse 75-81). Misfortune is defined as any mishap, adversity, harm, danger, or threat that happens to a character (Verse 54-65). A dream character may succeed or fail in the attainment of a goal and may receive positive outcomes (success and good fortune) (Verse 75-81) or negative outcomes (failure, and misfortune) (Verse 54-70).²³ Individuals whose dream reports contained more positive emotions (friendly interactions, positive words and objects) exhibited life satisfaction and higher well-being (Verse 75-81). There is indeed continuity between what individuals dream and what they experience in real life.²⁴ Rapid eye movement (REM) sleep selectively processes personally-significant material. The extraction of any personally meaningful pattern in past experiences would enable expectations about future events. Anticipatory affect may be an integral aspect of prediction. REM dreams are characterized by anxiety and fear (Verse 54-70).²⁵

Dream content is transparent, readable through direct access and it reflects the dreamer's vision of the world. The link between physical, mental, and emotional conditions, health, and dream content has always been a topic of interest. The possible role and usefulness of the analysis of dream content in the evaluation of the perception of illness, discomfort, psychological reaction, and general psycho-physical well-being of the dreamer is one of the key areas for future research. Various studies evaluated the impact of diseases on dream content, and reported the presence of issues related to negative emotions, death, pain and illness (Verse 54-70). Dream content of patients include higher presence of negative emotions, low familiar settings and characters and no success involving the dreamer (Verse 54-70).²⁶ Ayurvedic scholars of ancient India have used dreams as a tool for prognostication. They have interpreted dreams to assess the psyche of an individual, to diagnose a disease, to estimate the prognosis, and to calculate the remaining life expectancy. Dreams of death in men are positively associated with worse clinical outcomes (Verse 54-70). A dream converts the mild sensations perceived in sleep into intense sensations (Verse 64). Dream content of nightmares include themes of physical aggression (Verse 56), being chased, evil forces (Verse 57), and accidents and interpersonal conflicts. Bad dreams are significantly more emotionally intense, more bizarre, and more likely to contain misfortunes (Verse 54-70). The nightmare involves a specific danger

such as being chased, teased, scolded, beaten, strangled, or murdered (Verse 55, 56, 57, 61 and 62).¹²

If the animal figure in dreams initiates any response to the dreamer, it is some form of threat or hostility (Verse 55 & 68). Pleasurable activities such as singing and dancing in dreams may neutralize the idea of an impending death (Verse 56). The dream fulfils several wishes and it can be recognized as a wish fulfilment (Verse 65). During waking hours the dreamer may deny or suppress the wish or desire to take alcohol but dreams may reveal his suppressed desire or wish (Verse 65). Swimming against strong currents of a river in dreams may symbolically denote a fatal disease by which the patient struggles and an ultimate death (Verse 61). The same dream in a healthy person may represent the physical fitness or stamina of a dreamer (Verse 78). Lord Yama (god of death) is the owner of south direction (*Dakshina Disha*) and going towards that direction (*Dakshinamukha*) indicates an impending death (Verse 55, 56 & 57).¹² Demonic dreaming or appearance of supernatural entities in dreams is the common theme of nightmares or bad dreams (Verse 56, 57 & 63). Perceiving various floral scents or odours in dreams and it has been found that the dreamer's favourite odour was associated with emotionally negative dreams (Verse 58). Colour elements in dreams are significant and they represent specific affective constellation. The red colour in dreams denotes blood, bleeding injury or pathology to dreamer, war, enemy, defloration, menstrual bleeding, anger etc (Verse 56, 59 & 70).¹³

Impact of dreams seen during early morning hours can only remain for ten days (*Aphala*). Day dreams are incoherent in nature and they are also futile (*Aphala*). Dreams mentioned in Verse 67 represent commonplace situations and routine waking life experiences of a dreamer, hence there are more chances of forgetting them easily or the dreamer may provide least importance to them as they lack novel content (*Aphala*). *Homa* (a Vedic ritual), *Gayatri Mantra*, chanting of Vedic hymns, meditation and prayers have shown positive influence on many psychological and physiological functions of the body (Verse 72, 73 & 74).¹³ Dreams of misfortunes and their prognostic significance are highlighted in the VASN chapter. Dreams with evil presence or supernatural agents, dreams and odours, animal figures in dreams and their prognostic significance, appearance of colours in dreams (especially red and yellow), dream symbolism, various auspicious, inauspicious and bad dreams, various dreams objects, characters, images and situations, *Homa* and other spiritual protocol to neutralize the negative consequences of inauspicious dreams are documented in VASN chapter. Dreams mentioned in VASN chapter of SSS seems to be having prognostic significance and further research works are required to substantiate these claims (Table 3).^{4,5}

Table 3 Analysis of dreams documented in VASN chapter

Verse	Dream type or nature	Dream	Dream content & effect	Dream objects/symbols/mechanisms
<i>Snehabyakta shareera –Dakshinamukha</i> (S. Su. 29 / 55)	Bizarre dreams	source Internal organic or somatic stimuli	Negative & death	<i>Karabha</i> (camel), <i>Vyala</i> (carnivorous animal), <i>Gardabha</i> (donkey), <i>Varaha</i> (boar), <i>Mahisha</i> (buffalo) - Animal figures in dreams with negative tone; Predatory and omnivorous animals represent burial grounds and cemeteries; Desert and draught animals represent specific illnesses such as <i>Vata vyadhi</i> (neurological illness) or <i>Rajayakshma</i> (cachexia); <i>Dakshinamukha</i> - South direction represents death; <i>Snehabyakta</i> - May denote a wish or a desire of an oil massage as the patient might be suffering with a <i>Vata vyadhi</i> ;
<i>Raktambaradhara Stree – Dakshinamukha</i>	Anxiety neutralizing dream or demonic dreaming	Internal organic or somatic stimuli	Negative & death	<i>Raktambara</i> - Colours manifests in dreams by a dream mechanism called condensation; Red colour in dreams represents challenges or obstacles or <i>Pittaja</i> (inflammatory or hemorrhagic) diseases.

Table 3 Continued...

Verse	Dream type or nature	Dream	Dream content & effect	Dream objects/symbols/mechanisms
(S. Su. 29 / 56)				<i>Hasanti & Nrutyanti</i> - Laughing and dancing in dreams denote a dream mechanism known as Inversion, which reduces the anxiety associated with dream thoughts; Represent positive mood to neutralize the negative dream thoughts; Unfulfilled desires or wishes in real life gets fulfilled in dreams; <i>Aakarshati & Badhva</i> denotes a helpless situation of a dreamer (untreatable disease); <i>Krishna Stree Muktamurdhaja</i> - Black woman with bald or shaved head in dreams represent demonic dreaming due to repressed death wishes or mental conflicts or guilt or dysphoric emotions; <i>Preta & Pravrajita</i> - dreams with evil presence or supernatural or spiritual agents may represent dreamer's extreme psychological distress or severe illness or excessive porosity and absorption or exposure to severe traumatic events;
<i>Antaahvasaayibhiryo – Pravrajitaanstatha</i>	Demonic dreaming	Internal organic or somatic stimuli	Negative & death	
(S. Su. 29 / 57)				<i>Muhuraaghraayate</i> - disgusting odours foretells unpleasantness;
<i>Muhuraaghraayate – Panko Avaseedati</i>	Absurd dreams or wish fulfilling dreams	Internal organic or somatic stimuli	Negative & death	
(S. Su. 29 / 58)				<i>Shvaapada & Vikrutaanana</i> - carnivorous animals, demonic dreaming, anxiety provoking; <i>Panko Avaseedati</i> - denote dreamer's helplessness (untreatable disease?); <i>Pibet Madhu & Tailam</i> - denote either diabetes (craving for sweets) or <i>Vata vyadhi</i> (craving for oil);
<i>Pankapradigdha – Shirasaasrajam</i>	Absurd or bizarre dreams	Internal organic or somatic stimuli	Negative & death	<i>Pankapradigdha</i> - may represent excessive <i>Dosha Sanchaya</i> (accumulation of toxic or abnormal metabolites in the body); <i>Pranrutiyeta & Prahseta</i> - may denote inversion dream mechanism to reduce the anxiety associated with the dream content; <i>Nirambara</i> - may denote helpless situation or a failure or a despair of a dreamer <i>Raktam Shirasaasrajam</i> - diseases (inflammatory or infectious or neoplastic) of the brain or head;
(S. Su. 29 / 59)				<i>Vamsho Urasi Jayate</i> - may denote a malignant tumours (mediastinal or chest wall or lung metastasis) or <i>Gulma</i> disease;
<i>Yasya Vamsho Nalo – Pravishennara</i>	Absurd or bizarre dreams	Internal organic or somatic stimuli	Negative & death	<i>Matsyo Graset</i> - being swallowed by a fish indicate a major obstacle or setbacks; fish may be the symbolic representation of a major underlying disease and being swallowed by it denote an inevitable death; <i>Jananeem Pravishet</i> - parturition dreams or anxiety dreams with the content of traversing narrow spaces;
(S. Su. 29 / 60)				<i>Parvataagraat Patet</i> - falling sensation in dreams is typical and indicates anxiety;
<i>Parvataagraat – Maundayamavaapnuyat</i>	Anxiety dreams	Internal organic or somatic stimuli	Negative & death	<i>Shvabhre Tamasaavrute</i> - denote adversaries, challenges, estrangement and hardships; <i>Hriyate Srotasaa</i> - symbolically represents struggle of a patient with fatal disease and an imminent death;
(S. Su. 29 / 61)				<i>Paraajeeyate, Badhyeta & Abhibhuyate</i> - indicate defeat, loss, helplessness and health deterioration;
<i>Paraajeeyate Badhyeta – Deepa Chakshusho</i>	Bad	Internal organic or somatic stimuli	Negative & death	<i>Kaaka</i> - symbolic representation of death; <i>Taraka Patanam</i> - denote unexpected or death or loss;
(S. Su. 29 / 62)				<i>Pranasham Deepa Chakshusho</i> - may denote falling of vital parameters or health deterioration or eye diseases;

Table 3 Continued...

Verse	Dream type or nature	Dream	Dream content & effect	Dream objects/symbols/mechanisms
<i>Ya Pashyet – Prapatanti Va</i> (S. Su. 29 / 63)	Nightmares	Internal organic or somatic stimuli	Negative & death	<i>Pashyet Devataanaam</i> - evil presence or dreams with supernatural agents; <i>Avani Prakampanam</i> - denote great loss or disappointment; <i>Dashana Prapatanti</i> - indicate failure or desperate illness or death;
<i>Shalmali – Adhirohati</i> (S. Su. 29 / 64)	Absurd dreams	Internal organic or somatic stimuli	Negative & death	<i>Vruksham Adhirohati</i> - climbing trees having bright red or pink or orange coloured flowers indicate hardships or challenges or suffering with chronic debilitating illness (inflammatory or infectious); <i>Chitaam Adhirohati</i> - may indicate funeral or death or fever;
<i>Karpasa – Mrutyumichati</i> (S. Su. 29 / 65&66)	Wish fulfilling dreams	Internal organic or somatic stimuli	Neutral; disease or death;	<i>Pakwamannam Ashneeta</i> - may denote craving towards specific foods or deficiency states or cachexia or sarcopenia; <i>Pibet Suraam</i> - wish fulfilling (consuming alcohol in dreams satisfy the cravings that are suppressed during waking hours); Alcohol dependency and withdrawal states;
<i>Yathaasvam – Aphaladastu Te</i> (S. Su. 29 / 67)	Day dreams or Futile dreams	Routine or regular waking life experiences	Insignificant or futile;	<i>Yathasvam Prakruti</i> - dreams that are congruent to dreamers constitution <i>Vismruto</i> - dreams that are forgotten; <i>Vihata</i> - dreams that are replaced or overpowered by an another dream; <i>Chintaakruto</i> - dreams that are based on premeditated thoughts or well known phenomenon; <i>Diva Drushto</i> - day dreams; All these dreams are insignificant or futile (Aphalada);
<i>Jwaritaanaam – Sa Vinashyati</i> (S. Su. 29 / 68-70)	Bizarre dreams	Internal organic or somatic stimuli	Negative & death	<i>Jwara - Shuna Sakhyam</i> (friendship with dog) <i>Shosha - Kapi Sakhyam</i> (friendship with monkey) <i>Unmada - Rakshasa Sakhyam</i> (friendship with demons) <i>Apsmara - Pretai Sakhyam</i> (friendship with ghosts) <i>Prameha & Atisara</i> - drinking water <i>Kushta</i> - drinking oil <i>Gulma & Shiroruja</i> - shrubs or trees coming out of abdomen and head <i>Chardi</i> - eating snacks prepared with flour <i>Shwasa & Pipasa</i> - walking <i>Pandu</i> - eating turmeric <i>Raktapitta</i> - drinking blood; Bizarre or negative dream content such as animals, characters, interactions, situations, emotions etc may denote ill health or terminal stages of a disease;
<i>Ata Urdhwam – Karma Samaacharet</i> (S. Su. 29 / 75-81)	Dreams with realism	External sensory stimuli or internal organic stimuli	Positive & Auspicious	Positive objects (that represents prosperity), positive emotions, getting success, friendly interactions in dreams indicate physical and psychological well being of a dreamer or recovery from a disease.

(S. Su. 29 / XX): S - Sushruta Samhita; Su - Sutra Sthana; 29 - 29th chapter; XX - Verse number

Conclusion

Vipareeta Avipareeta Swapna Nidarshaneeyam (VASN) is the 29th chapter of Sushruta Sutra Sthana. This chapter has 81 verses

that deal with *Shakuna* (omens), *Doota* (caregiver or messenger) and *Swapna* (dreams). Various omens (both good and bad) related to *Doota* and *Swapna* and their prognostic significance is the main theme of the VASN chapter. Though the contents of VASN chapter

have shown some similarity with other *Ayurvedic* classical texts such as *Bhela Samhita*, *Kashyapa Samhita* and *Charaka Samhita*, some unique content is also available. Various *Shakunas* mentioned in VASN chapter represents the belief systems that were prevalent in ancient India and the prognostic significance of them require further validation. *Doota* related content seems to be logical and has some relevance in present era if *Doota* is considered as a caregiver instead of considering him only as a messenger. Interpretation of various auspicious and inauspicious dreams and their prognostic significance as documented in VASN chapter seems to be congruent with the findings of contemporary dream research. Interdisciplinary studies among *Ayurveda*, *Jyotishya Shastra* (medical astrology) and modern prognostic science are required to authenticate the good and bad omens and their association with the positive or negative clinical outcomes as explained in the VASN chapter. The present work has provided new insights and better understanding of the existing *Ayurvedic* dream literature.

Acknowledgments

None

Conflicts of interests

Authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest.

References

- Sharma HS, Sharma HI, Sharma HA. *Sushruta-samhit* - A critical Review Part-1: Historical glimpse. *Ayu*. 2012;33(2):167–173.
- Natarajan K. Surgical instruments and endoscopes of susruta, the sage surgeon of ancient india. *Indian J Surg*. 2008;70(5):219–223.
- Bhattacharya S. *Sushrutha* - our proud heritage. *Indian J Plast Surg*. 2009;42(2):223–225.
- Maharshi Sushruta. *Sushruta Samhita* with *Nibandha Sangraha* commentary by Shri Dalhanacharya, 1st ed, 29th chapter, Acharya JT, Acharya NR, editors. *Vipareetaavipareeta Swapna Nidarshaneeyam Adhyaya*. Verse 1-81. Varanasi: Krishnadas Academy; 1998.p.131–136.
- Maharshi Sushruta. *Sushruta Samhita* with *Bhanumati* commentary by Shri Chakrapani Datta, 1st ed, 29th chapter, Acharya JT, Bhishagacharya NS editors. *Vipareetaavipareeta Swapna Nidarshaneeyam Adhyaya*. Verse 1-81. Jaipur: Swami Lakshmi Ram Trust; 1939.p.203–212.
- Mamidi P, Gupta K. *Avaaraneeya Adhyaya of Sushruta Sutra Sthana* An Explorative Study. *J Integr Health Sci*. 2021;9(2):107–121.
- Mamidi P, Gupta K. *Swabhava Vipratipatti Adhyaya of Sushruta Sutra Sthana* An Explorative Study. *J Integr Health Sci*. 2022;10(1):22–47.
- Mamidi P, Gupta K. *Chaaya vipratipatti* chapter of *Sushruta sutra sthana* - An analysis. *Int J Ayurveda Res*. 2022;3(2):118–135.
- Mamidi P, Gupta K. *Panchendriyatha Vipratipatti* chapter of *Sushruta Sutra Sthana* An Explorative Study. *J Integr Health Sci*; 2022.
- Gupta K, Mamidi P. *Gomaya choorneeyam of Charaka Indriya sthana* - An explorative study. *Int J Ayu Alt Med*. 2019;7(6):288–306.
- Mamidi P, Gupta K. *Doota adhyaya of Bhela indriya sthana* - An explorative study. *Hos Pal Med Int Jnl*. 2020;4(4):88–96.
- Gupta K, Mamidi P. *Pushpeeyam Adhyaya of Bhela Indriya Sthana*: An explorative study. *J Integr Health Sci*. 2021;9(2):81–93.
- Gupta K, Mamidi P. *Aushadha Bhesajiyam of Kashyapa Indriya Sthana* - an explorative study. *Int J Complement Alt Med*. 2021;14(6):258–270.
- Goswami PK. Comparative studies of *Bhanumati* and *Nibandha Samgraha* with special reference to *Arista vijnana* (prognostic science). *AYU*. 2011;32(2):147–153.
- Otero P, Torres ÁJ, Vázquez FL, et al. Does the disease of the person receiving care affect the emotional state of non-professional caregivers. *Front Psychol*. 2019;10:1144.
- Lwi SJ, Ford BQ, Casey JJ, et al. Poor caregiver mental health predicts mortality of patients with neurodegenerative disease. *Proc Natl Acad Sci USA*. 2017;114(28):7319–7324.
- Gautam R. Bhadli P: a popular and historical source of omens in medieval rajasthan. *In proceedings of the Indian History Congress*. 2013;74:346–352.
- Kak SC. *Science in ancient India*. Ananya: A portrait of India. 1997;399–420.
- Ananya P, Soumya SM. A review on brihat samhita from ayurveda perspective. *Int J Creat Res Thoughts*. 2022;10(10):137–141.
- Varahamihira. Brihat Samhita, translated and notes by Sastri VS. (1st ed). 86th chapter –Shaakunam Adhyaya. Verse 1–80. Bangalore: MBD electric printing works. 1946.p.645–669.
- Edwards CL, Ruby PM, Malinowski JE, et al. Dreaming and insight. *Front Psychol*. 2013;4:979.
- Schredl M, Erlacher D. Fever dreams: an online study. *Front Psychol*. 2020;11:53.
- Pesant N, Zadra A. Dream content and psychological well being: a longitudinal study of the continuity hypothesis. *J Clin Psychol*. 2006;62(1):111–121.
- Fogli A, Maria AL, Quercia D. Our dreams, our selves: automatic analysis of dream reports. *R Soc Open Sci*. 2020;7(8):192080.
- Llewellyn S. Dream to predict? Rem dreaming as prospective coding. *Front Psychol*. 2016;6:1961.
- Cicolin A, Boffano M, Beccuti G, et al. End of life in oncologic patients' dream content. *Brain Sci*. 2020;10(8):505.