



BOOK REVIEW

RAVANA'S NADI PARIKSHA - A CRITICAL REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

Ancient texts of *Ayurveda* are embedded with enormous wisdom and need to be studied for the better knowledge regarding science. Other than *brihatrayi* and *laghutrayi*, there are many texts which add some valuable information to the science of *Ayurveda*. *Nadi pariksha* (pulse examination) is a unique concept of *Ayurveda* which is much more beyond mere pulse examination told in contemporary modern science. It is used as diagnostic, prognostic tool and gives idea regarding the *prakruti* (body constitution) of person. There are very few ancient texts which have been completely dedicated to the above topic. “*Nadi Pariksha*” written by *Acharya Ravana* is one among such texts details of which are presented here.

Key words: *nadi pariksha*, *Acharya Ravana*, pulse examination

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INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda has stated *ashta sthana parikshas* (eight-fold examination of patient) out of which *nadi pariksha* is one, which uses Pulse signals obtained from radial nerve as a means of diagnosis. *Nadi pariksha* has got significant role in identifying the physiology, pathology, the *dosha* involved in the pathology as well as prognosis of the condition. In ancient *Ayurveda* classics there is no elaborate description regarding *nadi pariksha*, but few *svatantra granthas* (independent texts) like *Raavana krita Nadi Pariksha*, *Kanaada krita Nadi vijnana* & some *samhithas* like *Bhava Prakasha*, *Sharngadhara samhitha* and *Yogaratanakara* have references in detail regarding *nadi pariksha*.

The patients who are approaching an *Ayurvedic* physician for treatment are still inclined to be diagnosed by *nadi pariksha*. This method of examination cannot be practiced easily as it requires lot of practice and experience. For any practice the background knowledge should be strong for which extensive literature survey and study is required. Keeping this in mind the review of ancient *grantha* "*Nadi Pariksha*" written by *Acharya Ravana* is carried out. The present article highlights the salient features of the above text Hindi commentary *Vaidya Prabha* by Dr. Indradeva Tripathi.

DETAILS OF TEXT REVIEWED

Author: Acharya Ravana

Commentator: Dr. Indradeva Tripathi

Name of the commentary: Vaidya Prabha

Language of commentary: Hindi

Publisher: Chaukhambha Orientalia

Last published Year: 1987

Binding: soft bound

Pages: 43

Total editions: 3

Price of book: 90 /-

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About the author

It is an ancient text written by *sarva shastra parangata Ravana*, but he is the *Ravana* belonging to *Rama parampara* or a different person is controversial. There is another belief that *Ravana* is a tantrik person. Exact time period of *Ravana* is also not known.

Other works of *Acharya Raavana* are: *Ravana samhitha*, *Arka prakasha*

Commentaries:

The book *Nadi Pariksha* has been translated to Hindi by

- Dr. Indradeva tripathi – *Vaidyaprabha teeka*
- Dr. Govinda Prasad Upadhyaya – *Siddhidaa teeka*

Arrangement of the text

In *mangalacharana* (auspicious invocation) the author salutes to goddess *Indire* which is another name of Goddess *Laxmi*. This book is being presented in the form of Sanskrit verses

(Devanagari) without dividing into chapters.

Total number of verses in this book is 96.

Contents

The whole treatise is attributed to *nadi pariksha*. And all the descriptions related to pulse examination are summarized within 96 *Shlokas* (verses). The contents of the book include general descriptions, the anatomical position for pulse examination in male and female, importance of *nadi pariksha* and *nadi* in certain physiological conditions.

Author has not followed any particular sequence in the arrangements of verses. For the convenience it can be studied in the following headings;

- General description
- *Nadi* in certain physiological conditions
- *Nadi* in certain mental states
- *Nadi* after taking certain diet
- *Nadi* in pathological conditions & diseases
- *Nadi* in prognosis

General description -

Text initiates with salutations to goddess *Shree Laxmi (Indire)*. In the 2nd verse the *ashta sthanas* (eight parts) to be examined by a physician in a *rogi* (patient) is stated which is similar to explanations of *Sharngadhara Samhitha*. In the next verse emphasis has been placed upon the importance of *nadi* and it has been cited that as the light of a candle helps in

identifying the things placed in dark, similarly with the help of *nadi* various conditions of *doshas*, whether they are disturbed singly or in combination of any two or all three are involved at the same time, can be elicited.

Next verse deals with anatomical position of the *nadi* and name of *Nandi* has been quoted. Quoting *Nandi*, *Ravana* says that according to him there exists a *nadi* at the root of the thumb which is evidence of life, and particularly it should be examined to know the condition of body.

Regarding technique of *nadi pariksha*, the pulse appearing one finger in breadth below from the root of the thumb should be examined cautiously.

Author has explained the site of pulse examination in female and male. In case of female, *nadi* of left hand & that of left leg should be examined whereas in male right hand and right leg should be examined. In leg, one finger above the great toe & also below the malleoli towards the side of the great toe, the pulse should be examined. The physician should gently press the artery with his three fingers and examine.

As the pulse examination is done using three fingers, each finger represents particular *Dosha* which is explained as Index finger detects the condition of *vata*, Middle finger – *pitta* and Ring finger – *kapha*

In *vata paittika* condition – pulse is felt under index & middle fingers

In *vata kaphaja* condition – pulse is felt under index & ring finger

In *pitta kaphaja* condition – pulse is felt under middle & ring finger.

In *sannipathika* condition – all 3 fingers

Nadi in certain physiological conditions –

Explanation goes as the pulse indicating no abnormality moves towards the thumb and appears to be equally moving. *Acharya* has explained *svasthanastha vatadi nadi laxanas* (*doshas* in their respective site), *samsargaja nadi laxanas* (combination of two *doshas*) and pattern of *nadi* in some of the physiological condition.

Table 1: *laxanas* (signs) of *nadi* in certain physiological conditions

Physiological condition	<i>Nadi laxana</i> (signs)
<i>Laxana</i> of <i>nadi</i> of <i>deepthagani Sukhi</i> (good digestive fire) person	<i>Sthira</i> (stable), <i>Balavathi</i> (good strength)
<i>Nadi</i> of <i>kshudhitha</i> person (during hunger)	<i>Chapala</i> (unsteady)
<i>Truptha</i> (after meal)	<i>Sthira</i> (stable)
<i>Garbhini</i> (pregnant woman)	<i>Guru</i> (heavy), <i>vatavaha</i> (carries <i>vata</i>)
<i>Nidralu</i> (sleepy person)	<i>Balavathi</i> , <i>mandagathi</i> (feeble pulse)
<i>Nadi spurana abhava vishayas</i> (factors hindering in pulse elicitation)	<i>Vyayama</i> (exercise), <i>attahasa</i> , <i>traasa/bhaya</i> (fear), <i>prahaara</i>
Person desiring for intercourse	<i>Vakra gathi</i> (not straight)
In case of <i>vegadharana</i> (suppression of natural urges), <i>baala</i> (children) and <i>shalya viddha</i> (afflicted with foreign body) person	resembles <i>paittika nadi</i>
In <i>nidralu</i> and <i>medura</i> (obese) person	slow & like <i>shlaishmika nadi</i>

Nadi in certain mental states –

In conditions like *udvega* (anxiety), *krodha* (anger) and *Kama* (greedy) the character of pulse is *ushna* (warm) and *vegavat* (increased pulse rate) whereas in *chinta* (stress/tension) the pulse becomes feeble.

Effect of diet –

Consuming pungent food substances leads to *pitta vruddhi* (increase) and *chapala gathi*

(unsteady movement) of *nadi*. Due to continuous consumption of *Khara* (rough), *Rookasha* (dry) and *vatakara ahara* (diet which increases *Vata*), *nadi* feels to be *rooksha* and *pinda sannibha* (like lump)

Nadi in certain pathological conditions –

Acharya quotes signs of pulse in various pathological conditions like depletion of *Dhatu*, *mandagni* (reduced digestive fire),

saama - ajeerna (indigestion) etc. characters of pulse in Diseases like *prameha, jvara, arshas, grahani, raktapitta, shwasa, atisara,*

kasa, mutraghata, pandu, kushta, jatruudhwagata vikara, rakta vikaras etc. have been explained.

Table 2: *laxanas* (signs) of *nadi* in certain pathological conditions

Pathological conditions	<i>Nadi laxanas</i> (signs)
Vitiated <i>vata</i>	<i>Vakra gati</i> as that of <i>jalauka</i> (leech), <i>sarpa</i> (serpent)
Vitiated <i>pitta</i>	<i>Chapala gati, kaaka mandooka gati</i> (crow-frog like movement)
Vitiated <i>kapha</i>	<i>Sthira</i> and <i>manda, hamsa</i> (swan) or <i>paraavata gati</i> (pegeion)
<i>Dwidoshaja nadi</i>	<i>Kadaachit mandagamana kadaachit vegavaahini</i> (sometimes slow and sometimes rapid)

CONCLUSION

Acharya Ravana's "*Nadi Pariksha*" is one of the oldest available books dealing with science of examination and interpretation of *nadi*. It is written in the same form as that of "*Nadi vijnana*" written by Kanada. The work of Ravana also describes the character of pulse in infants. There is minimum explanations regarding the character of pulse in certain mental states in this work but we can find elaborate explanations regarding the pulse indicating bad prognosis.

In the ancient texts the characters of pulse are not described in terms of its rate, rhythm, volume, force and tension but while describing various movements of pulse *Acharyas* have related them to gait of certain birds,

amphibians and reptiles based on their observations which indirectly indicates character of pulse along with rate and volume. The same pattern has been followed by Acharya Ravana in his work. One who is studying the text has to apply his *yukti* (intelligence) while interpreting these *Laxanas* in practice.

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