

A Review on an unpublished literature of “*Nadi Vijnaniyam*”

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ABSTRACT : The nativity of Indian medicine stems from the ancient science of Ayurveda. It has recognition globally in the present era, but has deep roots since ages for its well known clinical management and preventive aspects. However, the lesser explored entity remains to be the diagnostic aspect. Just as one can say that identification of the problem is half the solution, appropriate diagnosis forms the first line of treatment. To overcome the callow and also to probe much on this, the study on the unpublished manuscript *Nadi Vijnaniyam* was taken up. The content of the manuscript is elaborated in twelve *patalas* (chapters). Each *patala* intends to brief about the science of *Nadi* and the interpretations pertaining to the knowledge of *Nadi* with close relation to Ayurveda. The content of the manuscript authenticates further that this will be highly contributory to the existing Ayurvedic literature. Analysis of this text brought to light, the understanding of the distinct content and few insights that are exclusively belonging to *Nadi Vijnaniyam*.

Key words: *Nadi*, manuscript, interpretation of Ayurvedic diagnosis

Introduction

Ayurveda is considered by many scholars to be one of the most ancient and efficacious science. It stems from the ancient Vedic culture where teaching methodology for many thousands of years in an oral tradition was carried out from accomplished masters to their disciples. The importance of scripting the information dawned, which resulted in scripting the known knowledge in various writing materials. The manuscript “*Nadi Vijnaniyam*” was obtained to review and its contributions were listed. A literature review familiarizes the extent of knowledge about the content dealt with. This sets an organizational pattern and combines both summary and synthesis, often with specific conceptual categories. In

Ayurveda, it forms the backbone of the science as the fraternity of Ayurveda accepts the information depicted in original and Ancient Ayurveda Sanskrit texts.

Materials and Methods

The manuscripts pertaining to the title “*Nadi Vijnaniyam*” were scrutinized among all the available catalogues and four sources were procured.

They were verified with the New Catalogous Catalogorum to not miss any existing sources and the following details as mentioned in Table-1 were obtained.¹

S.No	Name of the Text	Source	Place	Source No.
1	<i>Nadi Vijnaniyam</i>	Govt. Oriental Manuscript Library	Chennai, India	MT 102(a)
2	<i>Nadi Vijnaniyam</i>	Govt. Oriental Manuscript Library	Chennai, India	MT 364(a)/ S.R97
3	<i>Nadi Vijnaniyam</i>	Maharaja Serfoji's Saraswati Mahal Library	Tanjore, India	11193
4	<i>Nadi Vijnaniyam</i>	Maharaja Serfoji's Saraswati Mahal Library	Tanjore, India	11194

Table-1 (Available sources of the intended manuscript from the NCC)

Among these sources, three were in Devanagari and one manuscript in Grantha lipi. Regarding the writing material, one manuscript is written in paper while the other are palm leaf manuscripts. All the available manuscripts were acquired in fair condition.

Significance of Review in a Manuscript study

Review on a manuscript, where exists a lot of analyzing, critical editing and interpreting the content to see if it leads to a newer scope and distinct from the existing available and published literature. In a manuscript study, the actual study comprises mostly of facts and the review may be simply designed to provide an overview of sources explored during research to demonstrate how it fits within a larger field of study. The first step in analyzing the manuscript throws light over the title and an outline about the content. Critical edition in

literary studies as the act of investigating, reviewing the literary, artistic, etc works for making an elaborate critical examination of the contents of creative works.

Review on *Grantha* script

Grantha is the name applied to the script used in Tamil Nadu, India for writing the Sanskrit language. In Sanskrit language, *grantha* is literally ‘a knot’, a word that was used for books and the script used to write them. This stems from the practice of binding inscribed palm leaves using a length of thread held by knots. *Grantha* was initially widely used to write Sanskrit in the Tamil-speaking parts of South Asia from about the 5th century CE. As time passed, it became prevalent throughout South India. The script bore the name *Arya Ezhuthu* the Malayalam language began to freely borrow words as well as the rules of grammar from Sanskrit. Thus, a similar adoption for writing was also made in the Tulu speaking region.

Also, the *Grantha* script was historically and traditionally used for writing *Manipravalam*, which is a blend of Tamil and Sanskrit which was used in the exegesis of *Manipravalam* texts. This evolved into a fairly complex writing system which required that Tamil words be written in the Tamil script and Sanskrit words be written in the *Grantha* script. But by the 15th century, this had evolved to the point that both scripts would be used within the same word – if the root was derived from Sanskrit, it would be written in *Grantha* Script, but any Tamil suffixes which were added to it would be written using the Tamil script. Slowly, this system of writing went out of use along with the decline of the popularity of *Manipravalam*, but it was customary to use the same convention in printed editions of texts originally written in *Manipravalam* until the middle of the 20th Century. Both *Grantha* and Tamil scripts appear alike in modern forms. The evolution of both scripts from *Brahmi* was also more or less similar.²

Nowadays, the *Grantha* script is used in religious contexts by Tamil-speaking Hindus, to use the script to write a child’s name for the first time during the naming ceremony, for the Sanskrit portion of wedding cards, for announcements of a person’s last rites and also in many religious almanacs to print traditional formulaic summaries of the coming year.

The time period of when the manuscript is said to be written is on 1921, which almost correlates to the time where the practice of writing in *Grantha lipi* had begun to fade.

Review on the Science of *Nadi*

The knowledge of pulse has traversed through ancient times, mostly as a diagnostic tool in Indological science systems. The entire Vedic tradition is composed of highly spiritual wisdom and pure knowledge revealed through the hearts of meditative minds. The ancient wisdom came from the sages, where he taught students. They imparted knowledge as they experienced it in a deep state of meditation. The early teachings were an oral tradition and because there were no books, the knowledge became a part of those who learnt it. Then with gradual progress in the documentation methods, these were attempted to document.

Nadi incorporates about the rare and valuable treasure of scattered knowledge of ancient pulse-lore of different civilizations of the world. The science of *Nadi* which was in practice since then by the *Vaidyas* and the Hakeems of India has been preserved to an extent and handed down through tradition till today. Diagnosis by means of pulse is highly admired by the people of India and throughout the world even in this era of advanced science and technology. To the ancient physician, irrespective of civilizations of the world, the pulse had always been the subject of great learning in the field of medicine.³ Though in India the knowledge of pulse examination was not much prevalent as a means of diagnosis till as late as the period of *Sharangadhara*, yet some ancient races of India as *Santhalas* (*Munda* ethnic group largest tribe in Jharkhand and native to India and Bangladesh) and *Tantriks* (esoteric traditions of Hinduism and Buddhism that developed in India) of India were aware of this knowledge.

In India, as evidenced, the first dawn in its original form was in the work of *Sharangadhara Samhita* in the 14th Century that has a historical landmark in the development of *Ayurveda*. It has mentioned about *Nadi*, the various movements and the method of examining in *Prathama khanda*, third chapter.⁴ Since then, the knowledge on this constantly grew and flourished throughout the subsequent period in the history of the country. *Yogaratanakara* has described *Nadi pariksha* as the foremost examining tool among the eight types of *pariksha* and also signifies it to be an indicator of many types of diseases.⁵

The contribution is not much seen from the *Brihatrayees*, but there are excerpts from other *samhitas* towards *Nadi*. *Madhava Nidana* quotes *Nadi Pariksha* as the first among the *ashta sthana parikshas*.

Other than that, the Indian source pertaining to the knowledge on pulse-lore routed only to the Tamil *Siddhars* of the south. The pulse-lore of early Tamil *Siddhars* is seen to have taken its origin from the *Shaiva-Agama Tantrism*.⁶

The more important works from Northern India are *Nadi Vijnana* by *Kanada*⁷ and the *Nadi Pariksha* by *Ravana*⁸ of twelfth century AD. Two other works pertaining to *Nadichakra* by an unidentified author also belonged to the same time period. In *Shiva Samhita*, it is distinctly noted that among 72,000 *Nadis*, the *ida*, *pingala* and *sushumna* were the principal *Nadis*.

In clinical medicine, no physical sign is more basic or important than the arterial pulse. From ancient times, pulse has been recognized as the most fundamental sign of life. The early physicians paid great attention to the character of the pulse in health and the changes that occurred in disease.

Even today, under emergency medical conditions the modern physician frequently records the pulse directly through an intra-catheter, and wishes to gain as much information from as possible from the inspection of pulse contour. To the modern physician, the study of pulse is limited to the diseases pertaining the heart and the blood vessels only.

Previously, this was a prime tool for examination, but eventually the practice became dormant and did not develop as a skill. Many social, religious and customary constraints existed as a barrier in the continuation of such a legacy.

This science has evolved to such an extent, that it was used along with technology where the development of *Nadi Tarangini* by Atreya Innovation private technologies is done. This is a tool to detect and analyze information about inner health by using a combination of hardware and artificial intelligence based intuitive software that makes the first move in the technology combined with *Nadi*. It is used to diagnose physical, mental and emotional imbalances in the body using the three pressure sensors to record the pulse on wrist, and mimics the way a *Vaidya* takes *Nadi* manually.⁹

Veda pulse is also a similar technology used for *Nadi Pariksha* to assess the defective organs or malfunctioning of the physiology. It works by graphing the electrical and mechanical occurrences in the heart and analyzing it with previously structured software. It allows estimating the functions of particular organs and systems and also the state of health in general.¹⁰

Review on the manuscript “*Nadi Vijnaniyam*”

Understanding of a manuscript firstly deals with the understanding of the title. *Nadi* is a *streelinga shabda*, “*naadi + krudikaaraadaktinah*”, synonymous to *naalam*.¹¹ *Nadi* simply means something that enables a hollow to flow. It is noted that there has been significant difference among the terms “*vijnana*” and “*vijnaniya*”. The term “*vijnana*” is derived from *vi*

+ *jnaa* + *lyut pratyaya*¹² and is a *trilinga shabda*, which denotes *chitradi karma kaushalam* and the addition to the actual term by “*eeya pratyaya*” denotes that there is always a continuation to the content and it does not end there. With evolution, the subject also comprehensively evolves.

The contents of the manuscript *Nadi Vijnaniyam* mentions about the number of *Nadis*, their types and characteristics. It has shown emphasis on identifying *nadis* which indicate curable and incurable diseases.

The content of *Nadi Vijnaniyam* is distributed into twelve chapters nomenclatured as *patala*. But the naming of *patalas* exists only for the first six chapters and has not been mentioned from the seventh chapter. The text enumerates the diseases which can be known through the examination techniques – *darshana*, *sparshana* and *prashna*. However the classification of diseases that can be known through *darshana* itself, few only after *sparshana* and few only after *prashna* (interrogation). They give a brief idea about the diseases grouped under particular examination technique. Diseases known by examination of *Nadi* at different *sthanas* like *hastha*, *pada*, *nadi* and *kantha* are enlisted. Different characteristics of *Nadi* based on *vaya*, *rtu* and *kala* is depicted by comparing that with the movements of different animals. The *Nadi* felt by the intake of various *rasas* (taste) – *ekarasa* and *dvandvarasa* based on their predominant *guna* is depicted.

The relevance of understanding *caya*, *prakopa* and *prashama* of the *tridoshas* in various seasons is mandated to examine *nadi* and not misinterpret as a *vikara*. Likewise, each *patala* intends to brief about the science of *Nadi* and the interpretations pertaining to the knowledge of *Nadi* with close relation to Ayurveda.

The content of the manuscript authenticates further that this will be highly contributory to the existing Ayurvedic literature. Analysis of this text brought to light, the understanding of the distinct content and few insights that are exclusively belonging to *Nadi Vijnaniyam*.

Discussion

The material of the manuscripts - three sources being in palm leaf and one in paper, makes the text to be older in time. The script is *Grantha lipi*, which in recent times have not been in use. They were mostly used when the Tamil and Malayalam scribes wrote manuscripts that were dictated in Sanskrit. The content seems to not mention about the techniques of examining *Nadi*, less repetitive regarding the usual knowledge that was already available in

other texts pertaining to *Nadi*. But the manuscripts proved rich in providing the knowledge on the interpretations that are obtained when the *Nadi* is examined.

Conclusion

The manuscript *Nadi Vijnaniyam* mentions about the number of *Nadis*, their types and characteristics. It has shown emphasis on identifying the *nadi* which indicate curable and incurable diseases. Analysis of this text brought to light, the understanding of the distinct content and few insights that are exclusively belonging to *Nadi Vijnaniyam*. Though the techniques are not explained here, but plenty of similes have been explained in detail so that the interpretations are clear, thereby making this manuscript of *Nadi Vijnaniyam* a rich text that guides in interpreting the findings obtained through *Nadi*.

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