

# Textbook of Ayurveda

## Other Books by Vasant D. Lad

Ayurveda: The Science of Self-Healing. 1985  
Secrets of the Pulse: The Ancient Art  
of Ayurvedic Pulse Diagnosis. 1996  
The Complete Book of Ayurvedic Home Remedies. 1998  
The Textbook of Ayurveda:  
Fundamental Principles of Ayurveda. 2002  
Strands of Eternity: A Compilation of  
Mystical Poetry and Discourses. 2004  
Ayurvedic Perspectives on Selected Pathologies. 2005

The Yoga of Herbs: An Ayurvedic Guide to Herbal Medicine. 1986  
by Vasant Lad and David Frawley

Ayurvedic Cooking for Self-Healing. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 1997  
by Usha and Vasant Lad

# Textbook of Ayurveda

## *A Complete Guide to Clinical Assessment*

*Volume Two*

by

Vasant Dattatray Lad, M.A.Sc.



The  
Ayurvedic  
Press

Albuquerque, New Mexico

Although the information contained in this book is based on Ayurvedic principles practiced for thousands of years, it should not be taken or construed as standard medical diagnosis or treatment. For any medical condition, always consult with a qualified physician.

**Copyright © 2007** by Vasant Dattatray Lad

**ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.** First Edition 2007

Printed in Malaysia.

15 14 13 12 11 10 09 08 07 06 5 4 3 2 1

This book is printed on acid-free paper.

ISBN-13: 978-1-883725-11-2

No part of this book may be reproduced in any form by any electronic or mechanical means including information storage and retrieval systems without permission in writing from the publisher, except by a reviewer who may quote brief passages in a review.

Cover design and illustration: Kevin Curry.

Ganesha drawings in front pages by Vasant Lad.

Layout by Laura Humphreys.

Edited by Glen Crowther.

---

### Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Lad, Vasant, 1943-

Textbook of Ayurveda / by Vasant Dattatray Lad.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN: 1-883725-11-9

1. Medicine, Ayurvedic--History. 2. Medicine, Ayurvedic--Philosophy.

I. Title.

R606 L33 2000

615.5'3--dc21

00-009373

---

Published by **The Ayurvedic Press** • P.O. Box 23445 • Albuquerque, NM 87192-1445

*For more information on Ayurveda, contact:*

The Ayurvedic Institute

11311 Menaul Blvd. NE

Albuquerque, NM 87112

(505)291-9698 • Fax 505.294.7572 • [www.ayurveda.com](http://www.ayurveda.com)



# Dedication

॥ श्रीः ॥

*This book is dedicated with all my heart  
to my loving wife, Usha, who has inspired  
and supported me in all walks of my life.*



## About the Cover

The image represented on the cover of this textbook originated in Dr. Lad's meditation. Out of the depth of his love for his students and for Ayurveda, he is sharing it as his vision of the order, beauty, and poetry of life.

Ayurveda comes to mankind through Lord Dhanvantari, who arises from the ocean. Representing knowledge and reflecting in the

ocean, the books also arise from the ocean of knowledge. The three books pictured here represent the three sages, Charaka, Sushruta, and Vagbhata, who served as vehicles for the Ayur Vidya, and gave to the world the "Great Three" texts on Ayurveda. The ghee lamp signifies the flame of attention, intuition, and the dedicated study that unlocks the true meaning existing in the wealth of information presented in these three great texts. It is the light of inner knowledge and the light of life.

Illuminated by this light of truth, the atma, one's Self, the manas, one's mind, and sattvam, the truth of existence, rest peacefully on the petals of the lotus. The lotus flower is the purity, sacredness, and simplicity that are characteristic of the devoted student's being. These qualities are the perfume of the life that is lived in harmony and cooperation with Nature.

The thread of wisdom that runs through and encircles the texts is the thread of true knowledge that remains unbroken and unchanged throughout the shifting ages and cultures. The timeless wisdom of Ayurveda joins the individual, manifested life with the eternal Cosmic Life. It also weaves itself through all the components of the individual body-mind: sattva, rajas, tamas; ojas, tejas, and prana; the seven dhatus, and three doshas. The thread of Wisdom is the integrating factor that allows these components to function together in equilibrium, bringing harmony and peace to the body and mind.

The visions that come in the meditative mind convey the order and beauty of life in a way that cannot always be expressed in words. They express the poetry of life. The life that is lived in cooperation and harmony with Nature is itself poetry. Students are encouraged to meditate on this loving vision of Ayurveda and its role in the individual and Cosmic life.

# Table of Contents

Foreword / xiii

About the Author / xvii

The Use of Sanskrit / xix

## Chapter One Nidāna Pañchakam ~ The Five Clinical Barometers / 1

*The Importance of Understanding the Cause of Disease / 1*

Causes of Some Specific Diseases / 3

Nidānam / 4

*Detailed Examination of the Categories of Hetu / 5*

Pūrva Rūpa / 11

Rūpa / 14

Upashaya / 15

*Antagonistic Treatments / 16*

*Similar Treatments / 17*

Samprāpti / 19

*Types of Samprāpti / 19*

*Summary / 21*

## Chapter Two Samprāpti ~ The Disease Process / 23

Stages of Disease / 24

*First Stage: Accumulation (Sañchaya) / 25*

*Second Stage: Provocation (Prakopa) / 26*

*Third Stage: Spread (Prasara) / 26*

*Fourth Stage: Deposition or Localization (Sthāna Samshraya) / 27*

*Fifth Stage: Manifestation (Vyakti) / 28*

*Sixth Stage: Differentiation of Disease, Destruction of Tissues and Complications (Bheda) / 29*

Samprāpti and the Gunas / 31

Vyādhi Mārga - The Pathways of Disease / 32

Dosha Gati / 35

*Dosha Gati and Common Disorders due to Upward, Downward and Linear Movement of the Doshas / 38*

*Summary / 43*

## Chapter Three Vyādhi ~ Disease / 45

Definitions of Disease / 46

Levels of Disease / 47

Broad Classifications of Disease / 49

Localized or Specific Classifications of Disease / 50

Structural Divisions of Disease / 51

Lakshanam (Signs and Symptoms) / 52

Sādhyā - Asādhyā (Prognosis) / 54

*Summary / 55*



**Chapter Four Trividhā Parīkshā ~ Three Categories  
of Clinical Examination / 57**

Darshanam (Visual Examination) / 59

*Height / 59*

*Weight / 59*

*Limbs / 60*

*Head / 60*

*Face / 60*

*Neck / 61*

*Characteristics of Facial Lines, Ridges and Creases / 61*

*Chest / 62*

*Abdomen / 62*

*Waist and Groin / 64*

*Hair / 65*

*Nails / 65*

*Sensory Organs / 65*

*Bodily Systems / 70*

Sparshanam (Palpation) / 71

*Chest / 71*

*Breast Examination / 73*

*Abdomen / 75*

*Spine / 77*

Subcategories of Sparshanam / 77

*Ākōtanam (Percussion) / 78*

*Shravanam (Auscultation) / 82*

*Modified Percussion with Auscultation / 85*

Prashnam (Questioning) / 90

**Chapter Five Ashtavidhā Parīkshā ~ Eight Methods  
of Clinical Examination / 95**

Nādi Parīkshā (Pulse) / 95

Mūtra Parīkshā (Urine) / 102

Purīsha or Mala Parīkshā (Feces) / 105

Jihva Parīkshā (Tongue) / 107

Shabda Parīkshā (Speech) / 112

*The Four Categories of Speech / 115*

Sparsha Parīkshā (Touch or Palpation) / 120

Drig or Netra Parīkshā (Examination of Eyes) / 121

Ākruti Parīkshā (Physical Form or Appearance) / 126

Summary / 130

**Chapter Six Rugna Patrakam ~ The Client Assessment Form / 133**

*Food Questionnaire / 139*

*Sāra / 144*

Short Form Rugna Patrakam / 149





**Chapter Seven The Prakruti-Vikruti Paradigm ~ Constitutional**

**Assessment / 151**

Prakruti: Your Unique Body Type / 151

*Janma Prakruti / 153*

*Deha Prakruti / 154*

*Dosha Prakruti / 156*

Seven Types of Prakruti / 156

*How the Qualities of the Doshas Express in Prakruti / 157*

Assessment of Prakruti / 160

*Summary of Prakruti / 169*

Vikruti: the Present State of Your Doshas / 170

Assessment of Vikruti / 173

Manas Prakruti: Your Mental Constitution / 173

*Types of Manas Prakruti / 177*

Assessment of Manas Prakruti / 177

Assessment of Manas Vikruti / 181

*Causes of Manas Vikruti / 182*

*Five Common Causes of Manas Vikruti / 182*

Summary / 184

**Chapter Eight Agni and Koshtā Parīkshā ~ Assessment of Metabolic Fire and the Digestive Tract / 187**

Clinical Assessment of Agni / 189

*Causes of Imbalanced Agni / 190*

*The Four Types of Agni Related to the Doshas / 190*

Mental Digestion / 192

Examination of Koshtā / 195

Summary / 197

**Chapter Nine Āma ~ Metabolic Waste, The Root Cause of Disease / 199**

*General Signs and Symptoms of Āma / 201*

Sāma and Nirāma Doshas and Malas / 202

**Chapter Ten Dosha Vijñānam ~ Specialized Knowledge of Dosha Disorders / 205**

Interactions of the Three Doshas / 205

*Increased and Decreased Doshas and Dosha Dushti / 208*

*Increased Vāta Dosha (Dosha Vruddhi) / 209*

*Signs and Symptoms of Increased Vāta / 213*

*Classical Definitions of Signs and Symptoms of Increased Vāta / 214*

*Vāta Dosha Entering the Dhātus / 217*

*Increased Pitta Dosha (Dosha Vruddhi) / 219*

*Classical Definitions of Signs and Symptoms of Increased Pitta / 223*

*Increased Kapha Dosha (Dosha Vruddhi) / 226*

*Classical Definitions of Signs and Symptoms of Increased Kapha / 230*

*Decreased Doshas (Dosha Kshaya) / 232*

Summary / 233

**Chapter Eleven Dhātu and Mala Vijñānam ~ Specialized Knowledge of Disorders of the Tissues and Bodily Wastes / 237**

- Disorders of the Dhātus (Tissues) / 237  
    *Cravings* / 239  
Disorders of Rasa Dhātu / 239  
    *Fever* / 240  
    *Decreased and Increased Rasa Dhātu* / 240  
Disorders of Rakta Dhātu / 243  
Disorders of Māmsa Dhātu / 248  
    *The Role of Māmsa Dhātu in Emotional Well Being* / 250  
Disorders of Meda Dhātu / 252  
Disorders of Asthi Dhātu / 260  
Disorders of Majjā Dhātu / 264  
Disorders of Shukra and Ārtava Dhātus / 271  
Disorders of Stanya (Mastic Tissue) / 275  
Summary of Dhātu Dushti, Vruddhi and Kshaya / 276  
Disorders of the Malas (Bodily Wastes) / 276  
    *Disorders of Mūtra (Urine)* / 277  
    *Disorders of Purīsha (Feces)* / 278  
    *Disorders of Sveda (Sweat)* / 279

**Chapter Twelve Prāna, Tejas, Ojas Vijñānam ~ Specialized Knowledge of Disorders of the Three Bodily Essences / 281**

- Disorders of Prāna, Tejas and Ojas / 282  
Ojas / 283  
Ojo Disorders / 284  
    *Ojo Visramsa (Displaced Ojas)* / 285  
    *Ojah Kshaya (Decreased Immunity)* / 286  
    *Ojo-vruddhi (Excessive or Unprocessed Ojas)* / 288  
    *Ojo-vyāpad (Ojas Disturbed by One or More Doshas)* / 288  
Tejas / 289  
Tejo Disorders / 290  
    *Tejo Visramsa (Displaced Tejas)* / 290  
    *Tejo Kshaya (Decreased Tejas)* / 290  
    *Tejo Vruddhi (Excessive or Unprocessed Tejas)* / 291  
    *Tejo Vyāpad (Tejas Disturbed by One or More Doshas)* / 291  
Prāna / 292  
Prāna Disorders / 292  
    *Prāna Visramsa (Displaced Prāna)* / 292  
    *Prāna Kshaya (Decreased Prāna)* / 293  
    *Prāna Vruddhi (Excessive or Unprocessed Prāna)* / 293  
    *Prāna Vyāpad (Prāna Disturbed by One or More Doshas)* / 294

**Chapter Thirteen Sroto Vijñānam ~ Specialized Knowledge of Disorders of the Bodily Channels / 297**

- Types of Sroto Disorders / 297  
Causes of Sroto Disorders / 299



The Channels to Receive: Prāna, Food, Water / 301  
    *Disorders of Prāna Vaha Srotas (Respiratory System and Prāna Channel) / 301*  
    *Ujjayi Breathing / 303*  
    *Disorders of Anna Vaha Srotas (Digestive System) / 304*  
    *Disorders of Ambu Vaha Srotas (Water Regulating System) / 305*  
The Channels to Nourish and Maintain the Body: The Dhātu Srotāmsi / 306  
    *Disorders of Rasa Vaha Srotas (Plasma Channel) / 306*  
    *Disorders of Rakta Vaha Srotas (Blood Channel) / 307*  
    *Disorders of Māmsa Vaha Srotas (Muscle Channel) / 308*  
    *Disorders of Meda Vaha Srotas (Fat Channel) / 309*  
    *Disorders of Asthi Vaha Srotas (Bone Channel) / 310*  
    *Disorders of Majjā Vaha Srotas (Nervous System and Bone Marrow Channel) /*  
    *312*  
    *Disorders of Shukra Vaha Srotas (Male Reproductive System) / 313*  
    *Disorders of Ārtava Vaha Srotas (Female Reproductive System) / 314*  
    *Disorders of Stanya Vaha Srotas (Lactation Channel) / 315*  
The Channels of Elimination: Feces, Urine, Sweat / 316  
    *Disorders of Purīsha Vaha Srotas (Excretory System) / 316*  
    *Disorders of Mūtra Vaha Srotas (Urinary System) / 318*  
    *Disorders of Sveda Vaha Srotas (Sweat-Regulating System) / 319*  
The Channel of the Mind / 320  
    *Disorders of Mano Vaha Srotas (The Mind Carrying Channels) / 320*  
Conclusion / 321

**Acknowledgements / 323**

**Appendix / 325**

**Glossary / 347**

**Bibliography and Selected Readings / 359**

**Index / 361**



# 3

## Vyādhi Disease

### आयुर्वेद

Vyādhi means disease. The prime definition of disease according to Āyurveda is “*dosha dūshya sammūrcchana jānito vyādhi.*” This is a beautiful but very specific definition. It states that disease is born out of an amalgamation of dosha (vāta, pitta and kapha) and dūshya (the corruptibles, also known as the seven dhātus or upadhātus). This occurs when the qualities of an increased dosha conquer the qualities of a particular tissue or organ. Dis-ease means disturbed ease. When a person is at ease with the present moment, this is a state of health. When that ease is disturbed, it is called disease.

*Sammūrcchana* is a very specific word. It does not mean simply the physical mixing of dosha and dūshya, but rather a complex biochemical reaction. A physical mixture can be separated. For example, powdered sulfur can be mixed with powdered iron, but if we take a magnet it will attract only the iron molecules, easily separating the two. However if you heat the iron and sulfur together, it creates a complex chemical substance called ferrous sulfate, where the molecules of both substances completely amalgamate so that they cannot easily be separated. This is what *sammūrcchana* means.

The aggravated doshas undergo accumulation and provocation within their respective sites—vāta in the colon, pitta in the intestines,

येन दोषदूष्यं सम्मूर्च्छनावस्था जनितेन  
भावि ज्वरादि मात्रं प्रतीयते न तु वातादि  
जनितत्वादि विशेषः ॥

Yena dosha dūshyam  
sammūrcchanāvasthā janitena bhāvi  
jvarādi mātram  
Pratīyate na tu vātādi jatitavādi  
visheshah

Madhāva Nidānam,  
*points from Madhukosha Vyākhyā*

The remnant of the food, not properly digested because of the poor agni, which becomes the cause of all diseases is known as āma.

## Definitions of Disease

Vyādhi  
Roga  
Pāpma  
Ātanka  
Jvara  
Vikāra  
Āmaya  
Yakshma

आहारस्य रसः शेषो यो न पक्वोऽग्निलाघवात् ।  
स मूलं सर्वरोगाणां आम इत्यभिधीयते ॥

Āhārasya rasah shesho yo na  
pakko'gni lāghavāt  
Sa mūlam sarva rogānām āma  
ityābhidhiyate

Madhāva Nidānam,  
points from Madhukosha Vyākhyā

The remnant of the food, not properly digested because of the poor Agni, which becomes the cause of all diseases is known as Āma.

“...the root cause of all disease is āma.”

– Vasant Lad, MASc

kapha in the stomach. They then leave the GI tract and enter into the general circulation during the third stage (prasara). In the fourth stage (sthāna samshraya) the dosha infiltrates into a defective space (khāvaigunya), if the agni of a particular dhātu is low. Agni is the natural resistance of the dhātu, protecting the tissue from aggravated doshas. However if agni is depleted, the dosha can enter the dhātu, upadhātu, srotas or organ. The result is that the increased qualities of the dosha attack the tissue, as if there is a war, resulting in an aggravation of those doshic qualities within the tissue.

Sammūrccana also has another meaning. *Mūrccā* means unconsciousness. There is consciousness in every cell and tissue in the body, so if an increased dosha enters a tissue, it attacks the consciousness of those cells. As a result, the intelligence (the *Mahat* principle) and selectivity function (the mind) of a tissue are both affected. Therefore, the cells become confused and this affects their functions. This is why there is initially a change in functioning and slowly, if the condition persists, the cells undergo structural changes.

So finally, we can say “*dosha dūshya samūrccana jānito vyādhi*” means that an increased or disturbed dosha enters a tissue, attacks the qualities of that tissue, affects the consciousness, intelligence and mind of the tissue at the cellular level and, as a result, changes the function and possibly the structure of the tissue. This is one of the principal definitions of disease in Āyurveda. Nevertheless, bear in mind that Āyurveda has various definitions of disease and each one reveals something important.

## Definitions of Disease

**Vyādhi** is to kill, strike, injure or destroy. Hence, vyādhi is something that kills tissues, cells or organs and, ultimately, the organism can die.

**Roga** indicates pain. In every disease there is physical pain, psychological pain or emotional pain. Any kind of pain is disease. “*Sukha samjñākam ārogyam vikaro dukkham eva cha*” means that health is happiness, while pain or unhappiness is disease. One should maintain happiness at the physical and mental levels as well as the level of consciousness.

**Pāpma** refers to sin, which in this context means bad or unvirtuous action, including negative thoughts and feelings or inappropriate lifestyle. Pāpma means not to follow the natural law of perfect health given by Āyurveda. Āyurveda says to wake up early, scrape the tongue, brush the teeth, drink water, eat according to your constitution and do appropriate exercise. The diseases that arise if these regimes are not followed are called pāpma, or diseases due to bad

habits. Disease due to negative thoughts is also pāpma. Even past life pāpma creates suffering in this lifetime.

**Ātanka**—*tanka* is generalized stress, pain, or fear, so *ātanka* means that which creates incredible stress in the physical, energetic, emotional or mental body.

**Jvara** stands for fever (pyrexia). *Jvara* is “*dehendriya manasa santāpa*,” which means rise of body temperature and hypersensitivity and irritation of the body, mind and consciousness.

**Vikāra** denotes a distorted form. *Ākara* means form and *vikāra* is distorted or altered form. When a person is suffering, his or her facial expressions change and the form is distorted. In some cases, the liver, spleen and heart become enlarged or other body parts are altered. For instance, the joints contract in cases of rheumatoid arthritis. Every disease has a typical look. When one has flat, red cheeks and a tapered chin, it indicates proneness to peptic ulcer. A patient of tuberculosis has sunken cheeks and eyes, pale skin and dry eyes. A jaundice patient looks yellow. These are all examples of *vikāra*.

**Āmāya** signifies that which is born out of *āma*, which is a toxic, morbid, non-homogenous waste substance. The amalgamation of the doshas and tissues creates this toxic substance. One Āyurvedic sutra says that perfect health is perfect agni; so balanced agni is perfect health. If the gastric fire is disturbed, any ingested food is improperly digested. That undigested food becomes toxic to the tissues, creating *āma*. “*Sa mūlam sarva roḡānām āma iti abhidhīyate*” means the root cause of all disease is *āma*. (see sutra page 46)

**Yakshma** means consumption. “*Yakshma rāja yakshma*” means the king of all diseases is *rāja yakshma*, which is tuberculosis, and literally means disease to the king of the *nakshatra*, that is, the moon.

Some of these definitions are rather poetic and philosophical. The most practical definition of disease is our original one: an aggravated dosha attacks the tissues, changing their functions and structures.

## Levels of Disease

These are categories based upon how deeply into the tissues the disease has progressed.

- \* Nirāma (little or no toxins), also known as *pakva vyādhi*, *sāma* (with toxins) and *pachyamāna* (the process of eliminating toxins by digestion).
- \* *Āshukāri vyādhi* (acute disease), *jīrna vyādhi* or *chirakāri vyādhi* (chronic disease). *Āshukāri vyādhi* is caused by a

There is a wonderful story about consumption. There are twenty-seven *nakshatra* (stars) that are said to be the daughters of Daksha Prajāpati, the creator. All of these daughters marry the Moon—the husband and the *nakshatra* are his beautiful wives. The Moon particularly enjoys romance with Rohinī, one of the twenty-seven. When the moon is in the part of the sky that is Rohinī *nakshatra*, he looks particularly bright, brilliant and beautiful. However, the moon began to stay longer with Rohinī and neglect the other wives, to the point where they complained to their father Daksha, saying they were ignored. So Daksha cursed the Moon by saying “Moon, you will have *yakshma*,” which means consumption. That is why the Moon waxes and wanes. The waning phase is a consumption of the Moon, which represents the mind. From the full to the new moon, the Moon is reducing moment to moment, until it disappears. It is as if the Moon is consumed. This is a mystical story about a disease that is due to a curse.

Never make another person suffer because of you. When you do this, you are committing an action that brings a curse and can result in disease. It is psychologically very true, whether you know it or not, that if a person suffers because of your actions, the person’s suffering itself creates a curse, even though that person may not actually curse you. For instance, if you insult a guru, master, teacher, deity, or enlightened person, that being may not give you a curse, but the curse happens. It happens in the same way as when you throw a ball against a rock or a wall and it rebounds back to you. The rock doesn’t throw the ball, but the ball still returns. A curse is nothing but a precursor of a future coming ailment; a seed of future sufferings.

dosha going into an *asthāyi* (immature) dhātu and creating acute symptomatology. For instance, a patient having an asthma attack is in the acute stage of disease. However, when the attack is over, it does not mean the patient's disease is over. The disease remains dormant; the dosha has now moved into the *sthāyi* (mature) dhātu. This is known as *nigūda vyādhi*, a form of jīma (chronic) vyādhi that is asymptomatic (free of symptoms). Note that there is a slight distinction between the definitions of jīma and chirakāri vyādhi, the two forms of chronic disease. Chirakāri diseases stay in one sthāyi dhātu, affecting only that particular tissue, while jīma diseases affect all the dhātus, creating emaciation of all bodily tissues. As an example of each, chronic dysentery is chirakāri, because it affects only the colon, while tuberculosis is an example of jīma, because it can affect all the dhātus.

- \* Āyurveda also classifies disease according to the stage of samprāpti. These stages are: sañchaya, prakopa, prasara, sthāna samshraya, vyakti and bheda. (see Chapter Two, Samprāpti) Once a dosha has entered a dhātu, disease has occurred. It is known as dhātu gata dosha, based on the particular dhātu that a dosha has entered. If vāta goes into rasa dhātu, it is called rasa gata vāta. Similarly, there is rasa gata pitta and kapha, rakta gata vāta, pitta and kapha and so forth. So the stage of the disease can be studied according to the journey of the disease into the dhātus.
- \* A further classification is *uttāna* and *gambhīra*. Uttāna means superficial, while gambhīra means deep. Rasa and rakta dhātus are superficial; the others are deep.
- \* When there are complications, it is called *vyādhi upadrava*. Upadrava means things that go together with a disease. Sometimes one symptom causes another. For example, when a person with high pitta has a nosebleed, it is the upadrava of high pitta. Sometimes in a severe pitta type of fever, the person can develop convulsions, which is an upadrava of pitta fever. When a main disease is the cause of a secondary disease, the secondary disease is called upadrava, or complication.
- \* *Vyādhi sāṅkhya* means that the samprāpti of two or more different diseases occur simultaneously, but one does not cause the other. For example, asthma and diabetes, or diabetes and hypertension with heart disease.



## Broad Classifications of Disease

These classifications of disease are due to specific etiological factors (hetu), as discussed in Chapter One. So in a sense, the categories of hetu can also apply to vyādhi. For instance, diseases can be classified as nija (internal) and āgantū (external), according to the location of the cause within or outside the body.

However, there are other classifications that apply to vyādhi, beginning with a broad division into three types of disease. These three categories are *ādhyātmika*, *ādhi daivika* and *ādhi bhautika*.

**Ādhyātmika<sup>1</sup>**. This classification refers to diseases having a spiritual cause, those coming from a past life. We journey from one life to another and bring certain qualities to this life, which can affect the consciousness and then the mind and body. Ādhyātmika disorders primarily affect buddhi (intellect), smṛti (memory) and dhṛti (learning capacity and attention). They can be so serious that they affect both the functioning and structure of the brain and sense organs. Examples include deafness, blindness and aphasia (inability to speak or write). Some children are born with a mental disability and although it may be a genetic dysfunction, it can also be classified as ādhyātmika. Ādhyātmika diseases include many genetic and congenital disorders. Congenital disorders that affect the consciousness, such as attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), bipolar disorder, or intellectual disability, are all classed as ādhyātmika.

**Ādhi Daivika<sup>2</sup>**. This category indicates diseases having a subtle or supernatural cause, such as the result of a curse, insulting a teacher or deity, or disrespecting something religious. Ādhi daivika are also physical and mental disorders that are caused by a natural calamity or supernatural event that is not directly caused by anyone. For example, if a person goes for a walk and suddenly lightning strikes, resulting in paralysis, it is ādhi daivika. You may call this a natural calamity or destiny. Modern science does not say much about the causes of this category of disorders, sometimes just categorizing them as idiopathic illness, but Āyurveda says these are ādhi daivika disorders, such as in the case of spiritual possession.

**Ādhi Bhautika**. These types of diseases have a physical cause, such as a bacterial infection, being bitten by a snake or cutting your finger. They include accidents that are caused by people, as opposed to those from natural phenomena.

1. Also known as *Ādhi Bala Pravrutta*.

2. Also known as *Daiva Bala Pravrutta*.

**L**ord Shiva holds a *trishūlam*, which is a three-pointed spear representing the three types of pain. If you worship Shiva, your *ādhyātmika*, *ādhi daivika* and *ādhi bhautika* diseases can be cured.

There can be a fine line between *ādhyātmika*, *ādhi daivika* and *ādhi bhautika* disorders. *Ādhi daivika* have subtle causes that affect the mind and body, while *ādhyātmika* are subtler and connected to consciousness. *Ādhi bhautika* disorders are from physical causes.

These three classifications of physical, subtle and spiritual diseases are very broad. Equally broad is another categorization method that uses anabolic or catabolic as the overall tendency. These two categories are known as *santarpana* and *apatarpana*. *Santarpana vyādhi* means anabolic, kapha-promoting diseases, caused by excessive nutrition. Examples are obesity and diabetes. *Apatarpana vyādhi* are catabolic diseases that are *vāta* increasing and secondarily *pitta* increasing, caused by malnutrition. Examples include emaciation, consumption and debility.

### **Localized or Specific Classifications of Disease**

The following list is a more precise way of classifying diseases.

**Ādhi Bala Pravrutta** is a disease that happens before conception; a genetic disorder. This is the same as *Ādhyātmika*.

**Janma Bala Pravrutta** indicates a disease that happens at birth; a congenital disorder.

**Dosha Bala Pravrutta** refers to the strength of the disease that comes from the doshas. Kapha diseases have their origin in the stomach, *pitta* diseases in the small intestine and *vāta* diseases in the colon.

**Kālā Bala Pravrutta** are diseases related to time; especially seasonal disorders. There are two subcategories:

- \* Appropriate disorders for the season, such as spring colds or summer diarrhea, autumnal constipation. These are easier to cure.
- \* Inappropriate disorders for the season, such as summer colds or winter diarrhea. These are more difficult to cure.

**Daiva Bala Pravrutta** specifies a disease that originates from subtle or supernatural causes. This is the same as *Ādhi Daivika*. There are a number of specific causes, including:

- \* Spiritual possession (ghosts).
- \* Epidemics, such as cholera, measles, or the plague.
- \* Natural or spontaneous accidents, such as earthquakes, volcanoes and lightning.
- \* *Graha bhūta*, which means diseases due to astrological causes. The planets and stars are natural powers and an affliction to a malefic planet may affect the person's health and cause disease. *Āyurvedic* physicians should pay attention to medical astrology so they can treat these diseases that are directly related to the astral body.

**Sanghatta Bala Pravrutta** denotes diseases that have a human cause. Examples are a car accident or an attack with a weapon, such as a gunshot wound. This is the same as Ādhi Bhautika.

**Svabhāva Bala Pravrutta** signifies natural disorders. These include hunger, thirst, sleep, aging and death. These natural phenomena are considered a type of disorder. They fall into two subcategories:

- \* *Kālāja*: timely, such as feeling hungry at noon or dying at age 80.
- \* *Akālāja*: untimely, such as feeling hungry at 3 am or dying at age 20.

## Structural Divisions of Disease

These are further ways of categorizing disease. *Note*: the word *bhedana* simply means “division.”

**Sthāna Bhedana** means according to the site in which the disease manifests. There are three main divisions:

- \* *Manasaja* (mental) specifies a disease that is born within the mental faculty. This includes anxiety, depression, schizophrenia, mania and all other psychiatric problems. Initially, there is *mano dushti*, which is a disturbance of *rajas* and *tamas*, the gunas known as the two doshas of the mind. *Sattva* is the very nature of the mind and is the balance point. Subsequently the three doshas (*vāta*, *pitta* and *kapha*) are disturbed, but there is no *dhātu dushti* in this instance. Involvement of the *dhātus* may happen later.
- \* *Sharīraja* (physical) indicates a disease that originates in the physical body with a disturbance of the doshas or *dhātus*. Diseases such as fever, flu, pneumonia, bronchitis, peptic ulcer and so on all have a physical origin. In these cases, there is both dosha disturbance and *dhātu dushti*.
- \* *Sharīra Manasaja* (psychosomatic) refers to a disease that originates in the mind by a disturbance of *rajas* and *tamas*, that subsequently increases the doshas and *dhātus*; or disease that begins in the body and then disturbs the gunas of the mind.

**Dosha Bhedana** designates diseases according to the number of doshas involved. Diseases can be *vātaja*, *pittaja*, or *kaphaja*. Dosha is predominantly important, so this classification is most practical. A disease can arise from one dosha, in which case it is called *eka doshaja*; dual doshic, called *dvandvaja*; or tri-doshic, which is *sannipātika*.

**Dhātu Bhedana** classifies disease according to the tissues affected. For instance, if the doshas affect the *rasa dhātu* they can cause diseases such as anemia, lymphatic obstruction or swelling,

generalized edema and fever. These are called *rasa pradoshaja roga*, which means disorders of *rasa dhātu*. Similarly, diseases of *rakta dhātu* are known as *rakta pradoshaja roga* and so on.

**Avayava Bhedana** specifies disease according to the organs that are affected. For example, *hrud roga* is heart disease, *udara roga* means diseases of the abdominal cavity, *sandhi roga* refers to diseases of the joints, *phuphusaja roga* to lung disease, *shiro roga* to head disease, *netra roga* to diseases of the eyes, *nasa roga* to the nose and *karna roga* to diseases of the ears.

In modern medical science, diseases are classified according to categories such as congestive, inflammatory, infective, or degenerative. Āyurveda talks about the same categories. All congestive diseases fall under *kapha*; inflammatory and infective diseases fall into the category of *pitta*; and degenerative diseases with tissue emaciation are *vāta* disorders.

| Āyurvedic Disease Classification     | Modern Equivalent |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Āgantū                               | Acquired          |
| Ojah Kshaya                          | Autoimmune        |
| Janma Bala Pravrutta                 | Congenital        |
| Kapha Sanga (stagnation)             | Congestive        |
| Vārdhakyam (old age)                 | Deficiency        |
| Dhātu Kshaya (Vāta)                  | Degenerative      |
| Majjā Dhātu Kshaya                   | Demyelinating     |
| Lākshnika                            | Functional        |
| Rakta Pradoshaja                     | Hemolytic         |
| Ādhi Bala Pravrutta                  | Hereditary        |
| Āgantū into Nija                     | Infective         |
| Pitta                                | Inflammatory      |
| Daiva Bala Pravrutta                 | Idiopathic        |
| Chronic disorder of all three doshas | Malignant         |
| Krumija                              | Parasitic         |
| Manasaja                             | Psychiatric       |
| Sharīra Manasaja                     | Psychosomatic     |

### **Lakshanam (Signs and Symptoms)**

In a previous chapter, we discussed *pūrva rūpa* and *rūpa*. At the junction between the third (*prasara*) and fourth (*sthāna samshraya*) stages of *samprāpti*, the disease shows *pūrva rūpa*, which are partly manifested signs and symptoms of a future disease. This is also known

as prodromal syndrome, or warning bell symptoms. In vyakti, the fifth stage, the disease manifests cardinal signs and symptoms, called rūpa.

The signs and symptoms of disease are called lakshanam. They may be caused simply by the aggravation of a dosha, or from disturbed functioning of a tissue or organ. Some symptoms are created mainly by the mind, while others come from the body through dosha dūshya sammūrchana.

Symptoms are the leaves and branches of a disease. If we just play with the symptoms, we cannot get to the root of the disease. Symptomatic treatment is not a true treatment, but it can be helpful as part of the management. If the person has a headache, give an analgesic; for nausea, give an anti-emetic; for fever, an anti-pyretic; for diarrhea, an astringent or stool-binding medicine. However these therapeutic measures will not solve the underlying problem.

Āyurveda says not to suppress the symptoms, but to treat the root cause. For that we have to learn the cause of the symptoms. If we just try to treat the patient symptomatically, then every suppressed symptom will undergo modifications and the samprāpti may become more complicated. The Āyurvedic approach to disease is radical and fundamental. It uproots the pathogenesis by treating the cause.

There are two main categories of lakshanam. These are *dosha lakshanāni*, which means symptoms of the doshas, and *vyādhi lakshanāni*, symptoms of a disease. Every doshic disorder and every disease has a specific lakshanam. An example of dosha lakshanāni is aggravated vāta causing dry skin and constipation. For vyādhi lakshanāni, an example is the cardinal signs and symptoms of pyrexia (fever), which are irritability, hypersensitivity and a rise of body temperature. Likewise, loose stools are a cardinal sign of diarrhea.

The signs and symptoms of vitiated doshas, dhātus, srotāmsi, malas and organs are called dosha lakshanāni, *dhātu lakshanāni*, *sroto lakshanāni*, *mala lakshanāni*, and *avayava lakshanāni* respectively. Sroto lakshanāni means the signs and symptoms belonging to a particular srotas. For example, when a person has breathlessness, difficulty in breathing, cold, congestion, or cough, prāna vaha srotas is affected. If someone has indigestion and lack of appetite, it means the person's *anna vaha srotas* is affected.<sup>3</sup> Similarly, the signs and symptoms related to the various organs of the body are called avayava lakshanāni. For instance, *yakrut lakshanāni* means the signs and symptoms of liver disorders.

Signs and symptoms related to the mind are called *mano lakshanāni*. Vāta induced mano lakshanāni includes fear, anxiety,

3. Note: Chapter 13 includes a list of each srotas and its symptomatology.

nervousness, and insomnia. Pitta type of mano lakshanāni is judgment, criticism, anger, hate, envy, and difficulty entering sleep. Kapha mano lakshanāni includes lethargy, attachment, greed, possessiveness, and excessive sleep leading to drowsiness.

There is also a general category called *arishta lakshanāni*, which means serious signs and symptoms. For example, if someone has a twisted nose, extremely dry lips, purple skin and a falling ear lobe, that means the person is going to die within one week. If the person has *pipīlika nādī*, which means the pulse moves like an ant, and in addition is gasping and has inaudible heart sounds, that means the person will die within three to six hours. Arishta lakshanāni are extremely serious cardinal signs.

*Upadrava lakshanāni* is another category, meaning the signs and symptoms of complications. Examples are ascites (breathlessness), asthma (status asthmaticus) and epilepsy (repeated attacks of epileptic seizures).

### **Sādhyā - Asādhyā (Prognosis)**

The outcome of a disease is categorized in four ways:

1. *Sādhyā*: easy to cure.
2. *Kashtāsādhyā*: may be difficult to cure.
3. *Asādhyā*: incurable.
4. *Pratyākhyeya*: prognosis uncertain, but treatment is given in the hope that the person may be cured, God willing. This is a form of faith therapy; it is curable only through faith.

The prognosis depends upon the number of doshas, dhātus, srotāmsi, and organs involved, the age and strength of the patient, the duration (age) of the disease (acute or chronic), the strength of the disease, the strength of agni, any āma (toxicity) that is present, the number of serious symptoms and whether there are any complications. If a person has healthy prāna, tejas and ojas, almost any disease is manageable.

If a disease is acute and it involves only one dosha, it is usually curable. If it involves two doshas and it has been there for a few weeks, it can be rather difficult to cure. If all three doshas are involved, the disease may be incurable. This category includes cancer, AIDS and severe insulin dependent diabetes. When the doshas linger in the sthāyi dhātus for a long time, the disease also becomes much more difficult to cure.

Generally, if there is a vāta or pitta problem in a child, it is easy to cure because the child is in kapha age. A kapha disorder can be more stubborn in a child. Conversely, a vāta disease in a vāta person

of vāta age (60 plus) is very complicated, whereas a kapha problem may be relatively easy to cure. In adulthood, which is pitta age, vāta and kapha diseases are easy to treat, whereas pitta disorders are most difficult. However, so long as there is life in a person and the person wishes to live, Āyurveda treats that person regardless of age or prognosis.

### **Summary**

An Āyurvedic physician, practitioner or student should have a complete understanding of samprāpti (the disease process), hetu (etiology), lakshanam (signs and symptoms) and upadrava (complications) and with the light of this knowledge, should enter the heart of the patient. Every client is a living book and to know this book requires great insight and compassion. An Āyurvedic physician can diagnose, treat and heal disease and give a long, happy life to the patient. Such a person is called *prānāchārya*, the giver of life.