

JIHVA PARIKSHA IN AYURVEDA: DECODING HEALTH THROUGH TONGUE

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Article Received date: 21 June 2024

Article Revised date: 11 July 2024

Article Accepted date: 01 August 2024



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ABSTRACT

Darshana Pariksha holds in understanding a patient is inevitable and important. So every Pariksha was aimed at understanding not only the disease condition but also the health status of the person including the sub clinical manifestations too. According to Ayurveda the tongue is an organ not used only for taste, but also a strong tool for diagnosis. Jihvapariksha is a part of Ayurvedic diagnosis. Jihva Pariksha was mentioned one among the RogiPariksha which can be categorized under Darshana Pariksha. Though elaborately it is not mentioned in the Bruhtrayi, but later texts like Yogaratnakara do have the explanation. This has been widely used and evolved in contemporary sciences like Unani, Sidha and Traditional Chinese medicine. Since all diseases are manifested with the involvement of jataragni (Amaya) the reflection of its involvement is definitely seen in the tongue. Jihva or Tongue being the only visible part of the digestive system or the Mahasrothas, a marked difference or minor changes in the colour, texture, coating, thickness, shape etc. shown/ manifested will give a vast clue about the diseases of the body.

KEYWORDS: Darshanpariksha, Jihvapariksha, Tongue examination.

INTRODUCTION

Understanding a patient is a key in Darshanapariksha. Rogi Pariksha, which is part of Darshanapariksha, is not clearly described in Bruhtrayi, but later texts like Yogaratnakara do explain Asthasthanapariksha, which is one of the Rogi Pariksha. These Ashtasthanapariksha (methods of examination) are important. They are as follows.

1. Nadi Pariksha (Pulse Study)
2. MutraPariksha (Urine Examination)
3. Mala Pariksha (Stool Examination)
4. JihvaPariksha (Tongue Examination)
5. ShabdaPariksha (Voice Examination)
6. SparshaPariksha (Skin Examination)
7. DrikPariksha (Eye Examination)
8. AkrtiPariksha (General Appearance Examination)

In Ayurveda, Agni Mandya is seen as the main cause of all diseases.

Saam Jihva (coated tongue) shows that there is Ama in the body. The tongue should be checked for its shape, colour, movement, and coating. JihvaPariksha is part of AshtavidhaPariksha.

Acharya Yogaratanakar talks about JihvaPariksha based on Doshas. Depending on the kind of Dosha imbalance, specific signs appear during JihvaPariksha.

In VataPrakopa condition, the tongue is cold, rough, and cracked. In PittaPrakopa, the tongue is reddish or blackish. In KaphaPrakopa, the tongue is whitish and sticky. In Sannipata condition, the tongue is blackish, thorny, and dry. In cases of DwandajaDoshas, mixed signs are seen. Both Bavaprakasha and Madhavnidana also mention JihvaPariksha based on Doshas, and the signs are similar to those described by Yogaratanakra. In food poisoning, the tongue may look like a stone and lose its normal colour. In SannipataJwara, the tongue is rough.

Tongue conditions in various disorders are.

- Asita Jihva, NilaJihva: Madatyaya Asadhya Lakshana.
- Jihvalepa: Amlapitta.
- Jihva Niskarsya, Jihva Shosha: Trishna Nirodhaja Daha.
- Jihva Upadeha: Prameha Purvarupa.

A healthy tongue is not too dry or too wet and does not have a bad smell or taste. The veins underneath the tongue are not visible.

SIGNS

1. Color: Shyavarakta (Uniformly pink, similar to a skinned chicken or pale-red)
2. Shape: Tanu (Neither too thick nor too thin, even width or oval)
3. Moisture: Slakshna (Healthy tongue is moist)
4. Coating: Nirlipta or Ishathlipta (Thin transparent or white coating)
5. Movement: Akampa (Straight when sticking out rather than veering to one side)

SIZE OF TONGUE

1. Deerghajihva (Macroglosia): Down's syndrome, acromegaly, myxoedema, angioedema, tumors, Bijadosha.
2. Hriswajihva (Microglosia): Pseudobulbar palsy, facial hemiatrophy, starvation, Bijadosha.

TONGUE PATHOLOGY BASED ON COLOR

1. Shyava (Pale): Anaemia, malnutrition, Vatajakshaya, Pandu
2. Paridagdha (Red raw): Sprue, pellagra, severe diabetes, prolonged febrile illness, Pittajavruddi, Sannipatajwara
3. Shweta (White): Lichen planus, HIV, non-HIV immune compromised, Khapakshaya, Ojakshaya
4. Neela (Blue): Central cyanosis, Kaphavruddi, MadatyayaAsadhyaLakshana
5. Purple: Polycythaemia Vera, Pittavruddi
6. Dark red or bluish red: Polycythaemia Vera, riboflavin deficiency, Raktavruddi
7. Strawberry (Paridagdha): Scarlet fever, Kawasaki's disease, toxic shock syndrome, Sannipatajwara
8. Peeta (Yellow): Rarely occurs in jaundice, Kamala, Kumbakamala, Puranapandu
9. Krishna (Black): Fungal infection, iron, bismuth, opium poisoning, tobacco, Vataavruddi
10. Furred tongue (Liptajihwa): In all febrile illnesses, especially typhoid, heavy smoke, poor oral hygiene, Sannipatajwara, Amlapitta, Pramehapoorvarupa.

BASED ON MOVEMENT

1. Slow rhythmic tremors stopping on voluntary extrusion of tongue: Parkinsonism (Kampavata), backward and forward.
2. Lizard tongue (Jack-in-the-box or watch spring tongue): Cause due to rheumatic chorea.
3. Deviated tongue: Hypoglossal nerve paralysis, malignant infiltration, severe ulceration, facial paralysis.
4. Sthabdajihva (Immobile tongue): Bilateral lingual paralysis, bulbar palsy, syringomyelia, mental retardation, myasthenia gravis.

BASED ON SURFACE

1. Ati-tanu (Smooth or bald tongue): Iron deficiency anaemia, pernicious anaemia, B complex deficiency or malabsorption, Kaphavaishmya.
2. Kharajihva/kantakajihva (Fissured tongue): Vitamin B complex deficiency, acute glossitis, acromegaly, congenital scrotal tongue.

3. Scarred tongue: Traumatic or secondary to tongue-biting, Abhigataja.
4. Mushroom like tongue: Sore tongue with whitish slough in acid poisoning.

Review of Chinese Medicine

The tongue is connected to the body's meridians and internal organs, making it important for confirming TCM diagnosis. It serves as a strong visual indicator of a person's health. The tongue is considered an "offshoot" of the Heart and is closely connected to it. In TCM, a normal tongue is light red or pink with a thin white coating.

CONNECTIONS TO THE TONGUE**Channels/Meridians Reaching the Tongue**

- Heart Channel (Hand Shaoyin): The Luo connecting channel connects to the root of the tongue.
- Spleen Channel (Foot Taiyin): Internal branch of the primary channel spreads over the lower surface of the tongue. The Spleen Divergent channel penetrates the tongue.
- Kidney Channel (Foot Shaoyin): Internal branch of the primary channel terminates at the base of the tongue.
- Bladder Channel (Foot Taiyang): A branch of the muscle/sinew channel binds to the root of the tongue.
- San Jiao Channel (Hand Shaoyang): A branch of the muscles channel links with the root of the tongue.

Tongue areas as they correspond to internal organs in Chinese Medicine.

TONGUE DIAGNOSIS TECHNIQUE AND PRECAUTIONS

- Lighting = Natural sunlight is the best way to see the true colour and coating of the tongue. If there is no sunlight, use a small flashlight to check the tongue's colour.
 - Position - The tongue should be stretched gently, not held for too long.
 - Food and Drink - Things like coffee, green tea, and sugary foods can change the colour of the tongue's coating.
 - Brushed Tongue -Some people brush their tongue to freshen their breath or as part of an Ayurvedic practice. Ask the patient not to brush their tongue on the day of the TCM tongue check-up.
 - Seasons of the Year - In summer, the tongue coating may look thicker and lighter yellow. In Autumn, it might be thinner with a drier look. In winter, there may be more moisture or dampness on the tongue. Spring usually shows a normal tongue.
 - Time of Day -As the day progresses, the tongue coating tends to get thinner, while the tongue itself may look shinier and brighter.
 - Patient's Age - Older people often have a dry, cracked tongue due to low Qi and Blood.
- Babies usually have a thick white coating that can be easily removed, and peeling tongues are common. People

who are overweight tend to have a wetter or more phlegmy tongue, which can be bigger and lighter in colour. Thin people often have a redder tongue.

TONGUE CHARACTERISTICS AND THEIR MEANINGS

Tongue Body Colour – Shows the status of Blood, Yin organs, and Nutritive Qi.

Normal Tongue Body – Should be pink or light red.

Bluish Purple or Reddish-Purple Tongue Body – A purple colour can mean either Heat or Cold. A reddish-purple tongue suggests Heat and Blood Stagnation. A dark red and dry tongue shows fluid loss from Heat. A lighter purple or greenish purple may mean Cold and Blood Stagnation.

Red Tongue Body – A red tongue means there's either too much or not enough Heat. A red tongue with a thick yellow coating or swollen bumps means too much Heat, while a bright red tongue with little coating suggests not enough Heat.

Scarlet Tongue Body – A bright red, peeled tongue points to Yin Deficiency, which might be related to the Heart or Lung.

Dark Red Tongue Body – A dark red or crimson tongue might show internal damage, external influences, or Blood Stagnation.

Pale Tongue Body – Indicates Blood or Qi problems, or Cold.

Green Tongue Body – Green usually means too much Yin Cold or a strong illness with weak immunity. It shows that Yang isn't moving Blood and Fluids well, causing blockages.

Tongue Body Shape – The shape of the tongue shows Blood and Nutritive Qi status and can point to issues of Excess or Deficiency.

Tongue Body Moisture – Shows how well the Yin and the body's fluids are working.

Tongue Coating – Helps understand the condition of the Yang organs, especially the Stomach.

White Tongue Coat – A thin white layer on the tongue can be a sign of Cold if other symptoms are present.

Powdery White Tongue Coat – A thick layer that looks like powder indicates something is blocking or causing heat. This coating often changes to yellow quickly if not treated.

Snow-Like White Tongue Coat – This may mean the Spleen is weak and there is Damp-Cold in the middle part of the body.

Yellow Tongue Coat – A yellow coating means there is internal heat.

The darker the yellow, the more heat there is; a very dark yellow shows that heat is getting stronger in the body.

Dirty Yellow Tongue Coat – This might mean there is Damp Heat in the Stomach and intestines.

White and Yellow Coating on the Tongue – This may show a Shaoyang condition, where both heat and cold symptoms are present, or when cold is turning into heat.

Gray Tongue Coating – Usually means there is either internal heat or Damp-Cold.

It might also mean excess heat is harming body fluids or fire is coming from Yin deficiency.

Black Tongue Coating – A black coating often comes from a Gray or burnt yellow one and shows that heat is worsening and using up body fluids.

Half Yellow, Half White (Longitudinal) – This could mean there is heat in the Liver and Gallbladder.

Yellow Root with White Tip – This may mean that heat from outside is moving deeper into the body.

Black in the Centre, White and Slippery on the Edges show Spleen Yang deficiency with internal Damp-Cold.

Tongue Coating Thickness– Thin Coating is normal. In sickness, it may mean something is on the outside or the illness is not too severe. If the coating gets thinner, it may mean the illness is moving out of the body and getting better. A thick layer usually means a more serious internal problem, that the outside illness has gone deep inside, and may also mean there is trapped food.

Tongue body cracks

Horizontal Cracks – Show Yin is not enough

Cracks on the Sides – Show Spleen Qi and/or Yin is weak

Scalloped Tongue – Suggests Spleen Qi is weak and often comes with Dampness

Centre Crack – Shows a lack of energy (Qi) in the stomach and/or spleen

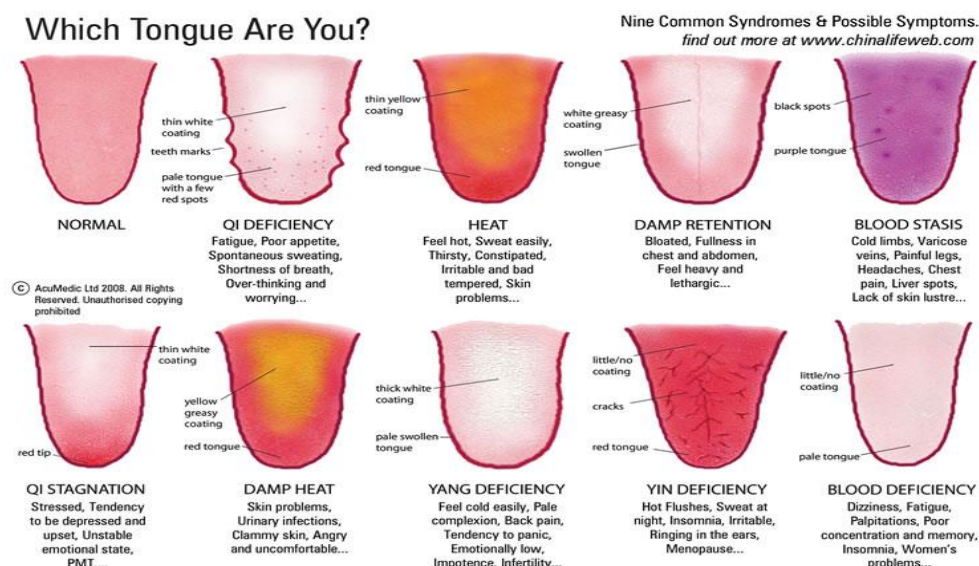
Crack going from the centre to the tip – Linked to problems with the heart

Cracks that look like ice floes – Suggests a deficiency of yin energy

Vertical cracks in the centre – Means the spleen is lacking energy

Irregular cracks – Point to a deficiency of yin in the stomach,

Tongue Coat Root–In Tongue Coat with Root the coating is attached to the tongue surface and can't be easily scraped off and a coating that is on top of the tongue and can be removed or scraped off, often meaning there is an issue with the spleen, stomach, and kidneys.



Review of Greek Medicine

Concept of Reflex Zones on the Tongue in Greek Medicine

- Both Chinese medicine and Greek medicine believe that the tongue is connected to different parts of the body through taste. The tongue shows the condition of the inside of the body and its many organs. The layout of the reflex zones on the tongue is not very complicated. For many years, Greek medicine healers and other traditional doctors have divided the tongue into different reflex zones based on what they saw in patients.
- The main organs in the chest area, like the heart and lungs, are shown on the front part of the tongue, near the tip. The heart is at the very tip, and the lungs are a bit behind it. The main organs in the upper and lower abdomen, such as the liver, gallbladder, and stomach, are shown in the middle part of the tongue, near the middle. The stomach is in the centre of this area. The spleen zones are to the sides of the stomach but still close to the liver and gallbladder. The pancreas area is on the middle line of the tongue, a little behind the stomach.
- The organs responsible for removing waste, such as the kidneys, intestines, and bladder, are shown on the back part of the tongue, near the base. The kidney zones are on both sides of the base of the tongue. The intestines are on the middle back part of the tongue, behind the stomach and pancreas areas. The bladder is at the very bottom of the tongue, right in the middle.
- Reflex zones are important in tongue diagnosis in two main ways. If the coating on the tongue in a certain zone is not normal, it may mean that there are problems with the digestive enzymes in the related organ. Also, if there is a strange mark or colour on the tongue in a certain zone, it might show a change in the structure or nutrition of the connected organ. But there are not enough clear rules to diagnose all kinds of health issues. To help with this, many different tongue diagnosis systems have been developed in recent years.

Review of Homeopathy

In homeopathy, the tongue and taste are used as physical signs to help build a picture of a patient's condition and to choose the right treatment for them. The tongue can show signs of illness and help in selecting remedies when the tongue's symptoms are clear. The condition of the tongue also gives clues about a patient's personality, which plays a role in how they are treated. From a homeopathic point of view, closely looking at the tongue is helpful for diagnosing diseases, understanding the patient's personality, and choosing the correct medicine.

Some notable tongue appearances in specific remedies include.

1. Aconite: The tongue is swollen and has a white coating.
2. Anti crud: The tongue is thickly coated in white, looking like it's been whitewashed, with cracks at the corners of the mouth.
3. Anti tart: The tongue has a thick white coating with red edges, appearing red and dry, especially in the centre.
4. Apismel: The tongue is red, swollen, sore, and raw, with small blisters.
5. Arsenic alb: The tongue is dry, clean, and red, with small blisters that cause a burning and stinging feeling.
6. Baptisiatinct: It has a typhoid-like tongue with a furred appearance and a yellowish-white coating, feels scalded, has red and shiny edges, and a cracked, sore surface.
7. Bryonia alb: The tongue is very dry with a dark white, yellow, or dark brown coating.
8. Chelidonium: The tongue is yellowish, with tooth imprints, a white coating, and red edges, and is large and soft in texture.
9. Crotalus horridus: The tongue is small and red but feels swollen, has a fiery red color, and is dry in the middle, looking smooth and shiny.
10. Hydrastiscan: The tongue is white, swollen, and soft, showing tooth marks, with cracks on the edges and a white coating, along with a bitter taste.

11. Hyoscyamusnig: The tongue is red, dry, and cracked, stiff, and hard to move or stick out.
12. Lachesis: The tongue is swollen, red, and dry, with cracks at the tip.
13. Mercuriusol: The upper part has a long groove, is heavy, thick, and moist.
14. Natrum mur: The tongue has a frothy coating with bubbles on the sides and a feeling of dryness, numbness, and tingling.
15. Nux vomica: The front part is clean, while the back is very coated with white cracks.
16. Pyrogen: The tongue is dry, red, clean, and cracked, looking smooth like it's been varnished.
17. Rhustox: The tongue is red and cracked, with a coating except for a red triangular area at the tip, and feels dry and red at the edges.

DISCUSSION

Jihva Pariksha is identified as one of the Rogi Pariksha types, which fits into the category of Darshana Pariksha. While it is not extensively described in the Bruhtrayi, later works such as the Yogaratnakara provide explanations. This practice has been widely adopted and has evolved within contemporary fields like Unani, Siddha, and Traditional Chinese medicine. The tongue, being the only visible part of the digestive system or Mahasrothas, reveals significant differences or slight changes in colour, texture, coating, thickness, and shape that can offer valuable insights into bodily diseases. Both Chinese and Greek medicine perceive the tongue as a representation of the entire body, allowing assessment of the health of various body parts through examination of specific areas on the tongue. The tongue serves as an external extension of the body's interior and reflects the states of various internal organs. Over centuries of clinical practice, holistic practitioners in Greek medicine and other traditional healing modalities have charted various reflex zones on the tongue. To minimize diagnostic variations, different Tongue diagnosis systems have been established. With this context in mind, one can proceed to develop computer-aided Tongue Diagnosis Systems (TDS) along with necessary software.

CONCLUSION

Jihva Pariksha, recognized as one of the methods under Rogi Pariksha, falls within the category of Darshana Pariksha. Although it is not extensively detailed in the Bruhtrayi, later works such as the Yogaratnakara provide explanations. This practice has been widely adopted and adapted in modern disciplines like Unani, Sidha, and Traditional Chinese medicine.

Since all ailments emerge through the interaction of jataragni (Amaya) and dosas, their manifestations can certainly be observed on the tongue. The tongue, being the only visible component of the digestive system or Mahasrothas, shows significant differences or slight variations in color, texture, coating, thickness, and shape, which can certainly offer insights into the disease and the

involvement of dosas, thereby aiding in appropriate treatment.

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