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Study on the Signs of Long Life of a Child as Said in Charaka Samhita

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ABSTRACT

Birth of a child is a gift to a family. A child brings happiness and hope for future. As a tradition, after childbirth, the parents and family observe some days as festival and ritual. Some types of rituals are observed and designated personalities are treated with offerings and gifts. Acharya Charaka, the father of Indian Medicine, in his famous book “Charaka Samhita” covers a wide range of human life starting from childbirth, growth, attainment of maturity, duties as a good citizen etc. In short, as Charaka says prevention and cure of disease are the basic aims of Charaka Samhita. Commonly Astrology is considered to be the related subject to deal with the longevity, progress, hardness in life, health, personality etc. of an individual. But, interestingly Charaka nicely discussed the signs of long life (Dirghayulakshanani) with special attention in one sloka of Sharirasthana (the section of the book containing description of different body parts) which are very interesting and reflect the depth of the knowledge of the scholar on anatomical character of each and every organ of the body. Throwing light on the description on the topic is considered important as it can open a potent area for future study with special reference to the health status of a child and may add some new facts in the Ayurvedic paediatrics (Kaumarabhritya – Balaroga).

Key words – Birth of a child, offerings and gifts, acharya Charaka, longevity, Ayurvedic paediatrics

INTRODUCTION –

Childbirth is traditionally considered as the God’s gift. A family celebrates the event as a festival. For a memorable period after the childbirth there is observation of a number of activities to be done like giving the name (namakarana), doing the puja to the grahas (navagrahapujana), preparation of document of birth containing the forecast about the future by eminent astrologer (koshthipranayana) etc. By these activities the future of the newborn child is tried to understand, make and even tried to modify some unexpected situations by performing some special performances as advised by the expert and wise persons.

Charaka Samhita, probably the first written document on health science, is the manual of a wide range of knowledge on creation, growth, existence and destruction. Charaka has not

only elaborated about birth, growth, health and death of the human beings but also about the creation of the universe, substances on it, their relation with the human life etc.

One of the important field studied, researched and advised by Charaka is the process of birth of a human. Garbhasthapan (gestation), Garbhavridhi (growth of foetus), Prasava (delivery), Kumara paricharyya (taking care of newborns) etc. are some of the topics related with this field . At the time of discussion on the topic Charaka interestingly gives importance on “sishupariksha for dirghayu (otherwise can be considered as examination of life span)” which is a major concern of the parents, family members, relatives etc. of a newborn child. Throwing light on the discussion on the topic is considered to have importance and value to understand the depth of knowledge of Charaka on physical examination of an individual and anatomical knowledge of different organs.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES –

The study was conducted with the below mentioned aims and objectives -

1. To study the concepts and guidelines of Charaka for examination of a child for the span of life
2. To justify the informations and guidelines provided in concern with the signs and symptoms of long life of a child depending upon the knowledge and references available on the subject
3. To discuss the findings with scientific reasoning as far as possible
4. Ultimately to give the whole matter a form of scientific article and to send for publication to an Internationally reputed peer reviewed indexed journal

MATERIAL AND METHODS –

The study was conducted with the following materials observing the methods as stated below –

1. Charaka Samhita was studied at the Central Library of Sri Sri College of Ayurvedic Science and Research Hospital, Sri Sri University, Cuttack, Odisha, India
2. The guidelines and instructions given by Acharya Charaka in Charaka Samhita, Sharira Sthana , Chapter 8, Sloka 51 for examination of a child for long life were collected and noted accordingly
3. The guidelines collected were discussed with an effort to justify the scientific thinkings behind

4. A summary reflecting the basic messages of the study and a conclusion to give a message to the society were added
5. Ultimately, adding the references, the article was sent to an International Peer Reviewed Indexed Journal requesting to publish for appraisal of the scientific forum

OBSERVATION AND RESULT –

The study reveals the following results -

After completion of the NAMAKARANA ANUSTHANA (function to give name) on the 10th day of birth the child is advised to examine thoroughly to assess the Ayupramana (span of life) with special attention to the following parts for the said characters that suggest Ayushman Kumara (child with long life) -

1. **Kesha (hair)** – Eka ekaja, mridu, alpa, snigdha, subaddhamula, krishna (separate, smooth , of less number, oily , of strong root and black in colour)
2. **Twak (skin)**– Sthira and bahala (strong and well spreaded)
3. **Shira (head)** – Prakrita, atisampanna Pramana ativrittam , atapatropama (normal, slightly bigger than the others and with some alleviations and depressions like umbrella)
4. **Shankha (temporal regions)** – Vyudha, dridha, sama, sushlista (appropriately articulated with other bones of the head, strong and homologous with the other parts)
5. **Lalata (forehead)**– Sandhyurdha, vyanjana, sampanna, upachita, balibha, ardhachandrakriti (the articulations are strong, with the prominent lines ,healthy with well nutrition and of semilunar shape)
6. **Karna(Ears)** – Bahala, bipulasamapitha, sama, nichavriddhiyukta, prishthato abanata, sushlistakarna putraka, mahachidra (big, spreaded, homologous, hanged towards downwards, spreading towards back, all the parts are well articulated, having big wholes)
7. **Bhru (Eyebrow)** – Ishat pralambita, avasangata, sama, sanghata, mahat (going downwards, not united, equal, well arranged and big)
8. **Chakshu (Eyes)** – Sama, samahitadarshana, vyaktabhagavibhaga, balaban, tejasopapanna, swangapanga (equal, of equal vision, with prominent parts, strong, having brightness with beautiful look)
9. **Nasa (Nose)**– Riju, mahoswasa, vangshasampanna, ishat avanatagra (Straight, taking breath normally, having prominent nasal bridge with some grade of bending)
10. **Ashyam (Mouth)** – Mahat, riju, sunibishtadanta (Big, straight and with beautiful gums)

11. **Jihba (Tongue)** – Ayama bistaropanna, shlakshna, tanu, prakritibarnayukta (having appropriate length and breadth, slimy, thin and of natural colour)
12. **Talu (Palate)** – Shlakshna, yuktopashaya, ushmopapanna, rakta (smooth, of appropriate nutrition, with hotness and of red colour)
13. **Swara (Voice)** – Mahan, adina, snigdha, anumadi, gabhirasamuttha, dhira (of loud tone, not weak, smooth, of appropriate pronunciation, coming out from depth and stable)
14. **Oshtha (Lips)** – Natisthula, natikrisha, bistaropapanna, ashyapracchadana, rakta (Neither too big nor too thin, spreaded, covers the mouth and of red colour)
15. **Hanu (Jaw)** – Mahat (sufficiently big in size)
16. **Griva (Neck)** – Vritta, natimahati (Round in shape and not too big / long)
17. **Urah (Chest)** – Vyudha, upachita (Broad and well nourished)
18. **Jatru and Prishthavangsha (Clavicle and backbone)** – Gudha (well covered by the muscles)
19. **Stana (Nipples)** – Biprakrishtantara (having sufficient distance)
20. **Parshwa (Flanks)** – Asangpatini, sthira (fleshy and well nourished , strong and stable)
21. **Bahu, Sakthi, anguli (Arms, legs and fingers)** – Britta , paripurnayata (Round shaped and of appropriate measurement)
22. **Panipada (Toes)** – Mahat, upachita (Big and well nutriated)
23. **Karaja (Nails)** – Sthira , britta, snigdha, tamra, tunga, kurmakara (Strong, round, slimy, of copper colour and concave like tortoise back)
24. **Nabhi (Umbilicus)** – Pradakshinavarta, sotsanga (having folded towards right and elevated at the periphery)
25. **Urah (Sternal region)** – Tribhagahina (without having three divisions)
26. **Kati (Lumber region)** – Sama , samupachitamamsa (Proportionate and well nutriated)
27. **Sphik (Buttack)** – britta, sthira, upachitamamsa, natyunnata , natyabanata (Round , stable, well nutriated , neither too extruded nor too intruded)
28. **Uru (Thigh)** – Anupurva, vritta, upachayayukta (With gradual sliminess towards downwards, round, well nutriated)
29. **Jangha (Forelegs)** – Natyupachita, natyapachita, enipada pragudhasira-asthi-sandhi (Neither too big nor too small and like the legs of deer – well organized blood vessels, bones, joints etc.)
30. **Gulpha (Ankles)** – Natyupachita, natyapachita (Neither too big nor too thin)
31. **Pada (Feet)** – Purbopadishta gunayukta, kurmakara (Having all the previously mentioned qualities and convex like tortoise)

32. **Prakrita** vata -mutra-purisha, swaprajagarana-ayasha-smita -rudita-stanagrahana (Expulsion of stool, urine, flatus etc. normally and normal sleep, movements, cry, taking milk etc.)

DISCUSSION –

The result and observations of the study can be discussed as follows –

1. Charaka considered study and assessment of all the parts of the body of a child to understand the state of structural, developmental and nutritional status of each and every part. An individual starts growing gradually from the time of conception depending upon a number of factors including the physical and mental state, food and behaviour practised by the mother specially. After birth the individual grows gradually depending upon the food that determines the nutritional status leading to health and longevity.
2. For assessment of the development and nutrition of an individual as a whole the structure, shape, size, length, circumference , homologousness etc. of each part of the body is to be assessed. Each and every body part has got normal shape , size and measurement that can be assessed by inspection and measuring with some parameters.
3. Nutrition is the prime factor to make an individual active, good looking and resistant to external harmful agents. Starting life with good nutrition indicates a good future . Hence Charaka , directly or indirectly in all references gives importance on nutritional assessment of the baby which can be considered appropriate .
4. Good , bright skin , long ,strong and straight bone , formed with appropriate muscle bulk , optimum tone , appropriate softness /firmness / hardness etc. are indicative of appropriate nutrition, growth and development which is self supportive and well justified .
5. Elimination of the excreta like , stool , urine , flatus etc. indicate the appropriate functioning of the systems and patency of the natural orifices which can be considered as the most important contributing factors for longevity . Hence, considering these points as important to observe by Charaka reflects the scientific thinking .
6. Cry, laugh, changing of position, making sounds by mouth are indications of well functioning mind. A body with undernutrition, overnutrition, improper, non homologous growth can never be expected to be the seat of a healthy mind. Hence sincere observation of these behaviours of a child to acquire knowledge about longevity can be considered as justified .

SUMMARY –

As summary of the study the following points are choosed –

1. Charaka was a scholar of health science of ancient India with extensive knowledge on research and observation ability on wide range of fields .
2. He, not only studied and researched on the curative but also preventive aspects with top priority .
3. His study also covered the fields like , physiology of birth , longevity , causes of giving birth to good progeny etc.
4. The study and observations of Charaka in relation to assessment of the health status of a newborn child to estimate the approximate longevity is attractive , interesting and justified .
5. Further extensive study on the advice of Charaka in relation to the topic may explore many newer informations for the benefit of the human society .
6. The criteria mentioned by Charaka in the relation can also be considered to utilise for examination of patient which is related with the field of “Roga Nidana” also .

CONCLUSION –

To conclude the following statement can be considered as a message –

Charaka was an eminent scholar of ancient health science who contributed a lot to the society . Each and every opinion on different topic has scope of further study and research . The present one is also a potent one with immense scope of research . It is hoped that , the new generation will work on the topic and contribute invaluable contribution for the welfare of the society .

REFERENCE –

All the references are taken from the book , chapter and sloka mentioned below -

Dwivedi Laxmidhar , Maharshi Agniveshapranita Charaka Samhita, Part II , Edition 4 , 2017 , Sharirasthana , Chapter 8 , Sloka 51)
