



## Life Profile

## Panchkarma Mahaguru - Vd. P. T. Joshi

Amit Nakanekar<sup>a, \*</sup>, Chinmayee Pravin Joshi<sup>b</sup><sup>a</sup> Kayachikitsa, Government Ayurved College, Nagpur, Maharashtra, India<sup>b</sup> K.C.Ajmera Ayurved College, Dhule, Maharashtra, India

Veteran practitioner *Vaidya* Prabhakar Tanaji Joshi, popularly known as 'Nana Joshi' amongst the Ayurvedic fraternity was involved in a lifelong mission of propagating, practicing, teaching, and popularizing *Panchkarma*. The uniqueness of his *Panchkarma* practice laid in his ease, affordability, and patient-friendly approach. He has bagged the credibility of having trained over 10,000 students of Ayurveda and other systems of medicine. Many of them are famous *Panchkarma* practitioners in the present day. His sincerity, dedication, and perseverance have made him an absolute authority in *Panchkarma* practice.

## 1. Early life

'Pancha' means five and 'Karma or Kriya' means procedures/doing. Interestingly, the number '5' was associated with *Vaidya*

Joshi since birth. He was born on the 5<sup>th</sup> of January 1936 in a poor family and was the eldest son of Tanaji Dagdu Joshi and Kamalabai. They were residents of a small village in Maharashtra named, Methi Vikharan (Shindkheda taluka, Dhule). Amidst the beauty of the village, Prabhakar grew as an ordinary boy with extraordinary skills of farming. His approach, that developed in his early years, was to implement affordable and easily available treatments at rural level, even in the absence of basic facilities like electricity and quick transportation. The rural background and early grooming with traditional Indian culture helped him to develop this approach. While growing up in the village, his inspiration laid in the ecstatic beauty around him, the plants, the cattle, the trees, and the aroma of the freshly plowed soil! He believed that healthy villages form the backbone of a healthy India; hence, Nanaji's focus was rendering Ayurveda services in villages.

## 2. Education

Prabhakarji completed his primary education in a local school and his matriculation from J. R. City High School Dhule. He further pursued his education in Sanskrit and *Vedashastra* from Sarasvati Paathashala, Dhule. This knowledge of Sanskrit and *Vedas* helped him in strengthening his core fundamentals in Ayurveda.

After gaining an adequate amount of knowledge in the different *Darshan Shastras*, Prabhakarji focused on his career and completed his D.S.A.C. (Ayurveda Pravin), from Ayurved Seva Sangha Ayurveda College, Nashik, Maharashtra. His financial difficulties never suppressed his quench to pursue education. He supported himself financially by working as an assistant at a skin specialist.

## 3. Family

Prabhakarji married Shobha, daughter of Dattatray and Durgabai Pandit, in 1962. The couple was blessed with two sons and a daughter named Manjusha. His sons, Pravin and Chandrashekhar, are both well-known Ayurveda practitioners along with their wives Kirti and Sampada, respectively.

\* Corresponding author.

E-mail: [amitnakanekar@gmail.com](mailto:amitnakanekar@gmail.com)

Peer review under responsibility of Transdisciplinary University, Bangalore.

#### 4. Professional service

In 1969, he joined as a Medical Officer in Dhule Municipality and served sincerely and honestly there until his retirement at 58.

Nanaji's research work on tuberculosis is very well-renowned [3]. He received a national-level prestigious award named in the memory of Vd Appa Shastri Sathe for the same. He treated many critical tuberculosis patients with *Vasa Ghrita* and *Vamana* along with *Pippali Rasayana*, at Dhule civil hospital in 1980. Multi-Drug-resistant Tuberculosis (MDR-TB) was a newly emerging challenge in those times. Initially, he treated 15 cases of MDR-TB with classical *Vamanaa* procedure. He used 50 ml *Vasa Ghrita* for *Snehpana* for 5–7 days and later *Vamanaa* was given with *Madanphala* powder. Post this, *Vardhaman Pippali Rasayan* was used. These patients later responded to conventional treatments. Since then, many students approached him to learn about Ayurveda.

After successful treatment of these patients, many such patients were referred for MDR-TB and some of them were treated with Ayurveda treatment alone. Notably, his clinical judgment about the use of appropriate *Vamana* was exceptional and very few could achieve such perfections.

With a belief that good, affordable, and effective medicines are the most important tools for an Ayurvedic physician, he started *Dhanwantari Ayurveda Pharmacy* in Dhule. Through this pharmacy, he distributed free medicines to patients in his vicinity for many years. Since there was a very limited access to medicals in the area, this pharmacy was a boon. He used different combinations instead of some classic medicines to make them affordable with desirable efficacy. To name a few, he used *Shunti* along with sugar as a substitute of *Sutshekhar*; considering *Pittaghna* nature of both, *Gairik* and *Amalaki*, instead of *Kamdudha Ras*, etc. Some of the patent proprietary medicines from his pharmacy include '*Kadonil*' for fever and '*Pachak vati*' for better digestion. These medications are quite popular and are prescribed by many practitioners to this day.

Nanaji's belief in Ayurveda was so deep that, he understood the diverse potentials of *Panchkarma* in managing various chronic as well as acute diseases. His belief encouraged him to manage many emergencies through Ayurveda and further made him to pursue his post-graduation from Pune University in 1988. He worked on 'Role of *Panchkarma* in acute stages of diseases' for his dissertation under the guidance of Vd S. D. Jalukar.

Due to his continuous and dedicated contributions, a well-equipped Inpatient Department (IPD) of *Panchkarma* was established in Dhule. Nanaji always said that "In a municipal corporation hospital, this IPD was one of its kind in the country where many Ayurvedic students can learn the art of *Panchkarma* irrespective of their colleges".

Sane Guruji Ayurveda Hospital in Malegaon is an existing example of his contributions in this field. Many students from different parts of India visit these centers for various *Panchkarma* courses. He served the society by conducting more than 1000 free Ayurveda *Panchkarma* camps in various rural parts of Maharashtra. His works on *Basti* treatment stood reckoned for many Ayurveda scholars [1]. During the measles pandemic in India, he treated more than 300 cases.

He popularized medicinal uses of Indian *Acalypha* for *Vamana*; *Tridax Procumbence*, for wound healing, and *Solanum Xanthocarpum* for dental caries. He was a forerunner of using locally available *Abhav Pratinidhi* (the herbs that are used in the absence of any other herb) plants. Some of the examples are the use of *Carica Papaya* instead of *Plumbago Zeylanica*; *Moringa oleifera* (*Shigru*) instead of *Boerhavia Diffusa* and *Emblica Ribes*, etc.

He was a thorough practitioner as he was bestowed with the quality of precise understanding of *Dosha*, *Sthana*, and *Avastha* of the disease. Diurnal variations in *Doshic* status and their correlations with symptoms of patient was a fundamental concept to plan any *Panchkarma*. For example, an obese patient of '*Tamank Shwas*' observed by increasing breathlessness after meals, would be treated with '*Vamanaa*' as against a lean patient of '*Tamak Shwas*' observed by increasing breathlessness on empty stomach would be treated with '*Anuvasan*' just after meals.

He mastered the skill of identifying every deep and minute difference in the symptoms and *Panchkarma* procedures. Good communication with patients, generous teaching and treating techniques made Nanaji a unique Ayurveda practitioner. He was against currently marketed 'packages' system of Ayurveda practitioners where Ayurveda treatment is becoming expensive and losing its connect with society. Instead, he emphasized on simple, convenient to use, easily acceptable for community and cost-effective treatment so that it could be affordable to the poorest patient of the society. Simplicity is difficult, especially while achieving success and maintaining it for a longer duration. Simplicity in treatment, *Panchkarma*, teaching, and overall lifestyle with the highest level of devotion was the hallmark of his life.

#### 5. Ayurveda for people and people for Ayurveda

Nanaji was a firm believer of democracy; he used to say "if a *Vaidya* opens his science for people without thinking about own earnings, then people will themselves take care of all the needs of *Vaidyas*." He started a project on Ayurveda-based maternal care. This project included various home-based remedies for healthy mothers and children. It focused on the avoidance of complications during pregnancy and thereby avoiding the need for an emergency caesarian section. 'Guidance on season- dependent *Panchkarma*' was one of the most important projects conducted from the '*Arogya Rakshak*' project in rural areas. It was given to the rural population based on their *Prakriti*. It is remarkable to note that everything was performed with locally available food, diet, instruments, etc. Thus, his work truly expressed the importance of local traditions, herbs, diet, and its utilization for planning a treatment of patients. He always managed the cost of effective treatment to anyone; for example, he used to soak okra (Lady's finger) in water and give that water to poor patient who couldn't afford any oil thus, successfully achieving *Snehana* in many patients. He was very smart in treatment of de-addiction for chronic alcoholics. He used *Haritaki Mashi*, *Madanfal*, and *Ashwagandha* as a *Anupan* of alcohol in many patients. Similarly, he used outer coating of *Haritaki* for de-addiction of areca nut. He said that *Haritaki* is a *Karmapvaad* for *Kashay Rasa* and hence, can nullify the effects of areca nut without alternation of taste. He used to counsel such patients in a very friendly manner, while respecting their dignity.

#### 6. Lifestyle as an open Gurukul

Life of great people is an inspiration and their lifestyle forms important component of their success. Nanaji always woke up on *Brahma Muhurta* as per the changes in timings of sunrise. Following of '*Agnihotra*' on sunrise and sunset was a very important component of daily routine along with daily reading of *Ashtang Hrudayam*. He used to say that '*Vagbhat*' can guide a *Vaidya* in difficult cases if a *Vaidya* follows this on a daily basis. Simple living and high morals constituted most of the parts of his

life. He never expected great honors and money; he was always happy amongst his patients and students. He was a great admirer of those who opposed him for his daring during *Panchkarma*. He always said that because of opponents one can reach more near to *Shashtra*. Many of his opponents soon became his friends and yet, they used to have debates with him on a dinner table at Nanaji's house. Respecting the knowledge and accepting differences of opinion were the core component of his dealings with scholars of his generation.

## 7. A devoted shishya (student)

He was fascinated with various *Panchkarma* articles by Vd T. M. Gogte who trained him for *Panchkarma*. Vd T. M. Gogte believed that *Kriya* means '*Panchkarma Kriya*'.

After attending a few lectures of Vd T. M. Gogte, Nanaji requested him to teach *Panchkarma*. However, Vd Gogte sternly responded saying, his teachings were not for the people who understood *Panchkarma* only through books. This stern response and Vd Gogte's bold clinical expertise inspired Nanaji to become his disciple. Gogteji followed a famous Sanskrit quote "य क्रियावान् स पण्डितः" meaning - 'one, who keeps working, becomes a master'. *Guru* (Gogteji) and *shishya* (Nanaji) both lived with this sentence throughout the life.

Exposure to various patient cases in Dhule Municipality and training from his *Guru*, Vd T. M. Gogte, made him confident to a great extent, which led to the establishment of many training centers of *Panchkarma*. Initially, when *Panchkarma* was not so popular among the general public, Nanaji visited patient's places and convinced them for *Panchkarma* treatments. He always preached that a *Vaidya* should be thankful to his patients for allowing him to practice *Panchkarma* on their bodies. His *Guru* always referred to his working place as *Kashi* (pilgrimage) of *Panchkarma* and so was Nanaji's belief. This signifies his devotion and purity towards his practice.

## 8. Vd P.T. Joshi as a Panchkarma guru

Although Vd P.T. Joshi possessed a high intellect, his teachings were easily assimilated by common people and students. Many of his preaching's have paved way for simple home-based remedies. His easy prescriptions for weight gain involved '*Shira*' a local sweet dish made from ghee, sugar, and semolina and was used for treatment of malnutrition with minimal medicine. He frequently practiced effectively with minimum requirements. He believed every *Vaidya* should take *Basti* at least as a part of season related *Panchkarma*. He advocated *Basti* beautifully saying, "*Basti dyava, basti ghaya, basti jivacha visava*" which means '*Basti* should be given, *Basti* should be taken, *Basti* is relief from all the sufferings' [2].

He believed that *Panchkarma* exists throughout Ayurveda. He practiced *Panchkarma* procedures with great confidence and authority. *Panchkarma* is everywhere; may it be diseased or a healthy state, either in an acute or a chronic disease, in *Santarpanothha* or *Apatarpanothha*. He explained the relation between Ayurveda and *Panchkarma* using simple mathematics by quoting, "Ayurveda minus *Panchkarma* is equal to a big zero".

A good teacher and a physician are the ones who practice empathy and generosity. He never expected fees from patients or students. Instead, he funded the needs of the students who were admitted to him, to learn *Panchkarma*. He was a true '*Apta*' for his students and patients.

To his credit, he has published many articles in various national journals on various aspects of Ayurveda. He has edited 5 books on

*Panchkarma* written by his *Guru*, Vd T.M.Gogte, viz., '*Yala Mhantat Ayurveda*', '*Panchakarmachya Satyatha*', '*Astravistruti*', '*Panchakarma Vyapad –Avastha Vyavstha*', and '*Ayurvedaiyanchya Lalat Resha*'. All of them are now translated in Hindi as well as English and attract many Ayurveda aspirants and practitioners. These books are practice-oriented, easy to understand, and are written on the firm foundation of *Shashtra*.

His professional experience of practical *Panchkarma* and management of its *Vyapad* (~complications) are compiled and published in a book named, '*Kimaya Panchkarmachi*'. His disciples have started '*Prabha Ayurveda Foundation*' for the propagation of *Panchkarma* and conducted its various trainings throughout the country. Many of his students are now recognized as *Gurus* from Rashtriya Ayurveda Vidyapeeth, Delhi.

He always emphasized on his belief that a *Vaidya* should be a follower of Yoga. He was also a great follower of *Vipassana* (meditation) and learned it from *Vipassana Guru - Satyanarayanji Goenka guruji*. *Vipassana* is a unique technique of Yoga to calm the mind. It aids us to see the reality around us with the closest proximity and bestows higher intellect. He held more than 70 excellent *Vipassana* camps. At the age of 75, Nanaji with his friend Vd Anant Bakre had made a great contributions in exploring and popularizing the place where Lord *Dhanwantari* gave up his body (*Dehotsarga*) at a village named Veraval which is situated in Gujrat state of India [4].

## 9. Awards and endowments

Great persons like Nanaji, never worked for awards. Awards are designed to respect their work. He had all the good qualities to become a great Ayurveda physician, which are *Vidya* (knowledge of science), *Vitarka* (understanding), *Vidnyan* (application of science as per the situation), *Smruti* (keeping the basics in mind), and *Tatpar kriya* (precise action). With all these qualities, he was honored with many awards.

Vd P.T. Joshi was a punctual professional, academician, and a great inspirer to all the Ayurveda aspirants. His humbleness, modesty, and gentleness have been reflected in his teachings that are recognized at national and international levels. He played a pivotal role in several organizations like *Sawarkar Sahitya Sabha*, *Ayurveda Seva Sangh*, *Ayurveda Prasarak Mandal*, *Satkaryottejak Sabha*, *Ayurved Maha-sammelan*, *Dhanwantari Shikshan Samshodhan Sanstha*, and *Savitribai Phule Pune University* as a *maulik Siddhant* member.

He was also a recipient of more than 40 honors; *Bapurao Patwardhan Chikitsa Puraskar* from *Vaidya Khadiwale Shikshan Sanstha Pune*, *Lakshmi Shrinivas Pruaskar*, *Ayurveda Maharun Yatra puraskar*, *Gujrat*; *Sandu Ayurveda Gaurav Puraskar*, *Dhanwantari Puraskar Baidynath*, *Ayurveda Dharmabhushan Puraskar*, *Life time Achievement by Madhav Baug*, *Rashtriya shikshan mandal*, *Pune*, and *Mama Gokhle samiti Award* are a few amongst his many honors, worth mentioning.

Nanaji's affable nature, his sweet manner of speaking, empathy towards those around him and his principle of nurturing people over money and luxury made people long for his company. His patients, students, fellow doctors and relatives, all felt comfortable around him as they believed that Nana belonged to them. He earned a lot of people throughout his life and treasured his relations.

Vd P. T. Joshi will always be remembered by the virtue of his convincing skills, excellent *Panchkarma* skills and empathy for poor patients. He will be an ever-cherishing guru, a devoted *Shishya*, a humble *Vaidya* with an undoubted faith in Ayurveda. But above all these many qualities, he will always have reminisced as a great human being and a real-life example of 'रजस्तमोभ्यां निर्मुक्तः' i.e, a true authority figure, '*Apta*'.

**Source(s) of funding**

None.

**Conflict of interest**

None.

**Author contributions**

**Amit Nakanekar:** Conceptualisation, Information Gathering, Preparation of Original Draft, Final Approval of Drafts, Supervision;  
**Chinmayee Joshi:** Information Gathering, Preparation of Original Draft, Final Approval of Drafts.

**Acknowledgements**

The authors acknowledge contributions of Amrutha Kalyani and Punam Khobarkar in editing the manuscript.

**References**

- [1] Tonde Shivanand. *Buddhi Panchkarmanusarini*. In: Joshi PT, editor. *Visheshank. Ayurved Patrika*; Jan 2009.
- [2] Joshi PT. Basti. *Ayurved Patrika*; Oct 1992.
- [3] Joshi PT. Proceeding of all India ayurvedic symposium on tuberculosis conducted at Ayurved Seva Sangh Nashik in 1986. In: Vaman in *Yakshma. Ayurved Patrika*; April 1978.
- [4] Joshi PT. Dhanwantari. *Ayurved Patrika*; July 2009.