



# A CONCEPTUAL REVIEW ON BHAVAMISROKTA GHRITA VARGA

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## ABSTRACT:

Ayurveda is the science of life. The main aims of Ayurveda are the maintenance of health of a healthy individual and to cure the disease. In order to lead a healthy and happy life, one need to take balanced diet regularly. *Ghrita* is one among such *Nityasevaneeya dravya* which nourishes *Saptha dhatus and Ojas*. The four *Sneha dravyas* mentioned in classics are *Ghrita, Taila, Vasa and Majja* among which, *Ghrita* is considered as *Shreshta* because of its property of *Samskara Anuvartana* (when processed with other substances, it acquires the qualities of processed substance). Properties and different varieties of *Ghrita* has been mentioned by different *Nighantukaras* under *Aharopayogi and Oushadhopyogi dravya varga*. Here an attempt is made to analyze *Ghrita varga* mentioned in Bhavaprakasha Nighantu.

**KEYWORDS:** *Ghrita*, Bhavamisra, Ayurveda, *Ghrita Varga*

## INTRODUCTION:

*Ahara, Nidra and Brahmacharya* are the sub triads of life. If proper balanced diet is taken, it will make the person disease free by making the body and mind healthy. The food items which are to be taken regularly (*Nitya Sevaneeya Dravyas*), rules for taking food, time for taking food, incompatible foods (*Virudha Aharas*) etc are explained in detail in Ayurveda classics owing to the significance of *Ahara*. *Ghrita* is considered as one among *Nityasevaneeya Dravya* which is very beneficial in *Dhi, Dhriti and Smriti*. Human being is having *Aajanma satmyata* to *Ghrita* as compared with other *Sneha dravyas*.

In Charaka samhita Sutrasthana, Acharya have explained regarding *Sneha dravyas*. The *Ghrita* is mentioned as one among the *Jangama Sneathayah* and is considered as best among the 4 types of *Sneha dravyas*. In general, *Ghrita* balances *Pitta* and *Vata dosha*. It is *hitakara* to *Rasa Dhatu, Sukra Dhatu* and *Ojas*. It has *Nirvapana* (ability to reduce burning sensation) and *Mrudukara* (ability to bring Softness) property. It gives clarity to *Swara* and *Varna*. *Ghrita* is *shreshta dravya* for *Pittahara*, hence is beneficial in *Sharad Rutu*. The *Ghrita* should be taken with the *Anupana* of *Ushnambu* (hot water). Acharya Charaka have mentioned indications for the Ghee administrations such as *Vata pitta prakriti* individuals, persons suffering from *Vata pitta vikaras*, *Chakshu kama* (those who desires for

Good eye sight), *Kshata*(injured), *Kshina*(debilitated), *Vruddha* (old aged), *Bala*(children) and *Abala* (weak), *Prakarsha Ayush kama*( one who desires for Long life), *Arthi* of *Bala*, *Varna*, *Swara*, *Pushti*, *Praja* and *Sukumarya*(One who desires of Strength, Good complexion, Voice, Nourishment, Progeny and Delicacy).On the contrary, *Kevala Sarpi praoga* ( administration of Unprocessed Ghee) is contraindicated in *Pitta* associated with *Ama* conditions since it causes the aggravation of *Pitta dosha* and results in *Smruti nasha*.<sup>1</sup>

Under *Gorasa Varga*, Acharya have mentioned about benefits of *Sarpi* such as,it promotes *Smriti*, *Buddhi*, *Agni* (digestive power), *Shukra*( semen), *Ojas*, *Kapha* and *Meda*( fat). It alleviates *Vata*, *Pitta*, *Visha*(toxic conditions), *Unmada*, *Shosha*(emaciation) and *Alakshmi*(auspicious). It is the best in *Sarva Snehas* and *Sita virya* and *Madhura rasa* and *Madhura vipaka*.In addition to that Acharya Charaka also explains the benefits of *Purana ghrita* in *Mada*( intoxication), *Apasmara*, *Murccha*, *Shosha*, *Unmada*, *Gara visha*, *Jwara*, *Soola* in *Yoni*,*Karna* and *Shira*.*Purana ghrita* is 10 years old Ghee. Here,only *Purana Goghrita* is explained since no other *Ghrita* variety is commonly used by people. <sup>2</sup>

The properties of different varieties of *Ghrita* is also explained by Acharya Sushruta. *Ghrita* is mainly indicated in conditions like *Udavarta*, *Unmada*, *Apasmara*, *Soola*, *Jwara*, *Anaha* and in Aggravated *Vatapitta dosha*.The *Purana ghrita* is indicated in *Timira*, *Swasa*, *Pinasa*, *Jwara*, *Kasa*, *Murccha*, *Kushta*, *Visha*, *Unmada*, *Apasmara* etc.The *Kumbha Sarpi* is a type of *Sarpi* exclusively told by Acharya (Ghee kept for one hundred and eleven years) which is useful as *Rakshoghna*. If further preserved, it is known as *Maha ghrita* which is highly beneficial in *Timira*.<sup>3</sup>

In *Dravadravya Vijnaniya Adhyaya* of Ashtanga Hridaya, the general qualities and benefits of *Ghrita* along with explanation regarding *Purana Ghrita* and its effects are told.<sup>4</sup>

Apart from the *Brihatrayees*, the properties and different varieties of *Ghrita* has been mentioned by different Nighantukaras under *Aharopayogi* and *Oushadhopyogi dravya varga*. Each Nighantukaras have explained *Ghrita* in separate chapters which denotes the Significance of *Ghrita*. Here, the *Ghrita Varga* explained in *Bhavaprakasha Nighantu* by Bhavamishra is analysed.

## OBJECTIVE:

An extensive research work was carried out from all the available sources to collect the information regarding *Ghrita varga* in *Bhavaprakasha Nighantu*.

## METHODOLOGY:

Acharya Bhavamishra have explained 8 types of *Ghrita* based on the sources of milk, with their specific properties and benefits in the *Bhavaprakasha Nighantu* under the chapter *Aharopayogi dravyavargas*. Among all *Ghritas*, *Goghrita* is considered as *shreshta*.

“*Pakwanavaneetham*” is considered to be *Ghrita*, it can be obtained either by *Ksheera* or *Dadhi*. *Aajya*, *Havi*, *Sarpi* are the synonyms mentioned in *Bhavaprakasha Nighantu* for *Ghrita*.<sup>5</sup>

Table 1: Types of *Ghrta* with its characteristics

<i>Prakara</i>	<i>Rasa</i>	<i>Guna</i>	<i>Virya</i>	<i>Vipaka</i>	<i>Doshaghata</i>	<i>Rogaghata</i>
<i>Gavyaghrita</i> (Ghee from Cow's milk)	<i>Madhura</i>	<i>Guru</i>	<i>Sita</i>	<i>Madhura</i>	<i>Vatakaphahara</i>	<i>Netraroga</i>
<i>Mahishaghrita</i> (Ghee from Buffalo's milk)	<i>Madhura</i>	<i>Guru</i>	<i>Sita</i>	<i>Madhura</i>	<i>Vatapittahara</i>	<i>Raktavikara</i>
<i>Ajaghrita</i> (Ghee from Goat's milk)				<i>Katu</i>	<i>Tridoshahara</i>	<i>Kasa,</i> <i>Shwasa,</i> <i>Kshaya</i>
<i>Oushtraghrita</i> (Ghee from Camel's milk)	<i>Madhura</i>			<i>Katu</i>	<i>Vatakaphahara</i>	<i>Shosha, Krimi,</i> <i>Visha</i>
<i>Aavikaghrita</i> (Ghee from Sheep's milk)		<i>Laghu</i>	<i>Sita</i>		<i>Vatahara</i>	<i>Netraroga,</i> <i>Ashmari</i>
<i>Nareeghrta</i> (Ghee from Women's milk)					<i>Tridoshahara</i>	<i>Yonivikaras,</i> <i>Raktapitta</i>
<i>Badavaghrita</i> (Ghee from Mare's milk)						<i>Daha, Visha,</i> <i>Netrarogas</i>
<i>Dugdhanisruta ghrta</i> (Ghee from milk)	<i>Madhura</i>	<i>Guru,</i> <i>Snigdha</i>	<i>Sita</i>		<i>Vatapittahara</i>	<i>Netraroga,</i> <i>Daha, Mada,</i> <i>Murccha,</i> <i>Bhrama</i>
<i>Hastinighrita</i> (Ghee from Elephant's milk)						<i>Jwara,</i> <i>Netrarogas</i>

Table 2: Types of *Ghrita* with its *Karma*

<i>Karma</i>	<i>Gavya ghrita</i>	<i>Mahisha ghrita</i>	<i>Aja Ghrita</i>	<i>Oushtra ghrita</i>	<i>Aavika ghrita</i>	<i>Naree ghrita</i>	<i>Badava ghrita</i>	<i>Dugdhanisrita ghrita</i>	<i>Hastini ghrita</i>
<i>Chakshushya</i>	+		+		+	+			+
<i>Vrishya</i>	+	+							+
<i>Agnikrut</i>	+		+	+	+				+
<i>Brahmana</i>									+
<i>Medhya</i>	+								
<i>Lavanyakanthi kara</i>	+								
<i>Ojastejovridhi kara</i>	+								
<i>Alakshmipapar akshoghna</i>	+								
<i>Vayasthapana</i>	+								
<i>Balya</i>	+		+						
<i>Ayushya</i>	+								
<i>Rasayana</i>	+								
<i>Ruchya</i>	+								+
<i>Tarpana</i>							+		
<i>Grahi</i>								+	

Table 3: General characteristics of *Ghrita*

<i>Guna</i>	<i>Guru</i> <i>Abhishyandi</i> <i>Snigdha</i>
<i>Virya</i>	<i>Sita</i>
<i>Doshagnata</i>	<i>Vatapittahara</i>
<i>Karmas</i>	<i>Rasayana</i> <i>Chakshushya</i> <i>Agnidipana</i> <i>Kanthyojostejolavanyavridhikara</i>

	<i>Swarya</i> <i>Smritikara</i> <i>Medhya</i> <i>Ayushya</i> <i>Balya</i> <i>Vrishya</i>
<b><i>Rogagnata</i></b>	<i>Udavarta</i> <i>Jwara</i> <i>Unmada</i> <i>Soola</i> <i>Anaha</i> <i>Vrana</i> <i>Kshaya</i> <i>Visarpa</i> <i>Raktavikaras</i>

Apart from the types of *Ghrita* according to the source of Milk, *Ghrita* is also classified into *Purana ghrita* and *Naveena ghrita*. The *Ghrita* which has been preserved for more than one year is called as *Purana ghrita* and is *Tridoshaghna*. *Puranaghrita* is indicated in *Murccha*, *Kushta*, *Visha*, *Unmada*, *Apasmara* and *Timira*. *Naveenaghrita* is used in *Bhojana* because of its *Tarpana* action.<sup>6</sup>

### **Preparation method of Cow Ghee:**

Cow's milk is boiled and allowed to cool, a spoonful of curd is added to it and stirred gently. This mix is stored overnight in a warm place. Once the curd is set, place it in a cool place before the churning. The curd thus formed is churned using a wooden churner. By churning, the curd will be separated into butter and buttermilk. The butter collected at the bottom of vessel is taken and heated in a pan over medium flame. Butter should be boiled till entire water content evaporates. A visible layer of solids will be remained at the bottom of the pan. This Ghee is then filtered and stored in an airtight container.<sup>7</sup>

The traditional method of preparation of Ghee is, first the milk should be boiled and then cooled, later it is set to curdle and then churned to extract butter. That butter is heated to get Ghee.<sup>7</sup>

### **Physico-chemical properties of Ghee:**

Milk fat is one of the complex forms of lipids existing in nature. Ghee is processed milk fat and basically known as clarified butter fat or anhydrous milk fat. It is mainly composed of glycerides (usually mixed), and other minor constituents found, are free fatty acids, phospholipids, sterols, sterol esters, fat-soluble vitamins, carbonyls, hydrocarbons, carotenoids (only in milk fat derived from cow). It also contains small amounts of charred casein and traces of calcium, phosphorus, iron.<sup>8</sup>

Ghee can be served to the people of all age groups for their nourishment. It is a good carrier of fat-soluble vitamins (A, D, E and K) along with essential fatty acids (Linolenic and Arachidonic acid) which are responsible for wellbeing. The only concern of ghee is of its cholesterol level (0.2–0.4%) which makes appreciable contribution to cholesterol intake when consumed at high level.<sup>8</sup>

### **The Shelf life of Ghee:**

The keeping quality of ghee is governed by several factors i.e, ripening of cream, method of manufacture, clarification temperature and the permeability of the packaging material to air and moisture (Singh and Ram, 1978). The shelf life of ghee may be of 06-08 months, even at ambient temperatures. Although, some studies reported it up to two years (Bekele and Kassaye, 1987). However, such variations in shelf life could be due to regional preferences in taste and many other factors.<sup>8</sup>

Buffalo ghee has been reported to be more resistant to lipolysis than cow ghee (van den Berg, 1988), mainly because of low unsaturated fats. Cow ghee is apparently more shelf stable than buffalo ghee due to the higher content of natural antioxidants in the former (van den Berg, 1988). Generally, ghee derived from fresh cream/butter has a longer shelf life than ripened cream/butter ghee (Ganguli and Jain, 1972; Singh et al,1979).<sup>8</sup>

The fat in ghee crystallizes with the formation of solid, semisolid and liquid layers. Ghee stored at 20°C or below has been reported to solidify uniformly with fine crystals. However, the ghee stored above 20°C and below 30°C solidifies with a loose structure. It has been suggested that ghee should be stored at temperatures below 20°C to avoid layer formation (Ganguli and Jain, 1972).<sup>8</sup>

### **DISCUSSION:**

Bhavamisra explained eight different sources of *Ghrita* with its properties in the Bhavaprakasha Nighantu, among which most commonly available one are *Gavyaghrita*, *Mahishaghrita*, *Ajaghrita*. Among all, the most abundantly available and the best one is Cow's ghee. Proper digestion, absorption and delivery to a target organ system are crucial in obtaining the maximum benefit from any therapeutic formulation; the lipophilic action of Ghee facilitates transportation to a target organ and final delivery inside the cell since the cell membrane also contains lipid. *Goghrita* itself being used as a brain tonic to improve memory. It is said to promote all three aspects of mental functioning-learning, memory and recall.

Ghee is made from butter, but the milk solids and impurities have been removed, so most people who are lactose or casein intolerant have no issue with ghee. It is rich in the oil soluble vitamins A and E and also rich in vitamin K2 and CLA (Conjugated Linoleic Acid); an antioxidant with anti-viral and anti-cancer properties.<sup>4</sup> Ghee is nutritionally superior to other oils/fats because of its medium chain fatty acids (MCFAs) content, which are absorbed directly by the liver and burned to provide energy. Therefore, for athletes it can be of consistent energy source. Also, the energy from medium chain fatty acids can be used to burn other fats in the system and to lose weight (St-Onge & Jones, 2008; Nokasa et al, 2009), therefore the anti-obesity properties of these MCFAs are well recognized. Ghee (unlike other oils) exclusively contain butyric acid; a short chain fatty acid (Kumar et al, 2015), which contributes to its distinct flavor and easy digestion. Beneficial intestinal bacteria convert fiber into butyric acid and then use that for energy and intestinal wall support (Maurice Bugaut, 1987). Daily consumption

of ghee in an adequate amount, imparts various health benefits such as binds toxins, enhances complexion and glow of the face and body, a great rejuvenator for the eyes, increases physical and mental stamina etc. in addition to providing sustaining energy.<sup>7</sup>

## CONCLUSION:

Ayurveda as well as recent modern research have given much importance to preventive measures. *Ghrita Varga* have proven their role in this area. Classical literature of Ayurveda extensively explains significance, benefits of *Ghrita Varga* and their impact on health. Every *Nighantu* in Ayurveda have dedicated complete chapter on explaining about *Ghrita Vargas*. Ghee is an essential part of daily diet in order to maintain the health of the body as well as mind and for leading a longer life. Even though different varieties of Ghee with its benefits have been explained, in accordance with the availability and considering the disease condition respective *Ghrita* has to be utilized. So further scope of the study is to evaluate property of each type of *Ghrita* by animal experimentation and clinical trials.

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