



A REVIEW ON EXPLORING VARIVARGA IN *BHAVAPRAKASHA NIGHANTU*

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ABSTRACT :

Water, a vital element in both life and Ayurveda, plays a crucial role in maintaining health and balancing the body's *doshas*. This review focuses on the Ayurvedic classification of water as detailed in *Bhavaprakasha Nighantu* specifically the *Varivarga*, which categorizes water into two primary types: *Divya Jalam* and *Bhauma Jalam*. Each type of water, possesses unique properties that influence its therapeutic uses. The review highlights the importance of water quality, its seasonal variations, and the ideal methods for its collection and purification. Additionally, *Bhavaprakasha Nighantu* provide detailed guidelines on the indications and contraindications for water consumption to maintain health and balance the *doshas*. The review investigates the integral role of water in Ayurvedic practices, and also offers holistic approach to health and wellness.

Key words: Bhavaprakasha Nighantu, Varivarga, Jala, Health, Wellness

Introduction

Bhavaprakasha Nighantu, written by *Bhavamisra* between the 15th and 17th centuries, is a key Ayurvedic text placed among the *Laghutrayi*. The book is divided into three sections: *Purvakhanda*, *Madhyama Khanda*, and *Uttara Khanda*, and includes a total of 24 *Vargas*, with the 25th section being *misraka varga*. Among these, the 12th *Varga* is the *Vaarivarga*, which focuses on the medicinal uses and classifications of water, highlighting its vital role in Ayurvedic practices.¹ The practices of eating food (*Annapanavidhi*) and drinking water (*Jalapanaavidhi*) are detailed as important guidelines for health. water is essential for life. It makes up a large portion of our bodies and plays a vital role in various bodily functions such as regulating temperature, digestion, nutrient transport, and waste removal. It holds great importance in the Vedic texts, particularly in the *Rigveda*, *Yajurveda*, and *Atharvaveda*, where it is regarded as essential for life and purification. The *Upanishads* also emphasize water's significance, with the *Taittiriya Upanishad* describing it as "food," highlighting its crucial role in sustaining and nourishing both the body and soul. *Jala* is revered as the very essence of life, "*paneeyam praninam prana viswameva cha thanmayam*" means water is the life for living beings and the living being is made up of water.²

Jalam in Other Samhithas and Nighantus

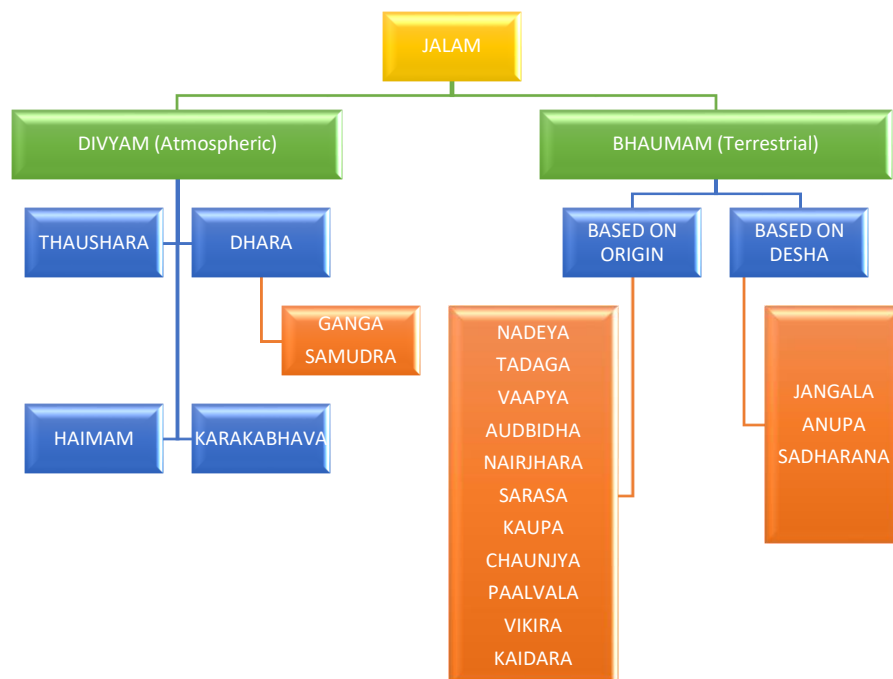
Charaka Samhita	Described in <i>Charaka samhita</i> under <i>Jal Varga</i> in Ch.Su. 27/116-216 <i>Annapanavidhi adhyaya</i> ²
Susruta Samhita	Described in <i>Susruta samhita Sutra</i> 45 <i>Drava Dravya Vidhi Adhyaya</i> ³
Ashtanga samgraha	Described in <i>Astanga Samgraha Sutra Sthana</i> , <i>Dravadrava Vijnaniya Adhyaya</i> ⁴
Ashtanga hrudaya	<i>Astanga Hridaya Sutra Sthana Drava Dravya Vijnaniya Adhyaya</i> . ⁵
Bhavaprakasha Nighantu	Deascribed in <i>Vaarivarga</i> ¹
Dhanwatari nighntu	Descrtbed in <i>Suvarnadi varga</i> ⁶
Raja Nighantu	Described in <i>Paniyadi varga</i> ⁷

Materials and methods

VAARI VARGA ACCORDING TO BHAVAPRAKASHA NIGHANTU¹

The *Bhavaprakasha Nighantu* provides an insightful guide to the various types of water, highlighting their distinct properties, healing uses, and the correct practices for water intake (*Jala Grahana*) and drinking procedures (*Panavidhi*).

Types of water mentioned in *Bhavaprakasha Nighant*



Divya jala (Atmospheric)

It is further classified as;

Dhara jala (torrential rain water), *Karakabhava Jalam* (Water by Melting of Hailstones), *Thaushara Jalam* (Water from Moist Vapour/Dew), and *Haima Jalam* (Water from Snowfall)

Types of water	Description	Properties	Uses & Effects
<i>Dhara jala</i> (torrential rain water),	Dharajala refers to rain water collecte through a clean cloth,either into a rock depression that has been washed properly or into a broad vessel made of materials such as gold,silver,copper,rock,c rystal,glass or clay	<i>Rasa:anirdesiyarasa</i> <i>Guna:laghu,</i> <i>Karma: Tridoshagna</i> <i>Sowmyam,Rasayanam,Balyam,Tarpana</i> <i>,Hrudyam,,JeevanamPpachana,</i> <i>Rogagnata:Murcha,Tantra,Daha,Srama, Klama,Trishna</i>	Collected during <i>pravrt ritu</i> is considered as <i>patya</i> .it is again classified as <i>Ganga jala</i> and <i>Samudra jala</i>
• <i>Gang a</i>	Diggajas (elephants guarding the eight quarters) bring water from ākāśa gāṅga (celestial river), fill it into the clouds, which in turn release it down in the form of rain; clouds	<i>Tridoshagna</i>	This water should be collected into a vessel of gold, silver, or mud. Boiled rice mixed with this water should remain not greatly soaked (slimy) and retain its normal colour (pure white).

	usually pour out rain during the āśvayuja month.		
• <i>Samudra</i>	Water with opposite qualities of ganga jala is called Samudra.	<i>Rasa: Saksharalavana, Shukradrishtibalapaham, Visram, Tridoshakara, Teekshna</i>	Not good for any therapeutic measures. During <i>Aswayuja</i> month it has properties like <i>ganga jala</i>
<i>Karakabhava Jalam</i> (Water by Melting of Hailstones)	The combination of ap, vayu (air), and agni (fire) in the atmosphere causes water to solidify and fall as hailstones, which is known as karaka. These hailstones possess properties similar to nectar.	<i>Ruksha, Sthira, Guru, Visada, Sita, Pitahara, Kapha Vatakara</i>	Known for possessing properties similar to nectar.
<i>Thaushara Jalam</i> (Water from Moist Vapour/Dew)	Tusara refers to the moist vapour that rises from rivers to the sea, created by the action of agni and ap. It is free from steam and is considered cold in nature.	<i>Sitala, Ruksha, Vatajanaka, Kinchit Pitakaraka</i>	Not good for animals but benefits plants. It can help treat conditions related to <i>Kapha, urustambha, kanta-agni roga, prameha, galaganda</i> .
<i>Haima Jalam</i> (Water from Snowfall)	Hima refers to snow, which forms when water solidifies and falls from the sky, especially in places like the Himalayas. The water from snow is called haima jala or himambu.	<i>Sitala, Pitanasaka, Guru, Vata Vardhana</i>	Some believe that <i>hima</i> is sea water vaporized by the fire in the water (<i>badavagni</i>), which then solidifies and is carried by the breeze over land. This type of <i>hima</i> water is <i>sita, rukshadaruna (kadina), sukshma</i> , and doesn't increase <i>vata, pitta</i> , or <i>kapha</i> .

During *varsha ritu divya jala* is poisonous due to hissing serpents moving in the sky except *aswayuja* month and *Anartava jala* (unseasonal rain water) increases *tridosha*

Bhaumajala (Terrestrial)

	Properties	Action
<i>Jangla jalam</i>	<i>Rasa: Lavanarasayukta</i> <i>Guna: Ruksha, Laghu</i>	<i>Agnivardhaka</i> Mitigates diseases of <i>Kapha</i> origin
<i>Anoopa jalam</i>	<i>Rasa: Madhura rasayukta</i> <i>Guna: Guru, Abhishyandi, Snigdha, Sita</i>	<i>Kaphakrit</i> <i>Agnidipaka, Triptikaraka, Rochaka</i> Causes many diseases
<i>Sadharana jalam</i>	<i>Rasa: Madhura</i> <i>Guna: Laghu,</i>	<i>Tridoshagna</i> <i>Dipana, Tarpana, Rochana, alleviates Trishna and Daha</i>

	<i>Rasa</i>	<i>Guna</i>	<i>Karma</i>
<i>Nadeya jala</i> (River water)	<i>Katu</i>	<i>Laghu</i> <i>Ruksha</i> <i>Visada</i>	<i>Kapha-Pittanut, Laghu, Dipana, Anabhishyandi</i> Based on speed of flow <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Seeghra gati</i> (swift-flowing rivers) : <i>Laghu</i> and is considered pure <i>Manda gati</i> (slow-flowing rivers): <i>Guru</i>. Based on origin <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rivers that originate from the Himavat mountains, which

			<p>pass through rocky regions, are <i>pathya</i>. Among these, the <i>Ganga</i>, <i>Śatadru</i> (<i>Satlej</i>), <i>Sarayu</i>, and <i>Yamunā</i> are known for their superior qualities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rivers originating from the <i>Sahya</i> mountains, such as <i>Venā</i> and <i>Godavari</i>, are often associated with conditions like <i>kusta</i> and other skin diseases, as well as a slight increase in <i>vāta</i> and <i>kapha</i> doshas.
<i>Audbhida jala</i> (water of springs)	<i>Madhura</i>	<i>Laghu</i>	<i>Pitanashaka, Avidahi, Athisithala, Triptikaraka, Balakaraka</i>
<i>Nairjhara jala</i> (Water of streams/ Water falls)	<i>Madhura</i>	<i>Laghu</i>	<i>Vipaka: Katu</i> <i>Vatakaraka, Ishat pittakaraka, Agnideepaka</i>
<i>Sarasa jala</i> (Water of natural lake)	<i>Madhura Kashaya</i>	<i>Laghu Ruksha</i>	<i>Balya, Rochaka, Malamutra Vibandhaka, Trishnaghna</i>
<i>Tadaga jala</i> (Water of ponds)	<i>Madhura, Kashaya</i>		<i>Vipaka: Katu</i> <i>Karma: Vatajanaka Malamutravibandhaka</i>
<i>Vaapyajala</i> (Artificial tank with steps)	<i>Madhura</i>	<i>Laghu</i>	<i>If alkaline in taste- pitakara and kaphavatahara</i> <i>, If it is Madhura-kaphakara, pitavatahara</i>
<i>Kaupajala</i> (Deep wellwater)	<i>Madhura</i>	<i>Laghu</i>	<i>Tridoshagha, if it is Kshara in taste it is Kaphavatahara and pitakara</i>
<i>Chaunjya jala</i> (Rain water pits in rocks)	<i>Madhura</i>	<i>Ruksha, Laghu, Vishada</i>	<i>Kaphapitahara, Agnikara, Rochaka, Pachaka</i>
<i>Paalvalajala</i> (Water of small ponds)	<i>Madhura</i>	<i>Guru</i>	<i>Tridoshakara, Abhishyandi</i>
<i>Vikirajala</i> (Water of burrows in moist sand)	<i>Kashaya</i>	<i>Laghu</i>	<i>Veerya: Sheetha</i> <i>Nirdosha, if it has Kashaya or Madhura rasa Pitahara, if it has Kshara rasa it is Pitakara</i>
<i>Kaidara jala</i> (water of cultivable fields)	<i>Madhura</i>	<i>Guru</i>	<i>Tridoshakara, Abhishyandi</i>

Vrishtijala (Rain water)

Rainwater collected on the same day after falling on the ground is harmful to health, but if it is left undisturbed for three days and becomes clear, it is as beneficial as nectar.

Ideal Water Sources for Different Seasons

<i>Hemantha</i> (Mid November to Mid January)	<i>Sarasa</i> (water of natural lake), <i>Tadaga</i> (water of ponds)
<i>Sisira</i> (Mid January to Mid March)	<i>Sarasa</i> (water of natural lake), <i>Tadaga</i> (water of ponds)

<i>Vasanta</i> (Mid March to Mid may)	<i>Kaupa</i> (Deep wellwater), <i>Vapya</i> (Artificial tank with steps), <i>Nairjhara</i> (Water of streams/ Water falls)
<i>Grishma</i> (Mid May to Mid July)	<i>Kaupa</i> (Deep wellwater), <i>Vapya</i> (Artificial tank with steps), <i>Nairjhara</i> (Water of streams/ Water falls)
<i>Varsha</i> (Mid August to Mid septemer)	<i>Anthariksha</i> , <i>Audbhida</i> (water of springs)
<i>Pravit</i> (Mid July to Mid August)	<i>Kaupa</i> (Deep wellwater)
<i>Sarad</i> (Mid September to Mid November)	<i>Nadeya</i> (River water), <i>Amsudaka</i>

In *Sarat Ritu* , all forms of water are deemed beneficial because of the rising of *Agastya*

Amsudaka

Water that is exposed to the sun's rays during the day and the moon's rays at night is known as *Amśudaka*.

Guna:Snigdha,Laghu,Sita

Karma: Tridoshagha, Anabhishtyandi, Nirdosha, similar to *Antarikshajala*, *Balyam*, *Rasayanam*, *Medhya*, *Amrithopamam*

Jalagrahanakala (Time for collection of water)

All types of water on Earth should be collected in the morning, as it is the coldest (*Sithatwa*) and purest (*Nirmalatwa*) at that time.

Panavidhi (Regimen of drinking water)

Drinking enough water is important for maintaining the balance of *the* body.The ancient Ayurvedic text *Bhavaprakasha Nighantu* mentions the importance of drinking water and the proper method of its consumption for optimal health.

Drinking too much water (*Athyambupana*) can hinder proper digestion, and not drinking water (*Nirambupana*) at all can have the same effect. Therefore, one should drink small amounts of water frequently (*Muhurmuhu*) to maintain the digestive fire.

Indication	Contraindication
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Murcha</i> • Aggravation of <i>pita</i> • <i>Visha</i> • <i>Madathyaya</i> • <i>Srama</i> • <i>Bhrama</i> • <i>Tamakaswasa</i> • <i>Vamana</i> • <i>Urdhwagata raktapita</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Sitha jalapana</i> • <i>Parswashoola</i> • <i>Pratisyaya</i> • <i>Vataroga</i> • <i>Galagraha</i> • <i>Adhmana</i> • <i>Stimitta koshta</i> • <i>Navajwara</i> • <i>Aruchi</i> • <i>Grahani</i> • <i>Gulma</i> • <i>Swasa</i> • <i>Vidhradi</i> • <i>Hikka</i>

Alpajalapana

Indication

Arochaka, *Pratisyaya*, *Mandagni*, *Swayathu*, *Kshaya*, *Mukhapraseka*, *Udararoga*, *Kshta*, *Netraroga*, *Jwara*, *Vrana*, *Madhumeha*

Jala pana avasyakata (Necessity of drinking water)

Water, the essence of life, flows through the very core of our existence, and the entire world is made up of it. Therefore proper intake of water is essential.

<i>Sudhajalaguna</i> (Pure potable water)	<i>Dusdusta jalaguna</i> (Bad impotable water)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Agandha</i> • <i>Avyaktarasa</i> • <i>Sita</i> • <i>Tarsha nasana</i>(relieves thirst quickly) • <i>Swacham</i> • <i>Laghu</i> • <i>Hridya</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Durgandha</i> • <i>Virasa</i> • <i>Pichila</i> • <i>Vivarna</i> • <i>Kalusha</i> • Having worms • <i>Sandra</i> • It causes: <i>Trishna, Adhmana, Chirajwara, Kasa,</i> <i>Agnimandhyaandu, Kandu</i>

Nirdosikarana (Purification Methods)

Ancient texts, including the *Bhavaprakasa Nighantu*, describe various methods for purifying water.

- Boil the water or expose it to the sun's rays.
- Immerse heated gold, silver, iron, stone balls, or even sand to purify it.

Improving Aroma:

- Add substances like *Karpura* (*Ciamomum camphora*), *Jati flowers*(*Jasminum grandiflorum*), *Punnaga* (*Calophyllum inophyllum*), or *Patāla* (*Stereospermum suaveolens*) to make the water smell sweet.

Removing Impurities:

- Filter the water through a clean, thick cloth to remove minute worms and other particles.

Storage & Enhancement:

- Store purified water in clean vessels made of gold, etc.
- Add sweet-smelling leaves, roots, lotus tuber, pearls, gold, and *gomedaka* to further clarify and purify the water

Jala paka kala (Time for digestion of water)

1. Normal water: Digests in 2 *yama* (6 hours).
2. Boiled and cooled water: Digests in 1 *yama* (3 hours).
3. Boiled and warm water: Digests in ½ *yama* (1.5 hours)

Results and Discussion

The *Varivarga* section of *Bhavaprakasha Nighantu* offers an intricate and holistic classification of water, highlighting its therapeutic relevance, seasonal suitability, and health implications in the Ayurvedic tradition. The text categorizes water into two main types: *Divya Jala* (atmospheric water) and *Bhauma Jala* (terrestrial water), each described with specific *Rasa* (taste), *Guna* (qualities), *Virya* (potency), and *Karma* (effect on doshas).

Divya Jala includes rainwater, hailstone water, dew, and snowmelt, with *Dhara Jala* (rainwater) being highly esteemed for its *Tridoshagna* (balancing tridosha) and rejuvenating properties especially when collected in clean vessels during specific seasons like *Aswayuja*. In contrast, *Samudra Jala* (sea water) is considered *tridosha* vitiation and unfit for consumption due to its salinity and sharpness.

Bhauma Jala, encompassing river, spring, well, pond, and artificial tank waters, is classified based on origin and flow. For example, river water from Himalayan sources is considered *pathya* (wholesome), while slow moving or stagnant waters (e.g., from ponds or marshes) are seen as *Kaphaa* aggravating and *Abhishyandi* (clogging).

The review further identifies ideal water sources for each season, such as well water and stream water in *Grishma Ritu*, and *Amsudaka* (sun and moon-exposed water) in *Sharad Ritu*. The text also introduces concepts like *Jalagrahana Kala* (ideal time for water collection), which emphasizes early morning

as the most suitable time due to water's purity and coolness.

Ayurveda outlines detailed practices for water purification, aligning closely with modern WHO guidelines. Methods include boiling, sun exposure, filtration through cloth, and storage in vessels made from metals like gold and silver which possess known antimicrobial properties. Herbs and flowers like *Karpura* and *Jati* are also used to enhance aroma and freshness.

The digestive timing of water (*Jala Paka Kala*) reinforces the Ayurvedic notion that warm or boiled water supports *Agni* (digestive fire) and is especially useful in conditions like *Mandagni*, *Ama*, and various *Kapha* related disorders.

Role of water in Ayurveda and Health

Water plays a central role in *Ayurveda*, not only as a substance essential for life but also as a therapeutic medium. The *Varivarga* provides a comprehensive understanding of the types of water and their effects on the body. Water, in *Ayurveda*, is closely linked to the balance of the *Tridoshas* (*Vata*, *Pitta*, and *Kapha*), and its quality directly influences health. Each type of water serves specific therapeutic purposes, based on its inherent properties, and it is used as part of a personalized health regimen.

For instance, *Divya Jalam* is recommended for its purifying and cooling properties, especially during specific seasons when its effects are most beneficial. On the other hand, *Bhauma Jalam* is categorized by its origin, and it is used based on its effects on the body's doshas. The purity and seasonal variations of water significantly influence its therapeutic efficacy.

Alignment with WHO Guidelines on Water Quality⁸

The *WHO* guidelines on water emphasize the importance of safe drinking water that is free from contaminants, as contaminated water can lead to numerous health issues. In this context, the Ayurvedic classification of water in the *Bhavapraksha Nighantu* aligns with these modern standards, particularly in terms of identifying clean, therapeutic water types. For example:

- The focus on collecting rainwater in specific months and storing it in clean vessels corresponds to modern concerns about avoiding contaminants.
- The classification of *Samudra Jala* as harmful due to its salty and alkaline nature aligns with the understanding that certain types of water can have adverse health effects, particularly in terms of electrolytes and hydration balance.

However, Ayurvedic texts also offer purification methods for water, such as boiling and exposing water to sunlight or using metals like gold and silver for purification. These traditional methods reflect the ongoing need to ensure water quality and safety, consistent with modern water purification practices recommended by the WHO.

Therapeutic and Preventive Applications in Modern Medicine

The Ayurvedic use of water in hydrotherapy, particularly through the application of *cold*, *warm*, or *boiled water*, mirrors the modern practice of using water for healing purposes. Hydrotherapy is used to relieve pain, reduce inflammation, and improve circulation, which aligns with the therapeutic effects described in the *Varivarga*. Furthermore, the understanding that water can balance *doshas* is in harmony with modern concepts of hydration and its role in maintaining homeostasis in the body.

The distinction made in Ayurveda between different types of water—rainwater, river water, spring water also resonates with modern water quality assessments, which classify water based on its source, mineral content, and other factors that can influence its health benefits.

Conclusion

The classification of water in the *Varivarga* section of the *Bhavapraksha Nighantu* provides an in-depth understanding of the therapeutic properties of various types of water, which is crucial in Ayurvedic practice. By aligning these traditional uses with modern *WHO guidelines* on water quality, safety, and efficacy, this study underscores the importance of water not only as an essential life-sustaining element but also as a powerful tool for healing and maintaining health. While Ayurvedic water classifications offer invaluable insights, future research and standardization are needed to integrate these ancient practices into modern healthcare systems effectively.

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