



## GURU AND LAGHU DRAVYAS IN CHARAKA SAMHITA IMPORTANCE IN DIET AND MEDICINE

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Article Received on 16/02/2024

Article Revised on 07/03/2025

Article Accepted on 28/03/2025

### ABSTRACT

The classification of Guru (heavy) and Laghu (light) Dravyas in the Charaka Samhita plays a crucial role in Ayurvedic dietetics and medicine. This study explores their impact on digestion, metabolism, and disease management. Guru Dravyas, such as milk, wheat, and meat, provide strength, nourishment, and tissue development but require strong digestive power. In contrast, Laghu Dravyas, including barley, green gram, and vegetables, are easy to digest, enhance metabolism, and are beneficial in detoxification and weight management. The study also highlights their application in therapeutic practices, where Guru Dravyas are used in conditions requiring nourishment (e.g., convalescence, osteoporosis), while Laghu Dravyas are applied in Langhana (fasting therapy) and metabolic disorders. Proper dietary selection based on these principles helps maintain Dosha balance and overall well-being. This research draws insights from classical Ayurvedic texts like Charaka Samhita, Sushruta Samhita, and Ashtanga Hridayam to support the relevance of Guru and Laghu Dravyas in modern dietary and medicinal applications. Understanding their properties allows for better integration of Ayurvedic nutrition into contemporary health practices, promoting disease prevention and longevity.

**KEYWORDS:** Guru Dravya, Laghu Dravya, Ayurveda, Digestion, Diet Therapy.

### INTRODUCTION

The Charaka Samhita, one of the foundational texts of Ayurveda, provides extensive knowledge on dietetics and pharmacology. Among its many classifications of substances, the distinction between **Guru (heavy) and Laghu (light) Dravyas (substances)** plays a crucial role in understanding the impact of food and medicine on the body. This classification helps in determining the digestive capability, therapeutic use, and physiological effects of various substances.

गुरुवो बलदा वृष्या वातघ्ना दीपनाः स्मृताः।  
लघवश्चात्यग्निस्त्रधाता हृद्याः कफहराश्च ये॥

(Charaka Samhita, Sutrasthana - 27.10)

This verse describes the properties of Guru and Laghu Dravyas:

- **Guru Dravya:** Heavy substances provide strength, increase vitality, and pacify Vata.
- **Laghu Dravya:** Light substances stimulate digestion, are heart-friendly, and reduce Kapha.

Understanding this classification is essential as it influences dietary choices and medicinal formulations. The balance of Guru and Laghu Dravyas in daily consumption determines health outcomes, making this study relevant even in modern dietary science and therapeutics.

### NEED FOR STUDY

The study of **Guru and Laghu Dravyas** is essential to develop a holistic approach to diet and medicine. A proper understanding helps in selecting the right food and medicine based on an individual's health status, digestion strength (Agni), and Dosha constitution.

### MATERIALS AND METHODS

#### Materials

- **Primary Text:** Charaka Samhita (Sutrasthana, Vimanasthana, Chikitsasthana)
- **Commentaries:** Ayurveda Deepika, Chakrapani Tika

- **Modern Ayurvedic References:** Contemporary research papers on Ayurvedic dietetics and pharmacology

### Methods

1. **Literary Review:** Detailed analysis of classical Ayurvedic texts on Guru and Laghu Dravyas.
2. **Comparative Study:** Identifying Guru and Laghu Dravyas mentioned in Ayurveda and their nutritional and pharmacological equivalents in modern science.
3. **Dietary Analysis:** Examining daily food habits incorporating Guru and Laghu substances.
4. **Therapeutic Application:** Studying the role of these Dravyas in disease management.

### Guru and Laghu Dravyas in Charaka Samhita

The Charaka Samhita, a foundational text of Ayurveda, classifies substances based on their qualities (Gunas) and effects on the body. Among these classifications, **Guru (heavy) and Laghu (light) Dravyas** are particularly significant in dietetics and medicine. This classification determines how substances affect digestion, metabolism, and the three Doshas (Vata, Pitta, and Kapha).

### GURU DRAVYAS (Heavy Substances)

#### Definition and Properties

Guru Dravyas are those that are heavy to digest, provide nourishment, and contribute to strength (Bala) and stability. They increase **Kapha Dosha** and pacify **Vata Dosha**. Due to their density and complexity, they require strong digestive power (Agni) for proper assimilation.

#### Qualities of Guru Dravyas

- **Madhura Rasa (Sweet taste):** Most Guru Dravyas have a sweet taste, which nourishes and builds tissues.
- **Snigdha (Unctuous):** Many Guru substances have an oily nature, promoting lubrication of tissues and reducing dryness (a key characteristic of Vata Dosha).
- **Sheeta (Cooling effect):** Most of these substances have a cooling effect, making them beneficial for heat-related disorders.
- **Mridu (Soft and heavy in nature):** They help in grounding and stabilizing the body and mind.

#### Effect on Doshas

- **Increase Kapha Dosha** (promotes stability and nourishment)
- **Reduce Vata Dosha** (calm nervous system, prevent dryness and weakness)

### Charaka Samhita

गुरु मांसं च माषश्च गोधूमोऽप्यथ मांसरः।

(Charaka Samhita, Sutrasthana - 27.9)

The verse mentions some important Guru Dravyas

1. **Meat (Mamsa)** – Animal flesh is highly nourishing and provides strength. It is ideal for individuals with

excessive weakness or those needing muscle recovery.

2. **Black Gram (Masha)** – Considered the heaviest among pulses, Masha is highly nutritious and increases body mass, making it useful for weight gain and strength.
3. **Wheat (Godhuma)** – A staple food in many cultures, wheat is heavy to digest but provides sustained energy and strength.
4. **Milk (Dugdha)** – Milk is a complete food, nourishing all tissues and promoting longevity and immunity.

### Other Guru Dravyas from Ayurveda

- **Sesame seeds (Tila)** – High in fats and nutrients, promoting strength.
- **Cheese & Ghee (Ghrita)** – Heavy but nourishing, improves memory and immunity.
- **Sugarcane & Jaggery (Ikshu, Gudha)** – Provide long-lasting energy and are beneficial for tissue nourishment.

### LAGHU DRAVYAS (Light Substances)

#### Definition and Properties

Laghu Dravyas are easy to digest, stimulate metabolism, and are ideal for individuals with weaker digestion. These substances pacify **Kapha Dosha** and balance **Pitta Dosha** due to their lightness and metabolic-stimulating properties.

#### Qualities of Laghu Dravyas

- **Katu, Tikta Rasa (Pungent, Bitter taste):** Most Laghu Dravyas have a slightly bitter or pungent taste, which enhances digestion and metabolism.
- **Ruksha (Dry nature):** They absorb excess moisture and reduce Kapha-related issues like obesity and lethargy.
- **Ushna (Heating effect):** They improve circulation and digestion, making them useful for sluggish metabolism.
- **Teekshna (Sharpness in action):** They quickly stimulate the digestive fire (Agni) and help in detoxification.

#### Effect on Doshas:

- **Reduce Kapha Dosha** (prevent weight gain, congestion, and sluggish digestion)
- **Balance Pitta Dosha** (aid in detoxification and digestion)

### Examples from Charaka Samhita:

लघवश्च यवाः मूंगाश्च शाकानि मदनानि च।

(Charaka Samhita, Sutrasthana - 27.9)

The verse highlights some key Laghu Dravyas

1. **Barley (Yava)** – One of the lightest grains, barley is easy to digest, helps in weight management, and regulates blood sugar.

2. **Green Gram (Mudga)** – The lightest and most digestible of all pulses, making it ideal for convalescents and those with weak digestion.
3. **Vegetables (Shaka)** – Most leafy greens and vegetables are Laghu in nature, rich in fiber, and support digestion and detoxification.
4. **Pomegranate (Dadima)** – A fruit known for its light nature, it helps in digestion and maintains a balanced metabolism.

**Other Laghu Dravyas from Ayurveda**

- **Honey (Madhu)** – Light but highly effective in metabolism regulation and weight management.
- **Ginger (Shunthi)** – Enhances digestion and absorption of nutrients.
- **Turmeric (Haridra)** – A potent detoxifier that improves liver function and immunity.
- **Millets (Kodo, Foxtail, Ragi, etc.)** – Lighter grains that help in diabetes control and digestion.

**Comparison of Guru and Laghu Dravyas**

Property	Guru Dravya (Heavy)	Laghu Dravya (Light)
Effect on Digestion	Hard to digest (slow metabolism)	Easy to digest (fast metabolism)
Effect on Body	Nourishing, increases muscle and tissue mass	Cleansing, helps in detoxification
Effect on Kapha	Increases Kapha	Reduces Kapha
Effect on Vata	Reduces Vata	May aggravate Vata (if used excessively)
Examples	Meat, Milk, Wheat, Black Gram	Barley, Green Gram, Vegetables, Pomegranate

**Clinical and Dietary Applications**

- **Guru Dravyas** are useful in individuals suffering from malnutrition, chronic weakness, or excessive weight loss. They help in recovery from long-term illnesses and are essential for building strength.
- **Laghu Dravyas** are beneficial for those with obesity, sluggish digestion, or Kapha-related disorders. They help in detoxification, weight management, and improving metabolic efficiency.
- **Balanced Use:** Ayurveda emphasizes balance. Overconsumption of Guru Dravyas can lead to obesity and sluggish digestion, while excessive Laghu Dravyas may lead to weakness and nutritional deficiencies.

**Examples of Guru and Laghu Dravyas in Daily Diet**  
 The concept of **Guru (heavy) and Laghu (light) Dravyas** in Ayurveda is essential for understanding the effects of food on digestion, metabolism, and overall health. Daily diet plays a crucial role in balancing the three Doshas (Vata, Pitta, Kapha), and the choice of Guru or Laghu substances can directly impact a person’s energy levels, digestion, and disease susceptibility.

**Guru Dravyas in Diet**

Guru Dravyas are heavy to digest but provide strength, nourishment, and stability to the body. These foods **increase Kapha Dosha** and help in **reducing Vata Dosha**, making them beneficial for individuals who need energy replenishment, muscle strength, and tissue nourishment.

**1. Milk & Dairy**

- **Examples:** Milk, ghee, yogurt, butter, paneer (cheese).
- **Effects:** Strengthens tissues (Dhatus), enhances immunity, and lubricates joints.

**Health Benefits**

- Beneficial for **weak individuals, children, and the elderly.**

- Helps in **reducing Vata disorders like dryness and weakness.**
- Ghee, specifically, is used for **memory enhancement, digestion, and mental health.**

**2. Meat & Pulses**

- **Examples:** Goat meat, chicken, black gram (Masha), kidney beans, chickpeas.
- **Effects:** Provides stamina, increases muscle mass, and improves energy levels.

**Health Benefits**

- Ideal for **athletes, laborers, and those recovering from illness.**
- Helps in **building strength and endurance.**
- Meat soups are recommended in Ayurveda for **post-illness recovery and nourishment.**

**3. Wheat & Rice**

- **Examples:** Whole wheat, basmati rice, red rice, brown rice.
- **Effects:** Provides **sustained energy**, is nourishing, and promotes stability.

**Health Benefits**

- Good for **people with high metabolic rates, children, and pregnant women.**
- Rice is easy to digest and helps in **replenishing energy stores.**
- Whole wheat is recommended for those needing **muscle strength and sustained satiety.**

**Laghu Dravyas in Diet**

Laghu Dravyas are **light to digest, stimulate metabolism, and pacify Kapha Dosha.** These foods are ideal for individuals with **weak digestion, obesity, and sluggish metabolism.**

**1. Fruits & Vegetables**

- **Examples:** Apples, pomegranates, papaya, leafy greens, gourds, cucumber.

- **Effects:** Easily digestible, cooling, and rich in fiber.

#### Health Benefits

- Helps in **detoxification and digestion**.
- Fruits like pomegranate improve **liver health and digestion**.
- Leafy greens promote **weight loss and blood purification**.

#### 2. Barley & Green Gram

- **Examples:** Barley (Yava), green gram (Mudga), millet, quinoa.
- **Effects:** Light, cooling, and metabolism-boosting.

#### Health Benefits

- **Best for Kapha-dominant individuals** who need weight management.
- Barley **reduces cholesterol and regulates blood sugar levels**.
- Green gram is **the easiest pulse to digest, making it ideal for weak digestion**.

#### 3. Herbs like Ginger & Turmeric

- **Examples:** Dry ginger (Shunthi), turmeric (Haridra), black pepper, cumin.
- **Effects:** Improves digestion, burns Ama (toxins), and detoxifies the body.

#### Health Benefits

- Ginger enhances **digestive fire (Agni)**, helping in **indigestion, bloating, and cold-related issues**.
- Turmeric is **anti-inflammatory and helps in liver detoxification**.
- Black pepper and cumin **help in fat metabolism and weight loss**.

#### Guru and Laghu Dravyas: Importance in Diet and Medicine

##### Importance in Diet

##### Guru Dravyas in Diet

- Beneficial for individuals with high metabolism, weakness, or Vata-related disorders.
- Promote muscle growth, energy retention, and tissue nourishment.
- Help in post-illness recovery and increasing stamina.

##### Laghu Dravyas in Diet

- Ideal for individuals with weak digestion, obesity, or Kapha-related disorders.
- Help in cleansing the body, improving metabolism, and reducing excess fat. Support and digestion without causing heaviness.

##### Importance in Medicine

##### Guru Dravyas in Medicine

- Used in convalescence and recovery from chronic diseases, malnutrition, osteoporosis, and muscle wasting.

- Recommended for pregnant women, lactating mothers, and elderly individuals to maintain strength and immunity.
- Helps in balancing Vata disorders like joint pain, dryness, and anxiety.

##### Laghu Dravyas in Medicine

- Applied in Langhana therapy (fasting therapy) to reduce excess Kapha and Ama (toxins).
- Used in weight management, diabetes control, and metabolism enhancement.
- Herbs like ginger, turmeric, and black pepper help in improving digestion and reducing inflammation.

#### OBSERVATIONS ON STUDY

1. Guru Dravyas provide sustained energy and nourishment, but can cause indigestion if consumed in excess.
2. Laghu Dravyas enhance digestion and metabolism, making them ideal for light meals and weight management.
3. A balanced combination of Guru and Laghu Dravyas is necessary for holistic health maintenance.
4. Modern dietary science aligns with Ayurvedic principles, as seen in concepts like complex carbohydrates (Guru) and easily digestible proteins (Laghu).

#### CONCLUSION

The classification of **Guru and Laghu Dravyas in Charaka Samhita** serves as a fundamental guide in both dietetics and medicine. Their strategic incorporation into daily life enhances digestion, prevents diseases, and maintains physiological balance. The wisdom of Ayurveda, reinforced by modern nutritional studies, suggests that personalized dietary choices based on Guru and Laghu principles can significantly improve overall health and well-being.

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