



THE CONCEPT OF HRUDYA IN CLASSICAL AYURVEDIC LEXICONS: A HOLISTIC PARADIGM

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores the multidimensional concept of *Hrudya* as delineated across classical Ayurvedic lexicons, including the *Brihatrayi* and various *Nighantus*. While contemporary medicine primarily views cardio protection through a strictly physiological lens, Ayurveda posits *Hrudya* as a holistic paradigm bridging physical, psychological, and spiritual well-being. By employing a comprehensive textual analysis, this study investigates how classical texts categorize *Hrudyadravyas* (substances) based on their *Rasa* (taste), *Virya* (potency), and *Prabhava* (specific action). The findings reveal that *Hrudya* extends far beyond mere anatomical stimulation of the heart (*Hrudaya*). It encompasses agents that stabilize *Sadhaka Pitta* (emotional regulation), nourish *Prana Vayu* (neurological function), and enhance *Ojas* (vital essence). Furthermore, the study highlights the dual nature of *Hrudya* as both *Manonukula* (pleasing to the mind) and *Hrud-pathya* (physiologically wholesome). This dual action underscores an intrinsic mind-heart-body axis recognized in ancient pharmacology. Ultimately, this research provides a systematized framework of *Hrudya* conceptualizations, offering valuable insights for integrating traditional psychosomatic *cardioprotective* strategies into modern integrative healthcare and preventative cardiology.

KEYWORDS: *Hrudya*, Ayurveda, Holistic Paradigm.

INTRODUCTION

The heart has long been recognized across global medical traditions not merely as a mechanical pump, but as a vital center of life, emotion, and consciousness. In contemporary biomedicine, cardiology focuses predominantly on the anatomical and physiological parameters of the cardiovascular system. While this objective approach has yielded profound advancements in treating structural heart disease, it often overlooks the complex, bi-directional relationship between psychological well-being and

cardiovascular health a connection increasingly highlighted by modern psychosomatic medicine and neurocardiology.

In contrast, classical Ayurveda offers a sophisticated, deeply integrated model of cardiology centre around the concept of the *Hrudaya* (heart). Within Ayurvedic physiology, the heart is not an isolated organ; it is the primary seat of *Prana Vayu* (the vital life force regulating neurological and respiratory functions), *Sadhaka Pitta* (the metabolic fire governing emotions, intellect, and memory), and *Ojas* (the ultimate essence of immunity and vitality). Consequently,

any therapeutic intervention targeted at this vital center must address this intricate mind-heart-body axis.

This holistic approach is best exemplified by the pharmacological and therapeutic concept of *Hrudya*. Translatable broadly as “cardio-protective,” “heart-wholesome,” or “mind-pleasing,” *Hrudya* represents a unique category of substances (*dravyas*) and interventions meticulously documented throughout classical Ayurvedic lexicons (*Nighantus*) and compendia (*Brihatrayi*). Unlike modern cardiotonics, which are defined strictly by their chemical action on myocardial tissue, a *Hrudya* substance operates simultaneously on two distinct yet inseparable levels: *Hrud-pathya* (physiologically beneficial to the physical heart) and *Manonukula* (agreeable or nourishing to the mind and senses). Despite its clinical relevance, the rich, multifaceted definition of *Hrudya* remains fragmented across various classical texts, often obscured by varying linguistic contexts and taxonomic classifications.

This research paper aims to systematically analyze the concept of *Hrudya* as delineated in classical Ayurvedic literature. By examining the *Rasa* (taste), *Virya* (potency), and *Prabhava* (specific action) of recognized *Hrudya* substances, this study seeks to reconstruct the comprehensive paradigm of Ayurvedic cardioprotection. Ultimately, decoding this ancient framework provides valuable, integrative insights for contemporary preventative cardiology, offering a more nuanced, psychosomatic approach to cardiovascular health.

METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative, exploratory, and hermeneutic research design focused on the textual analysis of classical Ayurvedic literature. The primary objective is to systematically isolate, decode, and synthesize the concept of *Hrudya* as documented across foundational compendia and specialized lexicons.

Data Sources and Selection Criteria

The literary research was executed using primary Sanskrit texts, authoritative commentaries, and validated English/Hindi translations.

The textual repository was categorized into two primary tiers:

The Brihatrayi

- Charaka Samhita (specifically Sutrasthana, Chikitsasthana, and Vimanasthana)
- Sushruta Samhita (Sutrasthana and Uttaratanttra)
- AshtangaHridayam
- AshtangaSangraha (Sutrasthana)

The Major Nighantus (Classical Lexicons)

- DhanvantariNighantu
- MadanapalaNighantu
- KaiyadevaNighantu
- BhavaprakashaNighantu

- Raja Nighantu

Inclusion Criteria

Textual references explicitly using the terms *Hrudya*, *Hrudayam*, *Hrud-pathya*, or *Manonukula*.

Formulations, single herbs (*ekadravya*), and dietary regimens (*Ahar-dravya*) categorized under *Hrudya Mahakashaya* (e.g., in Charaka Samhita) or directly attributed with cardio-protective or mind-pleasing properties.

Exclusion Criteria

References where *Hrudaya* is mentioned purely in an anatomical context without pharmacological, therapeutic, or psychological interventions.

Secondary literature or unverified contemporary commentaries lacking roots in classical Sanskrit texts.

Data Extraction and Categorization

A structured data extraction matrix was developed to capture the multi-dimensional nature of *Hrudya*. Relevant shlokas (verses) were identified, extracted, and cross-referenced across different lexicons to track conceptual evolution. For every identified *Hrudya* substance, data was collected based on its Ayurvedic Pharmacodynamics.

(Rasa Panchaka)

Rasa (Taste profiles, with special emphasis on *Amla*, *Madhura*, and *Lavanarasas*)

Guna (Physical attributes)

Virya (Potency: *Ushna* or *Sheeta*)

Vipaka (Post-digestive effect)

Prabhava (Specific, unexplainable dynamic action)

Analytical Framework

The extracted data underwent a thematic analysis to bridge the gap between classical terminology and modern psychosomatic physiology. The framework evaluated the dual-action mechanism of each substance:

Physiological Axis (*Hrud-pathya*): Evaluating actions related to tissue nourishment (*DhatuPoshana*), micro-circulation clearing (*Srotoshodhana*), and heart-toning properties.

Psychological Axis (*Manonukula*): Evaluating actions related to emotional calming, sensory gratification (*Tarpana*), and the balancing of *Sadhaka Pitta* and *Prana Vayu*.

By synthesizing these textual variables, a conceptual paradigm was established to map how classical lexicons transition the definition of *Hrudya* from a physical cardiotonic to a holistic, psychosomatic modulator.

Based on the classical Ayurvedic lexicons and the methodology outlined, here is a comprehensive classification of key *Hrudya* substances (*dravyas*). These are categorized by their primary pharmacological profiles

(*Rasa, Virya*) and their dual therapeutic actions (*Hrud-pathya* and *Manonukula*).

Substance	Botanical Name	Rasa (Taste)	Virya (Potency)	Primary Physiological Action (Hrud-pathya)	Psychological Action (Manonukula)	Classical Reference
Arjuna	Terminalia arjuna	Kashaya	Sheeta	Strengthens cardiac muscles, regulates coronary circulation, thins blood (Raktaprasadana)	Stabilizes emotional disturbances; reduces anxiety-induced palpitations	Charaka Samhita, Udardaprasamana Mahakashaya
Amra	Mangifera indica	Madhura, Amala	sheet	Nourishes cardiac tissue (DhatuPoshana); acts as a natural cardiotonic.	Induces sensory gratification (Tarpana); uplifts mood.	Charaka Samhita, Hrudya Mahakashaya
Dadima	Punicagranatum	Amla, Madhura	Anushna	Clears micro-circulatory channels (Srotoshodhana); hyperlipidemia management.	Pacifies Sadhaka Pitta; Mitigates anger, irritation, and mental burnout.	Bhavaprakasha Nighantu
Vrikshamla	Garcinia indica	Amla	Ushna	Stimulates digestive fire (Agni); reduces metabolic toxins (Ama) affecting the heart.	Refreshes the mind; relieves fatigue and mental heaviness	Charaka Samhita, Hrudya Mahakashaya
Matulunga	Citrus medica	Amla	Ushna	Relieves chest congestion; acts as an anti-spasmodic for cardiac blood vessels. Alleviates nausea, tastelessness	grounds hyperactive Prana Vayu.	Kaiyadeva Nighantu
Draksha	Vitis vinifera	Madhura	Sheeta	Combats oxidative stress; nourishes Rasa and Raktadhatu (plasma and blood).	Calms emotional distress; deeply satisfies and grounds the senses.	Charaka Samhita, Hrudya Mahakashaya
Ghritha	Clarified Butter	Madhura	Sheeta	Lubricates channels; enhances Ojas (vital essence); protects vascular integrity.	Enhances memory, intellect (Medha); coordinates the mind-heart axis.	Ashtanga Hridayam

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The systematic textual analysis of classical Ayurvedic lexicons (Nighantus) and compendia (Brihatrayi) reveals that the concept of Hrudya cannot be confined to the contemporary definition of a cardiotonic. Rather, it operates on a sophisticated psychosomatic axis. The data compiled from classical sources demonstrates a dual-action mechanism that simultaneously targets physical cardiac tissue (Hrud-pathya) and psychological well-being (Manonukula).

The Pharmacodynamic Profile of Hrudyadravyas

A critical finding from the literature is the unique distribution of Rasa (taste) and Virya (potency) among Hrudy substances. While modern pharmacology classifies cardiovascular drugs by chemical structure and receptor selectivity, Ayurveda organizes Hrudy actions primarily through Amla (sour) and Madhura (sweet) tastes.

• **The Role of Amla Rasa (Sour Taste) and UshnaVirya**
Substances like Vrikshamla (Kokum) and Matulunga (Citron) exhibit a dominant Amla Rasa and UshnaVirya. Classical texts highlight that Amla Rasa inherently pleases the mind (Manonukula) upon contact and stimulates the Agni (metabolic fire). Physiologically, its Ushna (heating) and Laghu (light) attributes counteract Kapha and Ama (metabolic toxins), which are responsible for vascular occlusion (Srotorodha). Therefore, the Amla profile serves as a natural vasodilator and micro-circulatory cleanser

(Srotoshodhana), facilitating unhindered Prana Vayu movement.

• The Role of Madhura Rasa (Sweet Taste) and SheetVirya

Conversely, substances such as Draksha (Raisins) and Ghritha (Cow's Ghee) possess a Madhura Rasa and SheetVirya. These dravyas fulfill the Hrud-pathya criteria by providing direct DhatuPoshana (tissue nourishment) to the myocardium. The sweet taste and cooling potency are highly effective at building Ojas (the biological substrate of immunity and vitality), which is primarily seated in the heart.

• The Mind-Heart-Body Axis (Psychosomatic Integration)

The core distinction of the Ayurvedic paradigm lies in its explicit integration of mental health with cardiovascular stability. The classical data indicates that a substance cannot be truly Hrudy if it only acts on the physical heart while agitating the mind.

• Emotional Regulation via Sadhaka Pitta:

The heart is the seat of Sadhaka Pitta, the sub-dosha responsible for processing emotions, courage, and intellect. Herbs like Arjuna and Dadima exert a stabilizing effect on Sadhaka Pitta. By mitigating intense emotional stressors like anger (Krodha) and grief (Shoka), these substances prevent stress-induced catecholamine surges, thereby

protecting the physical heart from stress cardiomyopathy and arrhythmias.

• Sensory Gratification (Tarpana)

The psychological action termed Manonukula often operates via Tarpana (sensory saturation and satisfaction). When a patient consumes a Hrudy substance like ripe Amra (Mango) or Draksha, the immediate sensory gratification calms the nervous system (Prana Vayu), lowering heart rate and blood pressure through a mechanism akin to parasympathetic activation.

Clinical Implications for Modern Integrative Cardiology

Modern cardiology increasingly recognizes “Type D” (distressed) personality traits, anxiety, and depression as independent risk factors for coronary artery disease. The Ayurvedic concept of Hrudy offers a pre-existing therapeutic framework to treat these conditions simultaneously. Rather than prescribing a distinct beta-blocker for physical tachycardia and an anxiolytic for psychological distress, Hrudyadravyas like Arjuna or Dadima offer a single, bio-compatible intervention that addresses both the physical load and the emotional trigger.

CONCLUSION

This study establishes that the classical Ayurvedic concept of Hrudy represents a sophisticated, bi-directional paradigm that fundamentally bridges physical cardiology with psychological well-being. Textual analysis of the Brihatrayi and major Nighantu reveals that Hrudy substances do not merely target the anatomical heart (Hrud-pathya); they simultaneously optimize emotional and cognitive health (Manonukula). By organizing these substances through their Rasa (taste) and Virya (potency) profiles—specifically the channel-clearing properties of Amla Rasa and the tissue-nourishing qualities of Madhura Rasa—Ayurveda targets the vital mind-heart-body axis. This holistic approach manages the interdependencies of Prana Vayu, Sadhaka Pitta, and Ojas, offering a comprehensive model of care that contemporary isolated cardiotonics lack.

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