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Depiction of horse treatment in Agnipurana

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Introduction

In ancient India the horses are used for riding, chariot, war, race and good-transport. They treated horse as a family member. Animal received good medical care in ancient India. Physicians treating human beings were also trained in the care of animals. Salihotra a famous author composed the first work deals with the treatment of horse's i.e. *Salihotra Tantra* and *Hayayurveda*. The greatest and most revered teacher of veterinary science was Salihotra. The treatment of animal diseases in ancient India was well developed and carried out with great care and precision by well trained personnel. The tradition, pioneered by Salihotra, flourished in the later period. Nakula, the fourth Pandava was next recognised as the supreme authority in this subject. The authorship of *Asvacikitsa* or *Asvasastram* is attributed to Nakula. *Asvacikitsa* by Nakula, *Asvavaidyaka* of Jayadatta Suri. *Asvayurvedasarasangraha* of Vabada, *Asvaparikhsana* of Nalaraja are the milestones in this tradition.

The *Garuda Purana* mentioned that, horses and camels are born in Tamra Vamsa¹. Rigveda, suggested that the horse is used as a symbol of sun. God Brahma created birds, goats, sheep, cows, horses, donkeys, beasts, camels, asvatara and many other forest animals.

‘Tasmadasva ajayanta ye ke co bhayadatah
Gavo ha janjire tasmattasmajjata ajavayah’

Bṛhadaranyaka, ‘The horse helped Gods in the form of Haya, helped Gandharvas as Arva and helped humans as Asva. There is a long tradition of the writings on horses.

‘Hayo bhutva devanavahatvajigandharvanarvasuranasvo
Manushyan samudraevasya banthuhu samudroyenihi’²

Asvamedha, as Rajasuya, is one of the important Vedic sacrifices, usually performed by kings. It is a yaga performed in order to get absolved of all sins, fixing a victory card on the head of a sacrificial horse, which is allowed to roam about freely. The Kautilyas *Arthasastram* mentioned types of horse services and punishment. Sutragr, Ahaka, Aswabandhaka, Yavasika, Vidhapachaka, Sthanapala, Kesakar and Jangulivid are the names of seven servants required to maintain the horses.

‘Sutragrahakasvapadhakayavasikavidhapacaka
sthanapalakesakarajata livadasca svakarmagirsvanaradhayeshu’³

The horses for which Vedic rituals are being performed to free them from various types of troubles, and the horses which are under treatment and forbidden for any work, if engaged by a person into work then he should be fined with twelve Panas. Horse-disease if increases for want of in time medicine and proper treatment the person responsible for this should be fined double the expenses required to cure such horse.

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¹. Pushpendra Kumar, *Garudapranam* (Tr.), p.50

² Balakrishna Nayar, *Vedanthadarsanam Upanishat Svadyayam*, p.30

³ Narain V, Kautilyas *Arthasastra*, p.261

By the carelessness duty, if the horse diseases the amount of the fine will be equal to the value of the horse.

Agnipurana mentioned the treatment of animal diseases using Ayurvedic medicine. Various scientific treatises which explain their type's qualities, characteristics certainly show the compassionate outlook towards them. There are so many references can be seen in *Agnipurana* which deals with *Asvacikitsa*. The 289th chapter of *Agnipurana* mainly discuss the treatments for horse ailments, about the features of bad and good horses and their health care. It deals with the diseases that are peculiar to and the rules that are to be observed in managing.

Bad Horses

‘Hinandhantho vidanthasca karalaha krishnatalukaha
Krishnajihvasca yamajoajatamushkasca yastatha.
Dvisaphasca tatha sringi trivarno vyagravarnakaha
Kharavarno bhasmavarno jatavarnasca kakudi
Sivatri ca kakasadi ca kharasarastathaiva ca.
Vanaraksha krishnasataha krishnagruhyastathaiva ca.
Krishnaprothasca sukasca yasca tittirisannibhaha.
Vishamaha svetapadasca dhruvavartavivarjitaha
Asubhavarta samyukto varjiyasturangamaha⁴’.

Good Horses

‘ranthroparantrayordvo dvou dvou
mastakavakshasoho
Prayena ca lalade ca kandavartaha subha dasa.
Srukkanyam ca lalade ca karnamule nigaalake
Bahumule gale sreshta aavartastvasubhaha pare.
Sukrendragopacandrabha ye ca vayasasannibhaha
Suvamavarnaha snigdhascaa prasasyastu sadaiva hi.
Dirgagrivakshikudasca hrasvakarnasca sobhanaha
Rajnam turangama yatra vijayam varjayettataha.
Palitastu hayo danthi subhado dukhadoanyatha
Sriyaha putrastu gandharva vajino ratnamuttamam.
Asvamedhe tu turagaha pavitratvattu huyate⁵’.

Treatments for Horses

‘vrusho nimbavruhatyou ca guduci ca samakshika
Singagranakahari pindi svedascasirasastatha
Hingu pushkaramulam ca nagaram samlavetasam
Praskandheshu ca sarveshu sreya adau visodhanam⁶’.

A morsal composed of vrisha, nimbi, brihati, guduci, maksika, simha and gandhakari, as well as a fomentation of the head or a decoction of Asafetida, pushkara-root, nagara, sour vetasa, pippali and saindhava salt, made lukewarm, should be administered to a horse suffering from an attack of acute dysentery. A decoction of nagara, ativisha, ananta, musta and bilva leaves, would prove remedial in the same complaint. A potion composed of goat's milk, priyangu, sariva and a profuse quantity of sugar, would prove a good beverage to a horse, just returned from a long journey and would remove all sense of fatigue in the animal. A marsel composed of pomegranate bark, triphala, vyosha and treacle, would prove beneficial to a horse suffering from a paroxysm of harassing cough. Similarly a case of the complaint would yield to a decoction of priyangu, lodhra and the expressed

juice of vrisha. Taken with honey as an auxiliary potion. A decoction of kshira and the five drugs known as the pancakola, would cure an attack of the same malady.

‘abyangodvartanasnehanasyavartikramaha smrutaha
Jvaritanam turanganam payasyaiva kriyakramaha
Ajapayaha srutamitam susitam sarkaranvitam⁷’.

In all sorts of diarrhoea or in diseases affecting the process of digestion or assimilation, emetics and purgatives should be first used, where as in cases of fever, snuffing and anointing with medicated oil, should be first prescribed, so as to eliminate the phlegm through the nostrils. A paste composed of lodhra, kranja-root, matulunga, nagara, kushta, hingu, vaca and rasna, should be deemed as a good remedial measure for all sorts of swelling of the limbs. A horse passing blood with the urine, should be treated with a potion composed of manjishta, madhuka, grapes, brihati, red sandal wood, roots and seeds of trapushi, sringatata and kaseruka boiled with goats milk and made cool and saturated with a quantity of sugar.

‘pitva nirasano vaji raktamehatpramucyate
Manyahanunigaalasthasirasotho galagrahaha
ksaundrena sodhani pindi sarpisha vranaropani⁸’.

A lubrication of the affected part with the medicated oil known as the kadu taila, should be made in all cases of lock-jaw or in paralysis of the jaw or cheekbones or in a case of swelling affecting throat of a horse. In all diseases affecting the throat of a horse. In all diseases affecting the throat of a horse and giving rise to a sort of numbness of the part, a swelling is always observed around the seat of the disease, which would yield to a snuffing of a decoction composed of the flowers of pratyaka, vanhi, saindhava, the expressed juice of saurabha, Krishna and asafoetida. In paralysis or numbness of the tongue, a paste composed of nisa, jyotishmati, pata. Krishna, kushta and vaca with honey or treacle, should be applied over the affected organ. Similarly clarified butter prepared with the essence of sesamum, yashti, turmeric, nimbi leaves or a paste composed of the above said drug mixed with honey, would prove a specific for all sorts of ulcers.

‘Abhigatena khanjanti ye hyasvastivavedana
Parishekakriya tesham tailenaasvu rujapaha
Gavam mutrena pishtaisca mardanam
kandunasanam⁹’.

A horse maimed by a stroke of the whip or limping on account of an excruciating pain in its legs should have been relieved. In case of a hurter in an extremely derange unattended by symptoms of local suppuration, a treatment similar to case of an open ulcer, should be adapted. A decoction of the barks of asvattha, udumbara, plaksha, madhuka an vata, boiled with a copious quantity of water, should be use in washing a wound and for antiseptic purposes in genera oil prepared with a decoction of satahva, nagara, rasna, manjishta, kushta, saindhava. Salt, devadharu, vaca, the two sorts of rajani, red sandal wood and the expressed juice of guduci, should be used for the purposes of healing snuffing and for the purpose of passing an enema and in cases where anointment would be necessary. The oil may be used in case

⁴ Dutt M.N, *Agnipurana*, p. 223

⁵ Ibid., 224

⁶ idem

⁷ Ibid., p.225

⁸ Idem.

⁹ Idem.

of bleeding or in diseases affecting the ends of the eyes of a horse, incidental to a wound may be leeches or by any other water parasite. Such a wound may be washed with a decoction composed of the washings ofudumbara, asvattha, dhatri, duralabha, tikta and the flowers of priyangu. In a case of bad foot or tumbling over a block of stone or in gradual decaying and withering of hoofs, the levitated powder of guduci should be used in a case of a fast-growing derangement of local humours in wound; it should be scraped out the very day the gangrenous process would be detected. A paste composed of go, sanjika, kushta, rajani, sesamum, and mustard, pestle with the urine of a cow, would prove beneficial to all sorts of itches or itching sensation of the skin. A case of Haemoptysis in a horse would prove amenable to a decoction of the drug known as the asvakarna, mix with honey and sugar and administered through its nostrils. Salt should be administered to a horse on each seventh day and the wine known as the varuni should be given to on the occasion, as an additional drink. In winter, a decoction of jivaniya, mrudvika, sugar, honey, petals of lotus and pippali, should be given instead of wine, while in winter the beverage would be a potion consisting of the boiled juice of vidanga, pippali, dhanya, satahva, lodhra, priyangu, musta pippali and visva, mixed with honey, where by a preponderance of phlegm in the animal, would be destroyed. In summer wine mixed with treacle and the expressed juice of priyangu pippali, lodhra and yashti, should be given to a horse as stimulant, while in the rainy season, it should be substitute by a potion consisting of the extract of lodhra stick, salt pippali, visva and bheshajam, mixed with oil.

‘Bhavetailayutairebhihi pratipanam ghanagame
Nidaghoddhrutapitta ye saratsu pushtasonitaha.
Gurvabhipyandibhaktani vyayamaha snanamatapam
Vayubarjam ca vahasya snehapitasya varjitam¹⁰.’

A horse suffering from a bilious distemper in summer from a plethora of blood in autumn or from a constipation of the bowels, in the rainy season, should drink clarified butter. In a disease marked by a preponderance of wind and phlegm, oil should be administered in place of clarified butter. A horse suffering from a disease brought about by an abuse of oil or by a presence of an excess of oily matter in the system, should be treated with a course of drying meals, which would be best served by giving it, for three days, a course of barley soaked in whey. In autumn and summer, the syringe should be passed with clarified butter, with oil in winter and spring, as well as in rains and the forepart of winter. A horse that has taken oil should not be bathed or made to take heavy and fatiguing physical exercise, nor should be so exposed as to give rise to a deranged condition of its bodily phlegm or wind.

‘Snamam panam satkuryadasvanam salilagame
Atyartam durdine kale panamekam prasasyate.
Yatnopanyastayavasaha sapradipasaha surakshitaha

Krukavakvajakapayo dharyascasvagrue mrugaha¹¹.

During the rains, a horse should not be bathed and given any water-drink on the same day, during which a horse should be provided with a single drink, each day. In a season of blended heat and moisture, a horse should be provided with two drinks and a single bath each day, whereas in summer, a horse

should be bathed thrice daily and that for a considerable time at a stretch. Each meal of a horse should consist of four adhaka measures of barley, free of husks and mixed with gram, vrihi, mudga and kalaya pulse. In whole day and night, a horse should consume ten pulses. In whole day and night, a horse should consume ten and a half tula weight of barley and eight tula weight of dried vyasa. Durva grass destroys all bilious distempers of a horse, while a meal consisting of barley alone, would prove beneficial to a horse, suffering from an attack of cough, whereas a meal of busa alone would give rise to an accumulation of phlegm in the animal. A course of arjuna leaves would cure all diseases, effecting the process of respiration in a horse, whereas mana would prove fatal to its strength and dashing vigour. A horse, living on a meal of durva grass, would enjoy immunity from all diseases that are usually ushered in by a deranged state of the wind, bile and phlegm. A vicious horse should be tied by means of two tight ropes, one on each side, while its hind legs should be tied by means of ropes two posts, driven into the round at a distance. Horses should be strewn over with dried bay or straw and fumigated with the vapours of vemifugous drugs. Goats, monkeys and krukavakvas, should be kept in the stable, which should be well guarded and lighted with lamps in the night. In these type of ayurvedic references can be seen in Agnipurana which deals with Asvacikitsa.

Nowadays horses are not used in the cavalry or as the mode of transport as much as they were used earlier. But even today they have important place in the ceremonial cavalry. In some places they are used for cultivating fields, to perform different types of exercises and for sports. Horse-rides have always been one of the major attractions for tourist everywhere. Horses like a deity, and they give us all sorts of wealth, progeny. The great horse gives us strength. No one should disturb the horses. Thus it is relevant to explore our ancient knowledge about horses.

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