



Part 1

Sushruta was an Indian Ayurvedic physician widely regarded as the 'Father of Indian Medicine' or 'Father of Surgery' and 'Father of Plastic Surgery'. He wrote one of the world's earliest works on medicine and surgery. Sushruta was known as the main author of the treatise 'The Compendium of Susruta' (Susruta Samhita).

During those days, physicians treating human beings were also trained in the care of the animals. The principles of animal surgery are effectively the same as that of human surgery. Indian medical treatises like Charaka, Susruta and Harita Samhitas contain chapters or references about care of the diseased as well as the healthy animals.

There were, however, physicians who specialized only in the care of the animals or even in one class of animals; the greatest of them all was Shalihotra, the 'Father of Veterinary Sciences'.

Though Shalihotra gained all the knowledge of Surgery from Sushruta and implemented it in animal health care, once he asked Sushruta what all he would need to perform a surgery on a wonderful horse. Sushruta, very quickly listed down all the instruments and the medicines that would be needed.

"Three things are missing." Shalihotra said.

Confused, Sushruta looked at him.

"I will give you a week to find them." Shalihotra consoled.



Curious to find out what those three things were, Sushruta observed his teacher carefully for the next one week.

Before operating the horse, Shalihotra observed every part of the horse. And then Sushruta found the first missing thing!

‘A good veterinarian should have an eagle’s eye.’

Then Shalihotra treated the animal as if it were his own; balancing science and compassion equally. And lo! Sushruta found his second rule. ‘A good veterinarian should have a lion’s heart.’

Shalihotra helped the horse recover after the surgery. Sushruta came to know that ‘A good veterinarian should have a mother’s touch too.’

Part 2

A tradition of veterinary therapy developed very early in India and this has survived to the present time. Based on the Ayurveda, Indian veterinary medicine is known for its specialized literature, which provides information on ancient methods of preventing and treating diseases of animals. Some of these treatments, little known outside India, are still practised today.

The oldest existing veterinary text from India is a treatise entitled ‘Asvayurveda Siddhanta’ (Complete Ayurvedic system for horses) attributed to Shalihotra (around 2350 BCE), the founder of veterinary medicine. Subsequently, various treatises on horses and diseases of horses were



composed. Nakula, one of the five Pandavas, was a horse specialist himself. Among the best known works of animal literature is 'Asva chikitsa' (Therapeutics of horses), written by Nakula!

Later, during the reign of Chandra Gupta Maurya (around 300 BC), veterinarians started accompanying armies, to treat horses, elephants as well as cattle.

The great Emperor Ashoka erected the first known veterinary hospitals of the world. He arranged cultivation of herbal medicines for men and animals in his empire and adjoining kingdoms.

Giving the animals general tonics and stimulants was practised in order to ensure good mental and physical health.

Prevention of the occurrence of diseases was also given importance.

Cleanliness of animals, maintenance of stalls and stables, quality of food, disadvantages of overfeeding were looked after.

Utilization of animal by-products was also done wisely by our ancestors! Conversion of milk into butter, ghee, curd, *khoa*, etc. was a common practice and still is. Chicken was utilized for its meat while sheep was utilized for its wool.

Although India has always had immense knowledge in the field of veterinary sciences, it is not chosen as a career by many due to a lack of awareness. Being an agriculture based country, today, India needs more veterinarians who empathize with animals and give their cent percent to the profession.

- Dr. Chirantana Mathkari

POINTERS

1. Answer the following questions :
 - (a) Who was Sushruta?
 - (b) Who was Shalihotra?
 - (c) What question did Shalihotra ask Sushruta?
 - (d) How long a period did Shalihotra allow to find the missing things?
 - (e) How did Sushruta find the missing things? Select the appropriate answer.
 - (1) By reading several books
 - (2) By consulting his friends
 - (3) By observing his teacher carefully and thinking about what he did
 - (4) By meditating
 - (f) Who erected the first known veterinary hospitals of the world?
2. What were the three things that Sushruta discovered?
3. Explain the meaning of the following phrases :
 - (a) An eagle's eye
 - (b) A lion's heart
 - (c) A mother's touch.
4. Narrate the story of Sushruta in your own words.

5. Write short notes on the following :
 - (a) Veterinary Science in Ancient India.
 - (b) Care of animals in the regime of Emperor Ashoka.
 - (c) Utilization of animal by-products in the ancient world.
6. Form pairs. Complete the following table through discussions.

Occupation	Necessary Qualities	Reasons
Student		
Teacher		
Housewife		
Sportsman		
Artist		
Singer		
Author		
Umpire		
Actor		
Scientist		

7. Note these pairs of words : ● care-carefully ● equal-equally.
 Here we see that the letters ‘-ly’ are added at the end of the word to make another word. A letter or group of letters added at the end of a word to make another word is called a suffix.
 - (a) Use the suffix ‘-ly’ to make other words from the following :
 - subsequent ● frequent ● wise ● immense ● beautiful
 - (b) Find two examples each, of the words made by using the following suffixes.
 - -ness ● -er ● -let ● -ful ● -tion/sion ● -y
8. Frame questions beginning with the following words, based on the above passage.
 - Who ● What ● Where ● When ● How ● Why (One question each)
9. Visit a library : Find more information/stories about scholars of the ancient world – Aryabhatta, Bhaskaracharya, Varahamihira, Charaka, Nagarjuna, Jeevaka.
