

IMPORTANCE OF STUDYING VETERINARY SCIENCE LITERATURE IN ANCIENT INDIA

R. P. S. TYAGI*

Director of Research
Haryana Agricultural University
Hisar 125004

The topic chosen for this symposium is offbeat, yet quite relevant and important. Unlike the popular view, our ancient contributions are not confined to metaphysics alone.¹ The Indian people did also make substantial material development, and the achievements in the field of medicine, chemistry, physics, mathematics and astronomy are well recognised. As a natural pre-condition for all the achievements, it can be well imagined that emphasis must had been given on the growth of contemporary scientific methods and technology. I, therefore, believe that the preservation of national heritage implies the preservation of the positive aspects of growth of knowledge in scientific subjects. Hence, by their attempts to reveal and review the literature in veterinary science in ancient India, the participants in this symposium would be enriching our knowledge in this little known area of our national heritage.

In the rural people, who are the major owners of domestic animals, century-old practices of disease treatment, parturition, management, nutrition, milk let down, *etc.* are deep rooted; they derive strength solely from past literature in veterinary sciences. Despite the fact that these practices served the people so long,² it is extremely sad that they have been uprooted without a scarce look at their remotest possible use. This symposium may also be considered as a token of recognition of these practices. Further, only through the study of past practices and the understanding of the terminologies employed, we may appreciate the ethos of our masses. Such a study would also help us to pinpoint the difficulties of our people in adopting modern scientific practices. In a way, this study is important from the point of view of updating the level of knowledge of our masses in veterinary science.

Let me conclude by quoting the words of H. F. Knight.³ "In these days, every science has to welcome strangers within its gates, to test and prove them whether they be true or false, and if true, to embody them in its own system—if necessary, rejecting them from that system such parts as will no longer stand the test. If

* At present Member, Agricultural Scientists Recruitment Board, New Delhi.

a science fails to do so and adopts a policy of isolation and withdrawal from the stream of human progress, then, its power of helping humanity inevitably decreases". This is the spirit of renaissance, in which this symposium has been organised. Let this be the sustaining force throughout our deliberations.

REFERENCES

- ¹ Krishnaswami, A., *Indian J. Vet. Sc. and Animal Husbandry*, **11**, 107, 1941.
- ² Singh, A. and Kohli, J. D., *Indian Vet. J.*, **32**, 271, 1955.
- ³ Knight, H. F., Address delivered in 1941 while inaugurating the Ram Bilas Anandilal Podar Ayurvedic College, Bombay (cf. Krishnaswami, A, *Indian Vet. J.*, **23**, 374.)