All human beings suffer from some diseases at some stage of their lives; some may be minor which can be cured quickly while some may require prolonged treatment. Every country has traditional cures for its diseases. In India, the ancient medical knowledge developed through ages with the herbs, spices and plants of numerous varieties. Even before the emergence of Ayurvedic system, the references of the plants of medicinal value are found in the *Rgveda* and other ancient scriptures. In the Vedic age, the use of medicinal plants has been prevalent among the villagers and the foresters. The word *oṣadhi* is frequently mentioned in the *Rgveda*.¹ Two types of *oṣadhi*, viz. *grāmyauṣadhi* and *āranyauṣadhi* have been known. *Soma* was regarded as an important plant for its medicinal properties. The juice of this plant² was used in both sacrificial and medicinal purposes and it was regarded as the king of creepers and medicinal plants. *Bheṣaja* or medicine was found to be one of the

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¹ RV. I.166.5
² ya oṣadhīḥ somarājñīrvaññih śatavicakṣanāḥ / ibid. X.97.18
important vidyā in the Vedic period. In the Rgveda, there is a hymn called ośadhiśūkta. In this sūkta the use of plants as medicine is mentioned. The four principal plants used in the treatment of the diseases of the people were aśvāvatī, somāvatī, ūrjayantī and udojasā. The diseases like supernatural or natural were cured through the application of such plants. The medicinal plants, their utilities, their classifications and the diseases against which these were applied are discussed in details in the Atharvaveda. From the Vedic texts it is revealed that plant science was in its rudimentary stage during Vedic days. The full-fledged development and their practical applications are found in the Caraka Samhitā and the Suśruta Samhitā.

The Purāṇas, too, contain a detailed description of the medicinal plants and their uses for curing different ailments. The study of the Purāṇas, especially, the Agnipurāṇa, the Matsyapurāṇa and the Brahmavaivartapurāṇa revealed that the wide variety of the kingdom of flora possessed in them the medicinal property to cure diseases of all types. An attempt is made here to study some important medicinal plants

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3 RV. X.97
4 aśvāvatīṁ somāvatīṁūrjayantīmudojasam / āvitsi sarvā ośadhīrasmā ariṣṭatātātaye// ibid.X.97.7
that were regarded to have curing properties in them. In the *Agnipurāṇa*,\(^5\) it is stated that in ancient medical science, diseases are classified into four divisions such as *śarīra* (relating to body), *mānasa* (relating to mind), *āguntuka* (arising accidentally) and *sahaja* (arising naturally). It has been observed that veterinary science was a developed branch of medical science in the days of the Purāṇas. The ingredients of the veterinary medicines were also the medicinal plants and herbs. Again, the diseases of the children are described as due to some supernatural cause and it was cured through the medicinal plants in association with some incantations and prayers. Apart from these, gynaecological complaints and sexual diseases were categorized as a separate class and the course of treatment was followed with the medicinal plants and herbs. Besides, toxicology, another class of medicinal treatment is also based on the medicinal plants and plant products. Hence, the study in this chapter is made under the following heads to cover the diseases of different classes:

i) some important medicinal plants and their healing properties.

ii) plants in the treatment of physical ailments.

iii) plants in the treatment of mental diseases.

iv) plants in the treatment of wounds.

v) plants in the treatment of natural diseases.

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5 śārīramānasāgantusahajā vyādhayo matāh /AP. 280.1
vi) plants in the protection and procreation of children.

vii) plants in the treatment of virility and erotic success.

viii) plants against venom of snakes, animals and insects.

ix) plants in the treatment of supernatural diseases.

x) plants in the treatment of animals.

I) SOME IMPORTANT MEDICINAL PLANTS AND THEIR HEALING PROPERTIES

Plants are studied by the ancient people and categorized accordingly under ganas or groups on the basis of their common characteristics. In the Caraka Samhita, some fifty groups of ten herbs in each are mentioned. In the Puranas, the Agnipurana, the Matsyapurana, the Brahmavaivartapurana, the Vamanapurana, the Vayupurana, the Kurmapurana etc, a vast number of medicinal plants are mentioned. The plants śara, tila, āmalaka, ikṣu etc. are stated in the Vamanapurana to have great medicinal importance. It is described in this Purana that pimples can be operated with the śara leaf.6 Tila is found in this Purana a crop of much medicinal value. The juice of ikṣu is mentioned in this Purana as satisfying drink.7 In the Vayupurana, panasa is regarded as a fruit of high medicinal value. It is stated in this Purana that one can live

6 VMP. 69.88
7 ibid. 179.49; 91.44
up to ten thousand years by consuming the fruit juice of this plant.\textsuperscript{8} Plants like \textit{nyagrodha},\textsuperscript{9} \textit{lakuca},\textsuperscript{10} \textit{jambū},\textsuperscript{11} \textit{kālāmrā} etc. are also described in the \textit{Vāyupurāṇa} as the enhancer of life span. It is stated in the \textit{Matsyapurāṇa} that the consumption of fruit juice makes the youth of a man constant and extends longevity.\textsuperscript{12} In this Purāṇa, \textit{kālāmrā},\textsuperscript{13} \textit{nyagrodha},\textsuperscript{14} \textit{lakuca},\textsuperscript{15} \textit{plakṣa},\textsuperscript{16} \textit{ikṣu}\textsuperscript{17} etc. are recommended as enhancer of longevity. The study of the Purāṇas reveals that out of the vast treasure of medicinal plants some are found to possess properties to fight against all types of diseases. In the \textit{Agnipurāṇa}\textsuperscript{18} mention is made of such thirty six plants

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item VAP.43.4
\item ibid. 45.4-5
\item ibid.45.9
\item ibid. 35.25-29 ; 43.6
\item jambūphalarasam pītvā na jārā vādhatēpi tān / MP. 114.78
\item kālāmrasya rasan pītvā te sarve sthirayauvanāḥ / ibid. 113.55
\item ibid. 113.62
\item tasmin varṣe mahāvrkṣo lakucaḥ, ibid.113.67
\item ibid. 114.64-65
\item ibid. 114.67-68
\item harītakyaśadātryaśca marīcampippaliśipāḥ /
  vahniḥ śuṇṭhī pippalī ca guḍōcīvacanimbakaḥ //
  vāsakaḥ śatamūlī ca saindhavaṁ sindhuvārakaṁ /
  kaṇṭakārī gokṣurakā vīvalampaunarnavaṁ balā //
  eraṇḍaṁuṇḍī rūcako bhṛṅgāḥ kṣāro’tha parpataḥ /
  dhanyāko jīrakaścaiva ṣatapūṣpī javānikā //
  viḍaṅgaḥ khadiraścaiva kṛtamālo haridrayā /
  vacā siddhārtha etāni ṣaṭṭrimśatpadagāni ca // AP. 141.2-5
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
such as *haritakī, nimba, akṣa*, (fig. 14) *balā* etc. These thirty six plants are used in combinations for treatment of different kinds of diseases. However, some important medicinal herbs and plants as mentioned in different Purāṇas have been chosen for discussion:

**AKṢA (*Terminalia bellerica*)**

It is a constituent of *triphalā* (the three myrobalans). It is also known as *vibhītaka*. The fruit is found to have possessed various medicinal properties. In the age of the Purāṇas the fruit was used to treat the patients of piles, cough and cold, boil, tuberculosi, etc. Moreover, *akṣa* is found to be the ingredient of an effective eye lotion. In the *Garuḍapurāṇa*, *vibhītaka* is mentioned as an important ingredient of medicine against several diseases like jaundice fever, epilepsy, tumour, leprosy, intestinal worms, diabetes fistula etc. Besides, it is referred in this Purāṇa as a medicine capable of arresting vomiting. The *Matsyapurāṇa* also made mention of the fruit for its medicinal values. It is found to have the efficacy in removing the affects of poison.

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19 AP.285.23-24, 30
20 *vibhītakaṅgudāni ca...rājayakṣinām // ibid.279.18-19*
21 *vyoṣāṁ triphalayā yuktāṁ...sarvākṣirogaśamanam, AP. 279.46*
22 GP.170.34, 58; 171.23; 193.12
23 MP. 218.11-12
ĀMALAKA (Phyllanthus emblica)

Āmalaka is a fruit of much medicinal importance. It is frequently mentioned in ancient Sanskrit literature. In different Purāṇas like the Agnipurāṇa, the Matsyapurāṇa, the Brahmacait apratapurāṇa, the Garuḍapurāṇa, the vāmanapurāṇa etc., the medicinal importance of āmalaka is found. In the Vāmanapurāṇa, it is stated that one can survive drinking the fruit juice of āmalaka only. In the days of the Purāṇas, it was used to treat various types of diseases like fevers of different kinds, breathing troubles, coughs of different varieties, diarrhoea, dysentery, leprosy, diabetes, intestinal worms, pimples, fistula, rheumatism, tumour, dropsy, eye diseases and diseases related to head and many more. In the Garuḍapurāṇa, āmalaka is mentioned in connection with the treatment of the fault of humours—phlegm, wind, bile, constipation etc. Moreover, āmalaka is used as hair tonic. The

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24 VMP. 91.51
25 āmalakya guḍucyā ca......samastajvaranucca, GP. 175.10
26 GP. 193.11; 170.10
27 viḍangatrichalākṛṣṇācūrṇam......bhagandarān / ibid. 171.23
28 ibid. 170.52; 171.4
29 triphalayā yuktam......sarvākṣirogaśamanam, AP.279.46
30 dhātrāphalānyathājyaśa śirolepanamuttamam / ibid. 279.43
31 GP. 169.59-60; 176.9
intake of amalaka arrests vomiting,\textsuperscript{32} gives relief from epilepsy, inflammation and pain.\textsuperscript{33} The medicinal importance of amalaka is mentioned in the Brahmavaivartapur\r\na also. In this Pur\r\na,\textsuperscript{34} amalaka is recommended as an effective medicine against excessive wind.

**BALĀ (Sida cordifolia)**

This is an important medicinal plant. The entire plant is used as medicine. The plant has two other species. These are atibalā (Sida rhombifolia) and nāgalā\textsuperscript{35} (Sida alba). All these three kinds of balā are found to have possessed medicinal values. In the Agnipurāṇa, balā (fig.15) variety of the plant is recommended in raktapitta,\textsuperscript{36} rheumatic diseases,\textsuperscript{37} boils\textsuperscript{38} etc. Moreover, it is acclaimed to be the curer of all diseases and the enhancer of life span. Pills prepared with balā together with bhṛṅgarāja, five kinds of nimba, khadira, nirgunḍī (fig.16) and kaṇṭakārī are recommended for getting rid of all diseases.\textsuperscript{39} Again, all the three kinds of balā are included in the composition of a medicinal jam

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{32} triphalācūrṇaṁ chardhiṁmadhunā saha, ṚP. 170.33-34
  \item \textsuperscript{33} ibid. 170.34,47
  \item \textsuperscript{34} lāṅgalālakharjūramuṇamāmalakīdravam, BRVP. 1.16.77
  \item \textsuperscript{35} māśaparṇī ca madadvai śārive dvē balātrayam / MP. 217.44
  \item \textsuperscript{36} raktapittī .........................balātrayam , AP. 283.20
  \item \textsuperscript{37} ibid. 285.46
  \item \textsuperscript{38} dhātakicandanalalā.........sasarpvrāṇaropaṇaḥ / ibid. 285.35
  \item \textsuperscript{39} AP. 286.21-24
\end{itemize}
that is recommended to patients suffering from tuberculosis.\textsuperscript{40} In addition to these, atibalā variety of plant was used in Purānic days as a medicine against poison due to insect bites.\textsuperscript{41}

**Eranḍa** *(Ricinus communis)*

_Eranḍa_ has been referred in the Purāṇas as a plant of immense medicinal value. In the *Agnipurāṇa*,\textsuperscript{42} it is also known as pañcāṅgula and citraka. The name indicates its morphological characteristics such as five nerved palmate leaves and a plant with decorated seeds. This plant is found to have possessed much medicinal value. It is especially a powerful ingredient of the medicine against vāṭa or rheumatism. For this, it is also called vāṭārī or the enemy of vāṭa.\textsuperscript{43}

In the Purāṇas, the *Agnipurāṇa* in particular, this plant has been mentioned frequently as a powerful medicinal plant against rheumatism. In the *Agnipurāṇa*,\textsuperscript{44} it is stated that erand̄a together with rāṣṇā, guḍucī and devādāru is beneficial against severe kind of rheumatic diseases that affects all the limbs, the joints, the bones and marrow. For the instant relief from the affect of the diseases, a kind of medicinal drink prepared

\textsuperscript{40} varī vidārī pathyā ca balātrayam. iĀP.283.21
\textsuperscript{41} ibid. 298.14-15
\textsuperscript{42} pañcāṅgula / ibid. 363.29; citraka/ ibid. 286.21
\textsuperscript{43} erand̄atailayuk vāṭāśoṇitaḥrt, ibid. 283.16
\textsuperscript{44} ĀP. 285.40
with *eranda*, *punarnava*, two types of *brhati*, *gokṣura* together with asafoetida and salt is found to be administered to the patients of acute gout.\(^{45}\) In the *Garuḍapurāṇa* also, it is mentioned that in diseases due to the excessive wind, oil of *eranda* is recommended.\(^{46}\)

It is also mentioned as a medicine against troubles and pains due to rheumatism.\(^{47}\) Besides, *eranda* is mentioned as a valuable plant for the treatment of dropsy, bowels complaints and diseases related to head.\(^{48}\)*Eraṇḍa* is also found efficacious against fever caused due to some bilious troubles.\(^{49}\) Moreover, it is stated in the *Garuḍapurāṇa* that the seed of *mātuluṅga* (a kind of lemon) and the root of *eranda*, if taken with ghee by a woman desirous of male offspring is sure to give birth of a male child.\(^{50}\)

**GOKŚURA (*Tribulus terrestris*)**

*Gokṣura* is an important medicinal plant. In the *Agnipurāṇa* it is also called *vanaśṛṅgāṭaka*.\(^{51}\) It is found to have different medicinal use such as urinary disorders, fever, side pains, cough, chronic diarrhoea,
hiccup, breathing troubles and dropsy. In the Garudapurāṇa, it is stated that a drink prepared with balā, punarnavā, brhatī and gokṣura together with asafoetida and salt is beneficial for the patient having rheumatic pain. Moreover, gokṣura has been found efficacious in the treatment of headache and post delivery pain. Gokṣura is also an important medicinal composition for the treatment of all the three humours—vāta, pitta and kapha. Gokṣura, an ingredient of daśamūla, is even claimed in the Garudapurāṇa to be the medicine for all kinds of diseases. It removes ailments like inflammation and fever resulted from physical exhaustion, heartache, epilepsy, goitre and all types of rheumatic diseases and diseases of ear.

GUḌUCĪ (Tinospora cordifolia)

Guḍucī (fig.17) is an important medicinal plant. It is frequently mentioned in the Purāṇas as a plant of much medicinal importance. Guḍucī together with triphalā, pathyā, citraka, śunṭhī with the mixture of sugar, honey, ghṛta and molasses is claimed in the Agnipurāṇa to have the medicinal property to fight against all kinds of diseases and enhance life span upto three hundred years.

52 AP.283.34; 285.4-9, 32
53 GP.170.46
54 dasāmūlikṛtaḥ kvāthaḥ sājyaḥ sūturjāpahāḥ / ibid. 172.12, 173.22
55 ibid.173.22; 174.15; 177.36; 192.43-44
56 AP.283.45-46
Guduci is found efficacious in fevers caused by deranged wind, bile and phlegm. It is one of the ingredients of pañcabhadra (kuśamūla, guḍucī, parpaṭa, mustā and kirāta), a highly potent medicine in fevers caused by wind and bile. Guduci is also included in the composition of a large number of medicines against cough, chronic diarrhoea (grahaṇī), hiccups, breathing troubles and thirst. Moreover, a kind of ghee called vajraka prepared with paṭoḷa, triphalā, nimba, dhāvani, vrṣa, karaṇja and guḍucī is found efficacious against leprosy. Another formula of preparation of the medicine called yogrāja is found beneficial against eighty types of rheumatic diseases, twenty types of phlegm related diseases, piles, pimples, boils and many more complaints. Guduci is found to be an effective medicine against rheumatic diseases that affect all the limbs, joints, bones and marrow. In the Garuḍapurāṇa also, guḍucī is mentioned as an important medicinal plant that cures various kinds of diseases like venereal diseases, bilious troubles and many

57 pippalīmūlaṁ guḍucī... sarvajvarāntakah/ AP. 285.2-3
58 ibid. 285.5-6, 8-9,14
59 ibid. 285.20-21
60 ibid. 285.22-25, 30
61 rāsnāṁ guḍucīmeraṇḍadēvadārumaḥauṣadham /
pivet sarvāṅgīkēvāte sāme sandhyasthimajjage // ibid. 285.40
62 paitte guḍucyā rasameva vā, GP. 171.66, 6
others. Besides, guḍucī is found to be an ingredient of brāhmī ghee that enhances memory and merit. Loss of appetite is also cured with guḍucī.63 In the Matsyapurāṇa, guḍucī is mentioned as a medicinal plant belonging to the tikta gana.64

HARIDRĀ (Curcuma longa)

Haridrā (turmeric) has been identified as herbal medicine since remote past. It is an important ingredient in Indian cuisine and cosmetics. In the Agnipurāṇa, it is described as an effective medicine against diabetes,65 urinary troubles, dysentery of babies in breast feeding stage, a brain tonic that increases the merit of children, dental diseases, fistula, pimples and wounds.66 In the Matsyapurāṇa, two types of rajanī, haridrā and dāruharidrā, are mentioned. These are stated to have the medicinal property to destroy the effect of poison.67 Moreover, an ointment prepared with haridrā, mañjisthā, pippalī, nimba etc. is recommended as a body message for getting rid of the affect of poison.68 In the

63 GP. 192.33-34, 175.8
64 MP. 217.74
65 pātavyo rajanīkalkaḥ kṣaudrāḥ kṣaudrāpramehiṇā /AP. 283.15
66 ibid. 279.31-32, 283.1-5, 9, 23-36
67 MP. 218.13-17
68 cūrṇairhaidrāmañjisthā kipṣīkaṇānimbajaiḥ /
digdham nirviṣatāmeti gātraṁ sarvaviśārditam // ibid. 218.20-21
Garudapurana, it is found useful for patients having eye diseases.⁶⁹ Haridrā together with kūṣṭha, meṣaṣrṇgī, balā of two varieties, sallakī, punarnavā, agnimantha, eranḍa, yava, kola, kulattha and daśamūla is found as an effective medicine to cure the faults of the three humours; vāyu, kapha and pitta. Moreover, haridrā is found efficacious against phlegm.⁷⁰ An astringent prepared with haridrā, nimba, triphalā, mustā and devadāru is declared beneficial against fever that arises out of the imbalance of three humours.⁷¹ Besides, in the Garudapurana, haridrā is mentioned as an effective medicine for diseases related to neck and head.⁷² A paste of pippalī and haridrā mixed with cow's urine is recommended for external use to cure piles.⁷³

HARITAKĪ (Terminalia chebula)

It is an important ingredient of traditional medicine. In the Garudapurana, haritakī is compared to nectar. It is found to have the property of removing wind, bile and phlegm.⁷⁴ Again, the dust of

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⁶⁹ haridrādārūsindhūttharasāñjjanaiḥ sagairikaiḥ /
pisthairdatto bahirlepo netravyādhinivārakaḥ // GP. 171.53
⁷⁰ ślesmaharo vargo haridrāguḍakusṭhakam / ibid. 173.24
⁷¹ ibid. 175.11
⁷² rasaḥ śirīṣasyabījāṁ haridrāyāścaturguṇaḥ /
tena pakkvena bhūteṣa naśyāṁ mastakaroganut // ibid. 177.26-27
⁷³ pippaliṇḍa haridrāṇḍa..... arśāśi vinīvārayet / ibid.183.17
⁷⁴ GP. 169.22-23
haritakī, *pippali*, *trivrta* and ghee is found to be a powerful medicine against bowels complaints. *Haritakī* is also an ingredient of the medicine for curing fever of all kinds including diabetes and *kuṣṭha*. It is stated in the *Agnipurāna* that after boiling *haritakī* in the urine of cow, one should consume it with oil and salt to remove *kapha* and *vāta*. *Haritakī* together with *vacā*, *śuṇṭhī* etc. is recommended for the treatment of dysentery, tumour, pain, diseases of the bowels, cough etc.

It is stated in the *Agnipurāna* that *haritakī* if taken with ghee, honey and molasses keeps the colour of hair black and increases longevity. Apart from this, a decoction made of *triphalā*, *amṛtā*, *vāsā* etc. is said to cure jaundice. Here, in this connection, it can be said that *haritakī* is an ingredient of the well known *triphalā*. In the *Matsyapurāṇa* also, this fruit is considered as an important medicinal ingredient. In the *Brahmavaivartapurāṇa*, again, the ripe and dried *haritakī* is mentioned as a powerful medicine against phlegm.
KAṆṬAKĀṆI (Solanum xanthocarpum)

*Kaṇṭakārī* (fig.18) is referred in the Purāṇas as one valuable medicinal plant. The root of *kaṇṭakārī* has been found to be a popular medicine against cough, fever and pain. It is an ingredient of *daśamūla* (ten roots) and is largely used in the treatment of a great variety of diseases. In the *Garuḍapurāṇa*, *kaṇṭakārī* is recommended against dysentery, dropsy, thirst and feeling of distaste etc. Moreover, a type of ghee prepared with the astringent of *daśamūla* is considered a powerful remedy against bodily pain of the mother of a newly born child. It is also found beneficial in the treatment of patients having cough, bilious and rheumatic troubles. Besides, *kaṇṭakārī* is an ingredient of *brāhmīghṛta*, a brain tonic for the enhancement of merit and the power of memory.

MARĪCA (*Piper nigrum*)

The medicinal value of *marīca* (black pepper) has been known to mankind from remote past. In different Purāṇas, the medicinal importance of *marīca* is found.

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82 AP.285.4
83 GP. 168.46-48
84 ibid. 170.13-14, 43, 46
85 daśamūḷīkṛtaḥ kvāṭhaḥ sājyaḥ sūtirujāpahāḥ / ibid. 172.12
86 ibid. 173.22
87 kaṇṭakārīyā...śrutimedhākaraṁ param, ibid. 174.3
In the *Agnipurāṇa* it is recommended as a cure against leprosy,\(^88\) dysentery accompanied by swelling,\(^89\) feeling of distaste, thirst, cough, fever and pimples.\(^90\) In the *Garuḍapurāṇa* also, *marīca* is described as a medicinal plant of immense value. In this Purāṇa *marīca* has been referred in connection with the treatment of diseases like dysentery, jaundice and leprosy.\(^91\) Medicinally, it is much used in combination with long pepper and ginger under the name of *trikatu* or *vyoṣa*. In the *Agnipurāṇa*, *trikatu* is mentioned in connection with different medicinal preparations. It is stated in this Purāṇa that *trikatu* together with *triphala*, *rāsṇā* etc. is beneficial in all kinds of eye diseases.\(^92\) A kind of medicated oil prepared with *jāti* leaves, *vyoṣa*, *niśā* boiled on milk and *abhayaṅkalka* (levigated powder obtained from *abhaya* or *haritaki*) is mentioned as a remedy against dental diseases.\(^93\) A person having cough and rheumatism is advised to drink the astringent of *triphala* and *trikatu* along with *ksāra lavaṇa*\(^94\) (a kind of salt). Moreover, a pill prepared with the dust of *pāṭhā*,

\(^88\) viḍaṅgaṁ maricaṁ mustaṁ kuṣṭhaṁ lodhraṁ suvarcikā / manahśilā ca vāleyaḥ kuṣṭhahā mūtrapeśitaḥ // AP. 279.16  
\(^89\) ibid. 285.11, 15; 61-62  
\(^90\) samarīcaṁ śṭaṁ taiṁṁ kṣīre syād vṛṇārohaṇaṁ / ibid. 283.25  
\(^91\) GP.171.15; 183.2-3  
\(^92\) AP.279.46  
\(^93\) jāṭipatraṁ phalaṁ vyosāṁ ...dvijārtinut // AP. 283.9  
\(^94\) ibid. 285.38, 56
nikumbha, triphalā and trikaṭu consumed with cow’s urine is claimed to cure tumour and spleen. Further, it has been observed that trikaṭu has the efficacy to cure eye diseases and enhance digestive power. Again, the juice of mātulunāga, trikaṭu, kṣaudra, drāksā, yava, godhūma and śāli rice is declared beneficial for the patients having breathing troubles and hiccups. It is found to have possessed the medicinal property to cure dropsy and five kinds of cough. Besides, a patient having udari, a disease that causes enlargement of abdomen due to dropsy or flatulence, is advised to drink milk along with trikaṭu. In the Matsyapurāṇa also marīca is mentioned as a highly potent medicinal plant. The Brahmandaivarta-purāṇa also mentions marīca, pippali and ṣuṣka ārdraka (dry ginger) as powerful medicines against deranged phlegm.

MUSTĀ (Cyperus rotundus)

Mustā (fig.19) is a valuable medicinal plant. It possesses good number of medicinal properties. The Purāṇas contain reference of the

95 vyōsadisaṁskṛtaḥ............bhoyaycchvāsakāsīnam / AP.279.21
96 savyoṣāyorajaḥ kṣāraḥ.......................... sothahṛt / ibid. 283.40
97 ibid. 285.7
98 sevyā jāthaṛiṇā kṛṣṇā snukṣiravahubhāvītā/
payo vā rucya dantyāgniṃdaṅgavyoṣakalkayuk / ibid. 283.17
99 MP. 217.62
100 maricāṁ pippalaiṁ śuṣkamāḍrakaṁ jīvakaṁ madhu /
dravyānyetāni gāndharvi sadyaḥślesmaharāṇi ca // BRVP. 1.16.71
different medicinal properties of this plant. In the Agnipurāṇa, it is stated that mustā and parpaṭa boiled in water and cooked is beneficial for the patient of fever.\textsuperscript{101} It has the efficacy to fight against leprosy, urinary complaints, chronic dysentery, dysentery accompanied by swelling and many more types of diseases.\textsuperscript{102} It is found efficacious in the treatment of fever due to wind and bile disorder and is included in the list of pañcabhadra\textsuperscript{103} (five beneficial medicinal plants). In the Garuḍapurāṇa also, mustā is mentioned against fever\textsuperscript{104} due to deranged wind, bile and phlegm, dysentery etc. The Matsyapurāṇa also contains reference of mustā as a valuable medicinal plant.\textsuperscript{105}

**NIMBA (Azadirachta indica)**

*Nimba* is a very well known tree in India. Every part of the tree has medicinal properties. In the Agnipurāṇa, it is stated to be a beneficial medicinal plant against fever.\textsuperscript{106} The dust of nimba is found to be an effective medicine for ripening and making the boils\textsuperscript{107} open. In the Purāṇic days, the leaf of nimba was given to the patient suffering from

\textsuperscript{101} AP. 279.4  
\textsuperscript{102} ibid. 279.16; 31-34; 283.29  
\textsuperscript{103} vāṭapittajvare deyaṁ pañcabhadramidam sr̥t̥m / ibid. 285.5  
\textsuperscript{104} GP.170.11; 175.3-6  
\textsuperscript{105} MP. 217.68  
\textsuperscript{106} paṭolarm saphalam nimbarṁ parpaṭaṁ daḍimarṁ jvare / AP. 279.7 ibid. 279.54  
\textsuperscript{107} ibid.279.54
snake bite. Moreover, *nimba* acts as the medicine against leprosy and fistula. It is an important ingredient of *pañcatiktagṛta* that cures eighty types of rheumatic diseases, forty types of bilious complaints and twenty types of phlegmatic disorder and cures the patients of cough, piles etc. The leaves of *nimba* have been proved to be a good cleanser for the wound of pimples. Besides, a decoction prepared with *arka*, *varṣabhū* and *nimba* is found to be an effective medicine for dropsy. Apart from these, the dust of *nimba* and the decoction of *khadira* and the juice of *bhṛṅga* are stated in the *Agnipurāṇa* to be the most powerful medicine to fight against diseases and conquer death. In the *Garuḍapurāṇa*, *nimba* is recommended against *upadamśa* (a kind of venereal disease), rheumatic diseases, pimples, jaundice, eye diseases, acidity etc. In the *Matsyapurāṇa*, it is stated that anointing the body with *haridrā*, *maṅjiśṭhā*, *pippalī*, *nimba* etc. removes the affect of pain.

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108 bhakṣaṇaṁ nimbapatrāṇāṁ sarpadāṣṭasya bheṣajam /Āṛ. 279.56
109 ibid. 279.56; 283.23; 285.20-24
110 madhukāṁ nimbapatrāṇī lepaḥ syādvraṇaśodhaḥ / ibid. 285.33
111 AP.285.50
112 ibid. 286.9-10
113 ibid. 171.6, 13-14
114 nimba patrasya vā lepaḥ sa bhaved vṛnaśoṣaṇaḥ / ibid. 170.71
115 ibid. 170.23, 171.31, 59-60
116 MP.218.20-21
PARPAṬA (Oldenlandia herbacea)

Parpaṭa is a much valued plant in the Purāṇas. It has been observed that parpaṭa is effective against fever, leprosy, rheumatic diseases\(^{117}\) etc. The Agnipurāṇa states that a decoction\(^{118}\) prepared with paṭola, amṛta, bhūnimba, vāsā, ariṣṭa and parpaṭa together with khadira is an effective medicine against fever due to abscess. The Garuḍapurāṇa also mentioned parpaṭa (fig.20) as a plant having highly potent medicinal property which is used to cure the patients of fever. Water boiled with mustā, uṣīra, candana, udīcyā, nāgara and Parpaṭa and cooled down is recommended for the patients of thirst after fever.\(^ {119}\) Again, parpaṭa is mentioned in this Purāṇa as an ingredient of the medicine for the treatment of atīsāra. It is stated in the Garuḍapurāṇa that parpaṭa with mustā, śrīngevarā, śālaparṇī, brhati, kantakārī, balā, pāṭhā etc. is beneficial for the patient of atīsāra and fever.\(^{120}\)

PIPPALĪ (Piper longum)

Pippali or māgadhi\(^ {121}\) is a plant of great medicinal value. In the Agnipurāṇa, pippali is found to be used against a good number of...

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117 AR 279.7, 15-16, 26
118 paṭolāṁṛta......parpaṭaiḥ.......visphoṭajvaraśāntikṛt / AP. 285.30-31
119 GP.170.1
120 ibid.170.13-14
121 GP. 169.29
diseases such as bronchitis, thirst, cough, fever, tuberculosis\textsuperscript{122} etc. A decoction prepared with \textit{pippali}, \textit{citraka}, \textit{śunṭhī}, \textit{triphalā}, \textit{trivrṭā}, \textit{vacā} etc. proves beneficial for the patients of dropsy.\textsuperscript{123} The \textit{Garudapurāṇa} also speaks of the medicinal importance of \textit{pippali}. According to this Purāṇa, \textit{pippali} is a remedy against cough, bronchitis, gout, piles, \textit{raktapitta} and fever.\textsuperscript{124} It is stated that the patients suffering from dropsy should consume \textit{pippali} along with water or molasses.\textsuperscript{125} Besides, \textit{pippali} is found effective in the treatment of boils and inflammation, eye diseases, bronchitis and also for the pregnant women.\textsuperscript{126} The medicinal importance of \textit{pippali} is referred in the \textit{Brahmavaivartapurāṇa} also. \textit{Pippali} is included in the group of plants that destroy phlegm.\textsuperscript{127}

\textbf{PUNARNAVĀ (\textit{Boerhavia diffusa})}

\textit{Punarnavā} (fig.21) is an important medicinal plant. In different Purāṇas, it is mentioned as an important plant of medicinal value. In the \textit{Agnipurāṇa}, it is stated that \textit{punarnavā} together with \textit{daśamūlī},

\textsuperscript{122} guḍuceī vāsakaṁ lodhraṁ pippalīkṣaudraksamīyutaṁ /
\hfil kaphāṅvitaṁjayedraktāṁ trṣṇākāśaṅjvarāpaham // AP. 285.14
\textsuperscript{123} ibid. 285.47-49
\textsuperscript{124} GP. 169.29-30 ; 170.20, 24
\textsuperscript{125} sothaharam............pippaliṁ vā payo'nvitām// GP. 170.65
\textsuperscript{126} ibid.171.36,58; 184.12
\textsuperscript{127} BRVP. 1.16.70-71
chinnaruha, pathyā, śigrū etc. is beneficial for remedying fevers, abscess and swelling.\textsuperscript{128} A drink prepared with punarnavā, balā, eranda, two types of brhatī, gokṣura and hingū and salt are recommended against rheumatic diseases.\textsuperscript{129} Drinking a pala (weight) of pulverized punarnavā together with honey, clarified butter and milk, is prescribed in the Agnipurāṇa against all kinds of ailments.\textsuperscript{130} The medicinal value of this plant is mentioned in the Garudapurāṇa also in connection with the medicinal treatment of a good number of diseases like dropsy, fever, thirst etc. Punarnavā also possesses the body purifying element in it.\textsuperscript{131} It is an important ingredient of the medicine against earache.\textsuperscript{132} It is also a beneficial plant against old age diseases.\textsuperscript{133} The Matsyapurāṇa states that punarnavā has the efficacy to remove the affect of poison\textsuperscript{134} and includes it in the group of medicinal plants which are recommended to be stored in a fort.

\footnotesize
\begin{center}
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128 & daśamūlicchinnaruḥā pathyā dāru punarnavā / jvara vidradhi śotheṣu śigrūviśvajitāḥ hitāḥ // AP. 285.32 \\
129 & AP.285.46 \\
130 & ibid.286.15 \\
131 & GP. 173.16-17 \\
132 & ibid.192.43-44 \\
133 & ibid.184.17-18 \\
134 & seluḥ pāṭalāṭivīṣā śigrū mūrvā punarnavā...viṣanāśanam // MP. 218.4-5
\end{tabular}
\end{center}
ŚATAMŪLI (Asparagus racemosus)

Śatamūli is considered as an important medicinal plant. Different Purāṇas contain references of this plant in connection with treatment of diseases of different nature. In the Agnipurāṇa, śatamūli is recommended for preventing aging.135 It is stated in this Purāṇa that satāvarīghta is prepared with the mixture of clarified butter, juice of śatamūli or śatāvarī boiled in milk. It is prescribed to one who desires a long life.136 In the Matsyapurāṇa, śatamūli is considered a mahauṣadha or a plant of immense medicinal benefits.137 According to the Garudapurāṇa, śatamūli is beneficial in the treatment of a good number of diseases.138 Šatāvarī together with śatapuspa, devadāru, māṃṣī, śaileya, balā, candana, tagara, kuṣṭha, manahśilā, jyotismati is found to have the efficacy to fight leprosy and other physical deformities.139

VACĀ (Acorus calamus)

It is regarded as a useful plant in the traditional system of medicine. In the Agnipurāṇa, vacā (fig.22) is mentioned as a plant having the efficacy to kill many diseases. In the age of the Purāṇas, the

135 AP.283.43
136 dirghamāyurjjītvīṣuḥ,....satāvarīrase,...., ibid. 279.49
137 MP. 218.33
138 satāvari,.....viḍaṅgabṛṅgarājādī bhāvitarī sarvarōganut / GP. 172.26-27
139 ibid. 174.8-10
physicians used *vaca* to treat the patients of epilepsy (*apasmāra*), mental diseases,\(^{140}\) abdominal pain, diseases of bowels, cough and tumour\(^{141}\). It is also found to be used as an emetic.\(^{142}\) In the *Garuḍapurāṇa*, it is mentioned that *vaca* together with *pippali*, *tagara* etc. is beneficial in the treatment of eye diseases.\(^{143}\) It is also an important ingredient of *brāhmighṛta* which is used to enhance memory and merit.\(^{144}\) The *Agnipurāṇa* contains reference of a drink prepared with *vaca*, *agniśikhā*, *vāsā*, *śunṭhī*, *krṣnā*, *niśāgada*, *yaṣṭi* and *saindhava*. This medicinal drink should be taken in the morning for the enhancement of merit, improvement of voice, beauty of human body and preventing loss of memory.\(^{145}\) Besides, *vaca* taken together with *ksāra*, *trikatu*, *viḍaṅga* and *atibalā* is found effective against the bite of an insect.\(^{146}\)

**VĀSAKA** (*Adhatoda vasika nees*)

*Vāsaka* is regarded as an important plant in the traditional system of medicine. The medicinal importance of *vāsaka* is recognized in different

\(^{140}\) *śāṅkhapuṣṭipacākuṣṭhaḥ siddhāṁ brāhmirasaiṛyutaiḥ /

purāṇaṁ hantyaṇapasmāraṁ sonmādaṁ medhyamuttamam // *GṛP*. 285.19

\(^{141}\) ibid. 285.54-55

\(^{142}\) *vacaḥalakaśaṇyoṭtharm payo vamanakṛdbhavet /ibid. 283.41*

\(^{143}\) *GṛP*. 177.12

\(^{144}\) ibid. 174.1-3

\(^{145}\) *vāgrūpasampadyuktāyurmedhāśrīrvardhvate, AP.283.3-4*

\(^{146}\) *ksāravyoṣavacāhiṅguḍaṅgaṁ …. sarvakṛtaviṣaṁ haret/ ibid. 298.14-15*
Purāṇas especially in the *Agnipurāṇa*. In this Purāṇa, it is prescribed against thirst, cough, fever, leprosy, tuberculosis etc.\(^{147}\) *Vāsā* (a variety of *vāsaka*) is recommended as a remedy for bile and wind disorder.\(^ {148}\) In this connection, it is to be noted that of the two varieties, *vāsaka* and *vāsā*, the later is found to have possessed much medicinal value and is used in the treatment of jaundice\(^ {149}\) and other diseases. Moreover, it is found to be an ingredient of the medicinal drink for the enhancement of merit.\(^ {150}\)

Besides, a medicine with the composition of *paṭola*, *amṛtā*, *bhūnimba*, *ariṣṭa*, *parpaṭa* and *vāsā* is referred in the *Agnipurāṇa* in connection with the treatment of abscess in association with fever.\(^ {151}\) The *Garuḍapurāṇa* also mentions *vāsaka* as an effective plant of high potency. In this Purāṇa, *Vāsaka* is claimed to cure all types of diseases.\(^ {152}\)

Medicinal pills or dusts composed of *varṣābhū*, *brāhmi*, *eranda*, *bhringarāja*, *yaṣṭi*, *daśamūla*, *khadira*, and *vāsaka* are described in the *Garuḍapurāṇa* as a powerful medicine that remedied all kinds of diseases.\(^ {153}\)

\(^{147}\) AP. 283.21; 285.7, 14-15, 21-23
\(^{148}\) vāsānimbapatolāni triphalā vātapittanuṭ / ibid. 285.57
\(^{149}\) ibid. 283.19
\(^{150}\) ibid. 283.4-5
\(^{151}\) paṭolāṁṛtabhūnimbavāsā.......visphoṭajvarasāntikṛt // ibid. 285.31
\(^{152}\) GP. 174.4
\(^{153}\) ibid. 174.14-15
VIDANÇA (Embelia ribes)

Vidañga is an important medicinal plant. It is frequently mentioned in the Purāṇas. It is stated in the Agnipurāṇa\textsuperscript{154} that vidañga together with devadāru, balā, vāsā etc. is efficacious against pañcakāśa, five kinds of cough. Vidañga (fig.23) is mentioned as an important ingredient in the preparation of a medicinal jam which is considered useful in the treatment of old age diseases and enhancement of longevity.\textsuperscript{155} Vidañga together with cow’s urine is beneficial in the treatment of the patients having intestinal worms.\textsuperscript{156} It is described in the Agnipurāṇa as an ingredient of the medicine against jaundice, dysentery, piles and tumours.\textsuperscript{157} In the Garudapurāṇa also, vidañga is referred in connection with several diseases such as leprosy, worms, diabetes, boils and fistula.\textsuperscript{158}

VILVA (Aegle marmelos)

Vilva tree is considered as an auspicious tree to the orthodox Hindus. In the Purāṇas, the root of the tree is included in the list of ten

\textsuperscript{154} AP.285.7
\textsuperscript{155} ibid.283.42-44
\textsuperscript{156} vidangaścūrṇam gomūtraṃ sarvatra krimināśane / ibid. 279.42
\textsuperscript{157} ibid.283.18-19
\textsuperscript{158} \$171.19-23
precious ingredients of the group of *daśamūla*, a most popular formulation. In the *Agnipurāṇa*, *vilva* is prescribed for patients having fever, abscess, dropsy, cough, hiccups and diarrhoea.\(^{159}\) Moreover, a decoction of *pañcamūlā* including *vilva* is recommended for the patient suffering from rheumatic complaints.\(^{160}\) Besides, it is regarded as a beneficial fruit for the patient of chronic dysentery and intestinal diseases.\(^{161}\) The *Garudapurāṇa* also mentions *vilva* in connection with several diseases like phlegmatic and bilious complaints, intestinal worms etc.\(^{162}\) *Vilva, punarnavā* and *pippalī* are also found in this Purāṇa to have used in the preparation of medicines for causing pregnancy.\(^{163}\) In the *Matsyapurāṇa*, *vilva* is said to have the medicinal property to remove the effect of poison.\(^{164}\) According to the *Brahmavaivarta-purāṇa*, it is a plant of immense medicinal benefits. *Vilva* is said to have the power to enhance strength and nourishment of the body and an effective medicine that remedies the diseases caused by excessive biles.\(^{165}\)

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159 AP. 285.8-9, 32
160 vilvādipañcamūlasya kvāthāḥ syādvātike jvare / ibid. 285.2
161 ibid. 285.59-60
162 GP. 169.11-12
163 ibid. 184.11-12
164 MP. 218.2-3
165 bilvatālaphalāṁ ......balapūṣṭipradāṁ param /BRVP. 1.16.62-63
ii) PLANTS IN THE TREATMENT OF PHYSICAL AILMENTS

It has been observed that the Purāṇas contain reference of a wide variety of medicines of plant origin. A good number of plants are mentioned in the Matsyapurāṇa wherein almost seventy five plants are claimed to have great medicinal value (mahauṣadha).\textsuperscript{166} The medicinal plants as mentioned in the Agnipurāṇa and the Garuḍapurāṇa are found efficacious in the treatment of various diseases like fever, dysentery and diarrhoea, diabetes, diseases of eye, diseases relating to deranged wind, bile and phlegm, urinary troubles, tuberculosis and many more. A wide variety of medicinal plants and herbs are also described in the other Purāṇas such as the Vāmanapurāṇa,\textsuperscript{167} Kūrmapurāṇa,\textsuperscript{168} Vāyupurāṇa\textsuperscript{169} etc. In these Purāṇas, some medicinal plants are described in connection with general health and the treatment of different kinds of diseases. In the Agnipurāṇa, it is stated that the diseases are diagnosed by the physicians on observation of characteristic features of the patients. It is observed that the climatic conditions of different regions such as anūpa (marshy), jāngala (arid) and sādhāraṇa (common) produce different effects on human body. The people residing in anūpa region abounding in trees and

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{166} MP. 218.22-34
\bibitem{167} VMP. 69.88, 91.51
\bibitem{168} KUP. 4.18.20,24
\bibitem{169} VAP. 43.4, 6, 9
\end{thebibliography}
plenty of water suffer from excess wind. But the people of the region with the reverse features i.e. devoid of trees and water called jāṅgala are found to suffer due to excessive bile. In the Brahmavaivartapurāṇa, it is stated that the fault of humour--wind, bile and phlegm--is at the root of all diseases. According to this Purāṇa, irregular eating creates the imbalance of humour. It is mentioned in the Brahmavaivartapurāṇa that drinking water immediately after eating tāla or vilva was found to be the cause of serious bilious diseases. Likewise, bitter juice in the month of Bhādra is considered harmful for bile. For getting rid of bilious humour, the Brahmavaivartapurāṇa prescribed some plants such as dhanyāka, caṇaka, vilva, tāla, ārdraka, tila etc. The patients suffering from phlegmatic disorder are advised to take ripe haritakī, immature piṇḍāraka, green banana, sindhuvāra, marīca, pippali, śunṭhī and jīraka. These plants are found efficacious for strengthening and nourishment of human body after the removal of phlem. Patients suffering from excess of wind are advised to take kadali, tāla, kharjūra, the juice of āmalaka and the water of nārikela. In the Agnipurāṇa also, various plants are prescribed for the treatment of the fault of humours. The Brahmavaivartapurāṇa opines that the diseases are of sixty four types

170 AP. 280.15-16
171 BRVP. 1.16.29, 1.16.59-77
such as, kāmala, kuṣṭha, jvara, atisāra, grahaṇi, mūtrakrechra, sannipāta, etc.  

The Agnipurāṇa and the Garuḍapurāṇa also contain description of a good number of diseases. Of these, fever, dysentery, diarrhoea, jaundice, intestinal worms, piles, cough, cold, hiccups, breathing troubles, bronchitis, abdominal pain, skin diseases, urinary troubles, tuberculosis, eye diseases, diseases of teeth, ear etc. are highlighted. The study reveals that out of the vast treasure of medicinal plants some are found to have possessed the properties to fight against all types of diseases. These plants were used in different combinations for different diseases.

Some common diseases from which Purānic people suffered from and the medicinal plants and herbs that were used by the physicians to treat such diseases are discussed below.

**JVARA (Fever)**

Among the common diseases, fever seems to be the vital one. According to the Brahmavaivartapurāṇa, fever is mainly of three types and it arises out of the defect of any of the three humours—wind, bile and phlegm. Mention is also found of a kind of severe type of fever called sannipātā jvara which is caused due to the defect of all the three

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172 bhedaprabhedena catuḥṣaṣṭi rūjayāḥ smṛtyah / BRVP 1.16.33

173 jvarabhedaśca trividhaścaturthaśca tridaśajah / BRVP. 1.16.30
humours. In case of fever due to abscess, the plants such as *paṭola*, *amṛta*, *bhūnimba*, *vāśa*, *khadira*, *ariṣṭa* and *parpaṭa* proved beneficial. The plants such as *kuśamūla*, *guḍucī*, *parpaṭa*, *mustā*, *kirāta* and *śuṇṭhi* etc. are recommended to the patients of fever due to deranged wind and bile. Moreover, a decoction of *pañcamūla* (five roots) is found to be an excellent remedy for fever due to deranged wind. Again, patients having fever, indigestion, pain on the sides of the body and cough are administered a drug with the composition of *vilva*, *agnimantha*, *śyonāka*, (fig.24) *kāśmari*, *prśniparnī*, *brhatī*, *kanṭakārī* and the roots of *kuśa*. Besides, the group of plants such as *nimba*, *paṭola*, *triphalā*, *guḍucī*, *khadira*, *vrśa*, *bhūnimba*, *pāṭhā* and *raktacandana* are recommended against fever, leprosy and tumour. The plants *daśamūlī*, *chinnaruhā*, *dāru*, *punarnavā*, *śigrū* and *pathyā* are prescribed by the physicians against fever.

In the *Garudapurāṇa* also, different combination of plants are prescribed for different kinds of fever. In this Purāṇa, it is stated that a

174 AP. 285.31
175 ibid. 285.4-5
176 ibid. 285.2
177 AP. 285.3-4
178 bhūnimba pāṭhā.....jvaram hanti, ibid. 285.29-30
179 ibid 285.32
decoction of the plants dhātrī, vahni etc. is beneficial to all kinds of fever.\textsuperscript{180} Again, trivṛtā, triphalā, śyāmā and pippalī are considered a powerful medicine for sannipāta jvara.\textsuperscript{181}

In the Agnipurāṇa, some diet for the patient suffering from fever is prescribed. These are lāja, viśva, water boiled with mustā, udīcyā, parpaṭa, uṣīra, candana, paṭola, nimba, dāḍima etc. Different varieties of rice such as old svāstika, nīvāra, raktaśāli, pramodaka, and pulses like mudga, masūra, caṇaka, kulattha etc. are regarded as beneficial for the patient of fever.\textsuperscript{182}

\textbf{ATĪSĀRA (Dysentry)}

\textit{Atīsāra} (mucous and stools) is the common bowels complaints that people often suffered from. In the Purāṇas, the Agnipurāṇa in particular, several plants are recommended against dysentery. It is stated in the Agnipurāṇa that the decoction of simhī, śaṭī, two kinds of niśā and vatsaka is an effective medicine of dysentery for children.\textsuperscript{183} The patient suffering from dysentery is advised to take old śāli rice, bark of lodhra, suṣka ādraka, bark of tintīḍī, sarṣapa, two varities of turmeric (niśā and vatsaka), vilva, āmra, dhātakī, pāṭhā, mocā etc.

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{180} GP. 170.10 \\
\textsuperscript{181} ibid. 170.24 \\
\textsuperscript{182} AP. 279.3-9 \\
\textsuperscript{183} svāstika niśāyugmam ..........sarvatisāresu stanyadosesu, ibid. 283.1
\end{footnotesize}
Among these, some are advised as a drink taken with butter milk or hot water and some with treacle. In case of dysentery accompanied by swelling, vidanqa, ativisha, musta, duru, patha, kalinga etc. are recommended to be taken together with marica. Some plants are found effective in prolonged atisara. These are vatsaka, ativisha, visva, vilva and musta. The patients of dysentery are to follow a diet that includes old sali rice.

In the Garudapurana, different combination of plants is prescribed for different kinds of dysentery. It is found that the patients sometimes suffer from atisara associated with fever. Water boiled with prsniparni, bal, vilva, nagara, utpala, dhanya, patha, bhunimba, musta, and parpataka is an effective remedy for dysentery associated with fever. This Purana also suggests that plants such as nagara, ativisha, musta, bhunimba, amrt and vatsaka are effective against dysentery of any type. In case of blood dysentery, vatsaka, ativisha, visva etc. are referred

184 A 283.1; 285.59-60
185 ibid. 285.61-62
186 ibid. 283.28-29
187 atisare purananaam salinam vha tightly hitam/ ibid. 279.9-10
188 GP.170.10-11
189 ibid. 170.12
in this Purāṇa as a powerful remedy. Moreover, a group of plants such as daśamūli, śaṭī, rāsnā, pippali, vilva, āmalaka, bhārgī, guḍucī and nāgavallī compounded well and decoction prepared is found efficacious for diarrhoea and other diseases.

**KAPHA ROGA (Diseases relating to cough)**

The person with excess phlegm and cough suffer from some diseases like asthma, bronchial infection etc. In the days of the Purāṇas such diseases were treated with some medicinal plants and herbs only. The person with excess of phlegm and cough is found to be given the juice of śrṅgevara (ārdraka) together with honey. For removing cough and difficult breathing a decoction prepared with daśamūli, śaṭī, rāsnā, pippali, vilva, āmalaka, bhārgī, guḍucī is administered to the patients. Besides, some other plants like devadāru, balā, vāsā, triphalā, trikaṭu, padmaka and viḍaṅga are regarded beneficial for the patient having cough. Juice of vāsaka is also prescribed to the patient suffering from cough only. Some other plants are also found efficacious for the
treatment of cough. These include *vilva*, *agnimantha*, *śyonāka*, *kāśmari*, *parpaṭa*, *trikaṇṭaka*, *prśniparṇī*, *brhati*, *kaṇṭakārī*, *āmalaka*, *abhaya* etc. Children suffering from cough are treated with *atīvisā*.

The *Garuḍapurāṇa* also made mention of some medicinal plants for the treatment of *kapha*. These include *pañcamūla* and *daśamūla*. Besides, some other plants such as *vilva*, *kākamāci*, *varsābhū*, *eranda*, *cāṅgerī*, *kaṇṭakārī*, *mātulūṅga*, *guḍuci* etc. are found beneficial for the treatment of cough.

The *Agnipurāṇa* also recommended some diet for the patients suffering from breathing difficulty and cough. These include *śuṣka mūlaka*, *pūpa*, the juice of *mātulūṅga* cooked with *dādima*, *yava*, *godhūma*, *śāli* seasoned with *kṣaudra*, *drākṣā* and *trikatu*. In the *Brahmavaivartapurāṇa*, some plants are recommended for getting rid of *ślesma* such as ripe *haritakī*, *rambhā*, *marīca*, *pippalī*, *śuṣka ārdraka* and *jīvaka*.

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196 AP.285.3-4
197 ekā cātīvisā kāśacchardirjvaraharī śisōh / AP. 283.2
198 bilvaḥ śoṇā……… ca śasyate / GP. 168.46-48
199 GP.168.46
200 AP. 279.19-21
201 BRVP.1.16.68-71
PĀṆḌU ROGA (Jaundice)

Jaundice has been found to be a frightening disease even today in spite of the advance treatment offered by modern medical science. In different Purāṇas, especially in the *Agnipurāṇa* and the *Garudapurāṇa*, some medicinal plants are recommended against jaundice. In the *Agnipurāṇa*, some medicinal plants are recommended against jaundice. The plants are *granthika*, *abhaya*, *viḍāṅga*, *krṣṇā*, *triphalā*, *amṛtā*, *vāsā*, *bhūnimba*. A decoction prepared with these plants together with honey is prescribed to a patient having jaundice. The *Garudapurāṇa* also holds the same prescription for jaundice. Moreover, it suggests a patient of jaundice to take *yaṣṭimadhu* with sugar and *vāsaka* with honey. Another kind of effective medicine prepared with *citraka*, *śūrāṇa*, *sunṭhī*, *marīca*, *pippalimūla*, and *viḍāṅga* mixed with molasses is referred in this Purāṇa in connection with the treatment of jaundice. It is said that a kind of collirium prepared with *marīca* and the flower of *tila* is effective in jaundice. A decoction of *triphalā*, *dāru* and

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202 *granthikogrābhaya ..........pāṇḍu gulma krimin haret / AP. 283.18*
203 *ibid. 283.19*
204 *GP. 170.23*
205 *yaṣṭimadhu śarkarā ca vāsakasya.......raktapittakāmala., ibid. 190.26*
206 *ibid. 192.1-3*
207 *ibid.183.3*
ksaudra is prescribed in the Garudapurāṇa as a good medicine against jaundice.208

ARŚA (Piles)

The problem of piles is an age-old one. It was one of the common diseases which people suffered from during the days of the Purāṇas. Some medicinal plants are mentioned in the Agnipurāṇa. In the Agnipurāṇa the plants granthika, abhayā, viḍaṅga etc. are recommended to the patients of piles.209 Besides, pañcatiktagṛhta prepared with paṭoḷa, nimba, guḍucī, vyāghṛī and vāsaka is found to be an effective medicine for curing piles.210

The Garudapurāṇa also contains reference of different types of medicinal plants in connection with treatment of piles. According to this Purāṇa, citraka is a beneficial plant in this regard. Kalka (levigated powder) and kvātha (decoction) of citraka is found to be prescribed against piles.211 Again, guḍucī, pippali and abhayā fried with ghee are mentioned in the Garudapurāṇa as a powerful medicine for curing piles. Tila mixed with ikṣu is also found a remedy against piles.212 The

208 सद 170.58
209 AP.283.18
210 ibid. 285.21-24
211 citrakakvaṭhakalkābhyāṃ,.............śulārśogham, GP. 170.17
212 ibid.170.20-21
Gaḍurapurāṇa contains reference of an ointment for external use in case of piles. It is stated in this Purāṇa that pippalī and haridrā mixed with cow’s urine is to be applied to the affected area for curing piles. The diet for the patient of arśa is also advised by the physicians. Patients of piles are required to eat raktaśāli, nīvāra, kalama variety of rice, śāka, pathyā etc.

VĀTA (Rheumatism)

Rheumatism is considered a vital disease in the traditional science of medicine. It is found to be at the root of many diseases. In the Purānic days, rheumatism was, perhaps, a common disease. Different types of medicines are referred in the Purāṇas against rheumatism of different varieties. All these medicines are prepared with different groups of plants. A decoction of vāsā, vyādhighāta and oil of eranḍa is found efficacious against vātaśonita, a type of rheumatic disease. Oil boiled with rāsnā is recommended in the Agnipurāṇa for the patients of rheumatism. Moreover, haritakī boiled in cow’s urine and taken with oil and salt is

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213 pippaliḥca haridrāḥca gomūtreṇa samanvitāṁ/
prakṣipecca gudadvare arśāsi vinivārayet // GP. 183.17

214 AP. 279.29-30

215 ibid. 283.16

216 rāsnāsahacarairvāpi taśāṁ vātāvāriṇāṁ / ibid. 279.53
mentioned in this Purāṇa as another effective method of curing rheumatism. The decoction of trikaṭu and triphalā is also found beneficial against vāta. For curing āmavāta, another kind of rheumatic disease, the plants recommended are pippalī, vacā, citraka and nāgara. The rheumatic troubles that affect the joints, bones and marrow are found to be cured by rāsnā, guḍucī, eraṇḍa, devadāru etc. These plants are called the mahauṣadhis and recommended in vāta that affects the whole body. Besides, the root, leaves and branches of prasārini, the juice or dust or decoction of guḍucī are mentioned in the Agnipurāṇa as a beneficial medicine against vātaṣoṇīta. The Garuḍapurāṇa also made mention of a good number of plants for the treatment of rheumatic ailments. These are godhūma, rājamāśa, kulattha, siddhārta, varṣābhū, kākamācī, mūlaka, and many more. Daśāmulā is found to be an excellent medicine for rheumatic complaints. Balā, punarnavā, eraṇḍa, brhati of two varieties, gokṣura along with hiṅgu and lavana proved efficacious against vāta. In the Brahmavaivartapurāṇa, the plants recommended

217 AP. 285.37
218 ibid. 285.38-43
219 GP. 169.4-16
220 ibid. 168.46-47
221 balāpunarnavairañḍavṛhatīdvaya....vātarūjāpaham /AP.285.46
for rheumatic complaints are *kadalī, nārikela, tila, lāngalī, tāla, kharjūra* and *āmalaka.*

**KUŚṬHA (Leprosy)**

*Kuśtha* or leprosy is included in the list of sixty four types of diseases as referred to in the *Brahmavaivartapurāṇa.* In the *Agnipurāṇa* also, *Kuśtha* is considered to be a disease of vital importance. During the age of the Purāṇas, various kinds of medicines with different groups of plants were administered to the patient of leprosy. It is stated in the *Agnipurāṇa* that a kind of ghee called *vajraka*, boiled in *dhāvanī, paṭola, triphalā, nimba, guḍucī, vrṣa* etc. are found effective in leprosy. Another kind of medicine is prepared with *nimba, paṭola, vyāghṛī, guḍucī* and *vāsaka* together with *triphalā* and sugar to cure leprosy. Besides, *triphalā, khadira, vrṣa, bhūnimba, pāṭhā, raktacandana* etc. are used in the treatment of leprosy. The *Agnipurāṇa* mentioned another kind of prolonged treatment for the cure of leprosy. The patient suffering from leprosy is advised to take *vākucī* and *tila* or *pathyā, bhallātaka* and lump of molasses kept in oil for one year. Apart from these, *vidaṅga, marīca,*

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222 BRVP. 1.16.75-77
223 ibid. 1.16.31
224 AP. 285.20-23
225 ibid. 285.29-30
226 vakuci satilā bhuktā vatsarat kuśṭhanāśanī // pathyā bhallātakī tailagudapindo tu kuśṭhajit // AP. 283.13
mustā, kuṣṭha, lodhra, manaḥśilā and vāleya are also found effective for
destroying leprosy.\textsuperscript{227} Nimba is found another plant against leprosy. The
Garudapurāṇa states that a paste of nimba leaf, viḍāṅga, somarāji,
haridrā, dāruharidrā, sarṣapa mixed with the urine of cow when applied
to the affected part cures leprosy.\textsuperscript{228} The patients of leprosy are advised to
take godhūma, śāli, mudga, abhayā, pañcakola, jāṅgala, nimba, dhātrī,
patola, mātulunga, jāti, śuṣka mūlaka and water boiled with khadira.\textsuperscript{229}
The Garudapurāṇa also contains reference of the medicinal plants
against leprosy. It is mentioned that oil prepared with manaḥśilā and
marīca cures kuṣṭha. Moreover, karaṇja, tagara, kuṣṭha (a kind of plant),
karavīra etc. are said to be the destroyer of leprosy.\textsuperscript{230} Another kind of
medicine prepared with viḍāṅga, kuṣṭha, niśā, sindhu and sarṣapa is
acclaimed in the Garudapurāṇa to be the curer of leprosy.\textsuperscript{231} Besides, the
juice of ikṣu and tila is found beneficial for the patient of leprosy.\textsuperscript{232}

\begin{footnotes}
\item[227] AP. 279.16
\item[228] GP.183.18-19
\item[229] AP. 279.13-14
\item[230] GP.171.15-16
\item[231] ibid.171.19
\item[232] tilekṣurasasamyogaścāṁśhkuṣṭhavināśanaḥ / GP.170.21
\end{footnotes}
SOTHA (Dropsy)

It is a disease in which different limbs of the body -- hands, feet, neck, ankle, testicles, glands etc. become swollen. The Purāṇas, the Agnipurāṇa in particular, mentioned different plants for the treatment of swelling. According to the Agnipurāṇa, the plants used for the treatment of swelling are daśamūli, chinnaruhā, pathyā, dāru, punarnavā, šigru and viśvajitā. Apart from these, a kind of jam prepared with the root of pippali, citraka, suṇthī, triphalā, trivrṭā, vacā etc. are found beneficial for the patient of swelling. Other plants used to treat swelling are arka, varṣābhū and nimba. Again, trivrṭā is found useful in case of maturing stage of abdominal swelling.

In the days of the Purāṇas, the physicians not only dealt with curative aspects of the disease but also recommended some diet to prevent the disease. The patients afflicted with swelling were given diet chart containing śuśka mūlaka, jāṅgala, yava, godhūma, śāli rice, usīra and pathyā. The Garuḍapurāṇa also contains reference of some medicinal plants for the treatment of sotha. In this Purāṇa, it is mentioned

233 AP.285.32
234 ibid. 285.47
235 sekastathārkavarṣābhū nimbakvāthena sothajit / ibid.285.50
236 sothavipake trivrṭā pravrddhe codarādike / ibid. 285.49
237 AP. 279.23-24
that decoction which contains *daśamūla* (vilva, śonā, gambhāri, pātalā, gaṇikārikā, śālaparnī, prśniparnī, brhatī of two varities and goksura ) amṛtā, eranda, rāsnā, nāgara, marīca etc. is efficacious against swelling.\(^{238}\) Apart from these, guggulu, triphalā, kṛṣnā etc. are also mentioned beneficial in the *Garuḍapurāṇa*.\(^{239}\)

**VRAṆA** (abscess)

*Vraṇa* is a skin disease in which swelling with pus appears in different limbs of the body. In the Purānic days the patients suffering from this type of disease not only underwent treatment but also followed some recommended diet. The food that does not cause excessive phlegm is recommended for such diseases. In the *Agnipurāṇa*, it is mentioned that rice which is not over boiled is beneficial for the patient of *vraṇa*.\(^{240}\) As regards the curative aspect, different methods of treatment prevailed. The medicines prescribed for the disease are the plants and herbs of different species. Some plants are found efficacious for ripening the abscess, some for making the ripened abscess open, some again, are beneficial for destroying the wounds. In the *Agnipurāṇa*, *nimba* is found to be an effective plant for the treatment of *vraṇa*. The leaves of *nimba*

\(^{238}\) GP. 170.42-43

\(^{239}\) ibid. 171.4

\(^{240}\) AP.279.53
are stated in this Purāṇa as useful in cleansing the wound of vrana.\textsuperscript{241} Besides, the astringent of triphalā, and the juice of bhringarāja is acclaimed as an important medicine for cleansing the wound of abscess. An ointment prepared with kumbhīśara mixed with milk is recommended for external use in case of vrana. Pañcatiktaghṛta, prepared with nimba, paṭola, vyāghrī, guḍucī and vāsaka is also said to be a kind of medicine for curing vrana.\textsuperscript{242} Moreover, oil boiled with śyāmā, yaśti, rajanī, lodhra, padmaka, candana and marīca distilled in milk is found to be another medicine for healing of the wound caused by abscess.\textsuperscript{243} Besides, the dust of rajanī and lāksā is besmeared on the affected part to clear the wound.\textsuperscript{244} Moreover, a decoction of triphalā, the leaves of khadira, dārvī, atibalā nyagrodha, kuśa grass are recommended for cleaning the wounds of abscess.\textsuperscript{245} For destroying the parasites of the wound the juice of karāṇja, ariṣṭa and nirgundi is found effective. Besides, a paste made up of dhātakī, candana, balā, madhuka, nīlotpala, dārvī mixed with clarified butter and nārikela in ghee is said to be a good medicine for healing the abscess.\textsuperscript{246}

\textsuperscript{241} pakvasya ca tathā bhede nimbacūrṇaṁca ropane / AP. 279.54
\textsuperscript{242} ibid. 283.27; 285.20-25
\textsuperscript{243} śyāmā yaśṭi niśā lodhra,........syādvraṇaḥraṇaṁ / ibid.283.25
\textsuperscript{244} ibid.283.24
\textsuperscript{245} triphalā khadiro dārvī.............sodhane hitāḥ / AP. 285.33-34
\textsuperscript{246} ibid. 285.35; 283.27
In the Garudapurāṇa, mention is also made of some medicinal plants in connection with the treatment of vrana. The plants are nimba, triphalā, khadira, dārvī, nyagrodha, yastimadhu, karāṇja, nirgundī, arīṣṭa etc. Moreover, guggulu together with the dust of triphalā, is acclaimed a good medicine for drying up and cleaning the abscess.247

KṣAYA ROGA (Tuberculosis)

It is an infectious disease transmitted by a bacterium, in which tubercles (small swellings) appear in the tissues, especially the lungs. In the days of the Purāṇas, the patients of tuberculosis used to undergo treatment with plant based medicines only. The Purāṇas, especially the Agnipurāṇa contains reference of some plants in this connection. It is stated in the Agnipurāṇa that the plants śaṭī, pippali and vāsā etc. are ingredients of the medicine against tuberculosis.248 Moreover, another type of medicine prepared with varī, vidārī, pathyā, three kinds of halās and vāsaka is beneficial for the treatment of this disease.249 In the Garudapurāṇa, vāsaka is considered as an important plant having the medicinal property to cure tuberculosis.250 The Agnipurāṇa mentions yava, mudga, kulattha, old sāli, the šākas (leafy vegetables) that taste

247 GP. 170.71-77
248 AP. 285.53-54
249 van vidan paihya ca, .......... kṣayarogavān // ibid. 283.20-21
250 GP. 170.25
bitter, vegetables, oil, śigru, vibhītaka, īṅgūḍī and the juice of jāṅgala\textsuperscript{251} to be the diet for the patient of tuberculosis.

There are many other physical ailments mentioned in the Purāṇas such as stiffness of thighs, diseases related to head, toothache, worms, eye diseases, diseases of the lips, urinary defects and ailments, ġāndamālā, diseases of tongue, skin, enlarged spleens, vomiting, constipation, abdominal tumour, diabetes and many more. The plants\textsuperscript{252} prescribed for treating such diseases are yava, śuṣkamūlaka, kuśmāṅḍa, pāṭhā, nikumbha, śallakā, piyāla, devadāru, śatāvarī, nilotpala, arjuna, viḍāṅga, kuṣṭha, śigru, kulmāṣa, vibhūtaka, īṅgūḍī, āmra etc.

iii) PLANTS IN THE TREATMENT OF MENTAL DISEASES

There are some mental diseases which are related to the mind. In the Purāṇic days, these diseases were called as mānasika vyāḍhi. In the Agnipurāṇa, it is stated that some people suffered from mental diseases such as insanity (unmāda), epilepsy (apasmāra) etc. arising out of anger, jealousy etc. The remedies for such diseases were also sought through some plants and plant products. According to the Agnipurāṇa, the physicians used to treat the mental patients with some plants and herbs

\textsuperscript{251} AP.279.17-19

\textsuperscript{252} ibid. Chap. 283, 285; GP. Chap. 170-177
such as *hingusauvarcalavyosa*. In the treatment of *murcha roga* (a kind of mental disease), the plants *ksaudra, granthi* and *puškara* are found beneficial. The *Agnipurāṇa*, also contains reference of the fact that the physicians knew the formula of preparing medicines for such diseases. It is stated that *sankhapuspi, vaca* and *kuśtha* soaked in the juice of *brāhmī* are applied to the insane persons. These medicinal plants are acclaimed to cure a long standing insanity of a person. Moreover, these plants are found to be an excellent brain tonic. In the *Garuḍapurāṇa*, some plants such as *satāvari, satapuspa* etc. are described as a cure against *apasmāra*.

iv) PLANTS IN THE TREATMENT OF WOUNDS

In the traditional system of medicine wounds are treated as a separate branch of medical science. Apart from the two divisions of surgery, major (*śalya*) and minor (*śālaka*), the physicians used to treat the patients of wound with some medicinal herbs.

The Purāṇas also contain reference of some plants and herbs that were used to treat the patients of wounds. In the *Agnipurāṇa*, it is stated that wound caused by some accidents, injuries of the soldiers in war or

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253 *hiṅgusauvarcalavyoṣai...unmādanāśanam // AP. 285.18*
254 *ksudrāṁ puṣkaraṁ...medhyamuttamam // ibid.285.17-19*
255 *GP.192.7-10*
battles or due to some blow etc. are categorized as the āgantuka (accidental) diseases. In the Matsyapurāṇa, it is found that serious wounds caused by a weapon may be cured. The patients having such wound had to undergo a long herbal treatment for thirty days. The plants recommended in the course of this treatment were the roots of kāseru, ikṣu and dūrvā cooked with milk and ghee. The Agnipurāṇa, on the other hand, contains reference of numerous herbs and plants in this context. In the Agnipurāṇa, the patients of wounds were advised to drink the juice of lākṣā with kṣaudra and milk.

The astringent of triphalā and the juice of bhringarāja are proved beneficial and observed to have the healing property in case of wounds. It is also stated in the Agnipurāṇa that a kind of medicine was prepared with the petals of kārpāsa, niśā etc. for curing the wounds.

v) PLANTS IN THE TREATMENT OF NATURAL DISEASES

In the Agnipurāṇa natural diseases are defined as the diseases that come naturally such as old age, hunger, thirst etc. Early stage of
aging and death is considered to occur due to some diseases. In the Purāṇas, it is stated that the ancient physicians not only knew the treatment against such diseases but also had the knowledge about how to prevent them. In both the aspects of treatment the principal ingredients to the medicines are the plants and the plant products.

In the Purāṇas, a good number of medicinal plants are described. Such plants are found to be used to enhance longevity and conquer death. According to the Agnipurāṇa, a man can become amara (immortal) if he undertakes treatment with the thirty six plants. In the Matsyapurāṇa, amara is explained as one who is born earlier and dies later. The fruits such as triphalā, vilva, bhallātaka, bhrṅgarāja, śatāvarī, guducī, vidāṅga, tila etc. are found efficacious to keep one free from aging and graying of hair and thus, ensuring longevity. Other plants that are found beneficial for this purpose include ārdraka, māṇḍūkī. Person suffering from old age diseases is recommended oil of palāša together with honey for a period of six months. Moreover, it is stated in the Agnipurāṇa that nirgundī together with honey is another kind of medicine administered to the patient suffering from old age diseases. Besides, the leaf of jyotismati and

261 AP.Chap.141
262 jivito na mriyatyagre tasmāt so’maro uccyate / MP. 154.366
trīphalā together with milk or śatāvarī is stated to have the similar effect. Decoction of khadiṛa with the juice of bhrṅga or drinking milk after taking rudantikā with clarified butter and honey is acclaimed to conquer death.

Other plants that are found beneficial for the treatment of natural diseases are vākucī, nimba, haritakī, kumārikā, aśvagandhā, punarnavā, kuṣmāṇḍa etc. Of the plants mentioned above, śatāvarī is found most efficacious. It is stated in the Agnipurāṇa that the compound of trīphalā, pippalī and śunṭhī with śatāvarī makes one strong and fit to live for one thousand years. Many more plants with the same potency such as citraka, five kinds of nimba, kanṭakārī, vāsaka, varṣābhū etc. are used to treat the patients who would suffer from old age diseases.²⁶³

For removing thirst, plants such as mustā, parpaṭa uśīra, candana, udīcya and nāgara are found useful.²⁶⁴ Moreover, the Purāṇic physicians used to take some plants like vata, śṛṅgī, lodhra, dādima along with honey and water of rice washing to remove thirst.²⁶⁵

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²⁶³ AP. Chap. 286
²⁶⁴ ibid.279.4
²⁶⁵ vaṭam śṛṅgī...tṛṣṇānivarāṇam, ibid.285.13
vi) PLANTS IN THE PROCREATION AND PROTECTION OF CHILDREN

This branch of medical science developed with the knowledge of plant science during the Vedic period. The *Atharvaveda* contains some hymns that speak of the procreation and protection of children through the plant-based remedies. In the *Agnipurāṇa*, a good number of plants are described for protection and procreation of children. Some of these plants were used to arrest miscarriage and causing pregnancy while others were found beneficial for easy delivery of a child and yet another group of plants were found to have used in the treatment of children. According to this Purāṇa, a mixture with the composition of *vīja, karuṇṭaka, madhuka, śvetacandana, padmamūla*, sugar and *tila* is considered excellent for arresting miscarriage and causing pregnancy.266 In addition to the above, some plants are recommended for anointing and some for oral use. The plants recommended for anointing are *utpala, akṣa, lodhra, candana, śārivā* and *tandula*. Again, *lāja, yaṣṭi, drākṣā, kṣaudra* etc. are some plants recommended for oral use.267 Some medicinal plants like *kākamācī, atarūṣaka, lāṅgalī* etc. consumed by a pregnant lady are found

266 vījāṁ kauruṇṭakaṇcapī madhukaṁ śvetacandanaṁ //
.................garbheṣu garbhasthāpanamuttamam // AP. 285.68-69
267 ibid. 302.20-21
beneficial for easy delivery of a child.\textsuperscript{268} It is mentioned in the *Agnipurāṇa* that the use of herbs like *sahadevī*, *mayūrasikhā*, *ghṛtakumāri* and *kṛṣṇadhūstupra* was also prevalent in the age of the Purāṇas for procreation of male offsprings.\textsuperscript{269}

It is a common belief with the ancient people that the children’s illness was due to the sinister spirits in different names as *ghanṭhālī*, *kākolī*, *pūtanā* etc. The *Agnipurāṇa* mentions some diseases of the children from the date of their birth up to sixteen years. These children were treated with some plants in association with spiritual *mantras* (incantations). The plants and herbs used for the purpose were *dhātakī*, *lodhra*, *maṇījaṭhā*, *tāla*, *candana* etc. These plants were used to make a paste and besmeared on the body of a child to appease the spirit called *pāpinī*. To protect the child from frightful *bhījanī*, the plants needed for besmearing are *marīca*, *apāmārga*, *keśara*, *nakharājī*, leaves of *vilva* and *candana*. In this way, to remove loss of appetite, frothing etc. the child was fumigated with the vapours of *haridrā* and *nimba* leaves.\textsuperscript{270} It is stated in the *Agnipurāṇa* that the plants like *simhī*, *śatī*, *niśā* (two varieties), *vātsaka* etc. are found efficacious in all types of dysentery of children. Apart from these, *ativiśā*

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{268} AP. 302.22
\textsuperscript{269} ibid. 140.1-7, 15-16
\textsuperscript{270} AP. 299.1-9
\end{footnotesize}
is observed to be a beneficial plant for all types of physical ailments which children generally suffered from. *Ativiśā* is found to have applied to the children having cough, cold and fever.\textsuperscript{271}

\textbf{vii) PLANTS USED FOR VIRILITY AND EROTIC SUCCESS}

Traditional system of medicine that has been developed mainly with the plants and plant-products does not leave any area of human health untouched. The problem of virility was one of the major problems that people suffered from in the remote past. In the *Atharvaveda*\textsuperscript{272} some hymns are found that deal with such troubles. People during Vedic period sought remedy in the form of invocations and incantations. However, in the society of the Purāṇas, such complaints were mainly addressed by some medicinal treatment, the ingredients of which were the plants and herbs of various kinds. The *Agnipurāṇa* has been found informative in this regard. In this Purāṇa, virility and erotic problems are found treated with medicinal plants alone. It is stated that a man desiring to enjoy sexual life is prescribed a drink of milk along with the dust of *triphalā*, *candana*, the juice of *bhrṅga*, *niśā*, *vidārī*, and *māṣa*.\textsuperscript{273} A paste consisting of *kapittha*, *karabha*, *māgadhī*, *madhuka* and honey is recommended for

\textsuperscript{271} Aft 283.1-2
\textsuperscript{272} AV. III. 4.18.1
\textsuperscript{273} AP. 302.12-14
external use. Moreover, the application of supernatural remedies with plants and herbs is a distinct feature of Purānic medical science. The people of that period believed that some medicinal herbs possessed in them mystic power to captivate or to bring one under control. The plants used for this purpose were sahadevī, putrañjīvī, kṛtānjali etc.\(^{274}\) Different types of plants are prescribed for different sexes. While astringent of triphalā is prescribed for the males, a paste prepared with aśvagandhā, yava, niśā, karpūra, pippalī, dhānīya, marīca, brhatī or the root of trikaṭu and kṣaudra is recommended for the concerned woman. The juice of kadamba together with sugar and honey is recommended for the well being of the couple.\(^{275}\)

viii) PLANTS USED AGAINST THE VENOM OF SNAKES, INSECTS AND OTHER ANIMALS

The sufferings due to the bites of different venomous creatures, especially the snakes, the rats etc. have been found in the Purāṇas, under the category Agadatantra or toxicology. The Atharvaveda\(^{276}\) contains reference of toxicology. But the Vedic prescription appears to be mainly associated with religious incantations and prayers. The Purānic

\(^{274}\) sahadevī mahālakṣmiḥ putrañjīvī kṛtānjaliḥ. / AP. 302.11-12

\(^{275}\) ibid. 302.7-9

\(^{276}\) AV. IV.2.7.6
prescription in this regard is very much distinct from other ancient texts. In the *Matsyapurāṇa*, there is a chapter in the name of *Agada* or antidotes for poison. In the *Agnipurāṇa* also, some plants are mentioned against poisons due to bites. A chapter on toxicology is found in the *Agnipurāṇa* also that deals with the nature of poison. In the *Matsyapurāṇa*, an elongated description of plants is found. The physicians used to prepare decoction, drinks etc. for curing patients suffering from poisoning effect. In this Purāṇa, such plants are referred in connection with the medicines recommended to store in a fort. A unique observation is made in the *Matsyapurāṇa* regarding the use of these toxic plants. It has been observed that these plants are not only used in preparing decoctions, drinks etc. but also are used in disinfecting the household articles. The plants *vilva, atasī, pātalā, vahlika, śriparnī, sallakī* etc. were used for sprinkling in the household articles like bedding, clothing etc. Another combination of plants referred in connection with toxicology was *śelu, pātalā, ativāśañā, śigru, murvā, punarnavā,(fig.20) samāṅga, vrṣamūla and kapittha*. It is stated in this Purāṇa that people of that period even used to wear amulets and pendants.

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277 MP. Chap. 218
278 AP. Chap.298
279 MP. 218.2-8
that comprised of different medicinal plants studded with precious gems, gold etc. in order to keep them secured against anything poisonous. Again, some plants are proved highly beneficial for preventing the effects of poison with the mixture of bile of a dog. The people of the Purānic society adopted a unique method of destroying the effects of poison. It was believed that the mixture of the medicinal plants and the bile of a dog when applied over the drums or banners, freed one from the effects of the poison. There were many more such methods like fumigation practised by the people in the Purānic days to drive away snakes, insects, worms etc. Another practice prevalent during that period for curing patients suffering from poisonous effect was the application of plants like nepālī, kuṅkuma etc. in the arms and forehead.

The medicinal plants that are found effective in the treatment of the patients of snake bites are referred in both the Agnipurāṇa and the Matsyapurāṇa. It has been observed that medicinal plants in association with some other elements like milk, ghee, clarified butter, rock salt, cow’s urine, honey and bile of different animals are used as remedies for such maladies. The familiarity and concern of the Agnipurāṇa with this aspect

280 MP. 218.11-17
281 rocanāpatranepālīkuṅkumaistilakān bahan /
viṣairna bādhyate syācca naranārī... // ibid. 218.19-20
is evident from the elongated list of medicinal plants prescribed as treatment for the bites of different types of snakes, insects, animals etc. Among the plants mentioned, *nimba* is the principal medicine against snake bites.\(^{282}\) Again, patients with severe bite were prescribed a medicine consisting of the root of rice plant and *trivṛtā* along with clarified butter for drinking.\(^{283}\) Even the snake charmers while uttering mantras were required to chew betel leaves for removing the poison.\(^{284}\) In case of the bite of *ahi*, a class of venomous snake, the course of treatment has been observed to continue for a fortnight. The patients were required to drink the milk of *snuhī* and clarified butter for fifteen consecutive days. Some other recommended plants for snake bites were *laśuna*, *rāmaṭhapala*, *kuśtha* and *vyosa*\(^{285}\) etc. Among these, a drink composed of *krṣṇā* and rock salt was given to the patient suffering from the bite of *rājīla*, another species of snake. Besides, fumigation with *nirguṇḍī*, *kākola* and leaf of the plant *munī* boiled with sour gruel with the ingredients such as the hair of the mongoose proved beneficial in curing the patients of the poisons of snakes.\(^{286}\)

\(^{282}\) AP. 279.56
\(^{283}\) ibid. 279.59
\(^{284}\) tāmbūlakhādānmantri harenmāṇḍalīni viṣam / ibid. 298.1
\(^{285}\) laśunāṁ rāmaṭhapalarī kuśṭhāgni vyōṣākāṁ viṣe / ibid. 298.2
\(^{286}\) AP. 298.3-6
Fumigation is found effective in case of insect bites such as scorpions. The patients of scorpion bites were administered a medicine following fumigation. The medicine was prepared with the seeds of palāśa, the juice of arka, the paste of the mixture of guṇja, nirguṇḍī, niśā, karanja, mañjīsthā, candana, vyosa, the flowers of śirīṣa and kumuda. Many other groups of plants were used to cure the patients of bites. In the Agnipurāṇa, it is stated that there are twenty ways of treating poisons.

Insect-bite like the spider-bite was another common incident of suffering in the days of the Purāṇas. A good number of plants are found in the Purāṇas that were prescribed as medicines against such bites. The plants that were used to prepare medicines for the spider bite include padmaka, paṭālā, kuṣṭha, uṣīra, candana, nirguṇḍī, śārivā and selu. A paste prepared with these plants was applied to the affected part.

The plants that are used to treat the patients of rat bites comprised the juice of cotton plant and flowers of phalinī. The patient is required to

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287 dhūpo vr̥ścikadaṣṭasya śikhipatragṛṭena vā /
arkaṣireṇa sampiṣṭāṁ lopa vijāṁ palāsajam //ĀP 279.57
288 ibid. 298.10
289 ibid. 298.8
290 AP. 279.60-61
drink the juice for getting rid of the effect of such bite.\textsuperscript{291} Milk of \textit{arka}, \textit{tila} etc. are found efficacious in the treatment of patients of dog bites.\textsuperscript{292} Again, another kind of medicine composed of \textit{yaṣṭi}, \textit{vyoṣa}, is also recommended for such patients.\textsuperscript{293} The patients with bites of animals like ass are treated with a medicinal drink that comprised of \textit{triphala}, \textit{uṣīra}, \textit{mustā}, \textit{māmsī}, \textit{padmaka} and \textit{candana}. Some plants are found effective in the treatment and cure the poison due to insect bites. These plants are \textit{vacā}, \textit{vīdaṅga}, \textit{ambuṣṭha}, \textit{atibalā} and \textit{kusṭha}.\textsuperscript{294} Over and above, the method of messaging with the plant materials proved beneficial to take away the poison. In addition to the above, a good number of plants such as \textit{bandhyā}, \textit{karkoṭakā}, \textit{utkaṭā}, \textit{satamūlī} etc. were used in Purāṇic days to get rid of the toxic effects of the bites.\textsuperscript{295}

\textbf{ix) PLANTS IN THE TREATMENT OF SUPERNATURAL MALADIES}

Indian traditional system of medicine provides treatment against supernatural diseases that arise due to some extraordinary causes under the head \textit{bhūtavidyā}. The very title indicates that it deals with some

\footnotesize
\textsuperscript{291} rasaṅkārpaśajampivet..., phaliniṅkusumantathā, \textit{AP} 298.6-7  
\textsuperscript{292} ibid. 279.58-59  
\textsuperscript{293} yaṣṭivyoṣagudākṣirayogah śuno viṣāpahaḥ / ibid. 298.15  
\textsuperscript{294} ibid. 298.12-15  
\textsuperscript{295} MP.218.23
supernatural diseases caused by supernatural agencies like demons, yakṣas, ghosts, curses and so on. In the *Atharvaveda*,\(^{296}\) it is found that curses, witchcraft, various evils etc. are treated sometimes with some plants. In the Purāṇas also, diseases of this type are narrated. The area of the maladies seems to be broader in the Purāṇas. Diseases considered to occur due to the influences of spirits have been referred in the *Matsyapurāṇa*.\(^{297}\) In this context, certain purificatory rites are recommended for getting rid of such problems. In the *Agnipurāṇa*,\(^{298}\) some plants are prescribed for captivating the males and females. The plants recommended for this purpose are *rocana*, *kun-kuma*, *nāgapuspa*, *manahśilā* etc. Purāṇic people used some plants with incantations for bringing the enemies under captivation. It is stated in the *Agnipurāṇa* that incantatory *kun-kuma* and *goracanā* on a *bhūrja* leaf were used to bring enemies under captivation.\(^{299}\) In the *Agnipurāṇa*, it is stated that in the days of the Purāṇas, people acquired different objects such as pleasure and victory over enemies by performing sacrifice with the wood of *nimba*. It has been observed that leaves were used in the sacrifice for

\(^{296}\) AV. IV.7.4.20

\(^{297}\) rājayakṣmābhūtasya.....saumyā praśasyate , MP. 228.5-6

\(^{298}\) AP.323.13

\(^{299}\) AP. 133.38
achieving different desired objects.\textsuperscript{300} In the Agnipurāṇa, a number of plants are recommended for the purpose of captivation. The plants are bhṛṅgarāja, sahadevī, mayūraśīkhā, putraṁjīva, adhahpuṣpa, rudantikā, śvetārka, gokṣura, karkatī, meṣaśṛṅgī, snuḥī, ghṛtakumārī, rudrajaṭā, viṣṇukrāntā, lajjālukā, mohalatā and kṛṣṇadhustūra. In the Purāṇic period, these were sometimes used as pills, sometimes used as ointment and sometimes as collyrium or tilaka.\textsuperscript{301}

Fumigation proved beneficial in driving out unwanted presence of certain elements. The plants recommended for fumigation are bhṛṅgarāja and putraṁjīva.\textsuperscript{302} Collyrium is prepared with mayūraśīkhā and the herb putraṁjīva is recommended for use in bathing water. The plant bhṛṅgarāja is found to be a beneficial one for the purpose of anointing.\textsuperscript{303} The plants are so powerful that Purāṇic people even used to besmear these on their bodies to gain infinite power. Again, the plants snuḥī, putraṁjīva, ghṛtakumārī, rudantikā and sahadevī were used as tilaka for bringing the whole world under captivation. Besides, pills were prepared with meṣaśṛṅgī, śvetārka, sahadevī and adhahpuṣpa and mixed with eatables or drinks for the purpose of vaśīkarana. In the days of the

\textsuperscript{300} \textit{AP.} 137.8-12

\textsuperscript{301} ibid. Chap.140.1-3

\textsuperscript{302} ibid. 140.1, 5

\textsuperscript{303} ṭṭṭyenaṁjñanāṁ kuryāt snānaṁ.......kuryācetuṣkataḥ / AP. 140.6
Purāṇas, the practice of anointing the body with the plant *mayūraśikha* prevailed. Puranic people believed that a woman could dispel all ill effects of misfortune by anointing *mayūraśikha* on her person. Moreover, *ghṛtakumārī, śvetārka, sahadevī* are found efficacious in achieving miraculous power.304

X) PLANTS IN THE TREATMENT OF ANIMALS

The Purānic science of medicine developed in many branches. It not only deals with human diseases but also with the diseases of other creatures. Animals like elephant; horse etc. being a part of the ancient warfare, proper care had been taken for protecting these animals from various diseases. Animal diseases are also found to be caused due to the faults of the three humours—wind, bile and phlegm.305 Domesticated animals are found to suffer from different physical ailments like fever, dysentery etc. due to the deranged wind, bile and phlegm. In this connection, it may be noted that animal diseases are also classified into four categories like human beings such as physical, mental, accidental and natural.306

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304 Ṛ. 140.8-16
305 piveyurvajinastailarii kaphavavyadhikāstu ye / AP. 289.44
306 ibid. 292.30
The study of the Purāṇas reveals that veterinary science has been developed to a great extent during the Purāṇic age. Different kinds of diseases related to animals and their remedies are sought mainly with different plants and plant products. In the Agnipurāṇa, descriptions of elephants, cows and horses of different varieties are found. The good, strong and auspicious elephants are recognized by ancient people through different features and are chosen and protected for the purpose of warfare. The veterinary physicians are required to have the knowledge of the symptoms of various types of ailments and accordingly the diseases are diagnosed and proper medicines are administered. In the Agnipurāṇa, mention is made of food and medicine of the elephants. It is observed that plants such as yava, brīhi, saśṭika, śāli, godhūma and ikṣu are recommended diet for the elephants.

In the Agnipurāṇa, mention is made of some common ailments from which elephants suffer such as fever, headache, diseases of the legs, shivering, numbness of the trunk, stiffness of the neck, loss of appetite, enlargement of spleen, eye diseases, wounds, worms, dysentery and many more. Different plants and plant materials are used to cure all those diseases. Plants used for different diseases of elephants are given below in a tabular form:

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307 pradhānabhojane teṣāṁ yaṣṭikabhṛhiśālayaḥ, AP.287.24
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>atīsāra</th>
<th>vilva, lodhra, dhātaki</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>mūrchā</td>
<td>vidāṅga, triphalā, vyōsa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>karagraha</td>
<td>māgadhi, nāgara, ajāji, yava,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>galagraha</td>
<td>daśamūla, kulattha, kākamāci</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>aruci</td>
<td>mudga, vyōsa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>krimi</td>
<td>vidāṅga</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kṣata</td>
<td>drākṣa, śṛṅgevara</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gulma</td>
<td>trivṛt, vyōsa, arka,(fig.25) agni,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>śyāmā, pippalī</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tvagdoṣa</td>
<td>nimba.³⁰⁸</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The ailment of the horses as stated in the Purāṇas was also caused due to the disorder of the humours.³⁰⁹ It is observed that the horses in most cases suffered from the deranged phlegm³¹⁰ and the plants used in the treatment are lodhra, priyaṅgu, mustā, pippalī and śunthi. Out of the four divisions of ailments, the horses generally suffered from physical ailments. However, some cases of accidental or natural ailment are also recorded in the Purāṇas.

³⁰⁸ AP. 287.1-5, 9-21, 23-25
³⁰⁹ vātikāḥ paīttikāścaiva śleśmājāḥ sānnipātikāḥ /

na rogāḥ piḍayiṣyanti durvāhāram turaṅgamam // ibid. 289.53
³¹⁰ ibid.289.40-44
In the *Agnipurāṇa*, it is stated that horses with some auspicious signs in their physical features are considered beneficial and accordingly protected with good diet and medicine for keeping them strong and healthy. The study of the Purāṇas reveals that like elephants, the horses also suffered from some diseases. The plants used for the treatment of different diseases of the horses as found in the *Agnipurāṇa* are given below in a tabular form:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the disease</th>
<th>Plants recommended</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>śūla</td>
<td>ṛṣa, nimba, brhatī, guḍucī, hingu, puṣkara, amlavetasa, pippali,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>atīsāra</td>
<td>nāgara, ativisā, mustā, vilva</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kāsa</td>
<td>dāḍima, triphalā, vyōsa, priyāṅgu, lodhra, ṛṣa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>śotha</td>
<td>lodhra, mātuluṅga, nāgara, agni, kuṣṭha, hingu, vacā, rāsnā</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>raktameha</td>
<td>maṇjiṣṭhā, madhuka, drākṣā, brhatī, raktacandana, trapuṣa, śṛṅgāṭaka, kaśeruka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jihvāstambha</td>
<td>jyotīṃmatī, haridrā, dāruharidrā, pāṭhā, kṛṣṇā, kuṣṭha, vacā</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

311 AP. 289.9
Besides the above, the horses were fed with different seasonal plants having medicinal value for keeping them in good health. These plants are stated below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the season</th>
<th>Plants recommended</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>autumn</td>
<td>jīvaniya, madhura, mrdvikā, pippalī, sugar and padmaka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>winter</td>
<td>vidangā, pippalī, dhanyāka, satāhvā, lodhra, citraka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rainy season</td>
<td>lodhra, (fig.26) pippalī</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>summer</td>
<td>lodhra, yasti</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Apart from these, yava without husk along with butter milk is a recommended diet for the horses. Cows are considered holy creatures. The Agnipurāṇa states that the entire universe is supported by gods,
brahmins, holy men, chaste women and cows. Cows, bulls and calves are considered valuable assets with the people in the days of the Purāṇas and there are references regarding their treatment in the Purāṇas. In the Agnipurāṇa, some medicines are prescribed for the nourishment of the calves and for the health of the young bulls. It is stated that a ball consisting of māsa, tila, godhūma, dugdha, ghṛta and saindhava may be given for their nourishment. The cows are recommended to feed with asvagandhā and tila to increase their strength and make them yield profuse milk. The following chart contains the names of the diseases that the cows are found to suffer as well as the plants used for curing those diseases:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the diseases</th>
<th>Plants recommended</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>śṛṅgarōga,</td>
<td>śṛṅgavera, balā</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>karnaśūla,</td>
<td>mahijīśhā, hiṅgu, rāsnā</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dantaśūla,</td>
<td>root of vilva, apāmārga, dhātaki</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>galagraha,</td>
<td>śṛṅgavera, haridrā, triphalā,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hṛtśūla , vāta and kṣaya</td>
<td>triphalā,</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

314 devabrāhmanagosādhusādhvībhīṣ sakalāṁ jagat /
dhāryate vai sadā tasmāt sarve pūjyatamā matāḥ // ṆP. 292.21

315 AP. 292.32

316 asvagandhatilaiḥ śulakam tena gauḥ kṣīrinī bhavet / ibid. 292.35
The above references suggest that people during the Purānic times recognized the importance of the medicinal plants. It is also evident that the physicians of that time conducted extensive experiments and researches on each and every plant and forms of life.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>atīsāra</th>
<th>two kinds of haridrā, pāthā</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>kuṣṭha, śvāsa, kāsa</td>
<td>śṛṅgavera and bhārgī</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bhagnasandhāna</td>
<td>priyaṅgu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pittaroga</td>
<td>madhuyaśī³¹⁷</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

³¹⁷ 292.23-30
Fig. 19. Mustă (*Cyperus rotundus*)

Fig. 20. Parpața (*Oldenlandia herbacea*)

Fig. 21. Punarnava (*Boerhavia diffusa*)

Fig. 22. Vaca (*Acorus calamus*)

Fig. 23. Viṣṇuga (*Embelia ribes*)
Fig. 24 Śyōnāka (Oroxylum indicum)

Fig. 25 Arka (calotropis gigantea)

Fig. 26 Lodhra (Symplocos racemosa)