



Shyam a few days before he left his body

Little Shyam left his body on January 10, 2005. He was a gentle soul with a great personality and handsome face. He loved to be hugged. As a worker, he was honest and did his share in the yoke. In his last months, he never complained and was resigned to the fact that his time was nearing.

Shyam was the partner of Agni. As partners they were used as the training team for new teamsters. They were medium in size, which made it easier for new teamsters to handle.

When we used Vraja and Gita as a training team, it was a daunting task as they are huge Brown Swiss oxen each weighing over 2000 pounds and standing 6 feet tall at the shoulder. Both great teams, but for new teamsters, Agni and Shyam were an easier team to learn how to drive.

As most of you know, Shyam had been an invalid for about 9 months. In April, Balabhadra (William Dove who is president of IS-COWP) noticed that Little Shyam was walking with a limp. He called the vet who diagnosed that Shyam's legs and sternum were fused together and his condition was too advanced for improvement. The vet said that this can happen after a fall.

We let him stay in the pasture with his friends. But in July we noticed that he was lagging behind the other cows. We were concerned that he would lay down in the pasture and not be able to get up. At that point we walked him to the barn to stay there. The walk uphill was difficult for him. At that point, he was able to walk, however feebly, from the barn to a small paddock near the barn to graze each day.

In October, Shyam's health took a turn for the worse. We noticed that Shyam hadn't gotten up all day and was situated in the corner of the paddock up against the fence. His back legs seemed oddly placed beneath him and we became concerned that something had happened. We presented grain to him and he tried to get up but could not. Four strong men came from the community to help us move him. We cut the fence and he bolted but fell. We rolled him a few times to try to get him in a good position which we did. Then we decided to leave him there to see if he could possibly get up later after resting. Later in the day we found him walking around eating all the new grass he didn't have access to before. We brought him into the barn, which was a safer place for him. From that point he was not able to get up again.

His last months were spent in the newly renovated loafing shed. He was checked every few hours during the day to see if he would take some hay or water. Sometimes he would eat and drink and sometimes he would not show any interest. During these checks, his area was also kept clean of stool and new bedding added to keep him clean and comfortable.

During his illness, we tried a number of remedies including homeopathy and several herbal remedies to try to rebuild the depleted bone mass in his hips and spinal column that were causing his problems. At this time he was adopted by Nada Gregg who sponsored all his medicines. Near the end of his life, he was given a tablet called "Bhut" which in essence is aspirin for cows and horses.

He had a separate area but at the same time had full view of the other cows when they were in the barnyard area. The other cows could also visit him and come to within 10 feet of his actual area. Throughout his illness he had been listening to Srila Prabhupada (spiritual master of the Hare Krsna movement) singing sacred mantras 24/7. This seemed to relax him. He was like a yogi preparing for the next phase of his eternal journey. A great soul, of this we have no doubt. He will be fondly remembered.