

Characteristics of Asian Elephants from Ancient Sanskrit Texts

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ABSTRACT

Elephants have been the center of discussion in the ancient Sanskrit veterinary texts such as Hastyāurveda and Mātaṅgalīlā. These texts focus on diseases of elephants and their cure. Texts such as Mṛgapakṣīśāstra, is a treatise that deals with many animals, including elephants, their characteristics as well as their types. Naturally, all these texts mention the characteristics of elephants in the beginning. Elephants being an important part of warfare, the texts dealing with State Affairs such as Arthaśāstra also discuss the characteristics of elephants. The Encyclopedic Treatise such as Bṛhatsamhitā is also not an exception when it states the characteristics of elephants in its 67th chapter.

The present paper will consult all these treatises and will try to state the characteristics of Asian Elephants seen in ancient Sanskrit texts.

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