

Role of Hastyadhyakṣa in Kauṭilya's Arthaśāstra

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ABSTRACT

In Kauṭilya's administration the King was the Head of State and he appointed officials through a stringent procedure of selection, and only the deserving ones were finally selected and appointed by him for different positions. Officials are appointed for smooth running of the state. Some of the officials are known as *adhyakṣas* or the superintendents. Nearly 30 *adhyakṣas* were appointed in Kauṭilya's administration. These superintendents are so competent that they are generally endowed with the excellences of the ministers and they are appointed to work according to their expertise. One of those superintendents is Hastyadhyakṣa who discharges his duty while looking after the entire set up of elephants. He ensured the following: the security of elephants in forest, their comfortable stay in stables constructed with as per their size in length, width and height, proper food with prescribed quantity as per their body size, regular health checkup by physicians, scheduled time for food, bath, sleep etc, proper training given for simple riding or for war, making them engaged as per different seasons and the rest. He should also see that elephants are caught only in summer season, cubs are generally not caught and if caught, they are meant for play only. However, he gets the work done by various attendants like security guards, trainers, cooks, drivers, foot-chainers and so on. Moreover, there is a provision of penalty for those who do not perform their duties as have been assigned to them. It appears that Hastyadhyakṣa is quite conversant with all related issues of elephants.

This paper makes an attempt to highlight the duties of the said official while looking after the elephants envisaged in *Arthaśāstra* (AŚ), and it may see some reflections in this regard with other Sanskrit literary work like *Śukranīti*, *Hastyāyurveda* etc.

Keywords: *Arthaśāstra*, *Hastyadhyakṣa*, *adhyakṣa*, *Śukranīti*, *Hastyāyurveda*

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