

Some Observations of Elephants in Kathāsaritsāgara

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ABSTRACT

The Kathāsaritsāgara is one of the earliest collections of stories in the extant world. The main story of this work is king Naravahandutta. Various interrelated stories come in a flow, such as Gandharvas, Merchants stories, Robbers, Ganika, animals, etc. In some stories animals are the main characters, with some inherent characteristics of them. Animals play a very important role in Sanskrit literature as compared to other tales and fables which we can see in the above texts. The purpose of these stories is mainly to create humour while giving us some historical information about ancient India. Elephants and some of their important characteristics are described in various stories as found in Kathāsaritsāgara, like elephant and Jackal, wild and female elephants, elephant and the hares, etc. Sometimes elephants play a very important part in army. Different names of elephants which are humanised can be found in this book. It is a crucial point in Sanskrit literature. As far as Kathasaritsagara is concerned these features can also be seen in that context. The main purpose of this paper is to make a study on observations of the characteristics of elephants with reference to the selected stories in Kathasaritasagar like charma, hastidanta, hastikumbha, mada, etc. and how it contributes to the plot of the stories with some behavioural features. The present paper deals with finding out some characteristics of elephants which are seen specifically in some stories of Kathasariasagara.

Keywords – *Bhadradanta & bhadravati, Vatsa king army, Lohajangha and Gajcharma, Hastikumbha*

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