

## **Identification of the Characteristics of Elephant through Synonyms in the Sanskrit Language**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Giving a name for an animate or inanimate object or for a place or an action on the basis of observing its characteristics is one of the traditional methods applied specifically in historical oriental languages such as Sanskrit, Pali and Sinhalese. As such, most of the terms in such languages as Sanskrit are words that are having obvious senses or obvious meanings. There, the word and the object that is denoted by it have a crucial and inseparable unique relationship or sameness. This tendency gives rise to the possibility of identifying the true characteristics of the objects that are implied by them. There is a sufficient collection of such words denoting the elephant in usage in Sanskrit, such as *gaja*, *hastin*, *dantin*, *nāga*, *karin*, *dvipa*, *kuñjara*, *vāraṇa*, *yūthanātha*, which really illustrate one or the other qualities of the elephant.

The intention of this paper is to make a study of the multitude of such names used for elephants in Sanskrit in common parlance in order to observe whether there is any possibility to recognize its characteristic features by analyzing such designations appearing in lexicons, dictionaries and literary sources.

As most of those Sanskrit names for elephant seem to be formed focusing on its instinctive and behavioral traits, in this survey all such terms are going to be critically analyzed in a certain etymological approach and it may throw a new light on the identification of typical characteristics of the elephant species. It may also be supportive to find a sound collection of miscellaneous elephant qualities which may indeed enhance our knowledge of the class of elephants. This attempt may, moreover, prove that the vigor of Sanskrit as a language is superb, for its word-formations are excessively organized in a systematical and theoretical background and this tendency will make the language-users persuasive by motivating them to construct such new words.

**Key words:** *gaja*, *hastin*, *dantin*, *nāga*, *karin*, *dvipa*, *kuñjara*, *vāraṇa*, *yūthanātha*

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