

Using the Sculpture and Engravings of Asian Elephants as Souvenirs in Modern Tourism Industry

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ABSTRACT

From the past the Asian elephant has taken an honorable place in Sri Lankan traditional sculpture and engraving arts among other animals as a result of their high imperial body type and intelligence. The cultural tourism or cultural heritage tourism highly focuses on the tangible and intangible cultural heritage of a country. The travelers, both in the past and in modern tourism industry are continuously attracted to *Elephas maximus maximus*, the Sri Lankan or Ceylon elephant. In this situation sculpture and engraving arts with elephants have high demand as travel souvenirs in modern Sri Lankan tourism industry. Two main objectives have been considered in the research. First is identifying existing souvenirs related to elephants available in the market and their special varieties. The second objective is focused on identifying special features for new varieties of souvenirs to motivate the buyer to involve in the conservation of elephants through attitudes. The primary data collection was done by the library review to identify cultural and traditional values of sculpture and engraving arts and crafts with Asian elephants' image and their core materials from the past. A survey was conducted around three sites famous for elephants in Sri Lanka that have both the cultural and natural value in the island; the tooth relic temple complex in Kandy, the elephant orphanage in Pinnawala and the elephant transit home in Udawalawe. The souvenirs production is based on three major themes; traditional concepts based themes, scenic themes and traditional and scenic mixed themes. The authenticity of tourist attraction is directly influenced for above themes, their materials and tourists' demands for the souvenirs. Traditional theme based souvenirs are currently popular among tourists and the demand of scenic themes and mixed theme based souvenirs can be developed in the future souvenir market.

Keywords: *Traditional arts, Cultural tourism, Nature tourism, Souvenir market, Elephants' behavior*

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