

The Close Relationship between the Tusker and Buddhism

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ABSTRACT

Asian elephants are long-lived mammals who live for sixty years. They are highly intelligent and also extremely sociable and stay in groups. These mammals have a close relationship with humans for over centuries serving as work animals and playing an important role in religious and cultural events. The research question is why only the tusker and not the elephant is used in Buddhist cultural events. The main objective of this research is to find the reason of using the tusker in Buddhist cultural events. Mainly a literature survey was conducted in this research to collect data. Among them only qualitative data was analysed in this academic work. Through the analysis, it was found that the tusker is used in the stories related to Buddha's life, Tales of *Pansiya panas jathaka* and in Perahera festivals. The most important finding is that it is always the tusker which is mentioned and not the elephant in the above references. According to the biological factors all the Asian elephants do not have tusks. In some of the male elephants, a pair of incisors may become elongated into tusks. Because of this speciality, tuskers might have been used as a symbol for the Lord Buddha as He also was special among general human beings.

Keywords: *Asian elephant, tusker, Buddhism, speciality, Lord Buddha*

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