A Short Study on the Occurrence and Usage of the Word 'Elephant' in the Buddhist Canon

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ABSTRACT

The word elephant implies that it is the biggest animal in the forest. Among the many aspects of the elephant its brain is considered one of the most significant. This research is not going to elucidate on the significant characteristics of mammalian elephants but is concerned with the specific occurrence and usage of word elephants with reference to the Buddhist canon.

More often than not, Buddhist teaching can be defined as consisting of figurative stories. When individual Dhamma was being preached, similes were taken from the surrounding by the Buddha. Accordingly, when studying the Buddhist norm one aspect that can be effectively identified are animal allegories. In such a context, the occurrence and usage of the elephant can usually be seen with prominent interpretations throughout the Pāli canon. For example, when paying attention to the *Majjima Nikaya,* it contains two suttas by names of simile of the small elephant's foot discourse *(Chullahatthipadopama sutta)* and simile of the great elephant's foot discourse *(Mahahatthi Padopama sutta).*

When considering these facts, the word elephant can be identified in the outstanding structure of the Pāli canon. Therefore this is an analytical study on the significance of the occurrence and usage of the word elephant in the Pali canon.

Keywords: Elephants, Pali canon, occurrence and usage, similes, significance.

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