

road, along which a particularly large tiger used to promenade. The tree is an Arjan (*Terminalia Arjuna*). The fire-watcher is standing on a slightly lower level than the ground at the near edge of the tree; the top claw mark was 10' 6" from ground level. The deeply scored claw marks indicate the energy put into the process, and if one pictures the tiger standing against the tree in the position indicated by the marks, one gets a vivid idea of the might of the tiger. It is a good illustration of paragraph 1 on page 63 of Dunbar Brander's 'Wild Animals in Central India'.

BETUL, C. P.,

August 3, 1941.

C. E. HEWETSON, I.F.S.

[The passage from Dunbar Brander book reads as follows:—

'Another habit of tigers, which they occasionally practise, is to sharpen or clean their claws on trees. This habit seems to be more an individual peculiarity constantly practised, rather than a general habit occasionally practised; as where the marks on trees are seen they are usually numerous and made by the same animal, whereas miles of jungle containing tigers may be devoid of all signs of the habit. I knew a particular Mohwa tree in a certain valley in the Melghat where a tiger regularly scraped his claws every three weeks or so. He evidently stood up on his hind legs and pulled his claws down, making deep incisions in the bark. This practice had been going on for years, but no other tigers for miles round indulged in it.'—Eds.]

III.—ON THE HEIGHT AND AGE OF AN ELEPHANT.

(With a plate).

The fine tusker, Chandrasekharan, belonging to H. H. the Maharaja of Travancore, died last year of old age.

He was a magnificent animal standing 10' at the shoulders. Captain S. S. Flower (later Major), Director, Egyptian Government, Zoological Service, who visited Travancore in 1913, described him in his Report on a Zoological Mission to India (p. 14) as the 'tallest male elephant' that he 'saw actually measured in India'. After death, the Museum Taxidermist deputed to prepare the animal's skin, reported his height as 10' 7". Major Stanley in the Report quoted above mentions three instances of elephants going over 10' in height—a male 'measured by Sanderson as 10' 7½"; Col. Hamilton's record of Sir Victor Brooke killing one of 11' and a skeleton in the Indian Museum of Mr. W. M. Smith's Bilkandi Elephant, measuring 11' 3"—which would indicate that the animal must have been nearly 12' high in the flesh, if the skeleton was properly mounted. Regarding his skeleton, Mr. W. T. Blanford has a footnote in his *Fauna of British India—Mammalia*—(p. 464) which explains that he was told by Mr. Sanderson that the femur of the mounted skeleton and of another elephant known to have been less than 10' high, on comparison, showed only a difference of 1/8".

The elephant Chandrasekharan died on 10-4-1115 M.E., i.e., A.D. 1940. The records about his age vary and are conflicting. From his appearance he must have been past 95 at the time of death. He was taken over to the Royal Stables on 15-8-1058 (A.D. 1883) from the Travancore Forest Department. His tusks were symmetrical and graceful and swept up in a semicircular curve. The weight of the tusks is $142\frac{1}{2}$ pounds.

Major Stanley writing on the age of Chandrasekharan in the same report, says that he had an ascertained minimum age of twenty-five and a supposed approximate age of forty years in 1913. This would mean that the animal might have been between 52 and 67 years of age at the time of death. This is considerably low, compared with Mr. W. T. Blanford's statement that an 'elephant is fully grown, but not fully mature, at 25 years of age, and individuals have been known to live over 100 years in captivity; in a wild state their existence probably extends to 150 years', and the evidence furnished by 'Ortela' the famous 170-year old elephant of Ceylon described on p. 619, Vol. xxxix of the *Journal of the Bombay Natural History Society*. Major Stanley's study on the duration of life in vertebrate animals which appeared in the *P. Z. S.*, 1931, based on actual observations for a number of years brings out 50 as the average life of elephants. It is interesting to note that the thirteenth century Jain Zoologist, Hamsadeva, has said in his 'Mrigapakshisastra' that the maximum age attained by elephants in captivity is 100.

The elephant was particularly remarkable for his sagacity, gentleness and almost human intelligence. He never harmed a living creature till his death. Various stories are current evidencing one or other of his qualities, an authentic one being his refusal to erect a pillar in one of the pits dug for the purpose in connection with one of the Murajapam festivals in Trivandrum. Usually the elephant was a very willing worker and his refusal to hoist the pillar which he held still with his tusk and trunk surprised the mahout who on looking into the pit found that a dog which had strayed in had got into the pit had fallen asleep. It was only after the dog was roused and driven away that Chandrasekharan lowered the pillar into the pit.

The death of an animal so remarkable for his size and intelligence, was a personal loss to H. H. the Maharaja, whose kindness to animals is proverbial. As a tribute to this mighty pachyderm, its head is set up and given a prominent place in the Royal Art Gallery, 'Ranga Vilas' at the Fort, Trivandrum.

TRIVANDRUM,

August 22, 1941.

N. G. PILLAI,

Curator, State Museum, Trivandrum.

IV.—THE MALAYAN ELEPHANT.

There are four points in Mr. Theodore Hubback's excellent article under the above caption (August 1941 *Journal*—Vol. xlii, No. 3) I should like to touch on.



Pillai, N G. 1941. "On the Height and Age of An Elephant." *The journal of the Bombay Natural History Society* 42, 927–928.

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