



Elephants!

Description

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Thais have a cultural love affair with elephants. Above is a mural painting from a Thai wat. Strong, patient. These elephant attributes are a part of Thai people themselves.

The only thing more revered in The Kingdom than elephants is The King himself.

Elephant icons are often plentiful at the altar of most statues of Lord Buddha. They have their own shrines where people kneel and pray. A long deceased war elephant even has it's own stupa in Lamphun for worship! Elephants bring luck. Elephants repel bad karma.



Golden elephants guarding a temple near Chang Rai.

The elephant represents how Thais want to see themselves-strong, wise, patient, thick skinned, and of likable disposition. The elephant is thought of as superior to a mere human and I agree completely.

On rare occasion I've been in very close proximity to an elephant. Their eyes focus in on you. They size you up. For some inexplicable reason, I want to apologize to them for the utter stupidity and incompetence of humans. Their intelligence should never be underestimated. Fact: Some elephants are more intelligent than some humans.



In Northern Thailand there are two elephant shows that also have conservancy programs to help the

elephant in Thailand. (One's in Chiang Mai and the other is halfway between Lamphun and Lampang). I've been to both, but didn't enjoy it at all, although I support their conservancy programs. I hate Sea World and zoos also.

I've never seen a wild elephant YET. When I cross some of the more isolated mountains of Thailand I see the signs warning about wild elephants. I strain my eyes into the forest, hoping to see a hulking blob of grey lumbering toward me. But just knowing wild elephants are out there keeps the dream of "Old Siam" alive.

Category

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