

Human Elephant conflict stage in public

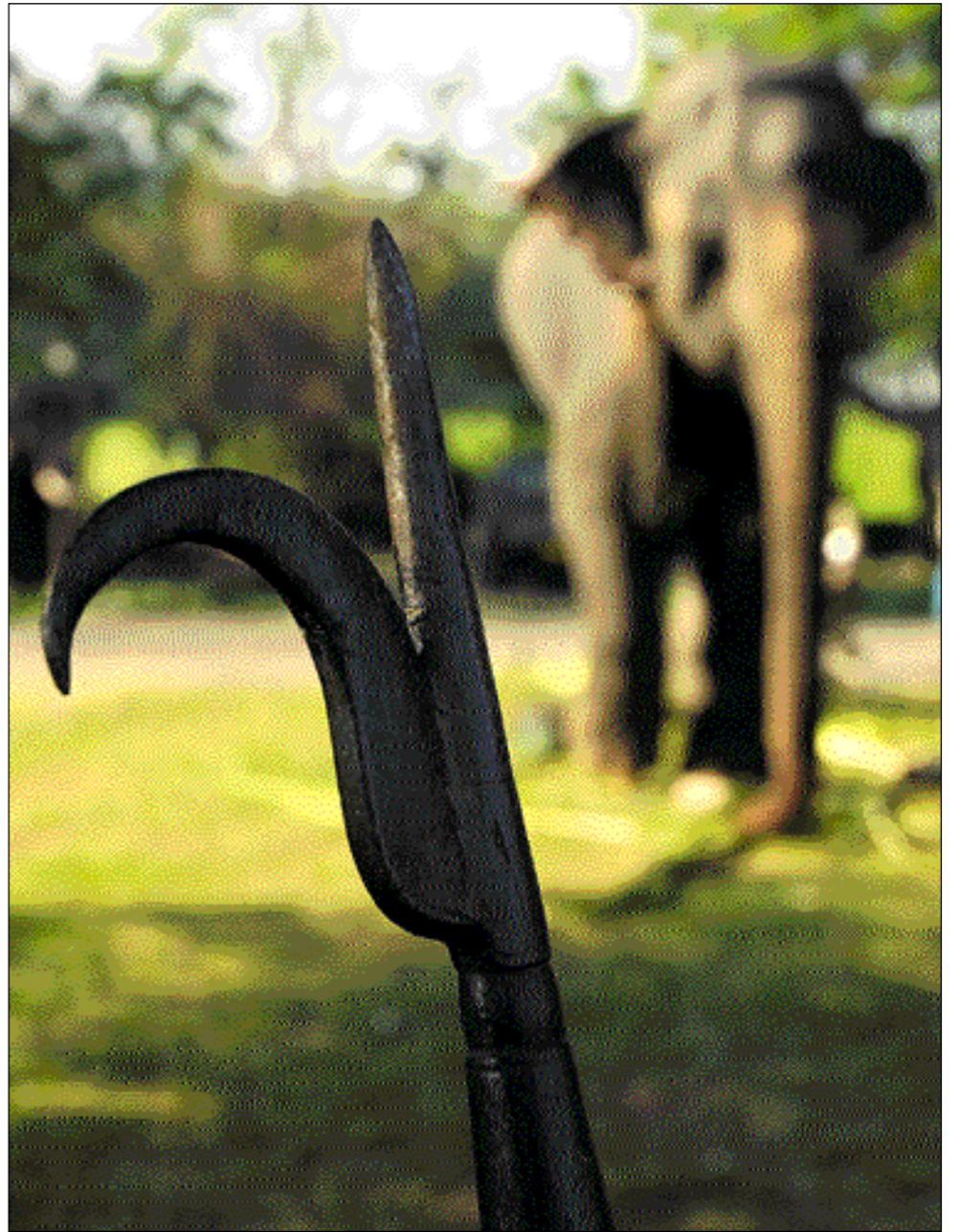
The conflict: human-elephant or inhuman-elephant?



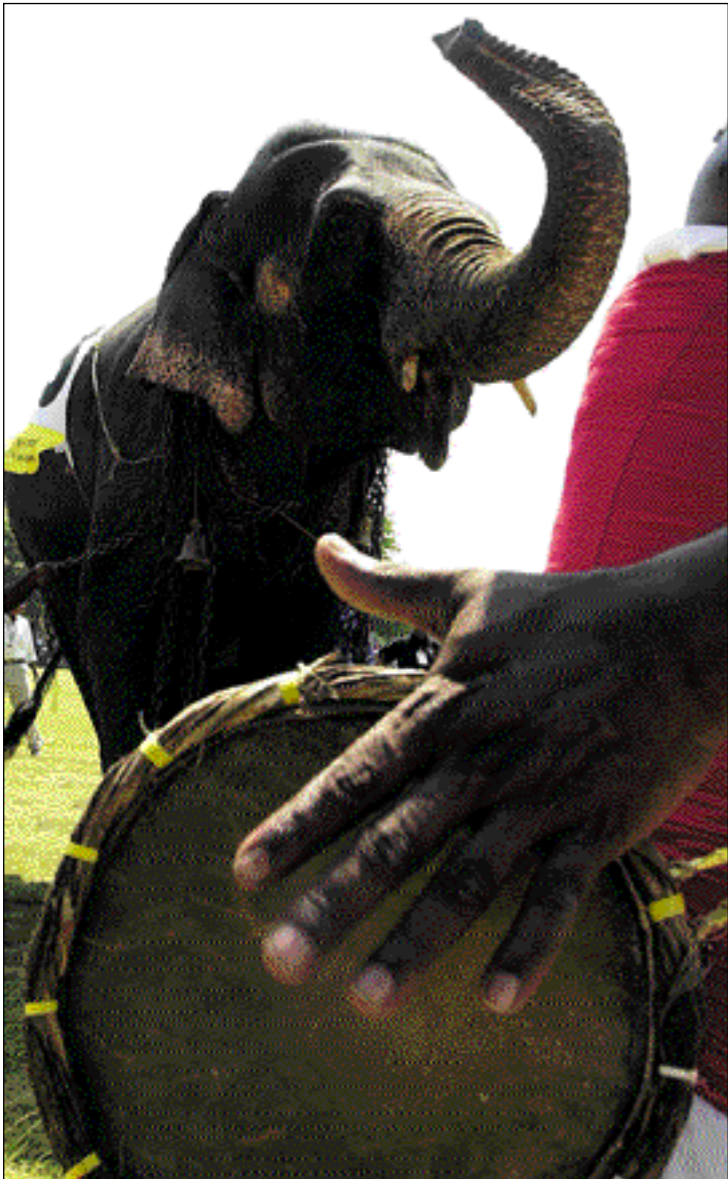
Tears for inhuman torture

ELEPHANTS: There was a time when elephants had their land, man had his. And then man proclaimed ownership of earth, wind, water and fire. Man seized possession of these things as a birth right. We encroached upon the elephants' traditional homeland and when the creature returned, out of habit or lack of choice, we responded with gunfire. Today there are less than 5000 elephants living in their natural habitat. And man, in his "natural" habitat employs the elephant as beast of burden and performer. Two hundred well built men tested their collective strength against a lone elephant in a tug-of-war thrice. Each time the elephant emerged victorious. Elephants were made to eat bread, play polo, run relays, marathons and perform other antics in the unbearable heat during the day. They performed. We enjoyed. And they knelt down to thank us for having been thus entertained. This is the classic expression of the relationship between conqueror and the conquered. These pictures will not capture this ever, but just imagine a circus where men trained by an elephant-trainer, perform and an appreciative audience of elephants trumpet in appreciation. At the end of the show, the performing humans genuflect in awe at having done something to deserve such applause. Not hard to imagine, I am sure. Something to think about at the next elephant show, what do you say?

Text & Pictures by Sriyantha Walpola



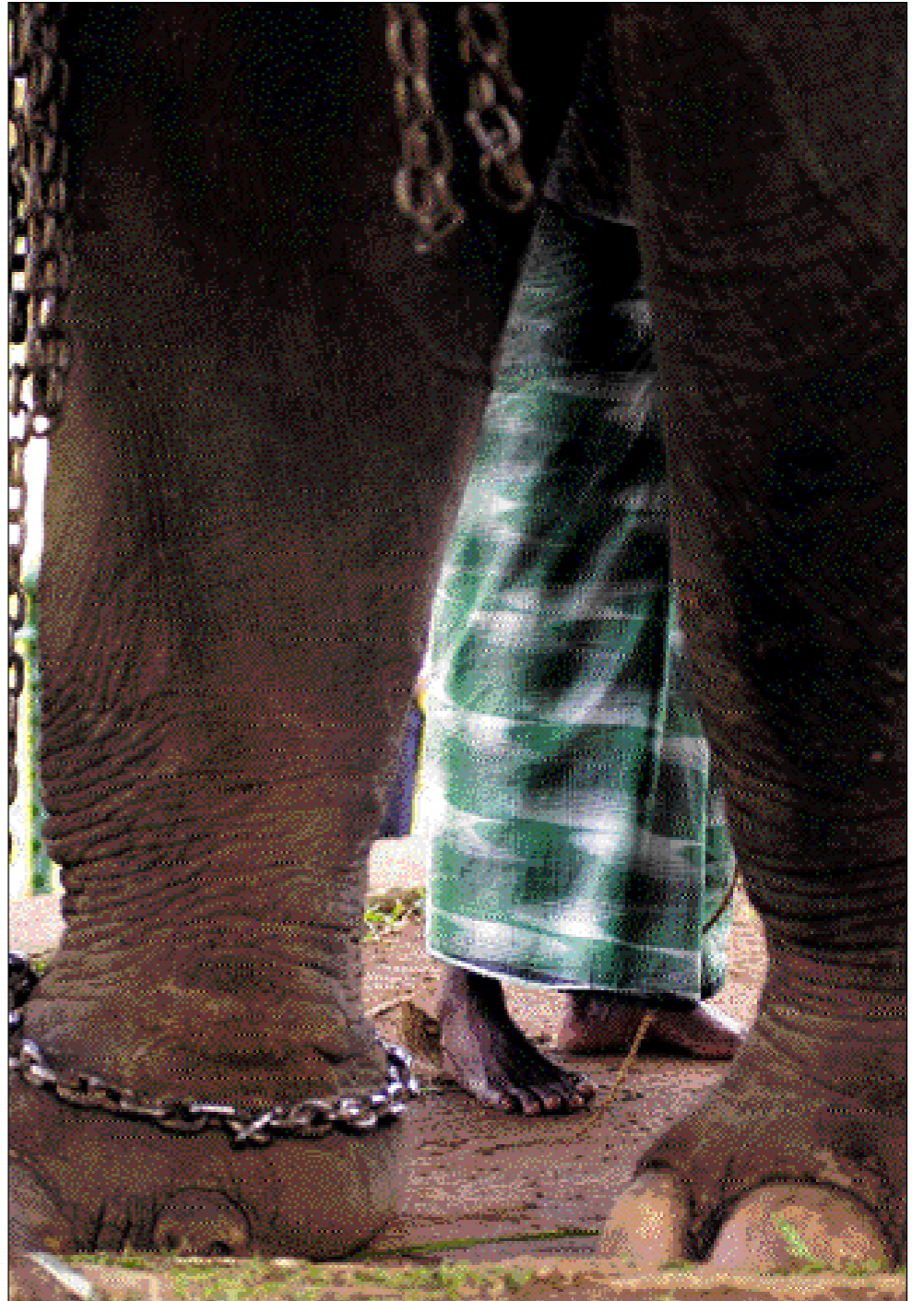
The instrument of torture



Dancing to the human tune



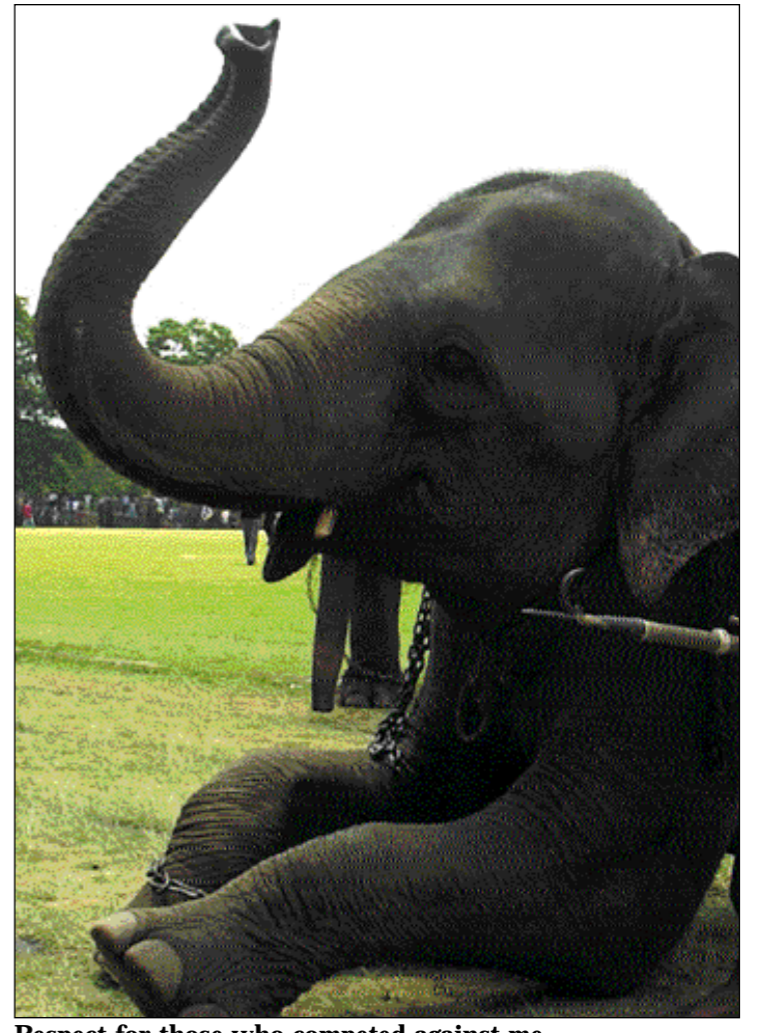
An elephant lover



Bondage



Two hundred strong men against an animal



Respect for those who competed against me