

Lesson 41
Training elephants
训练大象

First listen and then answer the following question.
听录音，然后回答以下问题。

At what point does the training of a captive wild elephant begin?

Two main techniques have been used for training elephants, which we may respectively the tough and the gentle. The former method simply consists of setting an elephant to work and beating him until he does what is expected of him. Apart from moral considerations this is a stupid method of training, for it produces a resentful animal who at a later stage may well turn man-killer. The gentle method requires more patience in the early stages, but produces a cheerful, good-tempered elephant who will give many years of loyal service.

The first essential in elephant training is to assign to the animal a single mahout who will be entirely responsible for the job. Elephants like to have one master just as dogs do, and are capable of a considerable degree of personal affection. There are even stories of half-trained elephant calves who have refused to feed and pined to death when by some unavoidable circumstance they have been deprived of their own trainer. Such extreme cases must probably be taken with a grain of salt, but they do underline the general principle that the relationship between elephant and mahout is the key to successful training.

The most economical age to capture an elephant for training is between fifteen and twenty years, for it is then almost ready to undertake heavy work and can begin to earn its keep straight away. But animals of this age do not easily become subservient to man, and a very time man, and a very firm hand must be employed in the early stages. The captive elephant, still roped to a tree, plunges and screams every time a man approaches, and for several days will probably refuse all food through anger and fear. Sometimes a tame elephant is tethered nearby to give the wild one confidence, and in most cases the captive gradually quietens down and begins to accept its food. The next stage is to get the elephant to the training establishment, a ticklish business which is achieved with the aid of two tame elephants roped to the captive on either side.

When several elephants are being trained at one time, it is customary for the new arrival to be placed between the stalls of two captives whose training is already well advanced. It is then left completely undisturbed with plenty of food and water so that it can absorb the atmosphere of its new home and see that nothing particularly alarming is happening to its companions. When it is eating normally, its own training begins. The trainer stands in front of the elephant holding a long stick with a sharp metal point. Two assistants, mounted on tame elephants, control the captive from either side, while others rub their hands over his skin to the accompaniment of a monotonous and soothing chant. This is supposed to induce pleasurable sensations in the elephant, and its effects are reinforced by the use of endearing epithets. The elephant is not son', or 'ho! my father', or 'my mother', according to the age and sex of the captive. The elephant is not immediately susceptible to such blandishments, however, and usually lashes fiercely with its trunk in all directions. These movements are controlled by the trainer with the metal-pointed stick, and the trunk eventually becomes so sore that the elephant curls it up and seldom afterwards uses it for offensive purposes.

RICHARD CARRINGTON Elephants

New words and expressions 生词和短语

- technique
- n. 技术
- tough
- adj. 强硬的
- resentful
- adj. 忿恨不满的
- assign
- v. 分配, 指派
- mahout
- n. 驯象人
- calf
- n. 幼仔
- pine
- v. 消瘦
- underline
- v. 着重说明, 强调
- keep
- n. 生计
- subservient
- adj. 屈从的
- plunge
- v. 向前冲
- tame
- adj. 养驯服了的
- tether
- v. (用绳) 拴
- ticklish
- adj. 难对付的, 棘手的
- alarming
- adj. 引起惊恐的
- accompaniment
- n. 伴奏
- soothe
- v. 镇定
- chant
- n. 单调的歌
- reinforce
- v. 加强
- endearing
- adj. 惹人喜爱的
- epithet
- n. 称呼
- susceptible
- adj. 易受感动的
- blandishment
- n. 奉承
- lash
- v. 猛烈地甩
- curl
- v. 使卷曲

参考译文

驯象有两种主要的方法，我们分别称之为强硬法和温柔法。强硬法就是驱象去干活，把它打顺从为止。且不说道义问题，这本身就是一种愚蠢的训练方法，因为这种方法训练会使动物反感，在以后某个时期可能会变成伤人的动物。温柔法要求在最初阶段保持较大的耐心，但这种方法可以训练出性情愉快、脾气温顺，能忠实为人服务多年的大象。

驯象中至关生要的是指派一名专门的驯象员，全面负责这项工作。大象和狗一样，喜欢有一个专一的主人，而且会对主人产生相当深厚的私人感情。甚至有这样的故事：训练了一半的小象，由于不可避免的情况与他们的主人分离后，竟拒绝吃食，消瘦至死。这种极端的事例虽不可全信，但强调了一项基本原则，象和驯象员之间的关系是驯象成功与否的关键。

捕捉 15 至 20 岁之间年龄的大象进行驯象最为经济。这个年龄的象差不多已能干重活，可以很快挣回饲养它的开支。但这个年龄的象不易驯服，因此开始阶段需要有一位强有力的老手。捕来拴在树上的大象，每当有人走近它时，就会向前猛冲并发出尖叫，甚至一连几天都由于愤怒和恐惧而拒绝进食。有时，把一头已驯服的象拴在旁边能给野象以信心。在大多数情况下，刚博来的象会慢慢静下来，接着开始吃食。下一步就是把象带到训练场所，这是一件棘手的事，需要在它两侧拴上两头驯服的大象才能完成。

几只象同时训练时，通常是把新到的安置在两头训练得很好的大象的象厩中间，然后给它以充足的食物和水，一定不要惊扰它，以便让他能适应新居的气氛，并且看到自己的同伴身上没有发生让自己担惊受怕的事。当它进食正常了，训练就开始。驯练员手持一根有锋利金属尖头的长棒，站在象前。两位助手骑在驯服的象的背上，从两侧控制新捕的象，其他人唱着单调的歌声用手抚摸象的皮肤。据说这是为了使象产生愉快的感觉，为了加强这种效果，人还按象的年龄性别，给以亲切的外号，如“嗨！我的孩子”、“嗨！我的爸爸”、“嗨！我的妈妈”。然而大象不会立刻被这些讨好的话感动，而往往是用鼻子朝各个方向猛烈地甩动。训练员要用有锋利金属尖的长棒控制它的这种举动，象鼻子最后疼得卷了起来，以后它就很少用鼻子去进攻了。