THE ROLE OF ANIMALS IN INDIAN BUDDHISM WITH SPECIAL REFERENCES TO THE JĀTAKAS

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By

NGUYEN THI KIEU DIEM

Under the Supervision of

Prof. K.T.S. SARAO & Dr. SHALINI SINGHAL

DEPARTMENT OF BUDDHIST STUDIES
UNIVERSITY OF DELHI
DELHI – 110007
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ABSTRACT

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Researcher: **Nguyen Thi Kieu Diem**

Supervisor: **Prof. K. T. S. Sarao & Dr. Shalini Singhal**

Buddhism perceives animals as if they were young children who do not have the intellectual capacity to understand the world as intelligently as humans and just like children need to be protected by humans. As human are the most intelligent beings on planet earth and control almost everything, they have a responsibility toward rest of the flora and fauna. Moreover, while protecting the flora and fauna, humans in a way shall be protecting themselves. It is in this sense that this thesis proposes to examine the Buddhist attitude toward animals in the light of the facts mentioned in the *Jātakas.*

This Thesis consists of six chapters including introduction and conclusion.

Chapter I: "*Introduction*". In this chapter, we have discussed the justification for the choice of this topic. This chapter also includes our analysis of the source material to be used and the research methodology to be employed.

Chapter II: "*Animals versus Humans: Buddhist Perspective*". This chapter, relates largely to the ethical and moral aspects of issues concerning human use of animals for the purposes of food, labour, and various other needs. The major portion of this chapter is devoted to the tricky issue of meat-eating. We have discussed in detail the Theravādin principle of *Tikoṭiparisuddha*, and the Mahāyāna regulations regarding vegetarian food.

Chapter III: "*Animal Characters in the Jātakas*". Many a time, the teachings of the Buddha are conveyed through stories in which animal characters play a central role. This is done in a variety of ways. And the great

influence of the teaching of *kamma* in Buddhism. This is the teaching of *saṃsāra* (the cycle of births and deaths) where individual beings are born again and again in different forms according to their *kamma*. These themes are widely available in the *Jātaka* literature.

Chapter IV: "*Animal, Buddha-nature and Jātakas*". As the expression 'sentient beings' means living beings which have feelings, animals would naturally fall within this group. In this chapter, an attempt has been made to show as to how the early Buddhist argument, which has been profoundly explained through the *Jātakas*, that all beings are sentient, lies at the very basis of the concept of Buddha- nature.

Chapter V: "*The Spirit of Kindness to Animals*". The teachings of the Buddha are full of many tales of love towards animals. The precepts that the Buddhists follow are actually restrains on their actions and one of these rules is that one must not take the life of man or beast. In this chapter, the question of animal rights forms the central part.

Chapter VI: '*Conclusion*'. The *Jātaka* stories teach valuable lessons to correct our current life style. A disciple of the Buddha must maintain a mind of kindness and cultivate the practice of liberating beings. Buddhist environmentalists extend loving kindness and compassion beyond people and animals to include plants and the earth itself.

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The Buddha has said that all beings have Buddha Nature. The Buddha spent many lives, as a man, animal and god, building up the moral and spiritual perfections necessary for Buddhahood. These lives are described in what are known as the *Jātaka* stories. He knew what it was like to be an animal. He also taught that we have been animals in our past lives and in fact all the animals are related to us, quite literally. At some point in the past they have been our mothers, fathers, sisters, cousins. So if we harm animals, we are actually harming members of our own families.

The law of *Karma* states that our actions have consequences. Buddhists should be mindful of the consequences of their actions on the environment and on future generations. The negative form of the First Precept means that Buddhists are likely to try to avoid taking the lives of other living creatures. The positive form of the First Precept encourages Buddhists to show loving kindness (*mettā*) to all beings. This suggests that Buddhists have a responsibility to care for other creatures too. Also occupations that were associated with the killing of animals, which fell outside the trades recommended as the means for a Right Livelihood by the Buddha in the Noble Eightfold Path, gained greater acceptance in society.

It is a Dharma door that exemplifies the Buddha's compassion. The Buddha said: "All beings fear violence, for life is precious to all, comparing your own self, Do not kill; do not get others to kill."[1] For

[1] Dhp. 129.

many Buddhist environmentalists compassion necessarily follows an understanding of all life forms as mutually interdependent. Protecting human life is not possible without also protecting the lives of animals, plants, and minerals. For the Buddhists it is impossible to distinguish between sentient and non-sentient beings. Every Buddhist practitioner should be a protector of the environment. Minerals have their own lives, too. While practicing the protection of humans, animals, plants, and minerals, we know that we are protecting ourselves. We feel in permanent and loving touch with all species on Earth. This planet is the place where all forms of life humans, animals, and plants live as a cooperative microcosm of a larger ecosystem and as a community where humans can develop an ecological ethic.

It was due to the above stated reasons that I chose this topic for my Ph.D. thesis with the hope that all living beings will get the happiness in their lives, peace in the world and safety on this planet, our Mother Earth.

In the completion of this work, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Head of the Department of Buddhist Studies and former teachers who helped and encouraged me to study the related subject during M.A, M. Phil courses. Next, I would like to press my gratefulness to Prof. K.T. S. Sarao who very kindly supervised my work and guided me during the time of its preparation. I am also grateful to Dr. Shalini Singhal who helped me to complete this work. Thanks should go to the library staff of the Delhi University who constantly provided me the required books and other materials, which were available in the library. Finally, I would like to remember my revered and beloved my Master Ven. Thich Nu Thuong Lien, all dharma Brothers, Sisters and laymen,

who have been bestowing on me their blessings and all kinds of help in all respects of life. I pay them my best regards and gratitude.

During the process of writing this topic, although tried my best, with rudimentary knowledge, I was really difficult to evade some mistakes and carelessness in the forms and contents. Thus, I am very happy to receive the encouragements and instructions of Masters, Brothers and Sisters in Dharma as well as of Professors, Doctors, Teachers and friends to supplement new knowledge for study latter.

Nguyen Thi Kieu Diem

ABBREVIATIONS

AN.	Aṅguttara Nikāya
Dhp.	Dhammapada
DN.	Dīgha Nikāya.
J.	Jātaka
MN.	Majjhima Nikāya
PTS	Pali Text Society
SN.	Saṃyutta Nikāya
U.	Udana
Vin.	Vinaya Piṭaka

CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The issue of animal right is one of the most important issues in the contemporary globalizing world. Now more and more people are paying attention to the issues of welfare relating to animals. A large number of non-governmental organizations have mushroomed all over the world which take up the issue of animal rights. Many governments have also legislated on matters relating to the welfare of animals. As now more and more scientific evidence is coming to light which shows that animals feel pain and suffer like human beings. They also have a fair level of language development, family sense, and above all, culture. Thus, it is now generally believed that it is high time that we stopped treating animals as machines. It is only in this sense that more and more people are becoming vegetarian because eating animals is seen as morally incorrect.

Animals and human beings have existed on the earth for a long time. The earth is a place where are all living beings give birth to propagate their species and exist. However, animals came into existence before the animals. This indicates that animals have equal, if not more, right to the resources on planet earth. On the same basis also, they have the right to life and existence. As the animals are not as developed as the human beings in terms of the brain, they are like innocent children and need human protection and care. So human beings are like parents and elder brothers and sisters to animals.

The Buddha spent many of his previous lives, as a man, animal and deity, building up the moral and spiritual perfections necessary for

Buddhahood. These lives are described in what are known as the Jātaka stories.[1] The Buddha took birth many times as an animal sometimes a deer, or a monkey, or a fish, or a dog etc. He knew what it was like to be an animal. He also taught that we have been animals in our past lives and in fact all the animals are related to us, quite literally. At some point in the past they have been our mothers, fathers, sisters, cousins. So if we harm animals, we are actually harming members of our own family.

'All male beings have been my father and all females have been my mother. There is not a single being that has not given birth to me during my previous lives; hence all beings of the Six Destinies are my parents. Therefore, when a person kills and eats any of these beings, he thereby slaughters my parents.'[2] We do not know which living being was related to us in our past life. One might have been our father, our brother, or our sister. We cannot know for sure. Perhaps they were our children, or our friends. Right now we have not gained the use of the heavenly eye or the penetration of past lives, and so we do not know what kinds of causes and effects belong to each animal and yet, when we see these creatures, we feel uncomfortable and want to set them free.

The Buddha advises that "A person who loves the self should not harm the self of other".[3] Therefore, to maintain peace and law and other society, we should not do anything to others that we would not like them to do to ourselves. Following this logic, it is important to contemplate on the

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1 Peter Harvey, *An Introduction to Buddhism: Teaching, History and Practices*, New Delhi: Foundation Books Pvt. Ltd, 2005:15.

2 Ronald B. Epstein, *Buddhist Text Translation Society's Buddhism A to Z,* CA: Buddhist Text Translation Society, 2003:122.

3 Anand, *The Buddha: The Essence of Dhamma and its Practice*, Mumbai: Samrudh Bharat Publication, 2002:102.

issue that of living beings eating the flesh of other living beings. We people are living beings and what we eat is other living beings. So this is a case of living beings eating other living beings. Horses, cows, pigs, sheep, chickens, and dogs are all animals. And all other creatures are also living beings. Life is more precious than anything else in the world. No one wants to suffer. Day and night, even in our dreams, we instinctively try to avoid even the slightest suffering.[4] Even insects want to live. Whenever we break any of the five precepts of Buddhism, we have violated some other sentient being.[5]

His Holiness, the Fourteen Dalai Lama, preaches to his audiences that the human beings are social animals. The animals have no need to study philosophy, and many other professional and complicated subjects. By simply looking at these innocent animals, insects, ants, bees, etc., quite often we develop some kind of respect for them. Because they have no religion, no constitution, no police force, nothing. But they live in harmony through the natural law of existence or nature's law or system. Morally relevant similarity of animals with humans is that both can feel pain and suffer, that they are sentient beings. Many people today still cannot accept animals on the same moral level as humanity. Although animals could speak nothing, they have sensitive sounds when they get inflicted with pain and consequent suffering. Therefore, Ryder states that: "If we are going to care about the suffering of other humans then logically we should care about the suffering of non-humans too".[6] It is the heartless exploiter of animals, not the animal protectionist, who is being irrational, showing a sentimental tendency to put

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4 Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, *Transform your life*, New Delhi: New Age Books, 2002: 33.

5 Hsing Yun, *Being Good: Buddhist ethics for everyday life*. Trans. Tom Graham, USA: Watherhill, Inc, 2002: 82.

6 Christie Ritter, *Animal Rights*, Abdo Publishing Company, 2008: 23.

his own species on a pedestal. We all, thank goodness, feel a natural spark of sympathy for the sufferings of others. We need to catch that spark and fan it into a fire of rational and universal compassion.

The Buddha has said that all beings have Buddha Nature. Therefore, we should not eat meat because all living beings are potential Buddhas and have a life. The physical mechanisms for feeling pain are the same among all the higher animals. Pain is pain whether you one is a bird, a fish, a mouse or a human. All men can think and feel alike, they can all understand the same sympathies and the same sufferings. They are all conscious beings. This is true of humans as it is true of animals. In fact, humans are simply another breed of animals. The non-human animal species are simply another oppressed group, another exploited mass. The mind of animals is essentially the same as that of man. The animals are indeed conscious beings and that they can feel as much as humans can. The animals are conscious beings. They can think and feel as any human being can. If humans are to be given rights on account of their sufferings, on account of the fact that we may all feel the same pains and desires, then it is also true that we should grant the same rights to non-human animals. Every one familiar with the dog will admit that the creature knows the right from the wrong, and is conscious when it committed a fault.[7]

In a society that gives few rights to animals, the most important right for a humane thinker to emphasize is the right to live; it is an intrinsic component of what is called humaneness. If we consume the flesh of our fellow creatures, then we are doing nothing but confirming that vice and

[7] John W. Draper, *History of the Conflict between Religion and Science*, Cambridge University Press, 2009: 128.

brutality will reign in civilization for thousands of years to come. If we look forward, it is undeniably the coming to humaneness. All animals are equal but some animals are more equal than others.[8] But in some respects human suffering can differ from that of other animals. However, the ability to reason is not unique to humans; it is a function of the forebrain one of the three basic functions present in all vertebrates. It varies in complexity from fish to the higher mammals. In human beings it is very highly developed but that is a difference of degree, not kind. Animals in Buddhism are capable of both passion and voluntary motion, and hence are not simply driven about by impulses beyond their control. If animals count in their own right, our use of animals for food becomes questionable especially when animal flesh is consumed as a luxury rather a necessity.[9] Some people think that ethics is inapplicable to the real world because they regard it as a system of short and simple rules like 'do not lie', 'do not steal', and 'do not kill'. When we abstain from killing, our respect for life grows, and we begin to act with compassion toward all living beings.[10] Then what are our responsibilities towards animal? Are we justified in treating animals as nothing more than machines producing flesh for to eat? These are the issues that can arise at one time or another time in our lives.

For non-humans, such as animals or even gods, suffering only causes them distress and unhappiness, and they cannot learn anything from their pain.[11] The position and treatment of animals in Buddhism is important for

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8 James A. Serpell, *In the company of animals: a study of human-animal relationships*, Cambridge University Press, 1996: 3.

9 Peter Singer, *Practical Ethics*, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1993:62.

10 Henepola Gunaratana, *Eight mindful steps to happiness: walking the path of the Buddha*, USA: Wisdom Publications, 2001:113.

11 Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, *Op. Cit.* 213.

the light it sheds on Buddhist's perception of their own relation to the natural world.

The Buddha was a lover of nature. He spent long periods in forests, in caves and under trees and encouraged his monastic to do so. The rules of discipline for monastic deal with measures for the conservation of nature. He loved nature includes animals. In ancient days, the Brahmins used to sacrifice cows in the hope of attaining heaven. Influenced by the teachings of love and compassion of the Buddha, the Brahmins have not only stopped bloody sacrifices but are also now propagating against cow killing. This is great victory of the doctrine of non-violence preached by the Buddha.[12] And saving the lives of all the sentient beings with the great compassion of the Buddha, He held the three month rainy season retreat. This is one of the reasons avoiding destroying creatures by monks and nuns during three month of rainy season. Buddhism with the loving kindness, believes karma and rebirth that human and animal be changed their life together belong to their good or bad action. In the Buddhist tradition, the teaching of rebirth states that humans can be reborn as animals if they commit heinous deeds, and those animals can be reborn as humans if they exert effort to act meritoriously.

Buddhism believes in reincarnation across species, Animals form an important part of its world view. The Buddha strongly campaigned for the humane treatment of all living beings. Thus, he gave the ethical treatment of all animals a theological priority. This is a powerful and significant heritage. Buddhism believes that Animals are like young children who do not have

[12] Leolla Karunyakara, *Modernisation of Buddhism: Contributions of Ambedkar and Dalai Lama -XIV*, New Delhi: Gyan Publishing House, 2002:235.

the intellectual capacity to understand the world as intelligently as humans. They are therefore needed to be protected by humans.

We should morally treat animals like humans, provided the animals have relevant similarities with humans. We human beings are social animals.[13] All animal species can suffer pain and distress. Animals scream and writhe like us. Their nervous systems are similar and contain the same biochemicals that we know are associated with the experience of pain in ourselves. When we purposely kill living beings, even small creatures like insects, we diminish our respect for all life and thus for ourselves. Mindfulness helps us to recognize our own aversions and to take responsibility for them.[14]

In this thesis, an attempt has been made to discuss the role of animals in Buddhism, in the light of the above mentioned background. It goes without saying that Buddhism pays direct attention to the role and importance of animals in the world dominated by men. The methodology used in this research work consists of mainly description and analysis based on the *Pañca Nikāyas*, special reference to the *Jātakas*. Beside these texts, we have also made use of survey method.

Including the present introductory chapter, this thesis consists of six chapters in all. The second chapter is entitled *Animals versus Humans: Buddhist Perspective***.** This chapter relates largely to the ethical and moral aspects of issues concerning human use of animals for the purposes of food, labour, and various other needs. An attempt has also been made to show as to how Buddhism considers it immoral for humans to exploit animals. It is

[13] *Ibid.* 118.
[14] Henepola Gunaratana, *Op. Cit.* 113.

no doubt that the Buddha after leaving home refused to ride an animal or travel by a vehicle driven by an animal. The major portion of this chapter is devoted to the tricky issue of meat-eating. The Theravādin principle of *Tikoṭiparisudha* has been analyzed in detail here and along with it the Mahāyāna regulations regarding vegetarian food have been discussed.

The third chapter is titled *Animal characters in the Jātakas: Buddha nature and Jātakas***.** Many a time, the teachings of the Buddha are conveyed through stories in which animal characters play a central role. This is done in a variety of ways. The first is a tendency toward animism, the idea that animals have life in the same way as humans. The second is the great influence of the teaching of kamma (Sanskrit, karma) in Buddhism. This is the teaching of *saṃsāra* (the cycle of births and deaths) where individual beings are born again and again in different forms depending upon their *karma*. The third is the personification of animals which was greatly developed at that time. It was very easy to adapt these personifications for oral purposes and thus animals and men talk to each other on the same footing. These three themes are widely available in the *Jātakas* stories literature.

The Four chapter is entitled *Aniamals, Buddha-nature and Jātakas***.** As the expression 'sentient beings'(*sattva*) means living beings which have feelings, animals would naturally fall within this group. Though the concept of Buddha-nature belongs largely to Mahāyāna Buddhism but its roots lie in texts such as the *Jātakas*. In this chapter, an attempt has been made to show as to how the Early Buddhist argument, which has been profoundly explained through the *Jātaka*, that all beings are sentient, lies at the very basis of the concept of Buddha- nature.

The title of the fifth chapter is '*The spirit of kindness to Animals'*. The teachings of the Buddha are full of many tales of love towards animals. The precepts that the Buddhists follow are actually restrains on their actions and one of these rules is that one must not take the life of man or beast. This forms part of five precepts, eight precepts and again ten precepts. None of these differentiate between man and beast. In other words, Buddhism is one of the very few religious systems that champion the cause of animals. Thus, in this chapter the question of animal rights shall form the core.

The final chapter is 'Conclusion'. In this chapter, we have summed up the arguments drawn in the previous chapters.

CHAPTER TWO

ANIMALS VERSUS HUMANS: A BUDDHIST PERSPECTIVE

From a Buddhist perspective, the empathetic relationships established among humans and their pets can be seen as new contributory capacities being brought forth from both humans and animals. This does not mean that the interdependence among humans and pets is assumed to be necessarily good. Pets can be, and too often are, abused. But the benefits of pets for children and the elderly are very well-documented as are the potentials for pets to establish profound more communities with individual humans and human families. The relational repertoire of well-cared for pets is much more extensive and refined than that of either their counterparts or industrially farmed animals.[1]

According to the universal law, all living beings have equal right to life in the world, all animals can have the right to be free from pain, the right to food, all other rights could be applied to animals. In nature, all animals are wild and free, but the human beings do not respect the right to life of animals. They kill and inflict injury to animals under many forms. The people do not care about the ethical and moral aspects that concern human use of animals for the purposes of food, labor, and various other needs. They make use of animals for fur, leather, wool, food, clothing, entertainment, and as research subjects. The people not only use animals for purpose of food, labor, but also in scientific experiments, hunting and trapping.[2]

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1 Peter D. Hershock, *Buddhism in the public sphere: reorienting global interdependence*. Routledge, 2006: 33.

2 Tom Regan, *Matters of life and death: New Introductory Essays in Moral Philosophy*, USA: McGraw-Hill, Inc, 1993: 350.

Buddhism considers it immoral for humans to exploit animals. Over 2500 years ago, the Buddha after leaving home refused to ride an animal or travel by a vehicle driven by an animal. With the reasons above, the major portion of this chapter is devoted to the tricky issue of meat eating. We have also discussed in detail the Theravādin principle of *Tikoṭiparisuddha*, and further deal with the Mahāyāna regulations regarding vegetarian food. Thus a major element of the animal rights argument is the shared characteristics of human and other animal species.[3]

II. 1. What is an animal?

The word "animal" comes from the Latin word *animus*, which means "breath" or "soul" That is, an animal is an "animate" being, a thing that lives and breathes and moves, unlike a plant which is incapable of rapid motor responses.[4] In everyday colloquial usage, the word usually refers to non-human animals. Frequently, only closer relatives of humans such as mammals and other vertebrates are meant in colloquial use. The biological definition of the word refers to all members of the kingdom Animalia, encompassing creatures as diverse as sponges, jellyfish, insects and humans.[5]

Animals have several characteristics that set them apart from other living things. Animals are multi-cellular which separates them form bacteria and most protists. They generally digest food in an internal chamber, which

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3 Catherine Redgwell, 'Life, The Universe And Everything: A Critique Of Anthropocentric Rights'. In *Human Rights Approaches to Environmental Protection*, ed. Alan E. Boyle, Michael R. Anderson, New York: Oxford University Press, 2003: 77.

4 Dhirendra Verma, *Word Origins: An Exhaustive Compilation of the Origin of Familiar Words and Phrases*, New Delhi: Sterling Publishers, 2008: 69.

5 Buddy Poy. *Vegetarianism Unmasked: Unmasking the Truth About Vegetarianism*. Author House, 2011: 57.

separates them from plants and algae. They are also distinguished from plants, algae, and fungi by lacking rigid cell walls. In most animals, embroil pass through a blastula stages, which is a characteristic exclusive to animals.[6]

There is a huge variety of life on earth. Nobody knows exactly how many different plants and animals there are, scientists have estimated that there are between five and thirty million species. Animal come in all shapes and size. They live in many varied habitats, from desert to rainforest. It unique species is the product of millions of years of evolution.[7]According to Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–1778) who was a foremost Franco-Swiss philosopher of the Enlightenment, a writer and composer of eighteenth century Romanticism mentioned in discourse on inequality that animals should be part of natural law, not because they are rational but because they are sentient. He argued that sensitivity, the capacity to experience pleasure and suffering, entitles rights. Animals being sensitive experience pain and suffering and therefore as a consequence they should have rights.[8]

Tom Regan argues that, because the moral rights of humans are based on their possession of certain cognitive abilities, and because these abilities are also possessed by at least some non-human animals, such animals must have the same moral rights as humans. Although only humans act as moral agents, both marginal-case humans, such as infants, and at least some non-humans must have the status of "moral patients." Moral patients are unable to formulate moral principles, and as such are unable to do right or wrong,

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6 *Ibid.* 58.

7 Barbara James, *Animal Rights*, London: Hodder Murrer, 2002: 4.

8 Rod Preece. *Awe for the Tiger, Love for the Lamb: A Chronicle of Sensibility to Animals*, New York and London: Routledge, 2002: 164.

even though what they do may be beneficial or harmful. Only moral agents are able to engage in moral action.

II.2. What is a human being?

An interest in human nature has long been a motive driving philosophical inquiry. In the ancient world it was associated most closely with the name of Socrates and with his claim that the most valuable knowledge is self-knowledge. In the modern period a distinctive kind of philosophical thought got under way with Descartes's attempt to show that rigorous scientific knowledge must be grounded in a new kind of self-knowledge.

An interest in human nature can take many forms, and the questions in which it finds expression can range from such matters as the character of human motivation to the prospects for human happiness. Philosophers have asked questions like these, but they have been more interested in what differentiates human beings from other living things and generally from the nature world in which they live. It has been widely agreed that if there is some respect in which human beings differ from even the higher animals, it must be their capacity for rational thought that makes the difference.[9]

Heidegger insists on the requirement that the level at which this inquiry is pitched must differ from that of the usual definitions of a human being as an *animal rationale*. A human being is an animal life-form that exists on planet earth. Humans are a very successful animal.[10]Like other similar living organisms, human beings are made of many individual cells,

[9] Frederick A. Olafson, *What is a human being? A Heideggerian* view, Cambridge University Press, 1995: 1–2.

[10] Barbara James, *Op. Cit.* 52.

each autonomous, which cooperate together for mutual benefit, specialize, organize into organs, and form a body that is capable of taking care of all its cells in a more sophisticated way.[11]They have adapted to living in most parts of the world, and have increased their population to nearly six billion. Humans now dominate many other species on earth.[12]

This is comparable to individual human beings, each fully autonomous and capable of independent function, cooperating for their individual benefit, specializing, organizing into clans and corporations, and together forming the human civilization that allows its member parts to function in a more complicated way.[13]

II.3. Immorality in using animal for food and labor

The Buddha did not permit his disciples the use of animals for riding or the use of their leather. The Buddha denounced violence and advocated a ban on the killing of animals for the sake of food, sacrifice, sport or pleasure; though it is a matter as to whether he banned violence under all circumstances.[14]

Animals do not want to ride bicycles, stand on their heads, balance on balls, or jump through rings of fire. Sadly, they have no choice. Trainers use abusive tools, like whips and electric prods, and force them to perform. Not only are elephants, bears, tigers, and other animals abused by trainers, they suffer from extreme loneliness, boredom, and frustration from being locked in tiny cages or chains month after month, city after city. Instead of being

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11 Helen Sue Cohen, *Neuroscience for Rehabilitation*, Lippincott Williams & Wilkins, 1999: 4.
12 Barbara James, *Op. Cit.* 52.
13 Evgeny Abramyan, *Civilization in the 21st Century*, Moscow, 2009: 196.
14 Leolla Karunyakara, *Modernisation of Buddhism: Contributions of Ambedkar and Dalai Lama -XIV*, New Delhi: Gyan Publishing House, 2002: 102.

treated like furniture that is loaded and unloaded into trucks and storage areas, these animals should be in their natural habitat, exploring, seeking, mates, and raising families. Animals held captive in circuses, rodeos, zoos, and other entertainment venues need you to speak out for them. Teach your community why, for animals' sake, they should go for a hike or take in a baseball game instead of supporting these unkind businesses. Most animals, plants, species, ecosystems, and other natural wholes are left out of direct account.[15]

In modern society, the only justification for killing animals for food is that people find meat to be convenient and that people enjoy the taste of meat. In other words, meat provides convenience and pleasure. These morally vacant justifications for eating meat should be weighed against unnecessarily killing of billions of animals each year and the devastating effects of meat production on both the environment and human starvation. In the past there may have been some reasonable justifications for eating meat. In most modern societies, it is perfectly possible to live a healthy, normal life without causing the deaths of animals. We still cling to the past out of habit. Animals are eaten neither for health, nor to increase our food supply. Their flesh is a luxury, consumed because people like its taste.[16]

Human beings also kill animals not just for food. They take the animal's skin to make shoes and hats and clothes. And even that is not enough. They take these animal's bones to make necklaces or buttons or earrings. In short, they kill many, many animals in order to sell the animal parts for money. Because of these desires and this strong animal

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15 Tom Regan, *Op. Cit.* 374.

16 Peter Singer, *Practical Ethics,* Second Edition, Kundli (India): Replica Press Pvt. Ltd, 2003: 63.

consciousness, human beings fight with each other, and destroy nature. They do not value life. So now this whole world has many problems; problems with the water, problems with the air, problems with the earth and food. Many new problems appear every day. These problems do not happen by accident. Human beings make each and every one of these problems. Dogs, cats, or lions, or snakes no animal makes as many problems for this world as human beings do. Humans do not understand their true nature, so they use their thinking and desire to create so much suffering for this world. That is why some people say that human beings are the number one bad animal in this world. So human beings must soon wake up and find their original seeds, their original nature.[17]

All sentient beings desire to live. All animals try to escape when being killed for food. No living being wants to be killed or hurt. Just as we don't wish that anybody should hurt us or killed us, in the same way, no living being wishes to be hurt or killed.[18] Living in the world, we are all frightened to die or to be killed, whereas we sacrifice the lives of many animals for our pleasure. Perhaps we are a hundred times or a thousand times more cruel than animals. As being intelligent, we open many universities in the world, teaching a variety of subjects. But there are not enough schools to teach how to live in dignity, how to treat kindly between each other, between mankind and living beings. We are killing animals for our food, for their skin, for their ivory to make our ornaments. The problem with eating meat was that it debased human beings to the level of

[17] Seung Sahn, *The Compass of Zen*, Boston: Shambhala, 1997: 7.
[18] Anand, *The Buddha: The Essence of Dhamma and its Practice*, Mumbai (Delhi): Samrudh Bharat Publication, 2002: 102.

mere animals. For most people in modern, urban shed societies, the principal form of contact with nonhuman animals is at meal times.[19]

The use of animals for food probably represents the greatest exploitation of them at present. Several billion animals are factory farmed yearly in the United Stated alone, and probably trillions of fish are also harvested annually, to die, apparently in great distress, from suffocation.[20]

Today, there are a lot of people who love animals and talk about protecting to animal. In the article of the Time Nation, The Animal Welfare Board of India (AWBI) has imposed a blanket ban on use of animals like lions, tigers, panthers and monkeys in films. The filmmakers cannot use animals for scenes shot on hard surface, or use them for shot that feature use of explosive. Pappu, an animal lover, said: "I certainly will not want to can scenes where we have to show horse falling and hurting themselves but it is ridiculous to stop us from using pigeons and dogs".[21]

Anti-hunt campaigners argue that hunting is cruel, causing great suffering and a violent death to animals. In most societies today, it is unnecessary to hunt for food. Hunting had become a sport rather than a necessity.[22] However, there are some people who do not eat any meat at all. Many Hindus and Buddhists believe in a code of non-violence, and do not kill any animals for food. A number of people in Western countries are vegetarian because they also feel that it is wrong to kill animals for their meat.[23]

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19 Peter Singer, *Op. Cit.* 62.
20 S. F. Sapontzis, *Morals, reason, and animals*, Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1987:199.
21 Bharati Dubey, TNN, *Blanket ban on use of "wild" animals in films*, Times Nation, Sunday Times of India, New Delhi, June 1, 2008: 13.
22 Barbara James, *Op. Cit.* 42.
23 *Ibid.* 12.

II. 4. The numberless animal killed for food.

Actually, of all rapacious animals, man is the most universal destroyer. The destruction of quadrupeds, birds and insects is, in general, limited to particular kinds: but the rapacity of man has hardly any limitation. His empire over the other animals which inhabit this globe is almost universal.[24]

The American College of Surgeons supports the responsible use and human care and treatment of laboratory animals in research, education, teaching, and product safety testing in accordance with applicable local, state, and federal animal welfare laws. Further, the membership believes that only as many animals as necessary should be used; that any pain or distress animals may experience should be minimized or alleviated.

Worldwide, over 200 million living animals a year are used for research in scientist experiments.[25] 60 billion animals are processed for human consumption each year, not counting fish.[26]And about 35,000 bulls are killed in bullfights in Spain each year.[27]"In a lifetime, the average person in the USA will eat 23 pigs, 3 lambs, 11 cattle, 45 turkeys, and 1,097 chickens."[28]Just one person changing to a vegetarian diet would save more than 100 innocent beings per year. That is why Dennis J. Kucinich said "Every one of us knows a story of animal cruelty, every one of us knows how in one way or another official policies have sanctioned cruelty to animals."[29]

Anywhere we go, creatures destined for the dinner plate endure cruel living conditions. We are eating them anyway, goes the strange logic. In the

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[24] Richard D. Ryder, *Animal revolution: changing attitudes towards specialism*, New York: Berg, 2000: 92.
[25] Barbara James, *Op. Cit.* 22.
[26] M. J. Urch. 'Fish and Fish Products'. In. *Food Industries Manual*, eds. M. D. Ranken, R. C. Kill and C. Baker, UK: Blackie Academic & Professional, 1997: 61.
[27] Barbara James, *Op. Cit.* 34.
[28] *Ibid*. 13.
[29] Pamela Rice, *One Hundred and One Reasons Why I'm a Vegetarian*, New York: Lantern Books, 2005: 9.

United States, the convention is to estimate the number of animals used for such purposes at about 70 to 90 million per year. Some estimates, however, are as low as 15 million per year. Yet there are a few persons who claim that the best estimate is 120 million per year.[30] The United States is not a good place to be if you're a farmed animal. Though you are a living, feeling, sentient being, there is little in the nation's laws to protect you abuse. First, the federal level Animal Welfare Act has no meaning for you because the word "animal," as legally defined, does not apply to "farm animals used for food, fiber, or production purposes." Consequently, even though the title of this statute implies to the public that the government looks after the welfare of animals destined for the dinner plate, it does not. And by leaving farmed animals unprotected against the onslaught of industrial farm production, the law actually helps to open the floodgates to even more animal cruelty to a scale, in fact, never before seen. Other federal level anti-cruelty laws that cover specific conditions during transport, at stockyards, and during the slaughter process similarly lack teeth in their wording and are inadequately enforced.[31]

More than twenty-seven billion animals are killed for food every year in the U.S. alone. Animals in factory farms have no legal protection from cruelty that would be illegal if it were inflicted on dogs or cats, including neglect, mutilations, genetic manipulation, drug regimens that cause chronic pain and crippling, transport through all weather extremes, and gruesome and violent slaughter. If animals count in their own right, our use of animals

[30] Peter Singer and Tom Regan, *Animal Rights and Human Obligations*, New Jersey: Prentice-hall, Eaglewood Cliffs, 1976: 199.
[31] Pamela Rice, *Op. Cit.* 10.

for food becomes questionable especially when animal flesh is a luxury rather than a necessity.[32]

The slaughterhouse is the final stop for animals raised for their flesh. These ghastly places, while little known to most meat-eaters, process enormous numbers of animals each years. A surprising quantity of meat is consumed by the meat-eater.

II.5. The strictly issue of Meat-eating in Buddhism

Animals are not property. They are not entertainment, laboratory subjects, clothes, or shooting targets. Animals are not food. It has nothing to do with being an 'animal lover' some animals are not very lovable, Law concludes, "but would anyone expect that in order to be concerned about equality for a mistreated racial minority, you have to love each individual member of that minority or regard them as cute and cuddly?"[33]

The word "meat" will be used to designate all forms of food derived from animals whether they fish, flesh or fowl. From the ethico-moral perspective there is no essential difference between these various form of flesh.

The Buddha's views on meat-eating should be put in the context of his times. The earliest Indian religious texts, the Vedas, did not prohibit meat eating or the killing of animals. Indeed large scale sacrifice became the norm, particularly the cruel ritual of the *aśvamedha* which gradually assumed large dimensions as the power of the Indian rulers grew.

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[32] Peter Singer, *Op. Cit.* 62.

[33] Mickey Z. 'Fear of a Vegan Planet: A Closer Look at the Meat-Based Diet. In. *Everything You Know is Wrong: The Disinformation Guide to Secrets and Lies*, ed. Russell Kick, USA: Gary Baddeley, 2004: 103.

Eating meat and killing beings for their meat are two separate things. The Buddha himself sometimes ate that was offered to him. Those who are merely eating meat also lack the intent to kill.[34]

Over twenty-five centuries have passed, when mentioning about Buddhism, it is generally believed that Buddhism is a religion of kindness, humanity and equality. But some historians and scholars when studying Buddhism have felt doubts that Buddha's attitude of allowing his disciples to take meat and his kindness to living animal seems somewhat contradictory. Therefore how was the Buddha's attitude towards meat eating in early Indian Buddhism?

There are few texts which discussed about the Buddhist view of meat-eating. Meat-eating is a controversial question and until now it continues being debated. Most of Buddhists in Theravādin Buddhist countries are non-vegetarian. The question of meat-eating or vegetable eating is not really an important problem to Buddhism. However, it is obvious that the problem of meat-eating has never been encouraged in Buddhism. The Buddha did neither want his disciples to kill any animals and to feel them nor insist the followers have to keep vegetarian diet.

It is true that, the Buddha and his disciples were those who wandered in the forest or from village to village and had to accept whatever the householder gave them without expressing their intentions to have any particular food. They had to accept whatever the house-holder offered them. This may be the main reason why the Master did not restrain his disciples from meat-eating.

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[34] Henepola Gunaratana, *Eight mindful steps to happiness: walking the path of the Buddha*, Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2001: 115.

During the Buddha's lifetime, besides being a disciple, Devadatta was also a cousin of Śākyamuni Buddha who wanted to become the leader of his own saṃgha, then, he proposed five extraordinarily strict rules for monks, which he knew the Buddha would not allow. Devadatta's reasoning was that after he had proposed those rules and the Buddha had not allowed them, Devadatta could claim that he did follow and practice these five rules, making him a better and more pure monk. One of these five extra rules required monks to be vegetarian.[35]According to the Pāli Canon, he taught his Saṃgha to do five *tapas* (rules) in their whole life:[36]

a. Monks should dwell all their lives in the forest.
b. They should accept no invitations to meals, but live entirely on alms obtained by begging.
c. They should wear only robes made of discarded rags and accept no robes from the laity.
d. They should dwell at the foot of a tree and not under a roof.
e. They should abstain completely from fish and flesh.

Devadatta, one of the Buddha's disciples, tried to create a schism in the Saṃgha by suggesting that the Buddha make vegetarianism compulsory, monks and nuns should not eat meat in any form.[37] But the Buddha rejected that idea, because the Buddha understood that not all landscape can support the growth of vegetables to support the population. When living in places such as mountains and deserts, one has no choice but to eat meat due to the

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35 Hans Wolfgang Schumann, *The Historical Buddha: the Times, Life, and Teachings of the Founder of Buddhism*, Delhi: Motilal Banarasidass, 2004: 236 – 237.

36 Vin. IV. 66, 335. Also see K.T.S. Sarao, *Origin and Nature of Ancient Indian Buddhism*, Delhi: East Book Linkers, 2002: 109.

37 Reakha Daswani, *Buddhist Monasteries and Monastic life in Ancient India*, New Delhi: Aditya Prakashan, 2006: 37.

scarcity of vegetables. Consequently the Buddha's attitude of allowing his disciples to take meat is his choice of the Middle Way. However his disciples were not allowed to eat meat freely, they had to observe certain specific rules made by the Buddha and these rules were clearly mentioned in Srīghanācārasaṃgraha.

According to the Srīghanācārasaṃgraha, an important guide book on Vinaya, a Srāmaṇera (Buddhist novice) should not allow to take meat which is specially prepared for him, because he may do the act of killing due to greed aroused by it. There are three ways to know whether the meat is specially prepared for him or not. Either it may be seen by himself very clearly and without any confusion or heard from very a confidante, or suspected after seeing wings, horns, etc…Then he is not allowed to eat at that house.

In case, a monk gets suspicious, he should ask the householder whether those animals and birds have been killed specially for him. If the householder replied in the affirmative, he should not take it, otherwise he may take it. In the same way, if it is prepared specially for any other monk, nun etc., even then he is not allowed to take it. On the other hand, the monks are allowed to take meat if it is prepared not especially for him, if he gets in alms, and if he finds dead flesh of animal being killed by another animal, or dead after eating grain, rice, barley…or in sacrifice in the name of the household's parents.

These are rules which the monks should observe before they take meat. If they take it without observing the rules they have to suffer sarivaratyagei may be lose their Srāmaṇerahood.

In the Jīvaka Sūtra, the Buddha taught that there are three cases in which meat may not be eaten by a monk: Having (1) seen (2) heard, or (3) suspected that the meat has been especially acquired for him by killing an animal (i.e. the animal has been killed specifically for the monk). This rule is called the Rule of *Tikoṭiparisuddha* (Pure in Three Ways).[38] However, according to the Vinaya, monks are forbidden to eat ten kinds of meat, namely: elephant, tiger, snake, horse, bear, dog, lion, leopard, cheetah, especially man.[39]

Addressing the monks Buddha said: "Do not eat meat knowing that it has been killed specially for (your) use; I allow the use of fish and meat blameless in three ways, unseen, unheard and unsuspected".[40] We shall refer to this rule as the Buddha's three-fold rule on meat eating. The three conditions postulated amount to not witnessing the actual killing, not being told that the meat had been specially killed (for the use of the consumer), and even in the absence of such information not suspecting that such was the case (i.e. the eye, ear and mind should be satisfied as to the "blamelessness" of the meat).

The Buddha said: 'Jīvaka, who ever destroys living things on account of the Tathāgatha or the disciples of the Tathāgatha, accumulate much demerit on five instances:

- If he said, go bring that living thing of such name. In this first instance he accumulates much demerit.

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38 MN. 55.
39 Vin. II, Mahavagga VI, 23.
40 Vin. I. 233. Also see. Paul Gwynne, *World Religions in Practice: A Comparative Introduction*, USA: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2009.

- If that living thing is pulled along, tied, with pain at the throat, feeling displeased and unpleasant. In this second instance he accumulates much demerit.
- If it was said, go kill that animal. In this third instance he accumulates much demerit.
- When killing if that animal feels displeased and unpleasant. In this fourth instance he accumulates, much demerit.
- When the Tathāgatha or a disciple of the Tathāgatha tastes that unsuitable food. In this fifth instance he accumulates much demerit.

Jīvaka, if anyone destroys the life of a living thing on account of the Tathāgatha or a disciple of the Tathāgatha, he accumulates much demerit on these five instances.'[41]

When the Buddha was alive, there was not the huge choice of food that is available today. It is clear that the issue of killing animals for food was one which he gave a lot of thought to. It is also clear that his teachings extend compassion to all sentient beings, including those destined for the butcher. But in some sutras he did not require his followers to be vegetarians, and rejected such a requirement when suggested by his cousin Devadatta.

The relevant portion of the *Mahāparinibbāna Suttanta* reads as follows:

"Then Cunda addressed the Lord and said, "May the Lord, together with the bhikkhus, do me the honour of taking his meal, at my house tomorrow?" And the Lord gave his consent by his silence … Now at the end

[41] MN. 55.

of the night, Cunda, the smith, prepared at his house sweet rice and cakes, and *sūkara-maddava.*"[42]

Before entering Mahāparinirvāṇa, the Buddha took the last meal offered by Cunda. According to *DīghaNikāya*, the meal included sweet rice, cakes and *sūkaramaddava*. The double word *sūkaramaddava*, according to some scholars, denotes soft boar's flesh or pig's soft food. However, almost scholars agree that this word refers a kind of truffle. Cunda had intended the Buddha to his house. He could not have offered pork to the Buddha as it would have meant violation of the Tikoṭiparisuddha.[43]

Early Indian Buddhism allowed monks to eat meat with the following exceptions:[44]

1. In three cases: (a) seen, (b) heard or (c) suspected for monk.
2. Use of raw meat was not allowed. But in case of sickness even was flesh and blood could be used. The cooking and eating of the remains of the kills of lions, tigers, hyenas and wolves are allowed by the Buddha to be eaten by the monks. The Buddha also allowed "the use of the fat of bears, fish, alligators, swine, asses, if received at the right time to be partaken of with oil." Indeed, fish and meat are mentioned among the five superior and delicate foods which a monk who is ill allowed to eat.
3. Ten kinds of meat.

Therefore, we should have no doubt about Buddha's attitude towards meat eating, because it is only the means of the Buddha in order to make

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42 K.T.S. Sarao, *Origin and Nature of Ancient Indian Buddhism*, Delhi: East Book Linkers, 2002: 86.
43 DN.II. 16: 131-148.
44 K.T.S. Sarao, *Op. Cit.* 85.

favorable condition to his disciples on the way proceeding to Holy life. Actually, the meat eating is not a great problem; the most important problem to a Buddhist monk is to control himself, to practice the Buddha's teaching, especially to cultivate the knowledge of the ultimate Truth, complete freedom, to attain the happiness trust in present life, in this world.

According to the Srighanācārasaṃgraha, the Buddhist monks are allowed to take meat in a certain limit. It depends either on the tradition of each country or on the climate or on the monk's heath-situation. However, in these days, monks live in comfortable life under the support of lay people in monastery; the change in menu from meat-eating to vegetating is a practices matter to perform the compassion to all living beings.

II.6. The Theravādin principle and Mahāyāna regulation about meat eating and vegetarian food

Actually, isn't there a difference regarding the question of meat-eating between the two main schools of Buddhism, "Theravāda" and "Mahāyāna"? Two very fundamental teachings of Buddhism are non-violence and harmlessness. There is an associated popular conception that all Buddhist are therefore vegetarians. This is not automatically the case, but vegetarianism certainly matches the spirit of Buddhism described by those fundamental teachings. Followers of Theravāda reside mostly in Cambodia, Laos, Thailand, Myanmar and Sri Lanka while followers of Mahāyāna are living in China, Japan, Korea and Vietnam. Attitudes towards meat consumption are markedly different within these two traditions. In Theravada meat consumption has been accepted while in Mahāyāna meat consumption is frowned upon.

Principles of Buddhism have put many restrictions on the monks. First, no monk can kill an animal. Second, no monk can accept meat which has been specially prepared for him. Third, certain kinds of meat cannot be eaten under any circumstances. The monks were supposed to beg food. Mahāyāna monks and nuns in China and Korea are strictly vegetarian and prepare their own food.[45]

a. Attitude of Theravāda Tradition towards Meat-eating

In the countries which belong to the Theravāda Buddhism, the problem of meat-eating is an ordinary thing to monks. The most important problem to a Buddhist monk is how to control himself from greed, anger, and ignorance, to practice the teaching of the Buddha, to perform the compassion to all living beings, especially to cultivate the Knowledge of the Ultimate Truth, complete freedom in order to attain the true happiness in present life in this world. However, they are forbidden from accepting animal flesh if they know, believe or suspect that the animal in question was killed especially for them, i.e., if the visits of begging minks have become an occasion for the slaughter of animals.

The Vinaya for monastic is not a set of ethically based rules; it is a set of rules for living as a monastic in ancient Indian culture. As such, it has much that is specific to the ancient Indian way of life, and the expectations of that society. Some of those features did not translate into other cultures fully as Buddhism expanded out of the subcontinent. Specifically, Mahāyāna Buddhism came to value the universal ethical spirit of Buddhism over the transmitted letter of the Vinaya rules.

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[45] James A. Benn. 'Diet', In *Encyclopedia of Buddhism: Vol.1*, ed. Robert E. Buswell, USA: Thomson/Gale, 2004: 229.

With regard to the killing of animals for food, it is obvious that the purer the food we eat the more fit will our body become for the functioning of our inner faculties, but once more common sense must be employed. The Buddha as saying: "My disciples have permission to eat whatever food it is customary to eat in any place or country provided it is done without indulgence of the appetite, or evil desire".[46]And the monk must follow the rule '*Pure in three respects'*: the monk has not seen, heard or suspected that the animal has been killed specifically for him.[47]

They should eat something else. But they should also not become neurotic trying to avoid everything that contributes indirectly to killing. When we think about it, a certain amount of indirect contribution to killing can be found in most contemporary lives. Even driving a car or walking across the lawn kills beings. Various types of medicines we use have been tested on animals killing them, maiming them, or making them sick. Benefiting from these medicines is not killing. The Buddha said very clearly that your intention is what really counts.[48]

Ambedkar says that the circumstantial evidence on the point is that the Buddha had no objection to eating meat offered to him as part of his alms. The monk can eat meat offered to him provided he was not a party to the killing of it. The Buddha resisted the opposition of Devadatta who insisted the monks should be prohibited from eating meat given to them by way of alms. Ambedkar gives another piece of evidence on the point is that Buddha was only opposed to the killing of animals in sacrifice.[49]

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46 Christmas Humphreys, *Buddhism: An introduction and guide*, London: Penguin Books Ltd, 1990: 112.
47 Vin. I. 237- 238.
48 Henepola Gunaratana, *Op. Cit.* 116.
49 Leolla Karunyakara, *Op. Cit*. 99.

People in our society often eat meat out of habit, because they have developed a taste for it, and for the lack of information about its ill effects. But these factors do not represent moral justification. Meat-eating is immoral because it involves the inhumane treatment of animals. It violates a basic moral principle of heaven and earth: namely, that it is wrong to kill, wrong to inflict unnecessary suffering and death upon other creatures.

We have always understood that, given its strong principle of ahiṃsā or non-violence, Buddhism frowned upon meat-eating, since meat-eating inevitably meant doing violence to animals that were slaughtered for food. The Buddha Śākyamuni himself was against the eating of meat and was in fact a strong advocate of vegetarianism and compassion towards animals. ahiṃsā or non-killing forms a very important part of the Buddha's teaching.[50]

In the light of the three fold rule the Pāli texts make a distinction between two kinds of meat, called respectively *uddissakatamaṃsa* and *pavattamaṃsa*. The former term is used to refer to meat destined for a specific person's consumption. Such meat would not be cleared by the three-fold rule. Although not stated so a rough criterion which could be used to identify this kind of meat is that the person doing the killing has a clear notion that the meat would be consumed by a specific person, and if that person were to consume it that person would partake not only of the meat but also of the karmic consequences attached to the provision of that meat. The term used for the other kind of which it is permissible to eat literally means "already existing meat". There has been some controversy as to what types of meat would fall into this category of "already existing meat". Some

[50] *Ibid.* 99.

interpreters have taken it to mean that it refers to the meat of animals killed accidentally or killed by other animals. But in fact it includes meat sold commercially. This is clear from another incident in the Vinaya where the lady Suppiya sends her servant to the market to fetch meat (to make a soup for a sick monk), and is told by the servant that "existing meat" could not be found as "today is not a slaughter day". This shows that meat slaughtered for sale in the market was regarded as *pavatta-maṃsa* and therefore falling into the category of permissible meat. This kind of meat is considered blameless because it is karmically neutral as far as the consumer is concerned (but not of course for the provider of the meat who must take the full karmic responsibility). We shall refer to the two kinds of meat as karmically effective and karmically neutral meat.

In other words the Buddha made a distinction between Principle and Rule. He did not make ahiṃsā a matter of rule. He enunciated it as a matter of principle or way of life. Ambedkar says that a principle leaves you free to act. A rule does not. Rule either breaks you or you break the rule.[51]

b. Attitude of Mahāyāna Tradition towards Meat-eating and Vegetarian Food

Vegetarianism was not a part of the early Buddhist tradition and the Buddha himself was not a vegetarian.[52] The Buddha got his food either by going on alms rounds or by being invited to the houses of his supporters and in both cases he ate what he was given. Before his enlightenment he had experimented with various diets including a meatless diet, but he eventually

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[51] *Ibid.* 99.

[52] V. Nithi Nithiyanandam, *Buddhist Philosophy of Social Activism*, Delhi: Global Vision Publishing House, 2004: 89.

abandoned them believing that they did not contribute to spiritual development.

Vegetarianism is a growing practice in modern society and some of its-new-found enthusiasts have pointed an accusing finger at the Buddha who is recorded as having eaten meat, and at modern Buddhists who eat meat. According to Chatral Rinpoche with the answers of an interview that "if you take meat, it goes against the vows one take in seeking refuge in the Buddha, Dharma, and Saṃgha. Because when you take meat you have to take a being's life."[53]

The Sutta-Nipāta underlines this point when it says that it is immorality that makes one impure (morally and spiritually), not the eating of meat. The Buddha is often described as eating meat, he recommended meat broth as a cure for certain types of illness and advised monks for practical reasons, to avoid certain types of meat, implying that other types were quite acceptable. In the *Lankāvatāra Sūtra*, the Buddha taught that "killing animals for profit and buying meat are both evil deeds; these kinds of actions will result in a rebirth in the horrifying realms of hell".[54]

Today it is often said that Mahāyānists are vegetarian and Theravādins are not. However the situation is a little more complex than that. Generally Theravādins have no dietary restrictions although it is not uncommon to find monks and lay people in Sri Lanka who are strict vegetarians. Others abstain from meat while eating fish. Chinese and Vietnamese monks and nuns are strictly vegetarian and the lay community tries to follow their example

[53] Chatral Rinpoche, *Compassionate Action*, New York: Snow Lion Publications, 2007: 24.
[54] *Ibid.* 31.

although many do not. Amongst Tibetans and Japanese Buddhists, vegetarianism is rare.

When Buddhism later moved to China, large monasteries developed with landholdings. Focusing on East Asia, begging for food was considered an unacceptable custom in Chinese Confucian culture and never got firmly established in Chinese Buddhism. Instead, monasteries were granted large tracts of land to grow their own food. So, unlike the situation in Indian Buddhism, monks in China started growing, storing, preparing, and cooking their own food.[55] Monastery kitchens appeared for the first time.

The threefold restriction on meat for monks already mentioned became meaningless for Chinese monks who no longer were begging for food daily. Monks were faced with the problem of interpreting the Vinaya rules to match their situation. The Chinese monks interpreted the spirit of the Vinaya to mean that all meat eating was to be forbidden, since the monks were doing the preparation themselves and for themselves. Thus, any meat prepared and consumed in a Chinese monastery would be obviously prepared specifically for the monks, and so it all came to be considered unallowable.

In Chinese Buddhism, and in Korean and Japanese Buddhism under Chinese influence, the practice of vegetarianism filtered down to the laity as well. Many Chinese lay Buddhists at present are vegetarian, and a unique style of Chinese vegetarian cooking has developed, originally for lay visitors to monasteries, where meat products are mimicked in wheat gluten and soy products.

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[55] Rupert Gethin, *The Foundations of Buddhism*, USA: Oxford University Press, 1998: 107.

A new code of Mahāyāna precepts became popular in China. This text contains a number of Chinese adaptations of the Vinaya, and emphasizes the practice of a Mahāyāna practitioner, a Bodhisattva. The precepts contained in this text are thus sometimes called the Bodhisattva Precepts. There are ten major and forty-eight minor precepts. The Third Minor Precept specifically prohibits eating meat, perhaps the first time such a precept was codified in Buddhism. The text of the *Third Minor Precept of the Fanwangjing (*梵網経*)* reads: A disciple of the Buddha must eat no flesh of sentient beings. If he eats their flesh, he injures his potential for developing universal compassion. Sentient beings will flee from on sight. For his reason, Mahāyāna practitioners should not eat the flesh of any sentient beings.

"Pray let us not eat any flesh or meat whatsoever coming from living beings. Anyone who eats flesh is cutting himself off from the great seed of his own merciful and compassionate nature, for which all sentient beings will reject him and flee from him when they see him acting so. . . Someone who eats flesh is defiling himself beyond measure . . ."[56]

The foregoing argument should not be taken as a justification of meat-eating. Our concern is to speculate on the rationale behind the three-fold rule on this subject enunciated by the Buddha and to refute the charge that the Buddha's rule involves a moral contradiction with the other parts of the Buddha's teaching such as his insistence on loving-kindness and the precept on the taking of life.

[56] Tony Page, *Buddhism and Animals: A Buddhist Vision of Humanity's Rightful Relationship with the Animal Kingdom*, London: UKAVIS Publications, 1999: 132.

Even though there is no blanket proscription on meat eating in the Buddha's teaching the three-fold rule that he enunciated has considerable value. The Buddha was concerned with devising a practical rule that will reconcile the dilemma involved in living in *saṃsāra* and allowing other life forms too to exist. The fact that the three-fold rule is not ideal is not a reflection on the Buddha but of the existential fact that *saṃsāra* faring must involve harm to others. The Buddha's final solution to this is perhaps the only way in which this problem could be satisfactorily solved. This solution is to chart a course to get out of phenomenal existence, i.e. chart a path to *Nirvāṇa*.

The drive toward active animal compassion and vegetarianism was promoted especially by the Mahāyāna school. The viewpoint that all life is interrelated was used to promote the abstention from meat, and within a Buddhist context serves as a basis for protesting all maltreatment of animals. The *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra* also includes stories to emphasize the need for vegetarianism. We are protected by the mindfulness and the loving kindness of the Buddha and the Buddhists who also practice non-violence. This energy of loving kindness brings us the feeling of safety, health, and joy in this life.

II.7. Vegetarian and Benefits of Vegetarian Eating

a. What is the Vegetarian?

The word 'vegetarian' appeared in 1842 and came into widespread use after the establishment of the vegetarian Society in England in 1847 by secular followers of Metcalfe."[57]

[57] Richard D. Ryder, *Op. Cit*. 92.

Vegetarians do not eat meat, fish, or poultry. Vegans, in addition to being vegetarian, do not use other animal products and by products such as eggs, dairy products, honey, leather, fur, silk, wool, cosmetics, and soaps derived from animal products. Since much of the world's population finds that vegetarian meals can be delightfully tasty, there is good reason for thinking that the pleasures many people derive from eating can be completely replaced with pleasures from eating vegetables.[58]

The term "vegan" refers to one that does not eat any animals, but also any animal products or derivatives, including milk, cheese, honey; or using animal furs, leathers, skins, etc. In modern terms, we might use the word "vegan" to describe the strict Mahāyāna diet. Vegetarianism, a natural and logical ramification of the moral precept against the taking of life is a diet that includes no animal meat. The Buddha recommended that pure Bodhisattvas follow this ideal: They who do not wear silk, leather boots, furs, or down ...and who do not consume milk, cream, or butter, can truly transcend this world. Both physically and mentally one must avoid the bodies and the by-products of beings, by neither wearing them nor eating them. It says that such people have true liberation.

There is no nutritional need for humans to eat any animal products, all of our dietary needs as infants, children and adults are best supplied by an animal free diet. Our evolutionary ancestors were, and our closest primate relatives are, vegetarians. Human teeth and intestines are designed for eating and digesting plant foods, so it is no wonder that our major health problems can be traced to meat consumption.

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[58] Carol Morris and James Kirwan. 'Is Meat the New Militancy? Locating Vegetarianism within the Alternative Food Economy'. In *Alternative Food Geographies: Representation and Practice*, eds. Damian Maye, Lewis Holloway, MoyaKneafsey, Amsterdam: Elservier, 2007: 141.

b. The kinds of Vegetarian

Types of Vegetarians[59]

1. Vegetarian: A person who doesn't eat meat, fish or fowl.
2. Lacto-Ovo Vegetarian: A person who doesn't eat meat, fish, or fowl, but does eat eggs and dairy products.
3. Ovo- Vegetarian: A person who doesn't eat meat, fish, fowl, or dairy products, but does eat eggs.
4. Lacto- Vegetarian: A person who doesn't eat meat, fowl, or eggs, but does eat dairy products.
5. Vegan: A person who doesn't eat meat, fish, fowl, eggs, or any dairy products. Most vegans also do not use any animal products such as leather or fur either.

There are many views about vegetarian such as:

1. **Vegetarian**: Some vegetarians will consume animal products, if the animal was not killed to produce it. You either eat flesh or you don't.

-**Lacto-vegetarians** will use dairy products (milk, butter, cheese).

-**Ovo-Vegetarians** will eat eggs.

-**Lacto-Ovo-Vegetarians** will eat both.

Besides, there are other types of vegetarian:

[59] Jennifer Horsman & Jaim Flowers, *Please don't eat the animals: All the Reasons you need to be a vegetarian,* USA: Quill Driver Books, 2007: 3.

-**Pesco-vegetarian** (fish). If you eat fish, you may call yourself a pescatarian.

-**Pollo-vegetarian** (chicken): avoid red meat and fish but eat chicken.

- **Pesco-pollo vegetarians**: avoid red meat but eat chicken and fish.

In addition, there is another vegetarian like as Fruitarian that same as vegetarian, but only eats foods that don't kill the plant (apples can be picked without killing the entire plant, carrots cannot). A fruitarian does not, as commonly believed, eat only fruit. Some people whose diet consists of 75% or more fruit consider themselves fruitarians.[60]

Moreover, there are also those who call themselves Vegan. This is a much stricter lifestyle. Vegans do not eat or use any product from animals or insects. Therefore they do not wear leather, silk, wool, fur or down products, or eat honey, marshmallows, jell, or dairy products, or use lanolin or other products which are derived from living creatures in any way. They also do not buy products from companies that test on animals or any products with animal derived ingredients.

2. Vegans: Eat no animal products at all. The philosophy sometimes also espouses not wearing anything made from animals as well (leather). Additionally, products like honey may also be considered taboo.

-Lacto-Ovo Vegetarians: Eat no dead animals or dead animal products whatsoever, but still consume some products where the animal is not killed in the process (eggs or dairy).

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[60] Buddy Poy, *Vegetarianism Unmasked: Unmasking the Truth about Vegetarianism*, Bloomington: Author House, 2011: 19.

-Vegetarians (general): Like above but sometimes also consume fish. Of course, the part about fish can be argued by the above groups, but an exception is sometimes made due to fish being so far from our own species and hence, sometimes, the less strict interpretation will at least allow for "Seafood Vegetarians."

*There are different kinds of vegetarians:[61]

1. **Vegans** avoid all animal products. They don't eat eggs, dairy products, or even honey. Many vegans also avoid anything made from animal products, such as leather, fur, and wool. Also avoids non-food animal products such as leather, wood, down, ect. Main sources of protein: beans, nits and seeds, and whole grains.

2. **Fruitarians** same as Vegan, they eat only fruits, seeds, nuts, (This includes the fruit of vegetables such as tomatoes and courgettes. However they never eat the roots of plants such as carrots and potatoes) and other plant components that can be gathered without harming the plant.

3. **Lacto-vegetarians** eat dairy products, but not eggs. They may or may not avoid non-dietary use of animal products.

4. **Lacto-ovo vegetarians** eat both eggs and dairy products. This is the most common group of vegetarians and what most people think of when someone says they're "a vegetarian."

5. **Pesce-vegetarians** include fish in their diet.

[61] Accessed on 2.4.2011 http://www.veggievisitors.com/vegetarian-types.htm

6. **Pollo-vegetarians** eat fowl, such as chicken and turkey, but avoid red meat and pork.

7. **Flexitarians** mainly eat vegetarian food, but will occasionally make exceptions.

8. **Su Vegetarian:** Excludes all animal products as well as vegetables in the allium family (which have the characteristic aroma of onion and garlic, scallions, or leeks.)

9. **Raw vegan** is a diet which combines veganism and raw foodism. It excludes all food of animal origin, and all food cooked above 48 degrees Celsius (118 degrees Fahrenheit)

10. **Semi-vegetarian** Eats predominantly vegetarian but includes some meat. Also called flexitarian or pseudo-vegetarian.

11. **Transitional vegetarian:** One who is transitioning to vegetarianism but not quite there yet or a temporary vegetarian.

In a Vegetarian diet you don't eat meat and fish. This can be out of health, ecological, ethical or environmental reasons. You even help World Hunger by becoming a vegetarian.[62] Modern vegetarianism includes a documented set of beliefs that look remarkably religious. It involves the expression of views and ideology about the relationship of humankind to the world in which we live and the path to salvation to be followed.[63] Many of those who have adopted a vegetarian diet have done so because of the ethical

[62] William C. Whit, *Food and Society: A Sociological Approach*, New York: General Hall, Inc, 1995: 80.
[63] Anne Murcott, 'You Are What You Eat: Exploration of Anthropological Issues Influencing Food Choice'. In *The Food Consumer*, ed. George Ritson. Chichester, England: Wiley, 1986: 12.

argument, either from reading about or personally experiencing what goes on daily at any one of the thousands of slaughterhouses in the U.S. and other countries, where animals suffer the cruel process of forced confinement, manipulation and violent death. Their pain and terror is beyond calculation.

There are various forms in which a vegetarian diet can be followed:

-Vegan: Does not eat anything derived from animals and does not use any animal-derived products.

-**Lacto-ovo**: Permits eating milk, eggs and cheese as these can be produced without killing the animal. In some cases, for health reasons, lacto-ovo vegetarians will only eat non-fat forms of dairy products.

-**Pesci**: Permits the eating of fish and seafood, but no meat from land-based animals or birds, since these forms do not affect the land-based environmental issues (though there are other issues related to pollution of the seas and depletion of fishing sources). Pesci-vegetarians also note that regarding the health aspects of the issue, fish is less harmful than meat and contains beneficial omega-3 fatty acids,[64] and regarding the cruelty aspects that fish may be vertebrates (though shrimp, crab, lobster are not) but are still at the lowest level of consciousness of the vertebrates.

Don't eat any animals (Vegetarian, a.k.a. Ovo-Lacto Vegetarian). This is one of the least arbitrary standards, as there's a fairly clear line between animals and non-animals. All animals are sensate, react to pain, and are

[64] Sharon Rady Rolfes, Kathryn Pinna, and Ellie Whitney, *Understanding Normal and Clinical Nutrition*, USA: Wadsworth Gengage Learning, 2009: 159.

arguably a higher form of life than plants, fungi, etc.. Even some invertebrate animals, such as octopuses, can be extremely intelligent.

Dried beans and dark green vegetables are especially good sources of iron, better on a per calorie basis than meat. Iron absorption is increased markedly by eating foods containing vitamin C along with foods containing iron. Soybeans, lentils, blackstrap molasses, kidney beans, chickpeas, black-eyed peas, Swiss chard, black beans, prune juice, beet greens, peas, figs, bulgur, botchy, raisins, watermelon, millet, kale etc.

c. Benefits of Vegetarian Eating

1. Respect to Buddha-nature in animals

"All living beings have Buddha-nature".[65] "All beings, sentient or not, have the same perfect wisdom."[66] Buddhism regards all living creatures as being endowed with the Buddha nature and the potential to become Buddhas. That is why Buddhism teaches us to refrain from killing and to liberate creatures instead.

Śākyamuni demonstrated to our human beings how he became the Buddha from a human body 2500 years ago. All human beings have their own Buddha's nature. For they have both good seeds and evil seeds, they can be human beings. However, we have to develop our good seeds, which will help us to open our mind and attain wisdom. Our mind is just like a mirror, which reflects if clear. If our mind is defiled with false thoughts and attachments, we are afflicted and perplexed.

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[65] Hsing Yun, *Protecting our environment*, USA: Buddha's Light Publishing, 2007: 2.
[66] *Ibid. 2.*

Based upon the teaching of the Lotus Sūtra, we can say that the true and eternal nature of the life of Śākyamuni Buddha is the active mode of our own true and eternal nature. As an actual person in history, Śākyamuni Buddha showed through his own life, how to apply the wisdom and compassion springing from the Buddha-nature. Even now, the Buddha's spiritual presence embodied in the *Lotus Sūtra* continues to guide us to a realization of our own potential.

Buddhism teaches that, when the Buddha nature manifests itself from within, it will receive protection from without. This is one of its fundamental principles. The *Lotus Sūtra* says, "I have profound reverence for you."[67]The *Nirvāṇa Sūtra* states, "All living beings alike possess the Buddha nature."[68] The eternal Buddha Śākyamuni exists in all human beings. All things being of Buddha become Buddha. You surely will be able to become a Buddha.[69]

All living beings can equally attain Buddhahood, the dragon king's daughter, a woman in reptile form. In the Lotus sutra, Mañjuśrī said "There is a Dragon King daughter who is just eight years old. She is the faculties, conducts, and Karmas of living beings and has attained Dharani. She is able to receive and uphold the entire storehouse of extremely profound secrets spoken by the Buddha. She has deeply entered Dhyāna Samādhi and thoroughly penetrated all Dharmas. In the space of a Kṣana she brought broth the Bodhi mind and attained to irreversibility. Her eloquence is unobstructed and she is compassionately mindful of all living beings as if

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67 Burton Watson, *The Lotus Sutra*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1993.

68 Nichiren, "The Three Kinds of Treasure," *The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, trans. and ed. by Gosho Translation Committee, Tokyo: Soka Gakkai, 1999, vol. 2: 848.

69 Sallie B. King, *Buddha Nature*, Albany: State University of New York, 1991: 104.

they were her children. Her merit and virtue is complete. The thoughts of her mind and the words from her mouth are subtle, wonderful, and expansive. She is compassionate, humane and yielding; harmonious and refined in mind and will, and she is able to arrive at Bodhi".[70]

According to the Buddhist view of things, the nature of being is not eternally or absolutely fixed. Beings that were once humans or animals may be reborn as gods; beings that were once gods may be reborn as animals or in hellish realms. Certainly, for the Buddhist tradition, the being who became Buddha or awakened had been born a man, but equally that being is regarded as having spent many previous lives as a god. Yet in becoming a Buddha he goes beyond such categories of being as human and divine.[71]

The loving-kindness and compassion comes from our Buddha-nature, which is inherent in every living being. The Dharma has enriched us in many ways. So deep inside is our compassion which tells we eating the flesh of those poor living creatures is wrong, but habits are hard to stop. Eating meat causes two kinds of suffering: the immediate suffering for the animal that is being slaughtered, and the suffering caused by the cycle of death and rebirth. When a sentient being dies, it is forced to begin again the painful process of rebirth. The only way to stop this cycle is to reach full enlightenment. Since it is possible for animals to become enlightened, killing them deprives them of that chance.

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[70] W. E. Soothill, *The Lotus of the Wonderful Law or the Lotus Gospel: Saddharma Pundarika Sutra Miao-Fa Lien HuaChing*, UK: Curzon Press, 1987: 107.

[71] Rupert Gethin, *The Foundations of Buddhism*, USA: Oxford University Press, 1998: 29.

2. Avoid eating to relative in the past life

The Mahāyāna sect does not concur with the view that Buddha ever allowed even the (so called) 'blameless' meat eating to the monks. The Mahāyāna adherents argue that meat is liable to cause sickness. If a meat eater meditates, he will not only spoil his own health, but also hinder the process of meditative practices and, thus, disturb concentration of mind. They also believe that all beings have been relatives in the past lives; hence one relative should not kill another one. Moreover, meat eating will also cause rebirth in a low class human, apart from generating arrogance. They also argue that no sacrifice of animals will ever take place, if there are no meat eaters.

In "On Meat Eating" essays, Chatral Rinpoche urges Buddhists to look on animals with compassion and refrain from eating meat. And In "Thang-tong Gyalpo's Aspiration Prayer for the Liberation of Fish," he gives us a practice for cultivating joy in being able to help the helpless. In "Advice for Nyingma Practitioners," he describes equanimity in its different aspects: looking at all beings as having been one's parents in past lifetimes and reminding us that anyone can be a holder of the Buddha's teachings if they live according to the Dharma, not just monks and lamas of high status.[72]

Through numberless lives, all living beings across many lives in the past, the tears of living beings more than the four oceans,[73] the bones like as the mountain, nobody who exist in the world that we don't find them are our relatives. So all living beings live on this world, are our parents, sisters, brothers. If we kill and eat meat, it means we eat our relatives in the past life.

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[72] Chatral Rinpoche, *Compassionate Action*, Snow Lion Publications, 2007: xix – xx.
[73] SN. II.

All beings, in some past rebirth, have been one's close relative, such as one's mother, or friend. One should look on all beings as if they were one's only child, i.e. with loving-kindness, and not eat their flesh. In the *Brahmajāla Sūtra*: "All males are my fathers. All females are my mothers. Rebirth after rebirth, they give me life. All beings are the six realms of existence are my parents. Killing animal for meat is the same as killing my parent, indirectly killing the source of my body."[74]

3. Development of the loving-kindness

In Mahāyāna Buddhism, when one take the bodhisattva vow, one pledges to work tirelessly in this life and all future lives to awaken oneself and purify oneself in order to help all other beings attain freedom from suffering through spiritual enlightenment. One vows to help beings whenever possible, and a profound way of doing this is to give a being the gift of life through an act of kindness. This can take the form of helping an animal in danger cross the road to safety before being struck by a vehicle or freeing an animal that is in captivity before it is killed by buying it from the captor and letting it roam free. If one is in a position to help save another's life whether a human or an animal– one must practice fearless kindness to help the other being in danger.

Meat eating and a compassionate religion do not go hand in hand. The Jīvaka Sutta hints that one could also make a good case for vegetarianism starting from any of the other brahmavihāras (loving-kindness, sympathetic joy, equanimity). Interestingly, it is loving-kindness

[74] Hsing Yun, *Protecting our environment*, USA: Buddha's Light Publishing, 2007: 11.

rather than compassion that is mentioned first in the Jīvaka Sutta.[75]It is useful to bear this in mind even if one consumes meat, to resist developing a habit of callousness. Many Buddhists (especially Mahāyānists) practice vegetarianism as a means of cultivating compassion.

The *Suraṅgama Sūtra* tells us that "if we eat the flesh of living creatures, we are destroying the seeds of compassion." That is, if we do not eat the flesh of living creatures, we are cultivating and irrigating the seeds of compassion," and to "cultivate a compassionate heart," we chose to become a vegetarian; and this is our main matter for doing so.

Being a vegetarian makes it easier for us to increase our loving kindness and compassion. All living things fear being beaten with clubs. "All living things fear being put to death. Putting oneself in the place of the other, Let no one neither kill nor cause another to kill."[76] The Dalai Lama says: "There is just no reason why animals should be slaughtered to serve as human diet when there are so many substitutes. Man can live without meat."[77] The Buddha said that "for innumerable reasons, Mahamati, the Boddhisattva, whose nature is compassion, is not to eat any meat".[78] Later the Buddha reiterates: "The eating of meat extinguishes the great seed of compassion."[79]

As custodians of this planet it is our responsibility to deal with all species with kindness, love and compassion. These animals suffer through

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75 MN.55.
76 Dhp.129.
77 Jennifer Horsman & Jaim Flowers, *Please don't eat the animals: All the Reasons you need to be a vegetarian,* USA: Quill Driver Books, 2007: 94.
78 Ibid. 94.
79 Ibid. 94.

human's cruelty.[80] However, many people help animals in their spare time.[81] The Buddha vehemently opposed the sacrifices and the animals, slaughter. He has said, "Love all so that you may not wish to kill any." This is a positive way of stating the principle of *ahiṃsā*.

The *Laṅkāvatāva Sūtra,* one of the early texts of the Mahāyāna school contains stories to emphasize the need for vegetarianism, makes an eloquent appeal for vegetarianism and respect for animals.[82] We can see in the *Laṅkāvatāva Sūtra,* in which a late section has a series of arguments against meat eating.[83]

Despite all we can do, merely to live is to deprive other beings of their food, habitat and life to a certain extent. Therefore, Buddhists practicing the Bodhisattva path should do all they can in their ability to avoid killing, and to protect life instead. Since individual acts of buying meat contribute to this great evil (the demand for meat), some negative consequential value is attributable to each act of buying meat, for each such act causally contributes to the general demand that causes animal suffering.[84]

"When one becomes a vegetarian not out of compassion for all sentient beings, but solely as a means for achieving good health and longevity, the attitude is flawed and the practice remains hollow. Good health comes from disciplined living, good diet, and regular exercise. Like the Buddha, we should practice vegetarianism out of compassion for all

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80 Barbara James, *Op. Cit.* 52.
81 *Ibid.* 57.
82 B.R. Ambedkar, *The Buddha and His Dhamma,* Bombay: People's Education Society, 1975: 27.
83 D.T. Suzuki, *Studies in The Laṅkāvatāva Sūtra*, London: Routled & Kegan Paul Ltd, 1930: 368 – 71.
84 Peter Singer and Tom Regan, *Op. Cit.* 188.

sentient beings. This correct perception and attitude will not only help our mental health, but over time can also improve our physical health."[85]

If you eat meat, you contribute to the demand for meat and thus spur more killings at the slaughterhouse. Although your consumption of a particular piece of meat does not directly cause the death of the animal that it came from, it does directly contribute to the demand to kill another animal. Meat industries kill billions of animals each year. If you eat meat, you participate in and condone this process, and thus share some of the responsibility for every one of those billions of deaths. The only way to fully remove yourself from the responsibility of killing meat-creatures is to not eat them. We should stop cruel animal raisers.[86]

The life of an adult animal raised for food is much shorter than the life of a similar animal in the wild, there will be more dying per total adult population among these animals than among wild animals of similar species.[87] These animals would never have been born were they not destined for the slaughterhouse. In a vegetarian world we would not have to breed farm animals, but simply allow them the space to live a free life in their natural habitat.

Every living creature longs to live and loathes dying. But we participate in the "survival of the fittest," as we use our power to take by force the lives of other creatures; we rob them of their lives. And at that moment before death, they experience tremendous hatred. Within their minds they harbor this hateful thought of vengeance: "You are killing me

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85 Hsing Yun, *Opening the mind's eye: clarity and spaciousness in Buddhist Practice,* translated by Amy Lam, New York: Lantern Books, 2005: 3.
86 Peter Singer and Tom Regan, *Op. Cit.* 178.
87 *Ibid.* 183.

now? Well, in the future, I'll kill you. You are going to eat my flesh? In the future, I will eat yours." And they hold onto this resentment, until it becomes as deep as the sea and the mutual antagonism is very hard to level. There's no way to resolve those feelings of resentment.

We should know that the people who eat meat may gain some awareness and may seem to be in s*amādhi*, but they are all great *rakṣasas*. When their retribution ends, they are bound to sink into the bitter sea of birth and death. They are not disciples of the Buddha. Such people as these kill and eat one another in a never-ending cycle.

4. Achieving good health and longevity

Protect even the smallest form of life; this is the cause of longevity.[88] In the *Saṃyutta Nikāya*, there is a story of a novice monk who was near the end of his life span. One day, he saw a group of ants drowning in water and reached out to save them. Through his act of compassion, he gained a long life. All this stories serve as reminders for us to act with compassion. Protecting life is a basic moral principle of being human and is the best tool for transforming anger, violence, and sadness into tranquility.[89]

In the sutra, the Buddha said: "There is the case where a woman or man, having abandoned the killing of living beings, abstains from killing living beings, and dwells with the rod laid down, the knife laid down, scrupulous, merciful, and sympathetic for the welfare of all living beings. Through having adopted and carried out such actions, on the break-up of the body, after death, he reappears in a good destination, in the heavenly world. If, on the break-up of the body, after death instead of reappearing in a good

[88] Hsing Yun, *Op.Cit.* 19.
[89] *Ibid.* 13.

destination, in the heavenly world he comes to the human state, then he is long-lived wherever reborn. This is the way leading to a long life: to have abandoned the killing of living beings, to abstain from killing living beings, to dwell with one's rod laid down, one's knife laid down, scrupulous, merciful, and sympathetic for the welfare of all living beings."[90]

When we kill the animals to eat them, they end up killing us because their flesh, which contains cholesterol and saturated fat, was never intended for human beings.

Vegetarian argue that a vegetarian diet is healthier.[91] In ancient times, people did not have to eat meat in order to live, and their lifespans were very long. The people of today have such short lifespans because they are so fond of eating nutritious food. Because of that fondness, they eat to the point that they shorten their lifespans. If animals were put here for us to use, then why did they exist before man? Most known animal phyla appeared in the fossil record as marine species during the Cambrian explosion, about 542 million years ago.[92] This point suggests that they must have some purpose that doesn't include our exploitation of them. If meat is not available, people should not go out and hurt or kill animals in order to eat.

Meat eating leads to a bad rebirth as a carnivorous animal, or a low-caste human; vegetarianism leads to a good rebirth. If no meat is eaten, nobody will destroy life, as there will be no market for the bodies. The Dalai Lama not only saves fish, but even feeds them.[93]

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90 MN. 135.
91 Barbara James, *Op. Cit.* 15.
92 Accessed to 19.6.2011 from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Animal
93 Dalai Lama, *Imagine All the People: A Conversation with the Dalai Lama on Money, Politics, and Life as It Could Be*, Boston: Wisdom Publications,1999: 30.

Vegetarians have stronger immune systems and, on average, live ten years longer than meat eaters do. Eating vegetables keeps the brain young, a chorus of research shows. One recent six-year study in Chicago tested 2,000 seniors, their mental acumen paired off with vegetable intake. Subjects who ate more than two servings of vegetables per day appeared about five years younger by certain indicators than those who ate few or no vegetables. Green leafiest (spinach, kale, and collards) appeared most beneficial.

The food you eat is the main source of the intricately balanced chemistry of our body, and what we eat affects our consciousness, emotions and physical patterns. By eating the flesh of another living being, we are introducing to our body and mind the chemistries of the animal, which include anger, jealousy, fear, anxiety, suspicion, and a terrible fear of death, all of which are bound into the flesh of the butchered creature. For this reason, vegetarians live in a “higher consciousness” (being influenced only by their own thoughts, feelings, desires and fears, not those of a separate, lower being) and meat eaters live in a “lower consciousness” (being influenced by the thoughts, feelings, desires and fears of a separate, lower being). If one wants to live in higher consciousness, in peace and happiness and love for all creatures, then he cannot eat meat, fish, shellfish, fowl, eggs, or the flesh of any animal, or cause damage knowingly or unknowingly, to any other living creature, to advance or sustain his own being.

Vegetarian foods provide us with all the nutrients that we need, minus the saturated fat, cholesterol, and contaminants that are found in meat, eggs, and dairy products. Plant based diets protect us against heart disease, diabetes, obesity, strokes, and several types of cancer. Ultimately, to “eat

green" and to "be kind," one needs to go vegan. So humans can live healthy lives 'without recourse to flesh products.'

The vegetarian diet provides all the nutrients a human being needs. The only exception is the vegan who does not eat any animal products could be missing vitamin B12. This vitamin can be found in miso (fermented soy paste) and shitake mushrooms. The lacto-ovo vegetarian has no problem as animal products contain high amount of B12. The cause of nearly all diseases, especially in developed countries, is not the lack of any nutrients, but rather the excess of too much food and fat. We do not hear on the news of anyone dying from lack of protein or lack of iron or lack of acids. The real problem is too much food and fat. People in developed countries eat too much fat and protein. The excess iron and protein leads to the health problems.[94]

There is no compelling reason to eat meat, while morality, health, and the environment are all reasons not to kill animals for your pleasure and convenience. Additionally, vegetarianism is a non-action. It takes no real effort to not eat meat. Being a vegetarian is one of the most dramatic ethical improvements we can make in our life compared to the amount of effort it takes. All we have to do is eat a healthy diet, and we are suddenly leading a healthier, moral, eco-friendly life. In order to satisfy one human stomach, so many lives are taken away. We must promote vegetarianism. It is extremely important.[95]

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[94] David N. Snyder. *The Complete Book of Buddha's Lists: Explained*, Las Vegas: Vipassana Foundation, 2009: 136.

[95] Dalai Lama, *Live in a Better Way: Reflections on Truth, Love and Happiness*, Renuka Singh (ed.), New York: Viking Compass, 2001: 68.

Even if meat eaters are spared the big killers that their lifestyle is associated with (heart disease, stroke, diabetes, and cancer), their diet may still be robbing them of everyday good health. A meat diet is sure to lead to nagging conditions and ailments. A whole-foods, high-fiber vegan diet, full of grains, fruits, vegetables, and legumes, is just the ticket to reduce arthritis pain, ease irritable-bowel disorders, mitigate common back pain, relieve cold and allergy symptoms, and lower risk for gallstones, kidney stones, and heartburn. But perhaps best of all, the vegan life is one free of constipation.

It is likely that we have been eating meat since we first ate solid foods. So we might not have thought much about how many animals have been dying for us. But think about this: if we eat meat, we are participating in the process of unnecessarily killing billions and billions of animals every year, and if we ate less meat, fewer animals would die. If we care for the welfare of living beings other than ourselves, perhaps we should spend a few minutes considering a way to not share in the responsibility for killing so many creatures. There is no reason why we must eat meat. An emerging consensus among health organizations, government health agencies, and nutritionists is that the best diets contain very little or no meat. If you have access to an abundance of non-meat food, you can live a healthy, normal life without eating animal flesh. There is the satisfaction of eating and knowing that one is not contributing to the suffering of animals. Finally, there is the adoption of a way of eating that in many ways is far healthier than a diet relying on animal flesh.[96]

We know that meat spoils easily, and fish and shrimp begin to become putrid after being left out for just half an hour. Meat and meat products begin

[96] Peter Singer and Tom Regan, *Op. Cit.* 183.

to decay after one hour. Vegetables, on the other hand, can usually be kept for three to five days. Although beans become rancid relatively quickly, the deterioration is very easy to detect and recognize.

It may be easier for some who are new to the vegetarian diet and lifestyle to begin with a regimen that is easier to follow and gradually develop a more pure form of vegetarian lifestyle. Others find that the most effective way to get started is just to jump in all the way and give up all eating of meat, poultry and fish altogether. The key is to take action and do something, to improve your health, to preserve the planet and to live in harmony with the other sentient creatures that share our world with us.

Vegetarian meals are very healthy. Animal foods are higher in fat than most plant foods, particularly saturated fats. Plants do not contain cholesterol. Cornbread, broccoli, kale, tofu, dried figs, great northern beans, and fortified orange juice and soy milk are all excellent sources of calcium. As with iron, vitamin C will help your child's system absorb calcium efficiently. It takes 8 kilograms of edible plant protein to produce 1 kilogram of edible pig protein. Protein from animals is an acutely wasteful way of feeding humans. Ten vegetarians can live on the same amount of land as one meat eater.[97]

The consumption of animal products has been conclusively linked with heart disease, cancer, diabetes, arthritis, and osteoporosis. Cholesterol (found only in animal products) and animal fat clog arteries, leading to heart attacks

[97] Gunther B. Paulien, *The Divine Prescription and Science of Health and Healing*, New York: Teach Services, Inc, 1997: 222. See, Drew DeSilver. 'Vegetarians Under the Microscope'. In *Vegetarian Times: Dec 1990: Issue 160*: 73.

and strokes. A vegetarian diet can prevent 97 percent of coronary occlusions.[98] The rate of colon cancer is highest in regions where meat consumption is high and lowest where meat-eating is uncommon. A similar pattern is evident for breast, cervical, uterine, ovarian, prostate, and lung cancers.

Medical studies prove that a vegetarian diet is easier to digest, provides a wider range of nutrients and imposes fewer burdens and impurities on the body. Vegetarians are less susceptible to all the major diseases that afflict contemporary humanity, and thus live longer, healthier, more productive lives. They have fewer physical complaints, less frequent visits to the doctor, fewer dental problems and smaller medical bills. Their immune system is stronger, their bodies are purer, more refined and skin more beautiful.

It's says that Calcium, needed for strong bones, is found in dark green vegetables, tofu processed with calcium sulfate, and many other foods commonly eaten by vegans. Calcium requirements for those on lower protein, plant-based protein diets may be somewhat lower than requirements for those eating a higher protein, flesh based diet. However, it is important for vegans to eat foods high in calcium and use a vegan calcium supplement every day.

Most people have been taught that children must eat animal flesh and dairy products to grow up strong and healthy. The truth is that children raised as vegans, who consume no animal products, including meat, eggs, and dairy, can derive all the nutrients essential for optimum growth from

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[98] Rene Noorbergen, *Ellen G. White, prophet of destiny*, New York: Teach Services, Inc., 2001: 108; See. Andrew W. Saul. *Fire Your Doctor! How to Be Independently Healthy*, CA: Basic Health Publications, Inc, 2005: 114.

plant-based sources. Children not only do not need animal products, they are much better off without them. Meat-eating and a lack of dietary fiber are linked to colon cancer. Only plant foods contain fiber.[99]

[99] Amy Brown, *Understanding Food: Principles and Preparation*, USA: Wadsworth, 2011: 274. See. Roberta Larson Duyff, American *Dietetic Association Complete Food and Nutrition Guide*, John Willey & Sons, Inc, 2006: 138.

CHAPTER THREE

ANIMAL CHARACTERS IN THE *JĀTAKAS*

The aim of the Buddha's teachings is to bring happiness not only to humankind but also to all living beings in the world. In order to achieve this aim, the Buddha had conveyed his compassionate massage by many ways and in various aspects through stories in which animal characters play a central role.

The Buddha spent many lives, as a man, animal and god, building up the moral and spiritual perfections necessary for Buddhahood. These lives are described in what are known as the *Jātaka* stories. And a large number of the characters in the *Jātaka* stories are animals. The doctrines of *karma* and *rebirth* are also the sources for the construction of an authentically Buddhist environmental ethics. The *Jātaka* account of the Buddha's former births gives a good idea of the extent to which Buddhist teaching urges respect for animals.

III.1. Animals have life in the same way as humans

Animality as a concept is derived from the human or animal division in Western thought. Because humankind has been interested in explaining and reinforcing its preeminence, animality has been defined by what it lacks. The search for the special defining trait of humanity has involved underestimating other animals. Animality is an abstraction, or concept, loosely based upon observations of actual animals and sometimes relevant to human beings.

Since the middle of the nineteenth century, when Charles Darwin asserted the idea of continuity between humans and other animals, researcher have attempted to rebuild the idea of animality. It has been necessary to establish that animals experience emotions beyond basic ones: love, grief, resentment, hope, and the like. Darwin himself began this work in his magnum opus '*The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals*.'

III.1.1. Animals have emotions

Animals are intelligent and most of the animals that humans eat are very similar to humans in many ways. They form relationships and care for their young.[1] They care for their young, protecting them from danger and teaching them how to survive in their habitat. According to well-documented scientific research, emotions such as fear are present in many of the animals that humans eat just like the humans. However, some people have also argued that other animals' emotions cannot be measured scientifically and perhaps feel that other animals should not be described as having human feelings. However, other animals have internal biochemical reactions to threatening situations just as humans do.[2]

Fish do not express pain like land animals, so for many humans it is difficult to understand that they might be suffering. Therefore, animal rights campaigners say that fish suffer physical pain similar to other animals, as well as fear and distress.[3]

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1 Barbara James, *Animal Rights*, London: Hodder Murray, 2002: 5.
2 Elaine Hatfield. 'Emotional Contagion'. In *Encyclopedia of Human Relationships, Volume 1*, eds. Harry T. Reis, Susan Sprecher and Susan K. Sprecher, New Delhi: Sage Publications, Inc, 2009: 492 - 493.
3 Barbara James, *Op. Cit.* 45.

Most animals are motile, meaning they can move spontaneously and independently. The differences between animals and humans are being blurred with every revelation. Man's closest relatives share over ninety-eight percent of our DNA, and all animals, including man, are related by a common ancestor. Chimpanzees are very closely related to humans. "Chimpanzees share more than ninety-eight percent of our genres; they have complex forms of communication and large stable societies. They use tool, plan for the future and share our emotion."[4]

In the Jātakas there are many stories that tell about Bodhisattva who had goodness, love and helped others. These describe his path of practice through many lives to purify himself and to perfect different qualities, such as altruism, so that in his last life he could become the fully awakened Buddha. Here, it may be worthwhile to mention that a few of the well-known *Jātaka* tales tell of the Buddha in a previous life of doing compassionate deeds such as throwing himself off a cliff so that on his death a starving tigress could feed herself and give milk to her cubs.[5] Many of the stories describe not only great sacrifice but also great compassion and wisdom. This notion of the Buddha as bodhisattva implies that there was only one bodhisattva at a time working through many aeons to become a Buddha.

In another story from Jātaka no. 455 (*Mati-PosakaJātaka*)[6] tells of a magnificent white elephant that lived with his blind mother in the forest. He took great care of his mother by making sure that sufficient fruits were

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4 *Ibid.* 9.

5 Martine Batchelor, *The Path of Compassion: The Bodhisattva Precepts*, UK: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc, 2004: 4.

6 J. No. 455.

brought to her every day. One day a forester lost his way in the forest. The kind-hearted elephant directed him out of the forest. However, instead of showing gratitude to the elephant, the forester brought the king's troop to capture him. The elephant refused to eat any food. When questioned why he behaved in such a manner, the elephant replied that his blind mother was left helpless in the forest and he was worried for her health and safety. The king was moved by his strong love and concern for his mother. He set free the elephant and ordered food to be served to him and his mother every day.

Similarly, *Jātaka* story no. 501 (*Rohanta-Miga-Jātaka*)[7] deals with the love of a stag called Rohanta. He was king of the deer. He used to support his parents who were getting older and blind. He helped them when they met an accident.

The most outstanding feature of the *Jātaka* tales is that they have not been written by basing them on the high, respectable class of society. On the contrary a tree, an elephant, quail, crow, jackal, poor farmer, deer etc. have been made the basis of the stories. The story line has been presented in an extremely simple way. They virtually lack didacticism. Yet, the characters of these stories sometimes amuse the ordinary reader and sometimes compel the enlightened reader to automatically think. Actually even the animals on which these stories are based represent the dutiful, true friend, innocent, clever, cunning or flattering characters found in human society. There is no scarcity of interest in the *Jātaka* tales. Therefore, these stories are interesting, entertaining and knowledgeable not only for children but also for people of all ages.

[7] J. No. 501.

III.1.2. Animals suffer and feel like humans

All animals and humans have the same core emotion systems in the brain.[8] When people are suffering mentally, they want to feel better. They want to stop having bad emotions and start having good emotions. That is the right goal for animals, too. Therefore, Jaak Panksepp, a neuroscientist at Washington State University who wrote the book *Affective Neuroscience* and is one the most important researchers in the fields, calls the core emotion systems the "blue ribbon emotions," because they "generate well organized behavior sequences that can be evoked by localized electrical stimulation of the brain." He says seeking is "the basic impulse to search, investigate, and make sense of the environment." Animals and humans feel FEAR when their survival is threatened in anyway, from the physical to the mental and social.[9]

According to the *Jātaka* tales, when the Buddha attained enlightenment, he was able to remember his many previous lives, both animal and human. In some of these lives, the Buddha sacrificed his own life for that of animals. Many Buddhists believe that we have all lived as animals before and it therefore makes little sense to look down on animals as lesser beings. The first illustration is a tendency toward animism, the idea that animals live and experience life in the same way as humans. Animals and humans should be viewed as equally capable of suffering, so we should care about human rights and animal rights equally. All beings humans and animals as having feelings, as being sentient, animals suffer and feel pain as

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8 Catherine Johnson and Temple Grandin, *Making Animals Happy: How to Create the Best Life for Pets and Other Animals*, London: Bloomsbury, 2009: 5.

9 *Ibid.* 8.

human and not deserving deliberately to be hurt. Animals feel pain and do not wish to be harmed.

"All living things fear being beaten with clubs.
All living things fear being put to death.
Putting oneself in the place of the other,
Let no one kill nor cause another to kill."[10]

For humans, the most horrible deaths involve terror.[11] In the same way, the animals experience feeling, pain, suffering; they also fear killing and hurting. They feel pain, hunger, fear and pleasure. It is morally wrong to treat other people as slaves or to kill them.[12] That the animals have feelings is undeniable. An injured animal, such as a pet dog or cat, reacts much the same way as we might when we are hurt. It screeches, yelps, or cries. This is not surprising since animals have nervous systems similar to ours with respect to feeling physical pain. No doubt some animals can suffer emotionally and psychologically as well. Since the capacity for suffering is well-developed in animals as it is in humans, both equally deserve to be treated with kindness. Everything we have learned about animals suggests that in terms of experiencing terror, pain, grief, anxiety and stress these sentient beings are relevantly similar to humans.[13]

Richard Ryder wrote that animals were thought to possess the same feelings as human beings, and several kings of ancient India built hospitals

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10 Dhp.129.
11 Peter Singer and Tom Regan, *Animal Rights and Human Obligations*, New Jersey: Prentice-hall, Eaglewood Cliffs, 1976: 183.
12 Barbara James, *Op. Cit.*5.
13 Peter Singer and Tom Regan, *Op. Cit.* 183.

for sick animals.[14] Based upon the idea of the transmigration of souls and the belief that all living creatures are the same in essence, Hinduism provided an entirely different basis from Christianity on which to build society. Animals, like humans, were arranged in a complex social hierarchy. According to this tradition, to kill a cow was as serious as to murder a high caste man.[15] Elephants and horses also held elevated status, but the penalty for killing even the despised dog was no less than that for the murder of an 'untouchable' human being. If we gradually bring non-humans into the same moral and legal circle as ourselves then we will not be able to exploit them as our slaves.

Buddhism shares with Brāhmaṇical-Hinduism the belief in the retributive karma and rebirth. The Buddha first 'trained himself to be kind to all animate life' and pointed out that it was a sin to kill any living creature. He wished for all people that they might know the blessedness of a pure spirit and not suffer from unsatisfied desires.[16] In *Jātaka* No. 12 (*Nigrodha-Miga Jātaka*) the Buddha in a former life was reborn as a Deer-king.[17] He offers to substitute his own life for that of a pregnant doe who is about to give birth. In another previous lifetime, the Buddha sacrificed his own life to feed a starving tiger and her two cubs, who were trapped in the snow. He reasoned that it would be better to save three lives than to merely preserve his own. It is better to lose one's own life than to kill another being.

The stories seek to inculcate good manners, good sense, and good behavior, all of which usually reap an appropriate reward owing to the

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14 Susan Jean Armstrong, *The Animal Ethics Reader*, New York: Routledge, 2003: 3.
15 Richard Ryder, *Animal Revolution: Changing Attitudes toward Specialism*, New York: Berg, 2000: 21.
16 Dwight Goddard, *Buddha, Truth and Brotherhood*, Kessinger Publishing, LLC, 2003:12.
17 J. No. 12.

working of karma by which the result of a volitional act, of body, speech or thought, is suited to the nature of that act.[18] Therefore, there is a sense in which the dog has his feelings, whether sad or happy.[19]As well as the emotions animals and humans have in common.[20]To deny animals' emotions is to deny a large part of who these beings are.[21] Animals have the same emotions as human beings. So we should not distinguish between human and animals. Every living creature longs to live and loathes dying. But we participate in the survival of the fittest; as we use our power to take by force the lives of other creatures we rob them of their lives. And at that moment before death, they experience tremendous hatred. Within their minds they harbor this hateful thought of vengeance, and they hold onto this resentment, until it becomes as deep as the sea and the mutual antagonism is very hard to level. There's no way to resolve those feelings of resentment.

A non-human animal is just another creature. It is just another being that can feel as any human can feel. The suffering that any man can feel is the same as the suffering that any animal can feel.

III.2. The influence of the teaching of Karma in Buddhism

The teaching of the law of karma is a valuable element in Buddhism, and it offers some interesting social and historical perspectives. It is an important doctrine. Walpola Rahula, a Sri Lankan monk and Buddhist scholar, has noted that this mistaken view has theistic overtones and warned that in the context of karma, "the term justice is ambiguous and dangerous,

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18 I. B. Horner, *Ten Jātaka stories*, London: Luzac & company, Ltd, 1957: ix.
19 Jared T. Williams, *Dogs never lie about Love*, New York: Crown Publishers, Inc., 1997: 31.
20 *Ibid.* 6.
21 Marc Bekoff, *Minding Animals: Awareness, Emotions, and Heart*, USA: Oxford University Press, 2002: 100.

and in its name more harm than good is done to humanity. The theory of karma is the theory of cause and effect, of action and reaction; it is a natural law, which has nothing to do with the idea of justice or reward and punishment."[22]

It is clear that underpinning and pervading the whole of the Buddhist teaching on the path, at both ordinary (*lokiya*) and super mundane (*lokuttara*) levels, is the notion of karma. Because a general knowledge of Buddhist teaching about karma is now quite common in the East and West, it is easy to underestimate the impact of the Buddha's innovative reworking of a traditional Brāhmaṇic concept. This impact is dramatically described in early texts dealing with the Buddha's final stages of attainment and his enlightenment.[23]

III.2.1. The Meaning of Karma in Buddhism

Karma means "action" or "doing". Whatever one does, says, or thinks is karma. In Buddhism, the term *karma* is used specifically for those actions which spring from the intention of an unenlightened being. For the sole purpose of understanding this 'karma' better, it may be worthwhile to Rahula from his book "Now, the Pali word kamma or the Sanskrit work *karma* (from the root *kṛ* to do) literally means 'action', 'doing'. But the Buddhist theory of Karma has a specific meaning: it means only 'volitional action', not all action. Nor does it mean the result of karma as many people wrongly and loosely use it.[24]

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22 Walpola Rahula, *What the Buddha Taught*, London: The Gordon Fraser Gallery Ltd, 1972:16–29.
23 Peter Harvey, *Buddhism*, New York: Continuum, 2001: 190.
24 Walpola Rahula, *Op. Cit.* 32.

In Buddhist terminology karma never means its effect; its effect is known as the 'fruit' or the 'result' of karma (*kamma-phala or kamma-vipāka*). "Deeds are one's own … beings are heir to deeds, deeds are matrix, deeds are kin and deeds are arbiters. Deeds divide beings, which are to say by lowness and excellence."[25] This is explained as referring to the karmic effect of various actions. A person's actions mould their consciousness, making them into a certain kind of person, so that when they die their out ter form tends to correspond to the type of nature that has been developed.[26] Volition may relatively be good or bad. So karma may be good or bad relatively. Good karma (*kusala*) produces good effects, and bad karma (*akusala*) produces bad effects. 'Thirst', volition, karma, whether good or bad, has one force as its effect: force to continue-to continue in a good or bad direction. Whether good or bad it is relative, and is within the cycle of continuity (*saṃsāra*).

The six realms are actual places in which we can be reborn. They are brought into existence through the power of our actions or karma.[27] Karma is the spiritual law of justice which makes us experiences the good and the bad effects of what we do to others. So, if we harm animals by killing them, eating them, or experimenting on them, we will have to suffer analogous experiences ourselves in the future or at least have to undergo some form of suffering. Only when we ourselves go through what the animals have been through will we definitely know that hurting animals is wrong. So eventually we will develop empathy, a belief in our kinship with all sentient beings, including animals. It is interesting to note, also, that if we are kind to

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[25] M. III. 203.

[26] Peter Harvey, *An Introduction to Buddhist Ethics: Foundations, Values, and Issues*, Cambridge University Press, 2000:15.

[27] Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, *Transform your life,* New Delhi: New Age Books, 2002: 52.

animals, kindness and happiness flow back to us. The Buddha says that if you perform one act of kindness to an animal, you will be recompensed a hundredfold.

III.2.2. The influence of Karma and Rebirth

Prior to the time of the Buddha, the basic idea of karma and rebirth had been expressed in the early Brāhmaṇical-Hindu compositions known as *Upaniṣads*. Here, though, there was as much emphasis on karma or actions being ritually right as on their being ethically right. In Buddhism, though, the ethical aspect of action is strongly emphasized as the relevant factor in causing karmic results.

At his enlightenment, the Buddha gained direct knowledge of rebirth, karma and the Four Holy Truths. One word used for the cycle of rebirths is saṃsāra, 'wandering on', which indicates that the process is seen as a long and often aimless process.[28] The Buddhist view, in fact is that there is known beginning to the cycle of rebirths and the world: 'inconceivable is any beginning of this saṃsāra, an earliest point is not discerned of beings who, obstructed by spiritual ignorance and fettered by craving, run and wander on'.[29] In one early text, the Buddha says that to believe in these principles, and so live a moral life, will lead to a good rebirth if rebirth exists.[30]

According to the rules of karma, a good cause leads to a good result and a bad cause leads to a bad result. Thus we should always try to do good however trivial it may seem. We should also always try to restrain ourselves

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[28] Peter Harvey, *An Introduction to Buddhism: Teaching, History and Practices*, New Delhi: Foundation Books Pvt. Ltd, 2005: 32.
[29] S. II.178.
[30] Peter Harvey, *Op. Cit.* 44.

from harming anyone however small our actions may appear to be. However, when we try to break free of the chain of karma once and for all, we must also free ourselves from all attachments to the notions of good and bad actions.

According to Buddhist teachings on rebirth, you can be born as one of those animals in your next birth. One of those animals may be your dead mother, father or a loved one. Some Buddhists believe that if a person is reborn as an animal, this is a result of that person's unskillful actions from a previous life. This suggests that animals are spiritually inferior to humans. Human souls could be reborn as animals if they had behaved badly, with all souls regarded as part of the Supreme Being. Failing to observe the duty to care could lead to bad karma, which increased the likelihood of returning as an animal next time round'.[31]

Actions can also lead to karmic fruits in a human life. This might be the present life, or a future human life, be this one's next life, or one that comes after one or more other types of rebirth. Karma works sort of like a bank account. Beings that have caused bad karma are reborn as lesser beings (animals, demons); those who follow the moral precepts and spread good karma will be reborn as higher beings (gods, humans). When lesser beings pay off their "debts", they can be reborn as humans. Since human beings are in the best position for enlightenment, this is the most desired level. As the Buddha explained in the *Śuraṅgama Sūtra,* "If he is a person with strength, blessings, and virtue, then once he is in the human realm, he will not have to lose his human rebirth after what is owed him is restored.

[31] Peter Harvey, *Op. Cit.* 15.

But if he lacks blessings, the he will return to the animal to continue repaying his debts."[32]

This traditional equanimity-meditation helps us remember the truth of the nature of impermanence and cause and effect: "All beings are owners of their actions, heirs of their actions, born of their actions, related through their actions, and have their actions as their arbitrator. Action is what differentiates beings in terms of baseness & excellence."[33] When we kill, we increase and perpetuate the bad karma of the killing karma. This bad karma will come back to us in this life or the next, but certainly has a more immediate effect on the being that we have just killed. Spreading the killing karma affects the whole so much that it collects and perpetuates, eventually leading to wars in the future.

The Buddha said:

"There is the case, student, where a woman or man is a killer of living beings, brutal, bloody-handed, given to killing and slaying, showing no mercy to living beings. Through having adopted and carried out such actions, on the break-up of the body, after death, he reappears in the plane of deprivation, the bad destination, the lower realms, hell. If, on the break-up of the body, after death instead of reappearing in the plane of deprivation, the bad destination, the lower realms, hell he comes to the human state, then he is short-lived wherever reborn. This is the way leading to a short life: to be a

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[32] Hsuan Hua, *The Shurangama Sutra: Sutra Text and Supplements*, Malaysia: Buddhist Text Translation Society, 2003: 231.

[33] Joan Halifax, Ira Byock, *Being with Dying: Cultivating Compassion and Fearlessness in the Presence of Death*, Boston: Shambhala Publications, Inc, 2008: 44. See. Bhikkhu Bodhi, *In the Buddha's Words: An Anthology of Discourses from the Pali* Canon, USA: Wisdom Publications, Inc, 2005: 162. See, M. 135.

killer of living beings, brutal, bloody-handed, given to killing and slaying, showing no mercy to living beings."[34]

And "But then there is the case where a woman or man is not one who harms beings with his fists, with clods, with sticks, or with knives. Through having adopted and carried out such actions, on the break-up of the body, after death, he reappears in a good destination... If instead he comes to the human state, then he is healthy wherever reborn. This is the way leading to health: not to be one who harms beings with one's fists, with clods, with sticks, or with knives."[35]

Generally speaking, reincarnation of ordinary sentient being may be divided into two kinds, although it is important to member that each individual is a unique case. There is the ordinary death without anything positive or negative during moment of death. People who experience this kind of death reincarnate with their past karma in complete control, because there has been no special influence during the moment of dead if there is a strong influence of a positive or negative sort that will override past karma. That is the second category reincarnation, in which positive or negative thoughts direct individual mind into a more positive or more negative rebirth.

In cosmological terms, the animals were believed to inhabit a distinct world, separated from humans not by space but by state of mind. Rebirth as an animal was considered to be one of the unhappy rebirths, usually involving more than human suffering. Buddhist commentarial texts depict many sufferings associated with the animal world, even where no human

[34] M.I.135.
[35] *Ibid.*

beings are present, they are attacked and eaten by other animals or live in fear of it, they endure extreme changes of environment throughout the year, and they have no security of habitation. Those that live among humans are often slaughtered for their bodies, or taken and forced to work with many beatings until they are slaughtered at the end of their lives. On top of this, they suffer from ignorance, not knowing or understanding what is happening to them with any clarity, and unable to do very much about it, acting primarily on instinct. A person who kills living creatures and has no compassion for them would, on account of that behavior, be reborn in an evil state after death. If he was reborn in an evil state and as a human, he would be short-lived.[36]

There are three types of action: bodily actions, verbal actions, and mental actions. Since our bodily and verbal actions are always initiated by our mental actions, or intentions, ultimately the six realms are created by our mind. For example, a hell realm is a place that arises as a result of the worst actions, such as murder or extreme mental. As Śāntideva says in *Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life*, "Those who regard themselves as high and others as low will be reborn in the lower realms. If they are later reborn as human beings, they will be servants or of a low class."[37]

As a result of regarding ourselves as superior and others as inferior we perform many negative actions that will later ripen as rebirth in the lower realms. Due to this haughty attitude, even when we finally take rebirth again as a human being we shall be of a low social status, living like a servant or slave. Buddhism links karma directly to the motives behind an action.

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[36] David J. Kalupahana, *Buddhist Philosophy: A Historical Analysis*, Honolulu: Hawaii, 1977: 49.

[37] Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, *Eight Steps to Happiness: The Buddhist Way of Loving Kindness*, USA: Tharpa Publications, 2003: 59 – 60.

Motivation usually makes the difference between "good" and "bad" actions, but included in the motivation is also the aspect of ignorance such that a well-intended action from an ignorant mind can subsequently be interpreted as a "bad" action in the sense that it creates unpleasant results for the "actor". Depending on how we act, we may experience 'heavenly' or 'hellish' states of mind.[38]

Master Hsing Yun suggests that some people are reincarnated into one of the six until we get off, until we obtain liberation, Nirvāṇa. We will go up and down in each one of our lives without choice according to the karma that manifest when we die. Buddha calls it the karma that ripens when we die.[39]

According to Buddhist theory, we are born and reborn countless numbers of times, and it is conceivable that each being has been our parent at one time or another. In this way all beings in the universe share a family relationship.

In Buddhism, according to karma, one who do good action, he will get good fruit. Such as long time ago, Bodhisattva practice *pāramitā*, he gave his material goods and his body for anyone who needs anything. After he die, he reborn in the heaven realm. If karma is interpreted in a very mechanical manner, it, too, can be seen as a fatalistic teaching. Fatalistic interpretations of karma were advocated by a number of non-Buddhist groups. Buddhists, by interpreting karma through the teaching of Dependent Origination, affirmed free will and the value of religious practice. If the Self

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[38] Peter Harvey, *Op. Cit*. 45.

[39] Wynand Goosen, *Affecting Deep Level Change in the Devine Matrix: Metaphysics*, Germany: GRIN Verlag, 2009: 15.

is considered to be a permanent and substantial entity, then it cannot change and cannot be affected by the fruits of a person's actions. If the causal relations that affect a person are not acknowledged, then the causal laws governing karma also cannot be recognized. Consequently, Buddhists applied the Middle Way between annihilationist and eternalist positions and their teachings concerning Dependent Origination to karma and thereby refuted fatalistic theories of karma.[40]

Buddhist ethics are based on the principle that certain actions (karma) result in certain effects; in short, they are based on the Law of Causality (*Paṭiccasamupāda*). As has been seen the five precepts (*pañcasīla*) ensures our security in society. Also, to a great extent, the fact that good actions lead to beneficial results and that bad actions lead to suffering is observable in daily life and we are able to know this experientially.

III.2.3. Why Believe in *Karma*?

Simply said, if we chose to ignore the workings of *karma*, we tend to create many problems for ourselves. For example, if we like to have something expensive, but we cannot afford it, it becomes very tempting to steal. If we are smart and attentive enough, we may never be caught stealing. However, by stealing, (according to the law of *karma*) we create problematic situations for ourselves in the future, like poverty, or being the victim of robbery. Therefore, if we chose to ignore *karma*, the results of our actions will still haunt us. Belief in the law of causation generates the conviction that just as our past actions shaped the present, so will the life we lead today determine the nature of our future. We are the architects of our own lives. If

[40] Akira Hirakawa, *A History of Indian Buddhism: From Śākyamuni to Early Mahāyāna*, (trans.) Paul Groner, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1998: 188.

we build with noble materials, carved with patient care, we shall have beauty and grace in our live. If we put into them love, loyalty, gentleness, meekness, kindness, faith, forbearance, patience, hope, we shall not fail to draw good dividends from all these things, dividends which shall rejoice our hearts, cause our eyes to sparkle, and the song of gladness to well up.[41]

Therefore, according to Buddhism, one who believes in the law of causation, will be careful not to cause pain to people, animals, plants, or the earth itself, for harming them is simultaneously harming oneself. It is said that 'the mental aspiration of a moral person is effective through its purity'.[42] That is, when such a person give a gift to a monk or Brāhmaṇa with the hope of being reborn in a certain way, this will occur, whether the heart is set on rebirth as a rich human, or in any of the six heavens of the desire realm, or even in the world of the *brahmas*. Yet if such an aspiration is really going to work, it must not be itself the sole motive of the giving, for this is seen to affect the nature of the beneficial karmic result. If a person give something to a monk 'with longing, with the heart bound (to the gift), intent on a store (of karmic fruitfulness), thinking "I will enjoy this after death", it is said that he will be reborn for a while in the lowest of all the heavens.[43]While Buddhists often see a large gift as generating more karmic fruitfulness than a small one, a small gift from a poor person is said to be worth as much as a large one from a rich person.[44] When practicing the Noble Eightfold Path, especially the right livelihood, a Buddhist avoids becoming a hunter, a fisherman, a jailer… because these kinds of persons will receive bad Karma

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41 C.W. Naylor, 'A Great Adventure'. In *Your Cry Has Been Heard*, ed. Beth Michael, The United States of America, 2009: 82.
42 D. III. 259 – 60.
43 Peter Harvey, *Op. Cit.* 19.
44 S. I. 20-22.

result. They will suffer an unpleasant state for a long period and rebirth in some lower form of being. Obviously, the results mentioned here are unlikely to come immediately (so-called 'instant karma' is considered rare), instead the karmic results may take lifetimes to ripen. For example, if I stead an ice-cream and enjoy eating it afterwards, the enjoyment is not a karmic result of stealing the ice-cream; it may be the result of helping someone else long ago. The karmic result of stealing an ice-cream is an unpleasant experience, such as being robbed.

In *A Living Buddhism for the West*, Lama Anāgārika Govinda expresses another approach: "All the suffering of this world arises from a wrong attitude. The world is neither good nor bad. It is only the relation to our ego that makes it seem the one or the other."[45]

Buddhism shows that both animals and human beings are the products of ignorance conjoined with craving, and that the differences between them are the consequences of past karma. In this sense, though not in any other, 'all life is one'. It is one in its origin, ignorance-craving, and in its subjection to the universal law of causality. But every being's karma is separate and individual. So long as a man refuses to become submerged in the herd, so long as he resists the pressure that is constantly brought to bear upon him to make him share the mass mind and take on the identity of mass activities, he is the master of his own destiny. Whatever the karma of others around him may be, he need have no share in it. His karma is his own, distinct and individual. In this sense all life is not one, but each life is a unique current of causal determinants, from lowest to highest in the scale. The special position of the human being rests on the fact that he alone can consciously direct his

[45] Anāgārika Govinda, *A Living Buddhism for the West*, Shambhala, 1990: 56.

own personal current of karma to a higher or lower destiny. All beings are their own creators; man is also his own judge and executioner. He is also his own savior.[46]

It is said that *saṃsāra* is without beginning, and there has never been a time when the round of rebirths did not exist. Consequently, the karmic history of every living being extends into the infinite past, and each has an unexpected potential of karma, good and bad. When a human being dies, the nature of the succeeding life-continuum is determined by the morally wholesome or unwholesome mental impulse that arises in his last conscious moment, that which follows it being his *Paṭisandhi-viññāna,* or rebirth-linking consciousness.[47] But where no such good or bad thought-moment arises the rebirth-linking consciousness is determined by some unexpended karma from a previous existence. Animals, being without moral discrimination, are more of less passive sufferers of the results of past bad karma, as are morally irresponsible human beings, such as congenital idiots and imbeciles. But the fact that the animal has been unable to originate any fresh good karma does not exclude it from rebirth on a higher level. When the results of the karma which caused the animal birth are exhausted some unexpended good karma from a previous state of existence will have an opportunity to take over, and in this way the life-continuum is raised to the human level again.[48]

The *Cūḷakammavibhaṅgasutta* of the *Majjhimanikāya* mentions that a person who kills a living creature will be born in an evil state. Not killing in

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[46] Soma Thera, *Collected Bodhi Leaves Volume 1*, Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, 2010:319.
[47] Bhikkhu Ñānamoli, *The Path of Purification: Visuddhimagga*, Colombo: Samayawardana Printers, 2010: 567.
[48] Soma Thera, *Op. Cit.* 320.

this life, one will not encounter disasters and difficulties in future live. If we refrain from killing all living beings, in future lives, we will not be killed and we will be free from all disasters and difficulties. We will not be killed by gunshots, burned by fire, or drawn in water. Since we didn't kill in previous life, we will also be free from all illnesses.

When we kill, we increase and perpetuate the bad karma of the killing karma. This bad karma will come back to us in this life or the next, but certainly has a more immediate effect on the being that we have just killed. Spreading the killing karma affects the whole so much that it collects and perpetuates, eventually leading to wars in the future. These experiences are the result of our past evolutionary actions (*karma*) which were motivated by the self-cherishing thought.

In past lives, due to egoism, wanting happiness just for ourselves, we harmed others, robbed and killed. In this life we are experiencing the result of those actions; therefore those sufferings are to be blamed only on egoism, the self-cherishing thought.[49]

A man is man due to the force of his *karma*. The gods are gods due to the force of their *karmas*. Whatever happens is the effect of an anterior *Karma* and what is going to happen will be an effect of *karma* of today. By *karma* our Lord considers the position of men noble and ignoble. He says: "A man is not noble because he injures living beings. He is called noble because he does not injure living beings, that is, he has compassion for all living beings".[50]

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[49] Ribur Rinpoche, *How to generate Boddhicitta*, Singapore: Ad Graphic Pte Ltd, 1999: 31.
[50] Shanti Bhikhushastri, *The Law of Karma in Buddhism*, also see Dh. 270.

In the *Jātaka*, there are many stories that tell animals. An animal can become a man and man can become an animal according his good or bad *karma.* This is a story that tell a women become a crane and the crane become a woman and then reborn in heavenly. Therefore stories in *Jātaka* containing a fable proper, where animals speak and act like men.[51]

III.2.4. The Six Buddhist Realms of Existence

There are six Buddhist realms of saṃsāric existence. Buddhists believe that the cycle of a person's life is perpetrated by ignorance, greed, pride, anger and jealousy. The 'six realms of existence', sometimes also translated as the 'six states of saṃsāra' or the six paths of rebirth' (Wheel of Life), are the six main types of birth that beings may have within Buddhist cosmology. Which state we are born into is driven by our karma our actions and states of awareness from previous lives.

According to the teachings of the Buddha, we will endlessly incarnate within these realms until we receive and practice the teachings, and through them break free of the karmas that pull us into the six realms, thereby attaining enlightenment. A human birth, which is one of the six realms, is the easiest realm to do this in, and is therefore the most auspicious birth. The ordinary beings living in our present world fall into six categories or occupy six realms of existence, arranged in hierarchical order in terms of their desirability. Lowest are the hell dwellers, being who because of their evil actions in the past are compelled, for a time at least, to suffer in the various hells that exist beneath the earth, the most terrible of which is the Avīci hell or the hell of incessant suffering. On a slightly higher level are the hungry

[51] T.W. Rhys Davids, *Buddhist Birth-Stories (Jātaka Tales)*, Delhi: BKP, 2005: vii.

ghosts or spirits, beings who are tormented by endless hunger and craving. Above this is the level of beasts or beings of animal nature, and above that the realm of the *asuras*, demons who are pictured in Indian mythology as constantly engaged in angry warfare. These first three or four realms represent the "evil paths," the lowest, most painful and undesirable states of existence.[52]

The realms are not only relevant in terms of studying rebirth, but also in terms of understanding the karma associated with different states of awareness while we are in a human birth. Each realm has a certain mind-state that drives it, and the teachings on the six realms can help us to understand the risks and challenges of each mind state.

The Six Realms are an allegorical description of conditioned existence, or saṃsāra, into which beings are reborn. The nature of one's existence is determined by karma. Some realms seem more pleasant than others heaven sounds preferable to hell but all are *dukkha*, meaning they are temporary and imperfect.

For Buddhists, these six realms represent all possible states of existence. They were traditionally conceived as real places, but can also be interpreted symbolically. The animal, ghost and hell realms are all places of punishment for previous sins, whereas birth in the heavenly, *asura*, or human realms comes through the accumulation of karmic merit.[53] Life in any of these realms is ultimately impermanent one does not suffer forever in hell, nor enjoy eternal bliss in heaven.

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[52] Burton Watson, *Miao-Fa Lion-Hua Ching* (*The Lotus Sutra*) New York: Columbia University Press, 1993: xiv.

[53] Martin A. Mills, *Identity, Ritual and State in Tibetan Buddhism: The Foundations of Authority in Gelukpa Monasticism*, New York: Routledge Curzon, 2003: 56.

Birth in any of these realms is based on one's *karma* ("action") essentially the moral causality that good actions bring good results, and bad actions bad results. Since one's motive is critical for "goodness" or "badness," one's thoughts become at least as important as one's actions (for example, accidentally killing something is far less serious than intentional killing).

Karma presupposes a dynamic universe one's present life reflects past choices, but one's present choices are shaping the future. Only human beings can make choices and accrue karma, which means that one's human actions (good or bad) determine one's future births. This gives added emphasis to one's moral choices; it also means that a change of heart or better guidance can help one to lay a positive foundation for the future. Such guidance can range from simple moral precepts all the way to instructions on how to select one's next birth, as found in the final section of *The Tibetan Book of the Dead.*

In some schools, the realms of Devas and Asuras are combined, leaving five realms instead of six. Note that each of these realms has a resident Buddha, through which its inhabitants can hear the dharma this may reflect the Mahayana Buddhist notion that the ultimate Buddha-nature (*dharmakāya*) pervades the entire universe. The six realms are:

1. *Deva* or Heavenly Realm (God Realm).

In the heavens, there are many beings who are rewarded for past good deeds. Life in heaven is a continual round of pleasure and enjoyment, with no suffering, anxiety, or unfulfilled desires until the moment one is about to be reborn in another realm. And this is one of the problems. Life in heaven is extremely long, but is ultimately impermanent, and one must inevitably leave

to take birth in another realm. To be born in heaven, one also needs to "spend" an enormous amount of religious merit, and life there is so carefree that people have no inclination toward religious life. For these reasons, religious authorities have discouraged seeking birth in heaven.

In Buddhist tradition, the Deva realm is populated by godlike beings that enjoy great power, wealth and long life.[54] They live in splendor and happiness. Yet even the Devas grow old and die. Further, their privilege and exalted status blind them to the suffering of others, so in spite of their long lives they have neither wisdom nor compassion. The privileged Devasare reborn in another of the Six Realms. The *Lotus Sūtra Commentary* describes devas as "Pure and pristinely bright, they are the most honored and supreme, hence the name deva."

In Buddhism, this is not an immortal state, and also not the ideal one for attaining liberation. We can become addicted to pleasure here, including meditative bliss, and can become trapped, forgetting to work towards liberation, and falling into lower realms because of this forgetfulness and self-absorption.

2. *Asura* or Demi-god Realm (Jealous God Realm)

The second highest realm of existence is called the Demi-god realm, or the Jealous God Realm. It is believed to be the realm of Titans, Asuras, and is marked by jealousy and paranoia. The fruit of disentanglement will be obtained when arriving the Nirvāṇic Path, and the fruit of contributory causes will not have any limitation in space or time.[55] Those born into this realm,

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[54] Hsing Yun, Robert Smitheram, *The Universal Gate: A Commentary on Avalokiteśvara's Universal Gate Sūtra*, Taiwan: Buddha's Light Publishing, 2011: 130.

[55] Dukkyu Choi, *Mechanism of Consciousness During Life, Dream and After – Death*, Bloomington: Author House, 2011: 169.

though blessed with a high birth, are exceedingly jealous of the God realm and of each other. They are believed to spend most of their time fighting among themselves to compete. 'Demi-God' Realm is also pleasurable; this realm is nevertheless defined by jealousy and competitiveness. Although a birth here does offer more opportunities for pleasure than a human birth, here we are prone to coveting the pleasures of the Devas, which we can see (just as animals and humans can see each other.) In this state, we are prone to envy and a sense of victimhood that we are not getting our fair share and become fixated on evening the score. Theravada teachings generally do not recognize this as a realm separate from the Deva realm. The Asuras are strong, powerful and amoral beings who are sometimes depicted as enemies of the Devas. Asuras are marked by their fierce envy. The karma of hate and jealousy causes rebirth in the Asura Realm.

3. Human Realm

Human Realm, a middle realm, our human existence is defined by our ability and free-will to experience any state, from blissful to hellish. It is therefore perfect for attaining enlightenment, because there is just enough suffering to motivate us to seek liberation (unlike in the god realms, where we are easily distracted by pleasure) but not so much that we cannot hear and practice the teachings (unlike in the lower realms, where we are so consumed by our suffering that we cannot practice). From a human birth, we can cultivate the compassion and wisdom necessary to free ourselves from the entire wheel of saṃsāra.[56] In this realm we also have the most control over our future births, because we can influence our

[56] Voyen Koreis, *The Fool's Pilgrimage: A Fantasy on the Tarot Initiation*, Australia: Book Splendour Publishing, 2007: 87.

karma through our choices, whereas in the other realms we generally do not move into another birth until the karma that has brought us there has run its course.

The human realm is the only one in which one's choices (good or bad) affect one's future in all the others, one is either being rewarded or punished for one's actions as a human being. One's present human condition (e.g., wealth, social status, and physical and psychological qualities) is based on one's past *karma*, but one's present choices also determine one's future (in this life, or a future life). As conscious moral agents, human beings have agency that the beings in other realms do not; this clearly underscores the importance of moral action and spiritual development. The difference between humans and the other realms is that we can practice Dharma. Furthermore, falling into the lower realms is like losing a wish-fulfilling jewel. A human life has incredible potential. Humans have the intelligence to comprehend the difference between good and bad and the relationship between cause and effect. If we are born as animals, we will not be able to see beyond immediate events. Because animals tend to indulge in negative activity, their next rebirth is even worse. It is like a rock tumbling down the side of a ravine from a high mountain peak; it is most difficult to stop and bring it back up. Once in a low rebirth we may experience many, many lives stuck away at the bottom. It is foolish to think that we will be reborn as humans very soon.[57] So we can take the teachings, and practice them in our lives. So, in the Human Realm we can move out of the six flights of *karma*.

[57] Lhundup Sopa Geshe, *Steps on the Path to Enlightenment: A Commentary on Tsongkhapa's Lamrim Chenmo. Volume 3: The Way of the Bodhisattva*, USA: Wisdom Publications, 2008:436.

4. Animal Realm

Animal birth is seen as the result of past sins, and one expiates these sins through suffering in animal form (being hunted, worked, driven, slaughtered, etc.), often for thousands of consecutive births (as a dog, pig, dung beetle, etc.). Animal behavior is also run by instinct, which means that animals cannot generate good karma; they are simply working off the bad. This suffering and lack of control make birth as an animal undesirable. The conviction that animals are sentient beings also underlies the prohibition on intentionally killing anything, which goes back to the Buddha's earliest teaching (the Buddha was also vocally opposed to the animal sacrifice prevalent in his time).

The Animal realm is based on strong mental states of stupidity and prejudice cultivated in a previous life or lives. This realm is the realm of existence of the nonhuman animals on Earth. The earth on which we live is just one of many planes, and the fact that it happens to accommodate both the human and animal states of existence does not in any way distinguish it from other planes as a possible milieu for sentient life. In fact, besides humans and animals, it harbours various classes of devas (deities), *pretas* (spirits) and other non-human beings.[58] Humans can, however, be seen by the animals, in the same way that the Asuras can see the Devas.

5. *Preta* Realm or Hungry Ghost Realm

This realm is defined by constant desire and greed. They have huge stomachs but tiny mouths, food and water is very scarce and when a *preta* sees

[58] Francis Story, *Rebirth as Doctrine and Experience: Essays and Case Studies*, Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, 2000: 56.

food or water they are so delusional that they believe they are seeing blood, bile and other disgusting things of that nature. And even if a *preta* finds food or water and is able to consume it, it burns its throat and stomach like fire. In this realm, we are so overcome by our desire for more, and more whether food, drink, sex, wealth, or even certain emotional states that we are consumed by it, and cannot focus on anything else. In this state, we cannot practice the teachings because we cannot focus on anything other than our wants.

As with the hells, beings in the *preta* realm expiate their past misdeeds through suffering. *Pretagati* ("going to the realm of hungry ghosts") is hungry ghost level of rebirth in the world of saṃsāra.[59] Pretas are described as tormented by hunger and thirst illustrated by showing them with tiny thin necks, through which they can never eat or drink enough to satisfy themselves; this is described as the result of greed and stinginess in previous lives.

Other torments are psychological, since *pretas* remain in the places where they used to live, but cannot be seen by the living (which brings feelings of frustration, isolation, and despair). A hungry ghost is one who is always looking outside himself for the new thing that will satisfy the craving within.

6. *Naraka* or Hell Realms

The Hell Realm is the most terrible of the Six Realms.[60] The lowest among the realms of existence is the hell realm. One is punished for one's evil actions. Buddhist visions of hell often link particular punishments to

[59] John C. Huntington and Dina Bangdel, *The Circle of Bliss: Buddhist Meditational Art*, Belgium: Serindia Publications, Inc, 2003: 532.
[60] Lama Dudjom Dorjee, *Heartfelt Advice*, USA: Snow Lion Publications, 2009: 50.

particular sins, doubtless to warn the hearers. One expiates one's evil deeds through suffering hunger and thirst, dismemberment, torture, psychological distress, and so on. The hell realms are looked upon as journey full of suffering; one born into this realm must not only endure suffering in their respective hell but also pass through each of lesser hells. This journey is supposed to take eternities to complete. In the course of which, even the Dharma is forgotten and even if it was remembered, the anguish is such that it makes practice impossible. The hell realm is characterized by acute aggression.

'Hell' Realm is defined by hatred and rage, and by defining all other beings as enemies. Within this realm, there is no opportunity for compassion or desire for the teachings to arise, as all our momentum goes toward fighting others, and suffering the consequences. But within Buddhist cosmology this state, like all the others, is not permanent. Instead, when the negative karma that brought us here has run out, we will be reborn into another realm, with the possibility of working towards a human birth again.

In brief, Buddhists believe that each person is reborn in accordance with their respective deeds (*karma*) in their previous lives. To form a mental image of the six realms we can compare them to the floors of a large, old house. In this analogy the house represents saṃsāra, the cycle of contaminated rebirth.[61] All the sufferings we experienced in countless rebirths in the three lower realms come from nothing other than the self-cherishing thought.[62] After all of the positive merits have been used up in the

[61] Kelsang Gyatso, *Op. Cit.* 53.
[62] Ribur Rinpoche, *Op. Cit.* 31.

higher realms a being will tumble into the lower realms continuing the viscous cycle of rebirth and death.

III.2.5. Human and animal can change place and position.

The Buddha taught that the human beings are also reborn from other forms like as animals. "Contaminated virtuous actions throw us into higher saṃsāric rebirths as a human, demi-god, or god, whereas non-virtuous actions throw us into lower rebirths in the animal, hungry spirit, or hell realms".[63]

The *Karma* leads one to a good position or places one in a bad position. The Buddha says: "Some enter the womb, that is, are reborn on earth. Evil doers go to hell. The good go to heaven. Those free from worldly desires attain *Nirvāṇa*."[64] The death of a person is must for not leading to rebirth in the human realm. He can be reborn in another realm due to his *karma.*

Animals have always been regarded in Buddhist thought as sentient beings, though less intellectually advanced than humans but no less capable of feeling suffering. Moreover, the doctrine of rebirth held that any human could be reborn as an animal, and any animal could be reborn as a human. An animal birth might be the rebirth of a dead relative, and if one looks far enough back in one's infinite series of lives, one would eventually have to be related to others in some way. One cannot, therefore, make a hard distinction between moral rules applicable to animals and those applicable to people. Ultimately humans and animals are part of a single family.

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[63] Kelsang Gyatso, *Op. Cit.* 57.
[64] Hsuan Hua, 'Eating flesh: pros and cons', *Cherishing Life*, Volume II: 142-144.

The beings here experience unrelenting torment."All human beings go into the human world by virtuous actions, but the experiences they have as human beings vary considerably depend upon their different completed actions. Similarly, animals have all been thrown into the animal world by the retribution of non-virtuous actions, but their experiences as animals vary considerably depending upon their different completing actions. Some animals, such as some domestic pets, can experience a life of luxury, receiving more care and attention than many human beings.[65]

Human souls could be reborn as animals and insects if they had behaved badly, with all souls regarded as part of the Supreme Being. Failing to observe the duty to care could lead to bad karma, which increased the likelihood of returning as an animal next time round.[66] Species sentience due to its association with rebirth eschatology leads to cross-species reincarnation.[67]

A person who has done evil persistently, or even one heavy crime, is likely to see at the time of death a vision, either relating to his past evil actions, or else to the bourn which his past evil actions or karma have prepared for him. When his physical body is no longer a suitable basis to support life, his mind creates a body ghostly and subtle in substance, which then and there begins to experience one of the evil bourns. But in case his karma drives him to be born as animals, there is the vision of animals copulating and he is dragged into the womb or egg of those animals.[68]

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65 Kelsang Gyatso, *Op. Cit.* 57-58.
66 Richard Ryder, *Op. Cit.* 21.
67 Obeyesekere, Gananath, *Karma & Rebirth: A Cross Cultural Study*, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publisher, 2006: 176.
68 Phra Khantipalo, *The Wheel of Birth and Death*, Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society,1970.

It may not be far from the truth to say that this attitude of renunciation is behind every moral virtue. Not only those who leave everyday life and embrace the life of monks, but everyone is expected to practice renunciation to the extent to which he is able. Without such sacrifices, there cannot be perfect harmony in society. Thus, even the simplest of virtues, such as generosity, liberality, caring for one's parents, family, fellow beings and others cannot be practiced without an element of renunciation or sacrifice. This is the sacrifice that the Buddha emphasized.

In the Buddhist tradition, the teaching of rebirth states that humans can be reborn as animals if they commit heinous deeds, and those animals can be reborn as humans if they exert effort to act meritoriously. As James P. McDermott writes, "After the breaking up of the body after death, individuals of comparatively good conduct will be reborn in a relatively satisfactory state of existence such as the human state."[69] This is illustrated in the *Campeyya-Jātaka*.[70] There was a puissant serpent King who left all his magnificence on the fast-days. He went to the human world and lie on the way. There was a serpent- charmer came to catch him and made him dance for show. After that the serpent King became a young man, into the human being realm, due to force of his good *karma.*

Through that story, we see an animal doing good deeds and with the force of good karma and changing its life from an animal he becomes a man in the next life. Thus, we know that if animal do good deeds it will be reborn in the good realms.

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[69] Wendy Doniger, *Karma and Rebirth in Classical Indian Traditions*, USA: University of California Press, 1980: 191.

[70] J. No. 506.

Those of bad conduct and wrong views, to the contrary, are destined to attain a miserable rebirth as an animal or worse. Thus, for example, if they do not end up in hell itself, individuals who creep or slink along in this life, be they bloody handed hunters, robbers, or whatever, are most likely to be reborn in the form of a sneaky or creeping creature as a snake, a scorpion, a centipede, a mongoose, a cat, a mouse, an owl or the like.[71]

III.3. Personification of Animals in Buddhist Literature

In the personification of animals, animals and human talk to each other on the same footing which in a way indicates that we should respect all living beings because they can become enlightenment. Moreover, as we have pointed out earlier, as all the living beings are related to each other, if we do harm to anyone of them it means we harm ourselves.

Some individuals recognize the inviolability of animals. In other words, they believe that animals are not ours to use, abuse, or consume. They believe that if animals could talk, farmed animals, vivisected animals, fur-bearing animals, circus, zoo, and rodeo animals, hunted animals, would all say the same thing: "Don't touch me!" In the absence of a language that animals can speak that proclaims their inviolability; some human beings are searching for a language that speaks this on their behalf. So far most of these efforts could be grouped under the general heading of animal rights theory. The notion of animal inviolability is a deep belief in search of a language. Because we have no adequate language for emotions or intuitions, we have no framework into which our misgivings about animal current violability

[71] Christopher Key Chapple, *Nonviolence to Animals, Earth, and Self in Asian Traditions*, Delhi: Indian Book Centre, 1995: 23.

can be fit. In the absence of such language, it is important that we widen Christian ethical discourse to address the problem of the use of animals.

The Jātaka stories which tell of past lives of the Buddha in folktale fashion, frequently involve animals as peripheral or main characters, and it is not uncommon for the Bodhisattva (the past-life Buddha) to appear as an animal as well. The stories sometimes involve animals alone, and sometimes involve conflicts between humans and animals; in the latter cases, the animals often exhibit characteristics of kindness and generosity that are absent in the humans.

Many gain an added interest if the symbolism of Buddhism is already understood, for example the story of the monkey-king who by risking his own life, made of himself a bridge so that his troupe could pass safety over his back to the security of the beyond, a notion reflected again, but without the bridge motif. In the story of the desert-pilot who took the caravan safely across the waterless desert, likewise arriving beyond, all perils past.[72]

Once the Bodhisattva lived as a Kuru deer in a wild forest where splendid trees and bushes grew and where all kinds of animals, large and small had their abode. His body was very beautiful and his skin shone like gold he knew the cruelty of man and that is beautiful would surely attract the eyes of hunter, he withdrew deep into the forest, far away from the habitations of people.

The bodhisattva felt the pain of others more than his own and saved very many lives in his re-births in the world. He did not think of his own danger; Kuru deer saved life of a man. The deer told him that he did not talk

[72] I. B. Horner, *Op. Cit*. ix.

to anyone about the place where deer stayed because if he did so people would catch him. The man promised that.

Thereafter, this man desired money and this aim he took the king to the forest in order to catch deer. The bodhisattva at once recognized the man, whom he had rescued and he said: ‘Shame upon you, surely it is true that it is better to save a log of wood from the water than an ungrateful man. I wonder that you did not know that bad karma would follow you for your ingratitude.’ The king understood what had happened. He said: ‘a man who can be so vile as to betray his rescuer should not live.’ But bodhisattva, full of compassion, called out: ‘stay, your Majesty, do not kill a man already punished. I stand here to plead for him, for I know how hard his punishment is’.

The Kuru Deer followed the king back to his capital; hence he was placed on the royal throne. Then the Deer in a sweet voice preached to them about ‘Mercy to all creatures’. He said: ‘if men would consider the animals their younger brothers, then all wickless would disappear in the world. The want of mercy is the cause of trouble. Mercy will bring rich fruits, as fruitful rain dose to vegetation. Mercy destroys the desire for injuring any creature and is the seed of other virtues. A merciful person is loved and esteemed by everybody. His mind is so filled with mercy that anger and passion cannot blaze in him. In mercy the whole Law of Righteousness is contained.’

Thus the bodhisattva taught the Law of Righteousness a long time before he became the Buddha. And the king and his people took the words to their hearts and from that time onwards the killing of animals and birds was forbidden.

CHAPTER FOUR

ANIMALS, BUDDHA-NATURE AND JĀTAKAS

The concept of Buddha-nature belongs largely to Mahāyāna Buddhism but its roots lie in texts such as the *Jātakas*. Through the *Jātaka*, all living being lies at the very basis of the concept of Buddha- nature.

IV.1. The Concept of Buddha-nature

The concept of Buddha nature is one of the most important ideas in East Asian Buddhism. In its simplest form, the Buddha-nature concept provides the answer to a question with which the ancient Chinese were very much concerned: Are all beings capable of attaining Buddhahood, or are there some who will never be free of the sufferings of *saṃsāra*? Buddha nature theory answers without equivocation: "All sentient beings possess the Buddha nature" and thus are guaranteed the realization of Buddhahood. Not only human beings, but all beings born and reborn in the six destinies: hell beings, hungry ghosts, animals, fighting demons, human beings, and gods are promised that Buddhahood awaits them. The belief in the *icchantika*, the one forever incapable of attaining Buddhahood, is expressly rejected. At its basis, then, the Buddha nature concept is an optimistic and encouraging doctrine.[1]

From this concept arises the idea that all sentient beings are equal, and all dharma realms are one. These insights are the foundation needed by human beings to reach eternal peace, and they provide guidance that can

[1] Sallie B. King, *Buddha Nature*, Albany: State University of New York, 1991:1.

benefit the entire world.[2] Buddha-nature is an important doctrine for many schools of Mahāyāna Buddhism. This thought is also rooted in the Indian Mahāyāna doctrinal tradition.[3]

The term Buddha-nature is closely relative in meaning to *tathāgatagarbha* (Sanskrit: "womb of the thus-come one").[4] Scholars now generally agree that the Sanskrit equivalent is *buddhadhātu*.[5] The Buddha-nature doctrine relates to the possession by sentient beings of the innate buddha-mind or buddha-element, which is, prior to the full attainment of Buddhahood, not fully actualized, or at least not clearly seen and known in its full radiance.

Unlike the Western concept of "soul" or some interpretations of the Indian "ātman", Buddha-nature is not considered an isolated essence of a particular individual, but rather a single unified essence shared by all beings with Buddha-nature. The following terms refer to the same thing: Self-Nature, True Nature, Original Nature, Dharma Nature, True Mark, True Mind, True Emptiness, True Thusness, Dharma Body, Original Face, Emptiness, Prajñā, Nirvāṇa, etc.

According to the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra* (*Flowers Adornment Sūtra*), "The Buddha nature is a Buddha seed".[6] The Buddha-nature is permanent.[7] And "Whole-being is the Buddha-nature."[8] Buddha-nature was all existence

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2 Hsing Yun, *The Buddha's Light Philosophy*, Taiwain: His Lai University Press, 2002: 4.
3 Sallie B. King, *Op. Cit.*5.
4 *Ibid*. 4.
5 *Ibid.* 5.
6 HsuanHua, *Flowers Adornment Sutra*, Dharma realm Buddhist Association, 1983: 35.
7 Joan Stambaugh, *Impermanence is Buddha nature: Dogen's understanding of temporarily*, USA: Universiry of Hawaii Press, 1990: 21.
8 Masao Abe, *A Study of Dōgen: His Philosophy and Religion*. Ed. Steven Heine, Albany: SUNY Press, 1992: 46.

which included sentient and insentient beings, and was no longer the possession of these beings.[9]At the suitable time, inside and outsides of sentient being becomes Buddha-nature totally.[10]

All living beings have inherent Buddha-nature and are capable of achieving enlightenment.[11] Śākyamuni Buddha said: "all sentient beings totally possess Buddha-nature. The Tathāgata is permanently abiding, not subject to change."[12] When the Buddha attained enlightenment he declared that all sentient beings have Buddha-nature. This means that ordinary beings are same as the Buddha, for they all possess the capacity to become Buddha.[13]

Buddha-nature is considered to be incorruptible, uncreated, and indestructible. It is eternal Nirvāṇa in dwelling Saṃsāra, and thus opens up the immanent possibility of Liberation from all suffering and impermanence.

The Buddha-nature is the original nature of all people, which is harmonious and non-dualistic. This is always present, whether it is ever realized or not. It is a concrete expression used to signify perfection.

In the Tantric teachings of the Buddha, Buddha-nature is the foundation, the path, and the fruition. Buddha-nature is described as being ultimately unstained by any defilement. It is just like space, which cannot ultimately be stained by anything. Even the being who is suffering in hell has a pure Buddha nature.

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9 Hee-jin Kim, *Eihei Dogen: Mystical Realist*, Wisdom Publications, 2004.
10 Carl Olson, *Original Buddhist source: a reader*, Rutgers University Press, 2005: 342.
11 Sung-bae Park, *Buddhist faith and sudden enlightenment*, New York: State University of New York Press, 1983.
12 Carl Olson, *Op. Cit.*341.
13 Hsing Yun, *For All Living Beings: A guide to Buddhist Practice*, Buddha's Publishing, 2010:106.

The Buddha said: “In order to know the principle of Buddha-nature watch for the proper time and circumstance. When the time comes, Buddha-nature will be manifest.” And ‘to understand the principle of Buddha-nature’ does not mean simple knowing, but means also practicing, enlighten, clarifying, and ultimately forgetting.[14]

Lord Maitreya explains that every sentient being has the potential for enlightenment. There is no sentient being that cannot improve and become enlightened eventually. This is so because every sentient being has Buddha-nature, regardless of which realm that sentient being belongs to. Every sentient being is ultimately perfect. Relatively, because of what are called, in Buddhism, defilements, sentient beings have countless imperfections. Defilements are things like anger, pride, and grasping. The purpose of Dharma practice is to apply the most effective method to overcome those imperfections. With the right method, a person can gradually awaken and overcome all defilements that prevent recognition of inner truth and realization of Buddha-nature.

The Buddha-nature is present in each individual. It is important that our intelligence goes side by side good intention. Without intelligence we cannot accomplish much. Without good intentions, we will not know whether the exercise of our intelligence is constructive or destructive. That is why it is important to have a good heart. Let us not forget that all these qualities are part of our basic nature. In other words, we need to look within, for the Lord Buddha, Buddhahood, is inside us.[15]

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[14] Carl Olson, *Op. Cit.* 343.
[15] Edward Rice, *Eastern Definitions: A Short Encyclopedia of Religions of the Orient*, Doubleday, 1978: 86.

Buddhist environmentalists argue, furthermore, that ontological notions such as Buddha-nature or Dharma-nature provide a basis for unifying all existent entities in a common sacred universe, even though the tradition offers human life the privilege of spiritual realization. The universal Buddha-nature blurred the distinction between sentient and non-sentient life-forms and logically led to the view that plants, trees, and the earth itself could achieve enlightenment. Sentient beings, or living beings, are those who are not yet enlightened or awakened to the illusory nature of ordinary reality. Sentient beings exist in many forms, realms, and locations and even in formless realms.

An important Mahāyāna teaching in which Buddha nature is discussed in some detail is the *Mahāyāna-uttara-tantra*, one of the teachings of Lord Maitreya, which was transmitted to the great master Asaṅga. Lord Maitreya is a great bodhisattva who is not in human form, although he is able to teach human beings who are advanced enough to understand the level on which he teaches. Asaṅga was able to bring these teachings to the human beings. Sentient beings have Buddha-nature, whether they know about it or not. They may be totally ignorant of Buddha-nature. It is on the ultimate level that every sentient being is Buddha.

Loving-kindness and compassion are the eternal spring in all things; they are the Buddha-nature. With loving-kindness and compassion, all sentient beings will become Buddhas.[16]

[16] Hsing Yun, *Humanistic Buddhism: A Blueprint for Life*, CA: Buddha's Light Publishing, 2005: 59.

IV.2. Equality of Human Beings and Animals in Terms of the Buddha-nature

Buddhism is perceived as building on a deeper understanding of human dependence on, and intimate relationship to animals. Several central elements in Buddhism contribute to this. One fundamental element is the continuity of all life forms, expressed in the idea of reincarnation, i.e. every sentient being's rebirth in different life forms. In the popular *Jātaka* stories, relations between animals themselves and between animals and humans are important. An enlightened Buddhist will 'know' his or her previous lives, but also without this specific knowledge a Buddhist regards an animal as a possible future human, or even a former human. Tightly related to this is a second element, the idea of karma, i.e. that we will experience the effects of all our volitional activities in the present and the next life. A third element more explicitly influencing the human–animal relationship is the ideal of non–violence (*ahiṃsā*). This is expressed in the first of the Five Precepts 'Ye shall slay no living thing'. A fourth element is action-guiding, the ideal of compassion, understood as the primary ethical value. On these grounds Buddha not only objected to animal sacrifice, but showed animals respect. These core elements are valuable incentives to treat animals well, or at least not intentionally to inflict harm.

All sentient beings possess the Buddha-nature and thus are guaranteed the realization of Buddhahood. Not only human beings, but all beings born and reborn in the six destinies-hell beings, hungry ghosts, animals, fighting demons, human beings, and gods are promised that Buddhahood awaits them. [17]

[17] Sallie B. King, *Op. Cit.* 1.

Lord Buddha himself was reborn as an animal in many of his previous lives, and in all those existences he was wiser than many humans. He had the perfection of truth and by reciting those acts of truth he was able to cause miracles to happen. It did not matter whether he was a monkey, a fish, an otter, a deer, a lion or an elephant. These stories are all recorded in the *Jātaka* tales, and well known in all Buddhist cultures. It is due to the influence of such stories, as well as the precept of refraining from taking lives that Buddhists develop a respect for all living beings. Thus animals are treated with equal respect as humans, if not more so.

In the *Jātakas*, as the experience of animal lovers and pet owners will bear out a relationship when an animal turns out to be far worthier than a relationship with a human. In these tales, the animal reveals unsuspected subtleties of tenderness, understanding and fellow feeling; and indeed, compassion is held in great veneration by Buddhists, for compassion is the Buddha-nature.[18]

According to the *Lotus Sūtra*, central in Mahāyāna Buddhism, animals also have Buddha-nature, and can thus be fully enlightened. However, influential lines of Buddhism also include clear elements of hierarchy between humans and other animals. According to this, only a human can attain enlightenment, and every human is more valuable than any other animal since their physical nature is a manifestation of moral status, and 'human nature is itself' a product of moral evaluation'. In practice, neither the non-harming principle nor compassion has been strong enough to prevent captivity or instrumentalization of animals in Buddhist countries.[19]

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[18] M.G. Chitkara, *Encyclopedia of Buddhism: a world faith*, Vol. XV, Delhi: A.P.H. Publishing Corporation, 2003: 96-7.

[19] Helena Roeklinsberg, 'Buddhism'. In *The Encyclopedia of Applied Animal Behavior and Welfare*, ed. Daniel S. Mills, USA: CAB International, 2010: 71 – 72.

Animals are depicted as being capable of meritorious behavior. In one passage from the *Vinaya Piṭaka*, an instance of amity among a partridge, a monkey, and an elephant is cited as exemplary for Buddhist monks. In the *Nigrodhamiga-Jātaka*, a prior incarnation of the Buddha in the form of a deer offers his own life to replace that of a pregnant doe headed for slaughter. The deer's generosity appealed to the reigning king's sense of compassion, who then granted guarantees for the protection of all deer in the park, and ultimately for all animals, birds, and fish in the realm.[20]

Animals are also deemed receptive to hearing and learning the teachings of the Buddha. In one instance, the Buddha approached a wild buffalo that had been causing trouble on the outskirts of a small village. He preached to him about "impermanence, lack of substance, and peaceful Nirvāṇa. He also reminded him of his past births… Overcome with remorse, the buffalo died and was reborn in the Devaloka, the realm of the gods. In another story the Buddha pacified a greedy cobra and chastised him for his behavior, warning that his action would cause rebirth in hell. The snake reportedly died thinking of the Buddha and was reborn in one of the heavens."[21]

Through the *Lotus Sūtra*, the eight year old Naga princess, who in the space of a moment changes into a male, completes the eight phases of a Buddha's life, and manifests perfect enlightenment. With the thirty-two features and eighty characteristics of a Buddha, she preaches the *Lotus Sūtra* to all living beings there. This reveals that Buddhahood is not limited to men

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[20] Christopher Chapple, *Nonviolence to Animals, Earth, and Self in Asian Traditions*, Delhi: Indian Book Centre, 1995: 23.

[21] *Ibid.* 23.

(as had been believed previously) but men, women and animals can all equally attain Buddhahood 'in their present form.'

In earlier Buddhism it had been asserted that women were gravely hampered in their endeavors by "five obstacles", one of which is that they could never hope to attain Buddhahood. But all such assertions are here in the *Lotus Sūtra* unequivocally thrust aside. The child is a dragon, a nonhuman being, she is of the female sex, and she has barely turned eight, yet she reaches the highest goal in the space of a moment. Once again the *Lotus Sūtra* reveals that its revolutionary doctrines operate in a realm transcending all petty distinctions of sex or species, instant or eon.[22] Therefore, the Dragon Girl's enlightenment has an important implication. It reveals that the power of the *Lotus Sūtra* enables all people equally to attain Buddhahood in their present form, without undergoing *kalpas* (aeons) of austere practices. The transformation occurred instantaneously, not in the next life.

Buddhism affirms the unity of all living beings, all equally possess the Buddha-nature, and all have the potential to become Buddha, that is, to become fully and perfectly enlightened. Among the sentient, there are no second-class citizens. According to Buddhist teachings, human beings do not have a privileged, special place above and beyond that of the rest of life. The world is not a creation specifically for the benefit and pleasure of human beings.

According to the Mahāyāna view, Buddha-nature is the true, immutable, and eternal nature of all beings. Since all beings possess

[22] Sachiko Kaneko Morrell, Robert E. Morrell, *Zen Sanctuary of Purple Robes: Japan's Tokeiji Convent Since 1285*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 2006: 9.

Buddha-nature, it is possible for them to attain enlightenment and become a Buddha, regardless of what level of existence they occupy. The Mahāyāna sees the attainment of Buddhahood as the highest goal; it can be attained through the inherent Buddha-nature of every being through appropriate spiritual practice.

Here, there are some stories about animals that cultivate to drive home the point that all beings have the Buddha-nature.[23]

In 1980, Fujian, a shepherd boy said to an ox, "Tomorrow you will be sold to a butcher". The ox immediately shed tears and knelt on its front legs. The shepherd boy told his parents and the local government officials to come and watch, and then the ox knelt and begged for mercy. Everyone pitied him, collected some money to buy him and send him to a monastery to be liberated. After the ox moved to the monastery, he enjoyed listening to lectures on the sutras and bowing to the Buddhas. Whenever he saw laypeople come to the monastery, he would bow in gratitude to them. At the end of his life, he knew in advance the time of his death. He slowly walked to the meadow and lay down. After half a day, he went off to rebirth. It was the 13th day of the 10th Lunar month, 1993. He was buried at the location where he passed on.

And another story[24] follows as:

In 1987, a green-feathered, red beaked parrot from Le Shan, Sichuan Province, was brought to Baotou City, Inner Mongolia. Because he was a dumb parrot that couldn't speak, and he would peck at people who tried to

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[23] Sino-American Buddhist Association, 'Ecological Aspects of Pure Land Practice'. In Magazine. *Vajara Bodhi Sea: A Monthly Journal of Orthodox Buddhism*. Vol. 37. Series 89. No: 441. February, 2007: 47 – 48.

[24] *Ibid.* 48.

train him, he was an unpopular parrot. Eventually he was given to an Elder Layman Wang to be raised. Elder Layman Wang's entire family was devoted to Buddhism and loved all kinds of animals and small creatures. They raised many abandoned cats, dogs, goats, doves in their home. After the parrot joined their family, he heard tapes of Amitābha Buddha's name and Guanyin Bodhisattva's name being recited all day long, and his temperament became gentler. Several months later, the parrot that couldn't learn anything before, began to recite the Buddha's name! He would say, "NamoAmitābha Buddha! Amitabha! Buddha, Buddha, Buddha! Namo Guanshiyin Bodhisattva! Guanyin Buddha!" etc. His voice was clear and pleasant. Often he would add, "Hurry and recite Buddha! Brother, recite Buddha!" (Brother is his nickname), "Hey, how about reciting Buddha?"

Every day when his owner did the morning and evening recitation, the parrot would follow along. Whenever someone recited a sutra or the Buddha's name in the Wangs' Buddha Hall, he would join in. Even when his owner was reciting silently in his mind, the parrot would know it and recite for as long as his owner did. The strangest thing was that aside from reciting the Buddha's name, he still couldn't be taught to say anything else. The Wang family welcomed many Buddhists to their home to practice together, and every day there was a lot of chatter in the house. However, the parrot never learned common phrases such as "How are you? Please have a seat," which people tried to teach him. He'd only say, "Let's recite the Buddha's name? Namo Amitābha!"

One day in May 1998, the parrot was frightened by something, and stopped eating after that. He continuously had diarrhea until the next day. As the end of his life approached, he recited the Buddha's name with his owner,

and one could faintly hear the syllables "Namo Amitofo" in his throat. After he went to rebirth, his body remained soft and his feathers glossy, as if he were still alive. Elder Layman Wang and his whole family recited for him for 12 hours. They invited an elder Dharma Master from Wutai Mountain to preside at the cremation ceremony, which over a hundred laypeople heard about and flocked to attend. It was a magnificent ceremony. After the cremation, they found the parrot's tongue intact and more than 20 pearly white *śarīra* clusters with tiny red flecks, plus several dozen *śarīra* seeds."

IV.3. Introduction to *Jātaka*.

IV.3.1. The meaning of *Jātaka*

Meaning of the Word: The generally accepted derivation of *Jātaka* is from *jāta*, in the sense of 'born', 'engendered', 'birth' + ka. Thus *Jātakaṃ* in the Jātaka Collection would mean 'birth', 'nativity' or 'life' and in the Buddhist sense, a story of one of the former births of the Buddha.[25] *Jātaka* means 'birth-let', 'birth-er', or collectively 'birthanea'.[26] In translating *Jātaka* by "birth-story", the original meaning must have been simply "tale, story".[27]

Jātaka is a Pāli and Sanskrit word that means 'birth.' It is a part of Buddhist canonical literature and as such is popularly believed to be pearls of wisdom from the mouth of the Buddha himself. Stories, ballads, anecdotes, and episodes that talk about the previous lives of the Buddha, in both human and animal form, are called *Jātakas*. *Jātaka* is the technical

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25 A.S. Kulasuriya, 'Jātaka'. In. *Encyclopedia of Buddhism Vol. VI*, ed. W. G. Weeraratne, Sri Lanka: The State Printing Coroporation, 1996: 3.

26 C.A.F. Rhys Davids, *Buddhist Birth-Stories (Jātaka Tales*), Delhi: BKP, 2005: vi.

27 J. S. Speyer, *The Jātakamālāor Garland of Birth-Stories of Āryasūra*, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1990: xxii.

name in Buddhist literature. They are tales of the former births of the Lord Buddha, when he has a Bodhisattva, when he has still on the road to perfection, to Buddhahood.[28] Such story is sometimes called a Bodhisattva story that is "a story in which the Bodhisattva plays a part in one of his former existences, whether as the hero of the story or as a secondary character or as a spectator only."[29]Asaṅga, the greatest exponent of the school, says that a story related to the deeds of a Bodhisattva with the practice. He further clarified that the Buddha reveals, by the knowledge of his former births, his experiences in past existences as Boddhisattvas. These revelations are obviously known as the Jātaka.[30]

The term is also used for the name of a collection of stories included in the Pāli Buddhist Canon. In the Pāli version these stories assume diverse forms. This is the most ancient and the most complete collection of folklore now extant in any literature in the world. The *Jātaka* stories which tell of past lives of the Buddha in folktale fashion, frequently involve animals as peripheral or main characters, spending innumerous *pāramitās*.

Moreover, *Jātaka* is the tenth book of *Khuddaka Nikāya*. It consists of 547 stories divided into 22 *Nipātas* according to the number of verse concerning each story. This is a collection of upwards of 547 folk-lore tales which forms part of the Buddhist canonical scriptures. The tales are in prose, each explaining a much more ancient poem of two or more lines. The allusions in the verses cannot be understood without the explanation give in

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[28] Marie Musaeus-Higgins, *Jātakamālā or a Garland of birth-Stories*, Delhi: Sri Satguru Publications, 1988: xi.

[29] A.S. Kulasuriya, *Op. Cit.* 2.

[30] Satkari Mukhopadhyaya, 'Jātaka'. In *The Encyclopedia of Indian Literature. Vol.2*, ed. AmareshDatta, Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 2005:1812.

the prose.[31] Therefore, in the *Khuddaka Nikāya*, there is the famous *Jātaka* Tales, usually described as histories of the previous lives of the Buddha.[32] In these birth-stories are embedded moral principles and practices which the Bodhisattva had observed for self-development and perfection to attain Buddhahood.[33] Later on, this collection of myth and legend has been the inspiration of some of the greatest Buddhist art, from the caves of Ajanta to frescoes of the present day.[34]

The *Jātaka* is a huge collection of fables framed as previous incarnations of the Buddha, many of which either have parallels or derivatives in western folklore and literature. Although the *Jātaka* is not considered part of the canonical Buddhist scripture, it is very popular. Each tale usually has a concise moral, and the entire collection is a browsers' delight. In the Buddhist sense of a story of a former birth of Gotama the Buddha, the word *Jātaka* occurs for the first time in Buddhist Sanskrit literature, in the text *Buddhacarita*.[35]

From the foregoing discussion distinct, the meanings of the word *Jātaka* may be summed up as follows:

1. A birth story or "life" of a previous birth of the Buddha, as found in the earlier books of the canon. As an extension of this, it may mean a birth story of the Bodhisattva in one or other of his numerous existences in his career on the way to enlightenment (i.e.

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31 C.A.F. Rhys Davids, *Op.Cit.* v.
32 Arthur L. Basham, "The Evolution of the Concept of the Bodhisattva". In *The Bodhisattva Doctrine in Buddhism*, ed. Leslie S. Kawamura, Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1981: 22.
33 U Ko Lay, *Guide to Tipiṭaka,* Rangoon, Burma Tipitaka Association, 1985: 142.
34 Christmas Humphreys, *Buddhism: An introduction and guide*, London: Penguin Books Ltd, 1990: 236.
35 A.S. Kulasuriya, *Op. Cit.*3. See, Satkari Mukhopadhyaya, *Op. Cit.* 1812.

Buddhahood), in the plural it could refer to the collection of such tales, usually 547 in number in the Pāli text.

2. The name of one of the nine categories (nine and sometimes twelve in the later Sanskrit literature) or varieties of literary composition. In the Pāli, this refers to a collection of verses - the *Jātaka* Pāli.
3. The name of a narrative work in the form of a voluminous prose commentary the *Jātakaṭṭhakathā,* also known as *Jātakaṭṭhavaṇṇanā,* in which the verses are embedded.

IV.3.2. Historical background of the *Jātaka*

According to E.B. Cowell, since the later Vedic period, the doctrine of Metempsychosis has played an important part in the history of the national character and religious ideas that we need not be surprised to find that Buddhist literature from the earliest times has always included the ages of the past as an authentic background to founder's historical life as Gautama. *Jātaka* legends occur even in Canonical *Piṭakas*; thus the *Sukha-vihāriJātaka* and the *Tittira Jātaka*, which are found in the *CullaVagga* (volume 6); and there are several other examples.[36]

1. The author of *Jātaka*

The Buddhists believe that the *Jātaka* verses were uttered by the Buddha himself and hence these were placed in historical context. Originally, the *Jātakas* represent a popular collection of tales and fables, by adopting these legends and giving them Buddhist guise Early

[36] J.v. 232.

Buddhism acquired a simple and effective means of popularizing the faith.[37]

There is no reason to doubt that the Buddha himself made use of popular tales in preaching to the people. We found it in the *Mahāsudassana Sutta* of the *Dīgha-Nikāya*[38] and later on in the book of T.W. Rhys Davids. They mentioned about dialogues of the Lord Buddha preaching the *Mahāsudassana Jātaka*. Sutta no. 95 is one of many such instances to be recorded in the Pāli Canon. It is certain that monks and preachers also did so. This was, indeed, a widespread practice throughout the length and breadth of India. The preachers of all religious sects there always took advantage of the native passion for storytelling and story-hearing, and made extensive use of stories to preach. They ventured frequently to take fables, fairy tales and amusing anecdotes from the rich store house of popular tales or from secular literature, altering and adapting them wherever and whenever necessary to suit their aims.

The Buddha teaches both by *sūtras* and stanzas and by legends and *Jātaka*s. Again it is mentioned in the same work that the Tathāgata, knowing the differences in faculties of his numerous hearers, preaches in many different ways, 'tells many tales, amusing, agreeable, both instructive and pleasant, tales by means of which all beings not only become pleased with the law in this present life, but also after death reach happy states'.[39]

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37 B. Subrahmanyam, *Jātakas in South Indian Art*, Delhi: BKP, 2005: 19.

38 Maurice Walshe (trans.), 'Mahasudassana Sutta: The Great Splendour A King's Renunciation'. In *The Long Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Dīgha Nikāya*, Boston: Wisdom Publications, 1996: 279 – 290.

39 A.S. Kulasuriya, *Op. Cit.*11.

According to T.W. Rhys David, the edition of the *Jātaka* by Fausböll is an edition of the commentary written probably in the fifth century CE by and an unknown author, who, as Childers thinks, was Buddhaghosa. Whether this commentary was actually written by Buddhaghosa or not, the numerous Jātaka quoted or narrated by Buddhaghosa in his commentaries show a close agreement with the commentary edited by Fausböll.[40]

It has been shown that the word commentary, the prose of the framework, and the prose of the stories are all the work of the same author.[41] E.B. Cowell confessed that he has no confidence in their historical credibility.

However, Burlingame finds, as also does Winternitz, the arguments of Rhys Davids and Fausböll convincing lie adds that the strongest argument of all is, however, that the *Jātaka* commentary and the *Dhammapada* commentary, differ so widely in language and style from the genuine works of Buddhaghosa as to make it in the highest degree improbable that he is the author of either of them. "Buddhaghosa is not the author of the *Jātaka Commentary* or of the *Dhammapada* commentary" he emphatically states. "Their authors are unknown."[42]

Some scholars are of the opinion that these *Jātaka gāthās* are of pre-Buddhist origin and were the work of many authors, chiefly non-Buddhist, though a compiler may have altered and even added new verse here and there, while recasting the whole text.[43]

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40 B.C. Law, *A History of Pali Literature*, Delhi: Abhishek Prakashan, 2007: 220.
41 K.R. Norman, *A History of Indian Literature*, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1983: 78.
42 A.S. Kulasuriya, *Op. Cit.*13.
43 B. Subrahmanyam, *Jātakas in Buddhist Thought and Art*, Vol. II. Delhi: BKP, 2009: 507.

Another text in Buddhist literature that derives heavily from the *Jātakas* is the Sanskrit work *Jātakamālā* (meaning garland of birth stories) by Āryasūra. A famous Sanskrit collection from approximately the fourth century CE, arranges the bulk of its thirty four *Jātakas*,[44] it is a work of high literary standards. Stories similar to *Jātakas* occur in the Vedas. Some of the *Brāhmaṇas* and *Purāṇas* are simply narrative stories. In many cases, the context, the style or the core theme of the story is altered. In some cases the same story is told in different forms by different authors.

It is unlikely Aesop and other early storytellers had copies of the *Jātakas* handy. And it's unlikely that the monks and scholars who compiled the Pāli Canon more than 2,000 years ago ever heard of Aesop. Perhaps the stories were spread by ancient travelers. Perhaps they were built from fragments of the first human stories, told by our paleolithic ancestors.[45]*Jātaka* and similar other stories travelled far and wide by word of mouth along caravan routes. Many *Jātaka* stories have appeared in many other languages and media. Retellings of the stories may contain significant amendments to suit different host cultures.

India has always had a rich tradition of oral storytelling and preachers from various religious sects have made extensive use of stories in their sermons. Buddha was no exception. According to folklore, the Lord Buddha often cited examples from his past lives in order to explain the right conduct. Since he told the stories according to the demand of a give situation, he

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44 Reiko Ohunma, 'Jātaka'. In *Encyclopedia of Buddhism Vol. 1*, ed. Robert E. Buswell, Jr, USA: Macmillan Reference, 2004: 400 – 402.

45 Rafe Martin, *The Hungry Tigress: Buddhist Myths, Legends, and Jātaka Tales*, USA: Yello Moon Press, 1999: 20.

never gave a sequence to these stories. It is quite uncertain when they were put together in a systematic form.

The oral storytelling which technique is made use of by various religious preachers to spread their beliefs. According to folklore, Buddha often recited stories from his past lives to teach his disciples the right conduct of life which came to be compiled as the *Jātakas*. Therefore, the *Jātakas* are Buddhist parables and tales of Buddha in his previous lives which included incarnations in the form of a snake, a rabbit, a swan, a fish, a quail, an ape, a woodpecker, a deer and an elephant.[46] The extensive narrative work known as the *Jātakaṭṭhavaṇṇanā* from Fausböll's edition of the work and more often as *Jātakaṭṭhakathā* in other editions is the work of an unknown Sinhalese monk.[47] It is a commentary or compilation of the fifth century CE.

E.J. Thomas thought that the Sinhalese text itself, upon which it was based, "was probably a translation of an older Pāli work, and as several of the tales have been preserved in other parts of the Canon in a more ancient style."[48]*Jātaka* tales are not considered *Buddhavacana*, i.e., generally, Theravāda Buddhists do not accord them the authority of being the actual word of the Buddha, and Sri Lanka orthodoxy maintains that they are not canonical writings. However, in Burma and elsewhere they are included as part of the Pāli canon, and these tales have been among the more popular and influential segments of Buddhist literature, irrespective of their heterodoxy.

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46 Christopher Chapple, *Op. Cit.* 22.

47 Sadhanchandra Sarkar, *A Study on the Jātakas and the Avadānas, Critical and Comparative,* Volume 1.Saraswat Library, 1981: 21.

48 A.S. Kulasuriya, *Op. Cit.* 12.

2. The Existence of *Jātaka* Tales

In any case it is conclusive as to the existence of a collection of *Jātaka* at a very early date. The text of the *Jātaka* book, as now received among the Southern Buddhists, consists, as will be seen from the translation, not only of the stories, but of an elaborate commentary, containing a detailed explanation of the verse or verses which occur in each of the stories. According to one tradition, the *Jātaka* stories composed in Pāli in India were taken to Ceylon by Mahindra about 250 BCE and the commentary translated there into Sinhalese and again translated into *Pāli* in fifth century CE by Buddhaghosa.[49] The accuracy of this tradition has been discussed by T.W. Rhys Davids in the introduction to the first volume of his *Buddhist Birth Stories*.

But, A.K. Warder said that the *Jātakas* are the precursors to the various legendary biographies of the Buddha, which were composed at later dates.[50] Although many *Jātakas* were written from an early period, which describe previous lives of the Buddha, very little biographical material about Gautama's own life has been recorded.

Whatever else this may prove with regard to the way in which the ancient Canon was preserved, it shows at all events that *Jātakas* existed before the Vesāli Council as an integral portion of the sacred Canon, and we learn at the same time that it was possible even then to compose new chapters of that canon, and probably also to add new *Jātaka* stories.[51]

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[49] B. Subrahmanyam, *Op. Cit.* 20.
[50] A. K. Warder, *Indian Buddhism*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2004: 332.
[51] J.S. Speryer, *Op. Cit.* xiii.

Another tradition holds that in Ceylon the original *Jātaka* book comprised of the *Gāthās* and a commentary that contained the stories written in early Sinhalese was found. This was later translated into Pāli about 430 CE by Buddhaghosa and after that the Sinhalese original book was lost. But there might have existed as a book containing *Jātaka* tales in India too at least by the third and second centuries BCE. Some of the stories are of pre-Buddhist origin ranging down to the fifth Century CE.[52] The *gāthās* are undoubtedly old, and they necessarily imply the previous existence of the stories, though not perhaps in the exact words in which we now possess them.[53]

Several scholars found the *Jātaka* panels in sculpture in many places such as Bharhut and Sanchi. At Bharhut has opened a line of inquiry and continued by Foucher and Barua. Foucher described the *Jātaka* stories depicted in *Toraṇa (4 gates)* reliefs at Sanchi. Barua gave an accurate identification of the *Jātaka* at Bharhut with the Jātaka text. Winternitz, who observed the depiction of *Jātakas* on the *stupas* at Bharhut and Sanchi, commented that the sculptors have followed the prose version and so they are of pre-Buddhist origin.[54] The *Jātaka*Tales form part of the *Sutta Piṭaka* of the Pāli canon, whereas the *Vinaya Piṭaka* was particularly concerned with monastic discipline. The *Sutta Piṭaka* focuses not only on the teachings of the Buddha but also on the lives of the Buddha and his disciples. There is also a long introduction to the *Jātaka* commentaries known as the *Nidānakathā* that is primarily a biography of the Buddha. The *Jātaka* tradition appears to take on something like its present form in Sri Lanka sometime between the beginning of the Common Era and the fifth century CE.[55]

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52 B. Subrahmanyam, *Op. Cit.* 20.

53 J. Vol. I: xxiv.

54 A.P. Bell, *Didactic Narration: Jātaka Iconography in Dunhuang with a Catalogue of Jātaka Representations in China*, Munster: Kunstgeschichte, 2000:36.

55 Laurie Cozad, *Sacred Snakes: Orthodox Images of Indian Snake Worship*, USA: The Davies Group Publishers, 2004: 82.

What we possess is the Pāli text of the *Jātaka* as it has been preserved in Ceylon. It is in this commentary alone that the text of the *Jātakas* has come down to us. This text has been edited by Fausböll. He has distinguished in his edition between three component elements, the tale, the frame, and the verbal interpretation. This text, of which the beginning was translated in 1880 by T.W Rhys Davids, is now being translated by R. Chalmers, W.R.D. Rouse et al, and the first volume of their translation has appeared in 1895 under the able editorship of E.B. Cowell.[56]

In the same century, Kern published *Jātakamālā* in the year 1891. Later J.S. Speryer in the year 1895 translated Āryasūra's*Jātakamālā* (garland of birth stories) into English. He says that the Āryasūra's *Jātakamālā* has higher pretension and is in fact a kind of *kāvya* style, a work of art and it was used by the Northern Buddhists, whereas the Pāli *Jātaka* is in simple prose style, followed by the Buddhists of south India. Similarly, three decades later, the Royal Asiatic Society published the translation of another great work namely *Avadānakalpalatā* in the year 1920.[57]

The Western scholars began to draw the attention to the form of *Jātakas* that was raised quite early in the last decades of the nineteen century. They first came into existence.[58] However, the *Jātaka* which belong to different periods ranging in date from the early sixth century BCE (pre-Buddhist period) down to the fifth century CE give a comprehensive picture of the contemporary Indian society besides providing us a harmonious and a homogeneous profile of the pre-Buddhist India.[59] The *Sutta* and *Vinaya*

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[56] J.S. Speryer, *Op. Cit.* xiv.
[57] B. Subrahmanyam, *Jatakas in South Indian Art*, Delhi: BKP, 2005: preface.
[58] A.S. Kulasuriya, *Op. Cit.*8.
[59] B. Subrahmanyam, *Jātakas in Buddhist Thought and Art*, Vol. II. Delhi: BKP, 2009: 507.

Piṭakas are generally accepted as at least older than the Council of Vesāli and thus *Jātaka* legends must have been always recognised in Buddhist literature.[60]

3. The origin of *Jātaka*

The *Jātaka* book was originally in verse alone, to which the recite, in the oral tradition of the time, added explanation. It is thought by Buddhist to be a compilation of the highest significance for social and literary history.[61] Although many *Jātakas* can be regarded as being non-Buddhist, or even pre-Buddhist, there are some which are certainly Buddhist. These show clearly that the Buddhists added material of their own to the *Jātaka* collection.[62] On the whole, the best description of the *Jātakas* is found in *Funk and Wagnalls Standard Dictionary of Folklore, Mythology and Legend*,[63] which defines them as:

"a collection of *gāthās* arranged in 22 sections, according to the number of stanzas forming a *Jātaka*, the *Jātakas* of each section progressively containing an additional *gāthā*. Thus, those in the first section contain one stanza, those in the fifth, five, etc. These *gāthās* are embedded in a prose commentary, which consists of a story of the present explaining why Buddha is telling the tale of the past, followed by the *Jātaka* (the *gāthās*) or story of the past, a commentary of the *gāthās*, and an integration of the two parts. They include fables, Marchen, moral tales, maxims and legends. More than a half of the *Jātaka* stories are not of Buddhist origin."

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60 E.B. Cowell, The Jātaka, Vol. I – II, 2005: xxi-xxii.
61 Lucien Stryk. *World of the Buddha: A Reader*. Doubleday, 1969: 2.
62 K.R. Norman, *Op. Cit.* 81.
63 Maria Leach and Jerome Fried, *Funk and Wagnalls Standard Dictionary of Folklore, Mythology and Legend*, Harper and Row, 1984: 40.

Therefore such stories are not only pre-Buddhist in origin but are very old. Thus the *Jātaka* system is based on handing down tales or some legends in prose, with the conversation only being in verse, which itself are pre-Buddhist. Such tales preserve the original form of the Indian folklore."[64]

The commentary to these gives for each *Jātaka*, or birth stories, an account of the event in Gotama's life which led to his first telling that particular story. Both text and commentary were then handed down, in the Pāli language in which they were composed, to the time of the Council of Patna (held in or about the year 250 BCE); and they were carried in following year to Ceylon by the great missionary Mahinda, the son of Asoka.[65] The commentary was written down in Singhalese, the Āryan dialect spoken in Ceylon, and was retranslated into its present from in the Pāli language in the fifth century of our era. But the text of the *Jātaka* stories themselves has been throughout preserved in its original Pāli form.[66]

It is a classification according to their form and contents. It seems that all these diverse types of Buddhist literature were already in existence when the canon was compiled in its present form. The seventh *aṅga* is the *Jātaka* (stories of the Former Births of Buddha).[67]

The stories found in the *Jātaka* have been found in numerous other languages and media many of them being translations from the Pāli versions, but others are instead derived from vernacular traditions prior to the Pāli compositions. Sanskrit and Tibetan *Jātaka* stories tend to maintain the

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64 B. Subrahmanyam, *Jātakas in Buddhist Thought and Art*, Vol. I. Delhi: BKP, 2009: 26.
65 H. Parker, *Ancient Ceylon*, New Delhi: Asian Educational Services, 1999: 27 – 28.
66 E.A. Reed, *Primitive Buddhism, Its Origin and Teachings*, Chicago: Scott, Foresman and Co, 1896: 45 – 46.
67 B. Subrahmanyam, *Jātakas in Buddhist Thought and Art*, Vol. I. Delhi: BKP, 2009: 27.

Buddhist morality of their Pāli equivalents, but re-tellings of the stories in Persian and other languages sometimes contain significant amendments to suit their respective cultures.[68]

In the sixth century, some of the stories were translated to Persian and this translation was later retranslated to Greek, Latin and Hebrew.[69]

According to an Italian scholar, the origin of several of stories of al-Sindbad and Arabian Nights could be traced from the Jātaka tales.[70]Although in many instances it is possible that these stories migrated from India to the West, it is not impossible that in others Western movies were brought to India.[71]Generally, the *Jātaka* stories have disseminated from India to become part of the world's folk-literature, in numerous variations, with the Pāli recensions representing one cultural and religious notion of what the stories "ought" to be.

Several *Jātaka* stories can be shown to be old because they have counter-parts in Jain canonical texts, and sometimes the similarity between them is so close that one version can be used to restore the text of the other.[72] The Buddhist or Jain orientation is very clearly marked in these stories. As the term *Jātaka* implies, these tales cut across generations in their continuity of themes and even characters. The rebirth motif is also dominant in the *Jātaka* tales and the moral tone is never left obscure.[73] They read like

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68 V. S. Bhaskar. *Faith and Philosophy of Buddhism*. Delhi: Kalpaz Publications, 2009: 104 – 105.

69 A. S, Geden, 'Josaphat, Barlaam and'. In *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, Part 14*, eds. James Hastings and A. Selbie, Kessinger Publishing, LLC, 2003: 567 – 569.

70 Shanti Lal Nagar, *Jātakas in Indian Art*, Parimal Publications, 1993: 41.

71 A.S. Kulasuriya, *Op. Cit.* 11.

72 K.R. Norman, *Op. Cit.* 82.

73 K.A. Panicker, *Indian Narratology*, New Delhi: Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, 2003: 97.

parables to teach certain truths, and are never meant for leisurely entertainment.

There are also several Jātaka stories in the *Mahāvastu* which do not have a parallel in the Pāli collection. The *Dīpavaṃsa* tells of the Mahāsaṃghikas making changes in the canon after their separation from the Theravādins and states that they rejected a portion of the *Jātaka*. This presumably means that the contents of the Jātaka collections of the two sects differed, doubtless because they both added to their collections after the schism.[74]

In the seventeenth century, there are notable examples mentioned historical records and other sources of eminent exponents of the *Jātakas*, great teachers and renowned preachers. La Fontaine the great exponent of

The fable literature created his own land mark. It was the fashion in those days that generally literary men and women used to meet in their salons and its origin to the various *Jātakas* and their transformations, imitations, adaptations and other various literary.[75] This tradition has come down to the present day. Thus it is that the temple and monastery have continued to be a powerful base of support for the propagation and popularization of the *Jātakas*.

There are several *Jātakas* scattered throughout the canonical Pāli literature as well as the Sanskrit Buddhist literature and even outside the literature of Buddhism, many of the stories of the *Jātaka* Book occur in the *Pañcatantra*, *Kathāsaritsāgara* and other Indian story books. Some stories

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74 K.R. Norman, *Op. Cit.* 84.

75 Ashfaq Ali, *Bhopal, Past and Present: A Brief History of Bhopal from the Hoary Past upto the Present Time*, Jai Bharat Publication House, 1969: 28. See, The Maha Bodhi Volume 78.

have parallels in the *Mahābhārata*and in the *Rāmāyaṇa*, the *Purāṇas*,[76]and still others in Jaina literature. There are also a large number of *Jātaka* tales in the non-canonical Pāli literature, notably in the *Milindapañha*.[77]Many *Jātakas* occur in the *Mahāvastu* in prose as well as in verse in mixed Sanskrit. Some of them are variants of Pāli *Jātakas* while others are not found in the Pāli collection.

Some *Jātaka* stories can be found in Jain literature, such as the story of Isisinga in *Suyakadanga*, which is the *Nalini Jātaka*. They are found in even the *Mahābhārata*, for example *Ṛsisringaupakhyāna*. The literature of countries such as Persia, China, Arabia, Italy, Greece, Britain and Japan have borrowed ideas and themes from the *Jātaka* and similar other stories.

There is a well-known reference to the *Jātakas* asa book of the *Khuddaka Nikāya* in the *Cullaniddesa*where a collection of 500 *Jātakas*is mentioned. This collection, in the opinion of a reputed scholar, appears to be earlier than the scriptural basis of the Buddhist sculptures at Bharhut and Sanchi and hence earlier than the sculptures themselves. It was certainly later than that of the *suttanta Jātakas* scattered throughout the first four *Nikāyas*.[78]

Despite the large number of stories found in the *Jātaka* collection, it is clear that it by no means includes all the *Jātaka* stories which existed in North India in the early days of Buddhism. There are stories found elsewhere in the Pāli canon. Asvaghosa in this work draws upon the Pāli

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[76] B.C. Law, *A History of Pāli Literature*. Delhi: Abhishek Prakashan, 2007: 214 – 215.
[77] A.S. Kulasuriya, *Op. Cit*. 10.
[78] Nalinaksha Dutt, *Buddhist Sects in India*, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1998: 224.

Jātaka called the *Samgamavacara* which tells the identical story though in a shorter form. The existence of this technique for overcoming desire, the instruction to "fight passion with passion", in such an early *Jātaka* tale, suggests that it was certainly understood by, and perhaps practiced by some of the earliest followers of the tradition.[79] Which are technically *Jātaka* stories because they purport to tell of the Buddha in an earlier birth, and conclude with an identification of the characters, and are nevertheless not found in the collection.

The *Jātaka* legends occur in the *Vinaya Piṭaka*, too. For example, the *Jātaka* (No.10); *Tittira Jātaka* (No.37) are to be found in the *Chulla-Vagga* (vii.1; and vi.6, respectively). Further, the *Cariyapiṭaka*, a book of the *Sutta-Piṭaka*, contains thirty-five *Jātakas* in verse-form. Besides, several *Jātakas* exist in the canonical texts but not included in the *Jātaka* collection. Further, the *Samantapasādikā* makes a reference to the *Jātaka Nikāya*; and the Dīghabhāṇakas, i.e., those who recited the *suttas* or discourses of the *Dīgha Nikāya* included the *Jātaka* in the Abhidhamma Piṭaka. There are also Mahāyāna *Jātaka* stories such as Vyāghrī, Dhammasoṇḍaka and Seta Gandha Hasti which do not appear in Pāli at all.

An analysis of the more than 500 *Jātaka* stories of the Pāli collection as we have it shows that it contains a wide variety of different types of verse composition. Many of them seem to be un-Buddhist in origin. Some of these stories are also found in Aesop's fables and other European literature and the problem of their inter-dependence has been much discussed. Representations

[79] Catherine Benton, *God of Desire: Tales of Kamadeva in Sanskrit Story Literature*, USA: State University of New York Press, 2006: 159.

of some of them are found in the reliefs on the Bharhut stupa, showing that they had already become popular by the second century B.C.

4. The *Jātaka* Commentary

In the post-canonical tradition of the Theravādins the *Jātaka* tradition culminated with the appearance of the *Jātaka Commentary* in Ceylon in the fifth century CE.[80] There is no doubt that a Sinhalese commentary in all likelihood, included verses in the original Pāli and was translated or rather recast and reworked into Pāli, formed the basis of the Pāli compilation.

The *Jātaka Commentary* itself is a collection of 547 stories, each containing an account of the life of Gotama the Buddha during some incarnation in one of his previous existences as a Bodhisattva, an animal hero, a being destined to Enlightenment. That *is* the role he played before he became Buddha, the Enlightened One, The number of such "births" does not correspond to exactly 547 stories, since some of the tales occur more than once in a different setting, or in a variant version, and occasionally several stories are included in one birth.[81]

Much of the material, however, is demonstrably many centuries older. The *Jātaka* forms the tenth book of the *Khuddaka Nikāya* of the *Sutta Piṭaka*. In the Pāli Canon it also forms one of the nine "*aṅgas*" or divisions of the Buddha's teachings, grouped according to the subject matter Like the *Udāna* ("verses of uplift, fervent utterances") and *Itivuttaka* ("as it was said") of the same canonical collection, the *Jātaka* is the name of an actual

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[80] Frank E. Reynolds, 'The Many Lives of Buddha: A Study of Sacred Biography and Theravada Tradition'. In *The Biographical Process: Studies in the History and Psychology of Religion*, eds. Frank Reynolds and Donald Capps, Hungary: Mouton & Co, 1976: 42.

[81] A.S. Kulasuriya, *Op. Cit.* 13.

work. Although the canonical book of the *Jātaka* contains only the verses, it is certain that from the earliest times, there must have been handed down an oral commentary, giving the stories in prose.[82]

It is not possible to say exactly when the *Jātakas* in their present form came into existence, nor how many of them were among the original number. What can he definitely stated is that they must have come into being and continued to grow over a considerable time before they reached their final form. In the time of the *Cullaniddesa*, there appear to have been 500 *Jātakas*, for reference is made to *pañca-Jātaka-satani*. Five hundred was the number seen by Xuanzang too. One is not certain, however, if the reference made was to a round number or an exact one.

Many scholars subscribe to the *view* that not all the stories contained in the *Jātaka* collection are "Buddhist" in a somewhat restricted view of the term, or even that they emanated from a Buddhist milieu. Some of these birth-stories are patently Buddhistic and depend for their point on some custom or idea peculiar to Buddhism, but many are said to be pieces gathered from folklore, "which have floated about the world for ages as the stray waif of literature and are liable everywhere to the appropriated by any casual claimant. This is an interesting observation. It is however, worth noting that no proprietary rights have been claimed by Buddhists for these stories, apart from the claim that, by and large, they are tales with Buddhist content and flavour and that Buddhist narrators and writers have invested them with a particular structure and form. Such appropriation of stories from a common stock by Buddhist *samanas* in the course of their wanderings is

[82] Naomi Appleton, *Jātaka Stories in Theravāda Buddhism: Narrating the Bodhisatta Path*, England: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2010: 60.

therefore quite possible and is only to be expected, when one considers the historical and cultural context in which the stories originated. Equally important is it to recognize the fact that *Jātaka* tales have been, over the centuries, appropriated by storytellers belonging to far-flung regions to which they had migrated. They have been used by different authors to achieve their special objectives.

5. The number of *Jātakas*

The tenth book of the *Khuddaka Nikāya* of the Pāli *Tipiṭaka* is called *Jātaka* which is supposed to contain, by definition, tales of the Buddha's former births. This canonical book of *Jātaka* comprises 6653 verses, constituting 547 *Jātakas*.[83] As of today, there are a total of 547 extant *Jātakas* arranged roughly by increasing number of verses. But there are indications that the actual number of *Jātakas* could be 550. According to Oskar von Hinuber, only the last 50 were clear to understand without any explanation. Folklorists are interested in these explanations in the form of short stories.[84]

The *Jātakas* have been grouped under twenty-two *nipātas*, depending on the number of verses in each Jātaka, e.g. the *Jātakas* in the *Ekanipāta* contains one verse each, those in the *Bukanipāta* two verses each and so on. As the *nipātas* proceed, the *Jātakas* contained therein grow more and more lengthy. But this principle of naming the *nipātas*, depending on the number of verses has not been adhered to uniformly. In the present editions of the *Jātaka* as well as in the *Jātakaṭṭhakathā*, there are more exceptions than consistency. As for instance, the tenth *nipāta* is called the *Dasakanipāta*, i.e.

[83] Satkari Mukhopadhyaya. *Op. Cit.* 1809.
[84] Robert Chalmers, *The Jātaka: Volumes 1 & 2*. Forgotten Books, 2007: vii.

each of the *Jātakas* is supposed to contain ten verses only; but in fact, quite a few of them contain many more.

IV.3.3. Framework of the *Jātakas*

In Pāli version, each *Jātaka* is preceded by a long introduction, the *Nidāna-kathā* which provides the Buddha's previous history both before his last birth and also during his last existence until he attain the state of Buddha. Each story opens with a preface called the *paccuppanavatthu* or story of the present relates on what occasion Buddha himself told the monks, the *Jātaka* in question. Next is the *Atītavatthu* i.e., the story of the past, in which a story of one of the former births of the Buddha is related. Every story is also illustrated by one or more *gāthās* narrated by the Buddha while he was still a Bodhisattva. The language of the *gāthās* is more archaic than that of the stories.[85]

A typical *Jātaka* will have four distinct parts. First, Buddha observes a real-life problem. Second, Buddha tells a story about one of his previous existences. Third, the meaning of the *Jātaka* is explained and Buddha shows how the *Jātaka* sheds insight on the presenting problem. Fourth, a concluding moral is stated. In the study of parables, *Jātaka* are fascinating precisely because the original contexts of the stories have been preserved.[86]According to C.B. Varma, the treatment of the *Jātaka* Stories may be analysed in five stages:[87]

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[85] B. Subrahmanyam, *Jātakas in South Indian Art*, *Op. Cit.* 20.

[86] Steven J.Voris, *Preaching parables: a metaphorical interfaith approach*, USA: Paulist Press, 2008: 88.

[87] C.B. Varma, *The Illustrated Jātaka & Other Stories of the Buddha:* Introduction, New Delhi: Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts. Access to 2.7.2008. http:ignca.nic.in/Jātakint.htm.

1. Contextuality of the story (*Pacchuppanna-vatthu*) or the background and the occasion which necessitated the Buddha to narrate the story;
2. Narrative of the past (*Atīta-vatthu*), which depicts the narrative of the previous life of the Bodhisatta;
3. Recitation of the original *Jātaka* verse (*Gāthā*) to accentuate and impart the moral of the story;
4. Explanation of the verse (*Veyyakaraṇa*);
5. Identification of the characters of the stories at the time of the narrator (i.e., the Buddha).

Each birth-story proper, i.e. 'the story of the past' is always preceded by a 'story of the present' which usually takes the form of a quasi-introduction to the former. This linking of 'the story of the past' and 'the story of the present' is an essential part of the plan of the original work.[88]

In terms of narrative structure, many *Jātakas* possess or imply a threefold structure consisting of a 'story of the present', explain on what occasion the Buddha told this tale; a 'story of the past', which is the past life story itself, and the final 'identifications', in which the perspective shifts back to the present, and the Buddha identifies characters in the 'story of the past' as the previous births of those in the 'story of the present' and other well-known Buddhist figures of his time. These identifications are often predictable, for the relationships the Buddha has with other people during his last life often mirror the relationships he had with them during his numerous previous lives.[89]

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[88] A.S. Kulasuriya. *Op. Cit.* 14.

[89] Reiko Ohnuma, *Bodily Self-Sacrifice in Indian Buddhist Literature*, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2009: 37.

In respect of literary form, Winternitz recognizes five classes, which he proposes mainly for "the stories of the past" along with the canonical *gāthā*. He distinguishes the following:[90]

1. tales in prose in which are included just one or two or few verses containing the moral or gist of the tale
2. ballads (a) dialogues(b) mixture of narrative and dialogue
3. long tales partly in prose partly in verse
4. strings of moral maxims on some one topic
5. regular epics or epic fragments.

In respect of content the tales are divided into the following groups:

1. fables marchen (fairy tales, animal stories)
2. anecdotes and comic tales.
3. tales of adventure and romance.
4. moral tales
5. moral maxims
6. legends

All the *Jātakas* are put into 22 *nipatas (book)*. The first *nipāta* contains nearly 150 stories. Each story has one *gāthā* or a *śloka*. In the second *nipata*, there are two *gāthās*. From third to 13th *nipātas*, there are 500 stories, each story having three or four *gāthās*. In the 9th *nipāta*, there are 150 Jātakas. In 14th *nipāta*, stories are found in poetry. Almost all the remaining *nipātas* contain more *gāthās* and each *gāthā* contains 10 to 14 stories. In 21st*nipāta*, there are nearly 90-100 *gāthās*. In 22nd *nipāta* there are 10 stories.

[90] A.S. Kulasuriya. *Op. Cit.*15.

Each *Jātaka* contains hundreds of *gāthās*. The last *Jātaka* i.e., *Vessantara* contains 500 *gāthās*.[91]

Each story opens with a preface called the *paccuppaññavatthu* or 'story of the present', which relates the particular circumstances in the Buddha's life which led him to tell the birth-story and thus reveal some event in the long series of his previous existences as a bodhisattva or a being destined to attain Buddha-ship. At the end, there is always given a short summary, where the Buddha identifies the different actors in the story in their present births at the time of his discourse, it being an essential condition of the book that the Buddha possesses the same power as that which Pythagoras claimed but with a far more extensive range, since he could remember all the past events in every being's previous existences as well as in his own.[92]

Among 547 or 550 *Jātaka* stories, Buddha was born as Bodhisattva 83 times as Bhikshu, 58 times as a king, 43 time as tree god, 26 times as a preacher, 24 times as a minister, 24 times as a priest, 24 times as heir apparent, 23 times as a gentleman, 22 times as a scholar, 20 times as Indra, 18 times as a monkey, 13 times as a merchant, 12 times as a rich man, 12 times as a hen, 10 times as a deer, 10 times as a lion, 8 times as a goose, 6 times as a an elephant, 5 times as a Garudā, 4 times as a horse, 4 times as a tree, 3 times as a potter, 3 times as an untouchable, 2 times as a fish, 2 times as an elephant rider, 2 times as a rat, 1 times as a carpenter, ironsmith, frog, hare etc. The Buddha did one or more good deeds of benevolence, renunciation, valour, wisdom, friendship and charity and as a result of these good deeds done in

[91] B. Subrahmanyam, *Jātakas in South Indian Art*, Delhi: BKP, 2005: 21.
[92] E. B. Cowell, *The Jātaka* Vol. I-II, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2005: xxiii.

innumerable lives in the past, he obtained Enlightenment and freedom from the cycle of *Saṃsāra*.[93]

Every story is also illustrated by one or more *gāthās* which are uttered by the Buddha while still a Bodhisattva and so playing his part in the narrative; but sometimes the verses are put into his mouth as the Buddha, when they are called *abhisambuddha-gāthā*."[94]

IV.3.4. The value and influence of *Jātaka*

The Seventh Dalai Lama wrote, "A poem to transform the mind written with references to a few drops from the ocean of tales on how Buddha practiced the six perfection in his previous lives."[95]

Here he indicates that his work refers to the Jātaka tales, the stories of the previous lives of the Buddha, which illustrate how he cultivated the six perfections while a bodhisattva in training.

And the twelfth century Kadampa masters had considered the Rosary of *Jātaka* Stories by the Indian master Āryasūra to be one of the six essential texts to be studies by all Kadampa monks, and in 1410 Lama Tsongkhapa instituted the tradition of having a senior monk read from this text to the crowd at the full moon ceremony of the Monlam Chenmo Festival.

The primary aim of the *Jātakas* is to instruct, to teach the people the value of a good life. They serve as instruments of preaching the doctrine. In addition to this didactic purpose, there is no doubt that these stories are meant

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93 B. Subrahmanyam, *Op. Cit.* 21.
94 E. B. Cowell, *Op. Cit.* xxiii.
95 Bskal-bzan-rgya-mtsho (Dalai Lama VII), *Meditations to Transform the Mind*, Trans, ed. Glenn H. Mullin, Snow Lion Publications, 1999: 68.

to amuse and entertain. Each *Jātaka* is introduced by a simple prose sentence of ethical and religious purport.[96] Every *Jātaka* tale conveys a message or moral to the mankind at large, in multifarious ways. The message conveyed by Buddha in these tales has universal application. Buddha while narrating these *Jātaka* stories brought out the realities and values of human life.[97]

All ancient civilizations had taken upon them the responsibility of maintaining moral values in society. Though they had different value systems, yet a common factory in those times was propagating moral teachings through storytelling.

In Buddhist Communities too, *Jātaka* tales were a major source for inculcating in people a deep sense of moral values. Lack of literacy in those days necessitated the appointment of *Jātaka* storytellers known as *Jātakabhāṇakas*. The *Jātakabhāṇakas* would travel far and wide to propagate the message of kindness, compassion, generosity, non-violence, self-sacrifice, charity, refrain from greed etc. through these stories. The Buddha himself used *Jātakas* stories to explain concepts like karma and rebirth and to emphasize the importance of certain moral values.[98]

The function of the stories is to teach moral lessons by allegory, but they are also important as illustrating the position that animals occupy side by side with men in the Buddhist world-view. By and large the *Jātakas* do not exalt animals unduly, for every tale of animal gratitude or affection can be balanced by another showing less worthy traits which animals and men have in common. There is at least one, however, which satirizes a peculiarly

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96 J.S. Speyer, *The Jātakamālā*, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1990: xxii.
97 B. Subrahmanyam, *Op. Cit.* 29.
98 P.K. Varma and Sandhya Mulchandani. *Love and Lust: An Anthology of Erotic Literature from Ancient and Medieval India*. Harper Collins Publishers, 2004: 43.

human characteristic, hypocrisy. If the story were not intended to be satirical it would be an injustice to wolves. Whatever other vices it may have, no animal degrades itself with sham piety, either to impress its fellows or to make spiritual capital out of an involuntary deprivation.

The stories seek to inculcate good manners, good sense and good behavior, all of which usually reap an appropriate reward owing to the working of karma by which the result of a volitional act, of body, speech or thought, is suited to the nature of that act. However, *Jātaka* tales are still listened to today: on special occasions a hsayadaw or other member of the saṃgha may tell the congregation a tale suitably chosen and tailored to the circumstances, and some parents, grandparents and teachers also tell well-loved tales, in simplified form, to youngster.[99]

The stories were told around some incident then happening, and it is in their relationship with that incident that we find their true lesson. At the close of the story the Buddha always identified the birth so that lines of action and character stand out clearly from the past to the present, sometimes the same, sometimes changed for the better.

The stories as preserved to us are for the most part Indian rather than Buddhist. The ethics they inculcate or suggest are milk for babes; very simple in character and referring almost exclusively to matters common to all schools of thought in India, and indeed elsewhere. Kindnesses, purity, honesty, generosity, worldly wisdom, perseverance, are the usual virtues praised; the higher ethics of the Path are scarcely mentioned.[100]

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[99] Gerry Abbott & Khin Thant Han, *The Folk-tales of Burma: An Introduction*, Netherland: Brill, 2000: 316.

[100] T. W. R. D, 'Jath-Jats'. In *Encyclopaedia Britannica: A Dictionary of Arts, Sciences, Literature and General Information*. Volume 15, eds. Hugh Chisholm. The Encyclopaedia Britannica Company, 1911: 280.

Jātaka Stories are the most ancient moral folklores that are a part of Buddhist Literature and are thought to be in existence since around the third century BCE. These are fables which end up with "Morals" and were used by Buddhist Kings to spread morality among the people through storytelling. Ancient *Jātaka* Stories were then carried by messengers of various cultures to their own and having given them a flavour of their own, the cultural messengers named them accordingly as per the needs of their cultures. An enormous variety of actual, mythical, magical, and hybrid animals are to be found in Tibetan art.[101]

In all the *Jātakas*, the bodhisattva is projected as a hero, a secondary character, a spectator, an animal, a bird etc. These previous Birth Stories were told by the Buddha and narrated by his disciples on various occasions to their followers in support of the Buddhist doctrine, which conveyed a message that the good actions obviously yield a higher and better position in the next birth, while bad actions entail a lower position, as a consequence of which the attainment of Nirvāṇa is postponed or differed.[102]

Consequently, with *Jātaka* stories as the root, it gave birth to fables in other parts of the world. The stories abound in information about life and customs of ancient India, and characters and situations that are found everywhere even today. Both literature and history, the *Jātaka* is a treasure house of Indian heritage.[103] Through the centuries these stories have been much more than fairy tales. They were, and are, taken very seriously for their moral and spiritual teachings. Like all great myths, the stories are as

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[101] Robert Beer, *The Encyclopedia of Tibetan Symbols and Motifs*, Chicago: Serindia Publications, Inc, 2004: 59.

[102] B. Subrahmanyam, *Op. Cit.* 507.

[103] Subodh Kapoor (ed.), 'Pali Literature'. In*The Indian Encyclopeda*. Vol. 1, Cosmo Publications, 2002 : 5407 – 5408.

much about us as they are about the Buddha. The *Jātaka* stories, over millennia, have been seminal to the development of many civilisations, the cultivation of moral conduct and good behaviour, the growth of a rich and varied literature in diverse parts of the world and the inspiration for paintings, sculpture and architecture of enduring aesthetic value. The Buddha himself used *Jātaka* stories to explain concepts like karma and rebirth and to emphasize the importance of moral values.[104]

For developing moral conduct and good behaviour, there are few more instructive foundation than *Jātaka* stories. All *Jātaka* stories hold out advice on how to correct our ways. They played and continued to play in some societies an enormous role in the cultivation of peace and generosity. When Buddhist monks taught children in vihāras, *Jātaka* stories took a prominent place in primary education. Young *sāmaṇeras* (novice monks) were required to read and preach effectively. In India these and similar other stories were a principal instrument in the socialization of children, discouraging them from selfishness and laying foundations for family had community solidarity. *Jātaka* stories speak eloquently of those human values, which contribute, to harmony, pleasure and progress.

The immensely popular *Jātaka* Tales or "Birth-stories" are an important part of Buddhist literature. The *Jātaka* stories have contributed many civilizations, moral conduct and good behaviour, a rich and varied literature, and inspired painting, sculpture and architecture of great value.

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[104] N. K. Singh, *Contemporary Indian Buddhism: Tradition and Transformation*, New Delhi: Global Vision Publishing House, 2008: 103.

There are depths of meaning in the enjoyable Buddhist *Jātaka* Tales. In India these and similar other stories helped in socializing children, discouraging them from selfishness. *Jātaka* stories hold out advice on how to correct our ways. They were thought up to impart values of sound morality, noble ways of living, honesty, kindness to animals, respect for elders, being grateful, ill of associating with bad people, generosity, and inculcate ideas, faith, and insights relating to wider aspects of life.

The *Jātakas* were very popular in Asia, especially in the Buddhist countries, and had a marked influence on the development of the narrative literature of many peoples. In some countries the longer *Jātaka* tales are still performed in dance, theatre, and recitation. Sri Lanka in particular has been nourished by *Jātaka* stories. Even later works of drama are based on *Jātaka* stories.[105]

In all Buddhist countries the *Jātaka* tales were the major source for developing the character of the people. They were used widely in preaching by monks and lay preachers. They usually used these stories in their sermons. Even Mahinda, who introduced Dharma into Sri Lanka, used these stories to illustrate the truth of the teachings.[106] Some were even used by the Buddha in his teachings, and from him his followers learned them and passed them into popular use in society. Even earlier, the same types of stories were present in Vedic literature.[107] Many of the stories probably predate the Lord Buddha. Many of the tales come from the Pāli scripts and some 550 stories at least are known to be in existence. Like the *Pañcatantra*,

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[105] James R. Brandon, *Theatre in Southeast Asia*, USA: the President and Fellows of Harvard College, 1967: 23 – 25

[106] N.A.Wanasundera, *Cultures of the World: Sri Lanka*, New York: Marshall Cavendish, 2002:116.

[107] RuchiSugan, *Tales of Buddha*, Delhi: Veena Publications, 2004: xi.

Aesop's fables, and Grimm's fairytales. The *Jātaka* Tales have defined a moral code through easy-to-interpret verses. Similar tales have also been found in Tibet, in china, the Middle East and through Europe.[108]

According to Felix Adler, there are other fables, notably the so-called *Jātaka* tales, which deserve attention. The *Jātaka* tales contain deep truths, and are calculated to impress lessons of great moral beauty.[109] Quaint humor and gentle earnestness distinguish these legends and they teach many wholesome lessons among them the duty of kindness to animals.[110]

The general function of the *Jātakas*, then, is to illustrate how the bodhisattva, in life after life, cultivated various virtues on the bodhisattva path that ultimately contributed to his attainment of Buddhahood. Accordingly, most *Jātaka* portray the bodhisattva as an exemplary figure, highlighting such features as his wisdom, compassion, and ascetic detachment. Many *Jātakas*, in fact, are explicitly intended to illustrate the bodhisattva's cultivation of one of the six or ten perfections needed for the attainment of Buddhahood.[111]

The *Jātaka* genre was thus used to assimilate an enormous variety of traditional Indian folklore into the Buddhist fold including some tales whose moral lessons were not especially true of the massive Pāli *Jātaka* collection, much of whose contents are likely non-Buddhist in origin, including many traditional animal fables, folktales, and fairy tales.

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[108] T.W. Rhys Davids, *Buddhist Birth-Stories (Jātaka Tales): the Commentarial Introduction*, New Delhi: Asian Educational Services, 1999: xl.
[109] Felix Adler, *The Moral Instruction of Children*, D. Appleton, 1908: 27.
[110] Ellen. C. Babbitt, *More Jātaka Tales*, Varanasi: Pilgrims Publishing, 2003: introduction.
[111] Reiko Ohnuma, *Bodily Self-Sacrifice in Indian Buddhist Literature*, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2009: 36.

This section dealing with the literary significance of the *Jātakas* will be concerned, as its title indicates, primarily with a discussion of the value of the stories as pieces of literature.

It is divided broadly into 4 sub-sections as follows:[112]

1. The intellectual milieu in which the stories originated and flourished; this will include some general remarks on their content and form, followed by a brief description of the arrangement of the stories
2. Individual *Jātakas* in the Pāli Canon;
3. The Longer *Jātakas* and.
4. Assessment of the stories as pieces of literary merit.

Several scholars have studied the *Jātaka* literature from various angles. Richard Fick has studied these *Jātakas* from the social point of view, keeping always in view, the caste and the priest. Roy Chaudhary has studies these stories to draw the political history of ancient India. Rhys Davids and N.S. Subba Rao have studies and drawn the economic conditions that prevailed during the early centuries of Christian era. Beni Prasad in his work, *The State in Ancient India*, has exhaustively dealt with the administrative aspects. B.C. Sen in his work, *Studies in Jātakas*, has drawn political and administrative matters. Ratilal N. Mehta in his work, *Pre-Buddhist India*, studied the *Jātakas* from several aspects such as political, administrative, economic, social and geographical survey of ancient India.[113]

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[112] A.S. Kulasuriya. '*Op. Cit.* 13.

[113] Ratilal N. Mehta, *Pre-Buddhist India: A Political, Administrative, Economic, Social and Geographical Survey of Ancient India Based Mainly on the Jātaka* Stories. Examiner Press, 1939:3. See. B. Subrahmanyam, *Jātakas in South Indian Art*, Delhi: BKP, 2005: preface.

From the foregoing analysis of the literary significance of the *Jātakas*, it would have become clear that the stories achieve a high degree of literary merit. The generality of the tales contained in the large Pāli collection possess poetic features of structure, content, form, arrangement and language which would match away compilation of stories in any language or literature. The orderly structure of the stories may sometimes appear to be somewhat stilted and artificial, but it still is quite characteristic of the Pāli Collection. The structure and form of such tales helps one to understand that particular feature marks it out from other similar collections. The smaller Sanskrit collection, the *Garland of Birth Stories* mentioned above, appeals to the reader for quite other reasons.

Apart from their literary value, this fact alone makes the *Jātaka* collection of great interest; beside which, this is the "most reliable, the most complete, and the most ancient collection of folk-lore now extant in any literature in the world.[114] This helps to establish the close connection between the *Jātaka* Tales and the folk-lore of ancient India. E.B. Cowell stresses this link in his preface to the UNESCO translation of the *Jātaka* Tales: "The *Jātakas* themselves are of course interesting as specimens of Buddhist literature; but their foremost interest to us consists in their relation to folk-lore and the light which they often throw on those popular stories which illustrate so vividly the ideas and superstitions of the early times of civilization. In this respect they possess a special value, as, although much of their matter is peculiar to Buddhism, they contain embedded with it an

[114] A.K. Coomaraswamy, *Buddha and the Gospel of Buddhism*, Kessinger Publishing, LLC, 2003: 289.

unrivalled collection of folk-lore. They are also full of interest as giving a vivid picture of the social life and customs of ancient India."[115]

The literary value of the *Jātaka* was in any case seen as minimal, thanks to the large amount of repetition and omission, as well as the sometimes crude content. In any case they are stories, and therefore 'low culture', thus the only other interest in them was as folklore, albeit as "the most reliable, the most complete, and the most ancient collection of folklore now extant in any literature in the world."[116] Indeed, for T.W. Rhys Davids, the fact that *Jātakas* are ancient folklore is what gives them real historical value, since they provide insight into more 'primitive' cultures, and form 'a priceless record of the childhood of our race'.[117]

It has been remarked earlier that these stories originated, developed and spread in lands and among peoples where a belief in the notion of recurrent lives *(punabbhava)* was prevalent. They show that such a view of life, a belief that all beings had already had previous lives and would have them in the future as well, was an integral part of the psychological equipment of both narrators and hearers. They illustrate poignantly the operation of *karma,* the law of moral action, by demonstrating how the Bodhisatta shaped his destiny through unending efforts on behalf of, and for: his welfare of, all beings. In the animated world of these stories, the relationship between action and its result can be clearly seen, increasing our awareness of how the actions of sentient beings shape their experience. Reflection on the *Jātakas* offers an opportunity to observe the workings of

[115] K.A. Panicker, *Op. Cit.* 99.
[116] T. W. Rhys Davids. *Buddhist India*, Delhi: Motilal, 2008: 206.
[117] T. W. Rhys Davids, *Buddhist Birth Stories*, London, 1880: lxxix.

karma in everyday life and to appreciate more fully the moral choices open to individuals and society in the modern world.

This section is concerned with discussing briefly:[118]

1. The influence of the *Piṭakas* in the life of the people;
2. Their sociological value under which reference will be made to the role of the story collection as an instrument for the propagation of the faith in addition to surviving as a vehicle of Buddhist propaganda. The stories have to be viewed and appreciated as they doubtless were in the days when they were first recounted, against the background of the notions of *kamma* i.e. the view that every action produces a reaction, a resultant effect, and that of *punabbhava (rebirth).* Both in the eyes of the narrators as well as the hearers, the Bodhisatta is an ideal being who, in all his previous existences, has demonstrated through precept and practice, one or more of the great virtues or Perfections *(pārami);*
3. A reference to some popular stories as standard texts for the Bodhisatta ideal;
4. The story collection as the common property of all Buddhist countries. In that sense, the stories are the chief witnesses of popular Buddhism; and
5. The role of the temple in the writing, transmission, preservation and propagation.

This section is devoted mainly to supplementary information from the Buddhist *Jātakas*. Therefore, the *Jātakas* may be taken as influenced by conditions during the Sātavahana period, and their historical detail infiltrated

[118] A.S. Kulasuriya, *Op. Cit.* 19.

by such tradition as was then extant. Social conditions had changed considerably in some cases from the time of the Buddha.[119]

Most of the moral narratives, sayings and pious legends are the common property of Indian didactic poetry, it has been claimed and are only partly of Buddhist origin. It has also been stated that there is nothing specifically Buddhistic in the short anecdotes, humorous tales and jokes that frequently occur in the *Jātakas*. They give also particulars of the life of people of all classes, about some of whom there is scarcely any other information in Indian literature. The stories appeal to all strata of the population. They are understandable not only to the wise but even to the simple-minded. Only the all-too-clever will smile at them indulgently, they have not lost their human appeal and continue to exert a deep influence on the life of peoples. In Thai Land, the *Jātakas* were already popular during the Sukhothai period, and remain an essential feature of Thai literature and art today.[120]

It need hardly be mentioned that this influence is to be felt mostly in Buddhist lands like Sri Lanka, Burma, Siam and Cambodia where crowds of people would listen with rapt attention for hours when bhikkhus, during full-moon nights and on other religious occasions, recite the stories of the Buddha's former lives. It has been reported that even in Tibet, tears in the eyes of sturdy caravan men have been seen, when sitting around the camp fire, listening to tales of the Bodhisatta's suffering and sacrifices. For ordinary people, the *Jātakas* are not merely literature or folklore, but something that happens in their very presence and profoundly affects their

[119] A. R. Desai, *State and Society in India*, Popular Prakashan Pvt. Ltd, 2011: 102.
[120] Arne Kislenko, *Culture and Customs of Thailand*, USA: Greenwood Press, 2004: 44.

own life, something that moves them to the core of their being, because it is present reality to them.

Purpose of the *Jātakas*: The primary aim of the *Jātakas* is to instruct, to teach the people the value of a good life. They serve as instruments of preaching the doctrine. In addition to this didactic purpose, there is no doubt that these stories are meant to amuse and entertain. Many are in the form of animal fables that teach something about morality, not unlike Aesop's fables. Many of the stories are charming and light-hearted, and some of these have been published in sweetly illustrated children's books.[121]

The *Jātaka* tales are a veritable of wisdom. They have had a profound influence over mankind since time immemorial and find reflection not just in Indian literature, but the literature of the whole world. The advent of the animal related stories as a significant genre in French literature during the middle ages was apparently inspired by the *Jātakas*.[122]

Another aspect of the influence of the *Jātakas* on the broad masses of the people, which included a relatively small group of learners and a much larger group of hearers, concerns the problem of the transmission of texts. Several elements were involved in this process of transmission. The first group referred to above was drawn from the monastic community consisting of trainee monks, attached to individual temples, while the latter comprised the much larger community of lay persons, drawn from all walks of life. Then there was the preacher or reciter of the text, who was usually an erudite

[121] Zena Sutherland, *The Best in Children's Books: The University of Chicago Guide to Children's Literature, 1973 – 1978*, USA: The University of Chicago, 1980: 241.
[122] Shanti Lal Nagar, *Jātakas in Indian Art*, Parimal Publications, 1993: 41.

monk, and of course the book or the written text.[123] The overall purpose of the Pāli *Jātakas* is to show how the Buddha lived many lives with the goal of realizing enlightenment. All beings are potential Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. Each is able to feel compassion for the sufferings of others and act selflessly to ease the pain of all beings. The *Jātakas* also remind us that everything is food for something else, part of an all-encompassing food chain which does not end with humans.[124]

As the common property of all Buddhist countries, the *Jātakas,* as mentioned earlier, have spread well beyond the confines of the Indian sub-continent, into other parts of Asia, through Tibet, Mongolia, and Central Asia to China, Korea and Japan in the Far East. They have been the chief vehicle of Buddhist propaganda, and the chief witnesses of popular Buddhism. The Buddhist texts belong to a later date, are relatively younger than the Indian texts, and therefore carry the doctrinal imprint of a time, far separated from the original texts, which themselves were already separated by some four hundred years at least of oral tradition, from the time of the Buddha. The Tibetan and Chinese texts of the *Jātaka* stories, for example, reflect the dynamic unfolding of Buddhist stories, which necessarily underwent a process of modification and elaboration, in the course of transmission.[125] By reading these stories, children and adults can develop their knowledge and learn how to face the difficult experiences of modern life. They can easily develop human values and good qualities like patience, forbearance, tolerance and the four sublime states of mind loving kindness,

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[123] A.S. Kulasuriya. *Op. Cit.* 20.

[124] David R. Loy, 'Loving the World as Our Own Body: The Non-dualist Ethics of Taoism, Buddhism, and Deep Ecology'. In *Asian and Jungian Views of Ethics*, ed. Carl B. Becker, USA: Greenwood Publishing Group, Inc, 1999: 101.

[125] A.S. Kulasuriya. *Op. Cit.* 22.

compassion, sympathetic joy and equanimity. The major purpose of these stories is to develop the moral and ethical values of the readers. Without them, people cannot be peaceful and happy in their hearts and minds. And the reader will find that these values are very different from those of the wider, violently acquisitive, ego-based society.

IV.3.5. *Jātaka* Art

The *Jātakas* were originally amongst the earliest Buddhist literature, with metrical analysis methods dating their average contents to around the fourth century BCE. The stories became a favourite subject with artists in ancient India, Ceylon, Central Asia, China, Bhutan and Nepal and especially in Tibet.[126] These stories exercised a great moral influence on the people, establishing a firm conviction that merit would result from performing virtuous acts of courage, liberality, fortitude, nobleness and self-sacrifice. *Jātaka* stories adorn many ancient India monuments including Bharhut and Sanchi during second and first century BCE, in Amaravati and Goli during second and third century CE, and also in the caves of Ajanta from second century BCE to fifth century CE and elsewhere during the later periods.

The most important among these sculptures of Bharhut are the bas-reliefs representing *Jātakas* (episodes relating to the past births of the Buddha), and the incidents of the life of the Buddha. In the Jātaka*s,* the bodhisattva, whether man or animal, always appear as a benevolent leader devoted to the welfare of his fellow creatures.[127]

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[126] M.C. Joshi & Radha Banerjee, 'Some Aspects of Jātaka Paintings in Indian and Chinese (Central Asian) Art'. In *Across the Himalayan Gap: An Indian Quest for Understanding China*. Tan Chung, New Delhi: Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, 1998: 173.

[127] A.S. Kulasuriya. *Op. Cit.* 698.

The sculptured representations of scenes from the *Jātakas* on the stone railings around the stupas of Bharhut and Sanchi are some of the earliest examples of monumental art. Those specimens bear witness to the existence and popularity of the tales as early as the third and second centuries BCE though, of course, in a pre-dominantly non-literary form. The Bharhut stupa has preserved representations of a whole series of *Jātakas*.

After the decline of the Mauryan Empire, the Śuṅgas succeeded to power in circa 185 BCE. They ruled the central and eastern parts of Northern India. Their native style, distinguished by its simplicity and folk appeal is best represented in monolithic free standing sculptures of *Yakshas* and *Yakshis*, discovered from Gwalior and Mathura; and the fragments of the beautifully carved gate and railings of the Buddhist stupa at Bharhut, now preserved in the Indian Museum, Calcutta.[128] The Narrative art of Bharhut, depicting *Jātakas* of Buddha's previous birth in sculptures, the decorative art of Sanchi and the Jain Stupa of Mathura belong to the same tradition. They all have an echo of wood construction and the style of the sculptures seems related to carving in wood or ivory, basically the exploitation and elaboration of a flat surface, governed by the law of formality as distinct from 'perspective' presentation. Whether it is the representation of Buddha by his lotus feet, and empty throne, a pair of fly whisks or the *triratna* symbol, or the nativity of Maya Devi by the tow elephants elegantly giving an *abhiśeka* or bath to the new born, pouring water from the *kalaṣa* or jars, the language employed by the artist is that of symbols.

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[128] Patricia Eichenbaum Karetzky, *Early Buddhist Narrative Art: Illustrations of the Life the Buddha from Central Asia to China, Korean and Japan*, University Press of America, 2000: xvi. See, S. R. Bakshi & O.P. Ralhan, *Madhya Pradesh Through the Ages. Volume 1: Land and The People*, New Delhi: Sarup & Sons, 2007: 213.

There are several interesting *Jātaka* stories, and Bharhut forms a treasure house of fables, visually represented.[129] Nonetheless, the popularity of the *Jātaka* stories in India was no less consequential, as the *Jātaka* scenes have been the favourite themes in the sculptured carvings on the railings in the relic shrines of Sanchi, Amaravati and Bharhut, Nagarjunakonda and Goli. Some of which may well be dated back to the third century B.C. The *Jātaka* stories noticed on the *toraṇas* and railings of the stupa at Bharhut in central India, first by Cunningham in 1873 represent the early indigenous Art of the Sub-continent. The copingstone, pillars and circular medallions of the railing, exhibit a variety of *Jātaka* stories. Sixty four *Jātakas* are identified and studied by various scholars, leaving many, to be identified.[130]

The popularity of the *Jātakas* can be occupied an important place due to its depictions of the *Jātaka*. *Jātakas* have also been gloriously depicted at the shrines at Sanchi and Amravati. Other places with prominent representations of *Jātakas* are Goli in Andhra Pradesh, Nalanda and Mathura.

Sculptures: The earliest historical sculpture in India is of the Mauryan age in the fourth-third centuries BCE. It is a bold and massive style marked by a certain realism freely employing foreign elements from Achaemenid Persia. The great Buddhist Emperor Asoka caused the erection of monolithic pillars of sandstone, 30 to 40 feet high, crowned by animal figures like the bull, lion and elephant, and had then inscribed with the Buddhist concepts of morality, humanity and piety, which he wished his people to follow. Famous Aśokan pillars are from Lauriya Nandangarh in

[129] C. Sivaramamurti, *Indian Sculpture*. Bombay: Allied Publishers, 1961: 22.
[130] B. Subrahmanyam, *Op. Cit.* 4.

Bihar, Sanchi and Sarnath.[131]The railings and the gateways of the stupa at Bharhut were profusely decorated with bas-reliefs and figure sculptures for the purpose of beautifying the monument and instilling religious feelings in the minds of the Buddhist devotees. The majority of the reliefs are purely decorative. The full medallions are often decorated with a full blown lotus covering the whole space or with outer rings having the middle space covered with human heads, wringed limbs, elephants, makara, peacocks, honey-suckle etc.

There is a variety of sculptures of a miscellaneous nature. The ubiquitous animals are lion, bull, elephant, and horse, while numerous other fauna are represented especially in the *Jātaka* reliefs.[132]

Besides literature, painting, sculpture and architecture in many parts of the world carried the message of *Jātaka* stories. This practice is still carried on today in Buddhist viharas in Sri Lanka, Myanmar (Burma), Indonesia, Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, and Viet Nam. According to Chinese pilgrimage, Faxian, who visited Sri Lanka in the fifth century CE[133] recorded that festival times the city of Anuradhapura was festooned with paintings from *Jātaka* stories. This practice continues today in major cities in Sri Lanka during Buddhist days of celebration. *Jātaka* stories are well depicted in Amarāvatī, Nālanda, Ajanta, Ellora, Bharut, Nagarjunikonda, Borobudur and Angkor Vat. The late historian Mackensey in *Buddhism in pre-Christian Britain* (1928) demonstrated that there were artistic works based on *Jātaka* stories in pre-Christian Britain.

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[131] Upinder Singh, *A History of Ancient and Early Medieval India: From the Stone Age to the 12th Century*, India: Dorling Kindersley, 2008: 327.
[132] *Enclyclopedia of Buddhism*, Vol II, Sri Lanka: Ministry of Buddhasasana, 1998: 699.
[133] N. S. Ramaswami, *Indian Monuments*, New Delhi: Shakti Malik, 1979: 109 – 110.

The *Jātaka* are not mere illustrations of some past episodes to be taken as incidental, but as part of a thoughtful programme of conveying some of the basic, meaningful, humanly practicable religious precepts in which the artist have proved equally efficient as the verbal or literal narrator. The artisan first followed the tradition of oral narration and next he concentrated on visual presentation whereby stories are communicated to an audience in direct terms through two or three dimension figurative sculptures and paintings.[134] The *Jātaka* stories have also been illustrated frequently in sculpture and painting through the Buddhist world.[135]

The *Jātaka* stories occur in canonical *Piṭakas* such as *CullaVagga, Sutta Piṭaka, CariyaPikata, Vinaya Piṭakas* and other Buddhist texts. The *Sutra* and *Vinaya Piṭakas* are generally accepted as at least older than the council of Vaiśāli. And as such the *Jātaka* legends must have always been recognized as a part and parcel of the Buddhist literate. This is also confirmed by the occurrence of the *Jātaka* scenes on the railings of the stupas at Bhārhut, Sāñchi and Amarāvatī. Of them, the *stūpa* at Bharhut had the maximum number of *Jātaka* depicted on the railings and gateways. Thus they were considered as part of the sacred history of the religion.[136]

A close study of the various *Jātakas* portrayed on the drum and dome panels of the stupas in India clearly suggests that each dynasty and ruler, whole selecting the *Jātakas*, might have exercised certain options base on two distinct ideological aspects viz., the moral or Dharma, which the *Jātaka* contained and secondly the acceptance of the particular *Jātaka* by the people at large in the society. For example, the Śuṅgas of North

[134] B. Subrahmanyam, *Op. Cit.* 209.
[135] Sunita Pant Bansal, *On the Footsteps of Buddha*, New Delhi: Smriti Books, 2006: 33 – 34.
[136] B. Subrahmanyam, *Op. Cit.* 22.

India chose the *Jātaka* in which the bodhisattva was born as an animal and the Kuṣāṇas and Gandharas selected the *Jātaka* in which the bodhisattva was born a human being, whereas the kings of South India preferred the *Jātakas* in which the bodhisattva was born a wise minster or king, rather than animal forms.[137]

Later, on metaphysical ground, the vegetal and animal forms giving importance to human beings seem to have bequeathed their rhythm and ceaseless flow to the human figure itself, as David L. Snell grove and others rightly observe.[138] "The *Jātakas* that have most fascinated the artists of Ajanta are: *Sibi Jātaka, Migga Jātaka, Mahājanaka Jātaka, Khantivādi Jātaka, Cāmpeyya Jātaka, Syāma Jātaka, Vaissantra Jātaka, Sutasoma Jātaka, Vidhurapaṇḍita Jātaka, Mahā Umagga Jātaka, Nigrodhamiga Jātaka, Mahisāa Jātaka, Saṃkhapāla Jātaka, Mahāhaṃsa Jātaka, Chadanta Jātaka, Mahākapi Jātaka, Matriposaka Jātaka, Hasti Jātaka* etc."

At Ajanta the old practice of labeling the *Jātaka* was stopped as the paintings revealed the subject with clarity, save when the subject was uncommon as in the Kṣantivāda and Sibi *Jātaka*, where, for easy identification, the names of Kṣantivāda and Sibirāja are mentioned below their figures. The paintings, therefore, assume great interest giving a vivid picture of the social life and customs of ancient India.[139]

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[137] Pushpa Tiwari, 'History of Agriculture as Reflected in the Art of India'. In *History of Science, Philosophy and Culture in Indian Civilization Volume V Part I: History of Agriculture in India, up to c. 1200 A.D*, eds. Lallanji Gopal & V. C. Srivastava. PHISPC: Centre for Studies in Civilizations, 2008: 810 – 817.

[138] David L. Snewllgrove, Jean Boisselier, *The Image of the Buddha*, Unesco, 1978: 97. See, Om Datt Upadhya, *The Art of Ajanta and Sopocani: A Comparative Study*, Delhi: Mohanlal Sukhadia University, Udaipur, 1994: 69.

[139] B. Subrahmanyam, *Op. Cit.* 19.

Bharhut artists equally excel in the carving of decorative patterns which show a remarkable variety of flora and fauna had been utilized to produce a profusion of motifs. The medallions having lotus patterns containing human busts, animals, birds etc., and the coping with the meandering creeper with their spaces filled with numerous and varied sculptures amply demonstrate the high quality attained by the artists in everything decorative. Temples in Sri Lanka afford abundant examples. Such sculptures and paintings have, in many cases, been executed by rural craftsmen and painters, under the inspiration and guidance of *bhikkhus.* There are notable instances where *bhikkhus* themselves have played the role of artists.[140] Other art forms like architecture and painting, it would seem, have played no less significant part in the process of transmission. These stories have been represented in the construction of buildings too, especially in religious edifices.

IV.3.6. The *Jātaka* in brief

The early history of the *Jātaka* genre is difficult to trace, though we can see from the division of scriptures, the *bhāṇaka* traditions, and the inscriptions at Bharhut, that *Jātaka* is considered to be a distinct genre from at least a few centuries after the time of the Buddha. In addition, the idea of telling stories of past births is conceptually linked to the story of the Buddha's awakening, and stories that demonstrate his abilities to recall past lives are found in both *sutta* and *vinaya* materials. However, there is no evidence at this stage that the genre had any relation to the path of the Bodhisatta, indeed a tendency to demonstrate the great abilities of the Buddha, or perhaps just a desire to tell good stories, is more prominent. The emergence of a defined *Jātaka* collection seems to have

[140] A.S. Kulasuriya. *Op.Cit.* 22.

been a gradual process, perhaps linked to the oral preservation of stories and the continued use of such stories in sermons. At some point this random assortment of *Jātakas*, or rather the verses relating to them, was collected together into one text.[141]

In support of his theory, Oldenberg cites as an example *Jātaka* No. 212 (*Ucchitthabhatta Jātaka*). He adduces the following arguments to strengthen his claim.[142]

1. The verses taken alone are to a large extent, meaningless, the prose introduced makes them clear, "that the verses were intended to complete just that context indicated by the prose is self-evident." Sometimes the story is entirely in prose (as in certain instances outside the Pāli *Jātaka*). Sometimes it is recorded entirely in verse (e.g. *Cariyapiṭaka*), and sometimes first in prose entirely and then in purely metrical form.
2. The type of mixed prose and verse narrative which is almost the only prevailing one, is the oldest or one of the oldest forms.
3. But if prose additions, like those handed down in the *Jātakarthavannana* (No. 212 above) belong necessarily, with a few exceptions, to the verses of our Pāli *Jātakas,* then we must also add that this form of prose cannot be the original one.
4. …..in prose especially in the minor decorative details etc., yet at times in those also of greater importance traces of a more recent authorship than the verse are evident.

[141] Naomi Appleton, *Op. Cit.* 53.
[142] A.S. Kulasuriya. *Op. Cit.* 9.

5. A very large portion of these verses… by its contents proves to have been composed just for the context or for one more or less similar - in which we find the corresponding verses.
6. The opening words of the first quotation *apannaka* become the title for the whole *Jātaka.*
7. The verses constitute an essential element in the form wielded by the compilers of these stories. These verses are not given to the listener as quotations, as for instance, in the *Pañcatantra,* where passages so often hear the stamps of having been taken from a thesaurus of popular philosophy.[143]The prose-poetic narrative of Jātaka151 appears here in another prose-poetic version, the verses in the one corresponding almost literally to the verses in the other.
8. The prose-and-verse form which the *Jātaka* collection hears for the most part, was already in existence and popular, at the time when the Nikāyas and the great Vinaya texts originated that, for instance, the Mallakantha *Jātaka* (pp. 253) appears in the *Vinaya* (Vol.III, p. 145 ff.) with exactly the same three verses as in the *Jātaka* collection, and also with a prose framework as in the latter, only with archaic prose in place of conventional prose.
9. That the prose-and-verse *Jātaka* form was firmly rooted in the literary consciousness of India, may be seen by the fact that the form decisively asserts itself in the northern Buddhist Sanskrit literature too, and that at a time when purely metrical *Jātakas* were

[143] This was contrary to the view expressed by R. O. Franke and certain other scholars who saw the Jātaka verses as borrowings from external sources. See Franke: "Jātak Mahabharata Paralleler" WZKM. Xx, 317ff: Charpentier, ZDMG, xii, 745. Jat. 584 appears in M.BL. II. 41; Jat. 151 in M.BL.III, 194; Hertel, J.m ZDMG, xiv.1910, 58ff, and WZKM, xxiv, 1910, 121ff.

actually to be found in it, yet co-existing quite distinctly beside them.[144]

These last comments take us through almost the entire gamut of *Jātaka* stories from their early beginnings to the period of the commentarial collection. The view of the original form of the *Jātakas* put forward here agrees with that of an Indian scholar who says "a *Jātaka* originally consisted of a verse or verses embodying in a concise form a part episode generally with a moral understood with the help of a prose narration, which for the most part remained implicit rather than explicit..." [145]

A *Jātaka*, in brief, is a story in which one of the characters-usually the hero is identified as a previous birth of the historical Buddha, generally appearing in the form of a man, a deity, or one of the higher animals as a female of any kind. Such stories exist within all kinds of Buddhist texts, both canonical and non-canonical including sutra, vinaya, abhidharma, *śāstra*, and commentaries, as well as individual *Jātaka* texts and *Jātaka* collections. The *Jātaka* as a genre appears to be very old, for in the ancient system enumerating nine 'limbs' (*aṅga*) of the Buddha's teaching mentioned throughout the Pāli *Nikāyas*, *Jātaka* constituted the seventh 'limbs'. Sine this is an ancient classification that predates the texts in which it now appears, *Jātaka* as an *aṅga* refers not to specific extant texts, but rather to a particular genre of composition and category of buddhavacana. The great age of the *Jātaka* genre is also suggested by the fact that depictions of *Jātaka* stories

[144] Oldenberg notes here (Von Oldenburg, JRAS, 1893, 302; Pischel "Die lid Literatur" in Kultur der Gegenwart. T.I.Abt., vii, 188 "that the different versions of the Jātakas generally agree in the verses, but are as a rule very different in the prose. This also testifies that the verses are at the base of the whole, (notice also the similarity in the Jātaka verses and the difference in the Jātaka prose, in this Jaina parallels, in the case which Charpentier discusses, ZDMG, lxii, 728.

[145] Gokuldas De, *Significance and Importance of Jātakas: With Special Reference to Bharhut*, Calcutta University, 1951: 26 – 45.

appear in Indian Buddhist art at Bharhut and Sanci as early as the second century BCE."[146]

The most interesting and valuable of the remains at Ajanta are the series of frescoes in the caves. These generally represent passages from the legendary history of Buddha, and from the *Jātakas*, or stories of the Buddha's former births, the visit of Asita to the infant Buddha, his temptation by Māra and his forces, legends of the Nāgas, or serpent race, hunting scenes, battle pieces, the carrying of the relies to Sri Lanka, and other incidents in the Buddhist legend. Many of the frescoes represent incidents taken from the *Jātakas*, of which some twelve have been identified by S.F. Oldenburg.[147] Of these, perhaps the most important are *the Ummadanti Jātaka of King Sibi or Sivi and the Chaddanta Jātaka,* or of the six tusked elephant.[148]

The *Jātaka* tales are an ancient collection of some 550 stories about the past lives of the Buddha, founder of the Buddhist religion. Each *Jātaka* has four parts. It opens with a preface that explains the event in the Buddha's life that led him to tell the particular birth story. Next comes the story itself. At the end there is a short summary, in which the Buddha explains which character he represents in the tale, along with the present day identities of all characters (who have also been reborn again and again). There is also a short verse illustrating the moral of the story. Some of the *Jātakas* were probably told by the Buddha himself, while others were developed later by his

[146] Reiko Ohnuma, *Op. Cit.* 35-36.
[147] Journal American Oriental Society, xvii, 183f; JRAS, 1896: 324.
[148] Subodh Kapoor, *Indian Encyclopaedia, Volume 1*, India: Cosmo Publications, 2002: 124.

followers. The tales were collected and written down several centuries after the death of the Buddha, traditionally dated at 483 BCE.[149]

To sum up:[150]

1. The canonical *Book of the Jātakas* contains only the verses. It was composed in North India, in the so-called 'Middle Country', before the time of Asoka. It is still unpublished.
2. It is absolutely certain that, with these verses, there must have been handed down, from the first, an oral commentary giving the stories in prose; for the verses without the stories are unintelligible.
3. Bas-reliefs of the third century BCE have been found illustrating a number of these prose stories. One of these bas-reliefs gives also half of a verse.
4. There are *Jātaka* stories in those canonical books that are older than the *Jātaka* Book.
5. These oldest extant *Jātakas* are similes, parables, or legends. They usually give us neither framework nor verses. In them the Buddha, in his previous birth, is never identified with an animal, or even with an ordinary man. He is identified only with some famous sage of bygone times.
6. Our present edition is not an edition of the text, but of the commentary. It was written probably in the fifth century CE in Ceylon by an author whose name is not known.
7. This commentary, which contains all the verses, contains also the prose stories in which they occur. To each such story it further gives

[149] Virginia Schomp, *Ancient India*, New York: Marshall Cavendish Corporation, 2010: 89.
[150] T.W. Rhys Davids, *Op. Cit.* 206-8.

a framework of introductory episode (stating when and where and on what occasion the story is supposed to have been spoken by the Buddha); and of final identification (of the characters in each story with the Buddha and his contemporaries in a previous birth).

8. This commentary is a translation into Pāli of the commentary as handed down in Sri Lanka. That earlier commentary, now lost, was in the Singhalese language throughout, except as regards the verses, which were in Pāli.
9. The Pāli commentary, as we now have it, has in the stories preserved, for the most part, the tradition handed down from the third century BCE. But in one or two instances variations have already been discovered.
10. As regards the allusions to political and social conditions, they refer, for the most part, to the state of things that existed in North India in and before the Buddha's time.
11. When the original *Jātaka* was being gradually formed most of the stories were taken bodily over from the existing folklore of North India.
12. Some progress has already been made in determining the relative age, at that time, of the stories. Those in the sixth and last volumes are both the longest and latest. Some of these were already selected for illustration on the bas-reliefs of the third century BCE.
13. All the *Jātakas* have verses attached to them. In a few instances these verses are in the framework, not in the stories themselves. Such stories, without the verses, have probably preserved the original form of the Indian folklore.

14. In a few instances, the verses, though in the stories, are in them only as a sort of chorus, and do not form part of the narrative. In these instances, also, a similar conclusion may be drawn.
15. The whole collection forms the most reliable, the most complete, and the most ancient collection of folklore now extant in any literature in the world.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE SPIRIT OF KINDNESS TO ANIMALS

V.1. The Buddhist concept of loving kindness

"My religion is kindness," says the Dalai Lama. This simple sentence proclaims the essence of Buddhist morality, which is expressed by the Pāli word *mettā*. Along with *upekkhā* (equanimity), the subject of discussion in the last chapter, *mettā* is one of the twin pillars of the way of life and practice enjoined by the Buddha.[1]

V.1.1. The meaning of loving-kindness

The Pali term *mettā* (Skt. *maitrī*) is translated as benevolence, goodwill, friendliness, amity, sympathy, and is also defined as the strong wish for the welfare and happiness of all beings without exception. *Mettā* is rendered here by loving kindness and may be defined as follows: "Loving kindness has the mode of friendliness for its characteristic. Its natural function is to promote friendliness. It is manifested as the disappearance of ill-will. Its footing is seeing with kindness. When it succeeds it eliminates ill will. When it fails it degenerates into selfish affectionate desire."[2]

The unfailing sign of *mettā* is that you are deeply concerned for the well-being, happiness, and prosperity of the object of your *mettā*, be that a person, an animal, or any other being. When you feel *mettā* for someone, you want them to be not just happy, but deeply happy; you have an ardent

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1 Patrick Ophuls, *Buddha Takes No Prisoners: A Meditator's Survival Guide*, Berkeley: North Atlantic Books, 2007: 111.

2 Ñāṇamoli Thera, *The Practice of Loving Kindness,* Sri Lanka: Buddhist Publication Society, 1998: 15 – 16.

desire for their true welfare, an undying enthusiasm for their growth and progress.[3]

Mettā means "love" devoid of selfishness, without desire to possess and to be repaid, similar to the love of a mother for her only child; it is an altruistic attitude of love, a universal love embracing the whole world, embracing impartially all human beings as well as sentient beings. It means that which softens one's heart, or the state of a true friend. It is defined as the sincere wish for the welfare and genuine happiness of all living beings without exception. It is also explained as the friendly disposition, for a genuine friend sincerely wishes for the welfare of his friend.

Sweet *mettā* is limitless in scope and range. Barriers it has none. Discrimination it makes not. *Mettā* enables one to regard the whole world as one's motherland and all as fellow-beings. Just as the sun sheds its rays on all without any distinction, even so sublime *mettā* bestows its sweet blessings equally on the pleasant and the unpleasant, on the rich and the poor, on the high and the low, on the vicious and the virtuous, on man and woman, and on human and animal.[4]

Although *mettā* is sublime love, it is not extraordinary thing beyond our means, is not a property of a superman, it is within us, it is the very ordinary ability to just be kind, not dwell in aversion towards everyone or everything, not do anything to harm them, but willing to do well for their welfare and happiness; for this reason, *mettā* is often rendered as "loving-kindness".
The Buddha's saying:

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3 Sangharakshita, *Living with kindness: The Buddha's teaching on mettā*, UK: Windhorse Publications, 2004: 11.

4 Narada Mahathera, *The Buddha and His Teaching*, Mumbai: Jaico Publishing House, 2006: 422.

"I visited all quarters with my mind
Nor found I any dearer than myself;
Self is likewise to every other dear;
Who loves himself will never harm another."[5]

And how does a bhikkhu abide with his heart imbued with loving-kindness extending over one direction? Just as he would feel friendliness on seeing a dearly beloved person, so he extends loving-kindness to all creatures.

In the *Dīgha Nikāya*, it is said by the Buddha that almost every virtue such as unselfishness, loving sympathy and loving kindness is included in this *mettā*.[6] *Mettā* is an essential part of the Middle Path in the teaching of the Buddha. It seeks to eliminate the three roots of evil: greed, hatred and illusion. As part of the method of developing loving kindness, the *Theravāda* commentator *Budhaghosa* offers various reflections, in his *Visuddhimagga*, for undermining hatred or anger.[7] *Mettā* plays a significant role in the development of moral discipline (*Sīla*), meditation (*Samādhi*) and wisdom (*Paññā*), which lead the follower to the ultimate goal of seeing things as they really are.

Mettā is not mere universal brotherhood, for it embraces all living beings including animals, our lesser brethren and sisters that need greater compassion as they are helpless.[8] Starting from himself he should gradually

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5 S.I. 75; Ud. 47.
6 N.K. Singh, *International Encyclopedia of Buddhism*, vol. 4, New Delhi: Anmol Publications, 1997: 282.
7 E.W. Burlingame, (trans.) *A Treasury of Buddhist Stories: From the Dhammapada Commentary*, Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, 1996: 130.
8 Narada Mahathera, *Op. Cit.* 420.

extend his *mettā* towards all beings, irrespective of creed, race, colour, or sex, including dumb animals, until he has identified himself with all, making no distinction whatever. He merges himself in the whole universe and is one with all.

Like *mettā*, *karuṇā* (compassion) should also be extended without limit towards all suffering and helpless beings, including dumb animals and fertile eggs. Compassion embraces all sorrow-stricken beings, while loving-kindness embraces all living beings, happy or sorrowful. Buddhism paid attention to *karuṇā* and *mettā* extending fellow feeling to all beings not only to friends but also to foes, not only to man but also all living beings. It is high level of understanding for the prevailing of peace and co-operation as well as integration between people through the closing down of all the avenues of aversion.

V.1.2. The application of Loving kindness in Buddhism

Once you know about the thought of enlightenment, the next step is to increase this type of awareness. As much as possible, you should work diligently to increase your motivation to attain enlightenment for the benefit of others. In your daily practice you can pray that those beings that have not yet generated *bodhicitta* may quickly do so, and that those beings, including yourself, who are already cultivating *bodhicitta* will increase it.[9]

In many *suttas*, the Buddha taught that the path to the company of Brahmāis the cultivation of the four sublime states of mind known as

[9] Khenchen Sherab, KhenpoTsewang Dongyal, *The Buddhist Path: A Practical Guide from the Nyingma Tradition of Tibetan Buddhism*, USA: Snow Lion Publications, 2010: 37.

Brahma-vihāras composed of loving-kindness (*mettā*), compassion (*karuṇā*), sympathetic joy (*muditā*), and equanimity (*upekkhā*). The Buddha once pointed out to Anāthapiṇḍika that the cultivation of loving-kindness just for a finger-snap moment would have been the fruit that was greater than the observing of the Five Precepts and the giving of the most expensive donations offered to the saints, the Buddha and the Saṃgha.

We learn that in the daily monastic life of monks and nuns, there are many rules imposed on them to bring up loving-kindness. Besides the *Pārājika* rule of abstinence from taking life (of a human being), there are some other rules such as a *Pācittiya* rule of abstinence from taking life of a living thing; another *Pācittiya* rule is abstinence from using water that contains living things.[10] Or meat should not be eaten in three instances (*tikoṭiparisuddha*), i.e., when it is seen, heard, or suspected that the living beings have been slaughtered for the bhikkhus.[11] Water has to be strained before drinking to avoid killing the living things it contains[12] and so forth.

Loving kindness can be practice in daily life by kindly actions. Loving kindness is stressed in such verse as, 'Conquer anger by loving-kindness; conquer evil by good; conquer the stingy by giving; conquer the liar by truth'.[13]

Compassion is based on loving-kindness. When you feel compassion for people and animals, even for just a few of them, it is because you love them. Once you have developed true loving-kindness you no longer act

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[10] Vin.III. 1-3.
[11] MN. II. 369.
[12] J. No. 31.
[13] Dhp. 223.

violently or hurt anyone. When your loving-kindness becomes immeasurable, you want all sentient being to be happy and your treat all of them as your loved ones.[14]

Loving-kindness and compassion represent the highest state, where all is equal, regardless of hatred or affection. They are selfless, benefiting all sentient beings. Only when people consider all sentient beings with the eyes, words, expression, voice, and mind of living-kindness and compassion and create affinities with all sentient beings can society achieve harmony and be at peace.[15]

Buddhist moral conduct is "built on the vast conception of universal love and compassion for all living beings."[16] Buddhism inherited *ahiṃsa* from its land of birth, India, and added some uniquely Buddhist expressions of this universal moral ideal, such as *metta* (loving-kindness) and *karuṇa* (compassion). Compassion toward non-human animals has a high profile in the ancient and foundational Buddhist Pāli Canon, as well as in extra-canonical writings. Buddhist literature features prominent injunctions against killing any living being.[17]

The record of the mirror of the mind teaches, 'it is suitable to practice enlightenment with the *bodhicitta* as cause and loving-kindness and compassion as the basic. Bodhisattva has compassion for all sentient beings. Compassion gives rise to bodhi, and from bodhi comes Buddhahood. Seeing the distress of sentient beings, out of loving-kindness and compassion the bodhisattva prays and transforms, uprooting suffering and giving happiness, leading sentient beings

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14 Khenchen Sherab& Khenpo Tsewang Dongyal, *Ibid.* 37.

15 Hsing Yun, *Humanistic Buddhism: A Blueprint for Life*, (trans: John Balcom), CA: Buddha's Light Publishing, 2005: 58.

16 Walpola Rahula, *What the Buddha Taught*. New York: Grove Weidenfeld, 1959: 46.

17 Paul Waldau, *The Specter of Speciesism: Buddhist and Christian Views of Animals*, New York: Oxford, 2002: 136.

on the way to enlightenment. For this reason, loving-kindness and compassion are a prerequisite for a bodhisattva to become a Buddha.

According to His Holiness the Seventeenth Karmapa "All of the Buddha's teachings are based on refraining from harming others and engaging in helping others. It is therefore of great importance for Buddhist to have these two principles as the ground of their practice. The roots of Buddhist practice are the attitudes of altruism and non-harm. In other words, the roots of Buddhist practice are loving kindness and compassion."[18] From among these two qualities, he thinks that compassion is foremost: in general, we develop loving-kindness by relying on compassion. In the beginning, therefore, compassion is in a sense more important. Our compassion must have a broad focus, not only including ourselves, but including all sentient beings.

Love (or loving-kindness, *mettā*) and compassion are the mental states at the root of Engaged Buddhist action. It follows that an engaged Buddhist, whose aspiration is to act for the welfare of others, should intentionally cultivate loving-kindness and compassion.[19]

The Seventeenth Karmapa said that for Mahāyāna teachings, all sentient beings are 'our parents of the past, present, and future.' This means that, of all sentient beings, some have our parents in the past, some are our current parents, and some will be our parents in future: there are no beings that are not, in the end, our parents. For this reason, all sentient beings have a connection of affection toward us. They have a connection of kindness

[18] His Holiness the Seventeenth Karmapa, 'Compassion is the Root of All Practices'. In *The Best Buddhist Writing 2009*, ed. Melvin McLeod. Shambhala Publications, Inc, 2009: 103.

[19] Sallie B. King, *Socially engaged Buddhism*, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1888: 49.

toward us. These affectionate and kind parents are trapped in a state of suffering, unable to actualize their desire for happiness.[20]

The Dalai Lama has often stated that loving-kindness is his religion. Thich Nhat Hanh speaks of love, which to him is the ability to sacrifice oneself for others, as the essence of nonviolent action. The Dalai Lama calls love the supreme emotion, closely tied to our innate ability to empathize with others, basic to being human. Mahā Ghoṣānanda says that the Dharma itself is found in loving-kindness. Working to reduce suffering in humans, living things, and the planet is integral to spiritual practice and leads to selflessness and compassion.[21]

Most Buddhists are familiar with the expression, 'the heart of Buddhism is loving-kindness and compassion.' However, if we take the expression a step further and attempt to define the terms 'loving-kindness and compassion', we will find that few are able to do so. According to a commentary on the lotus sutra, 'loving-kindness and compassion are the uprooting of suffering and the creation of joy'.[22] Two of the most important qualities to be developed by Buddhists are loving-kindness understood as the wish for others to be happy, and compassion as the wish to alleviate suffering.[23]

The dharma methods and the teachings contained in the Buddhist canon are infinite, but the basic for each is loving-kindness and compassion. Loving-kindness and compassion, according to the explanation on the passages and sentences of lotus sutra, are 'the basic for giving charity and

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[20] His Holiness the Seventeenth Karmapa, *Op. Cit.* 104.
[21] Sallie B. King, *Op. Cit.* 49-50.
[22] Hsing Yun, *Op. Cit.* 58.
[23] Martine Batchelor, 'Even the Stones Smiles: Selections from the Scriptures'. In *Buddhism and Ecology*, eds. Martine Batchelor and Kerry Brown, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1994: 4.

teaching the dharma. Without loving-kindness and compassion, all Buddhist dharma would be nothing more than magic.

Compassion is expected of monks, saints, and all Buddhists, "*Ahiṃsa*, or non-injury, is an ethical goal" for every Buddhist[24] those who successfully travel the Buddhist path will be filled with mercy, living a life that is "compassionate and kind to all creatures."[25] The virtue of compassion is "one of the indispensable conditions for deliverance"[26] One who is cruel will not attain to nirvaṇa; only those who "hurt no living being" will reach nirvaṇa.[27]

During the life of the Buddha, The Lord endeavored to conquer violence by his compassion. He prescribed that every person should look upon other beings with compassion as mother takes care of her only child. In the Buddha's former life as a deer king, he laid down his own life to save that of a doe. A human king witnessed his compassion and was so move that he designated the area as a wildlife sanctuary where hunting was forbidden. This story illustrates the Buddha's love for the environment.[28]

One time, Devadatta in attempt, the fierce man-killing elephant Nāḷāgiri was let loose on the road on which the Buddha was travelling. As the elephant charged, the Buddha calmly stood his ground and suffused the

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[24] Larry D. Shinn, 'The Inner Logic of Gandhian Ecology'. In *Hinduism and Ecology: The Intersection of Earth, Sky, and Water*, eds. Christopher Key Chapple and Mary Evelyn Tucker, Cambridge: Harvard University, 2000: 219.

[25] Burtt, E. A., ed. *The Teachings of the Compassionate Buddha: Early Discourses, the Dhammapada, and Later Basic Writings*, New York: New American Library, 1955: 104.

[26] Thomasine Kushner, "Interpretations of Life and Prohibitions against Killing." Environmental Ethics 3, 1981: 148.

[27] Dhp.68.

[28] Hsing Yun, *Protecting Our Environment*, USA: Buddha's Light Publishing, 2007: 6.

elephant with the power of his loving kindness, so that it stopped and bowed its head, letting the Buddha stroke and tame it.[29]

And Aṅgulimāla was a killer; he took refuge under the Buddha and attained arhathood, destroyed the cycle of rebirth in *saṃsāra*. With his compassion, he helped a woman deliver a baby safely. Thus he who had destroyed so many lives was able to give life to others and take care of their well-being. Therefore, the Buddha recommended this practice: "Whenever a Bodhisattva sees a person preparing to kill an animal; he should devise a skillful method to rescue and protect it, freeing it from its suffering and difficulties."[30]

The social consequences of observing the basic ethics enunciated in the layman's code of ethics are very extensive. They contribute to producing a protective atmosphere of security and goodwill around one which is conducive to both material and spiritual progress.

The idea of a Bodhisattva now becomes prominent in the vast popular *Jākata* literature which tells stories about the Buddha's former lives. Originally these tales were fables, fairy-tales, anecdotes, etc., taken from the vast fund of Indian folklore. These current tales were then adapted to Buddhist uses by being represented as incidents in the life of the historical Buddha. For a long time they were just talked about in the illustration of the Buddha's moral precepts, or for the purpose of proclaiming the glory and spiritual stature of the Lord. But at a later age

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[29] Peter Harvey, *An Introduction to Buddhism: Teaching, History and Practices*, Delhi: Foundation Books Pvt, Ltd, 2005: 25.

[30] David W. Chappell, 'Bodhisattva Social Ethics'. In *Buddhist Exploration of Peace and Justice*, eds. Chanju Mun and Ronald S. Green, Honolulu: Jung Bup Sa Buddhist Temple of Hawaii, 2006: 63.

they were recast into the form of stories about the Bodhisattva. In connection with the *Jātakas* a set of 10 "perfections" was elaborated, parallel to the six perfections of the Mahāyāna. Also the compassion and the loving-kindness, which in older literature is a minor and very subordinate virtue, become more prominent in these tales of the Bodhisattva's deeds, the "Boddhisattva" always being the Buddha in his previous lives."[31]A *Jātaka* story tells of the *Bodhisattva* as a hermit who, during a drought, ensured that wild animals got water.[32] And one *Jātaka* tale is particularly instructive in regard to the importance of non-injury to living beings: One upon a time, a goat was led to a temple and was about to be sacrificed by the presiding Brāhmaṇa. Suddenly, the goat let out a laugh and then uttered a moaning cry. The Brāhmaṇa, started by his odd behavior, asked the goat what was happening. The goat responded as follows: "Sir, I have just remembered the history of what has led up to this event. The reason I have laughed is that I realized that in the last of 500 births I have suffered as a goat; in my next life I will return again as a human. The reason I have cried is out of compassion for you. You see, 500 births ago I was a Brahman, leading a goat to the sacrifice. After killing the goat, I was condemned to 500births as a goat. If you kill me, you will suffer the same fate." The Brāhmaṇa, visibly shaken, immediately freed the goat, which trotted away. A few minutes later, lightning stuck the goat and he was freed to again become human. The Brahman likewise was spared, due to the goat's compassionate intervention.[33]

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[31] Edward Conze, *A Short History of Buddhism*, London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1980:54.
[32] J. I. 273-75.
[33] Christopher Chapple, *Ibid.* 24.

The *Karaṇīyamettā Sutta* enjoins the practice of *mettā* towards all creatures, timid and bold, short and long, small and big, minute and great, invisible and visible, near and far, waiting birth and born.[34] The *Mettā Sutta*, the blueprint of loving kindness, tells us how this boundless compassion should be cultivated towards all living beings without any distinction whatsoever[35] such as the Buddha's *mettā*, in the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka Sūtra*, is like Dharma rain which gives life to plants fertilizing everything around them and that makes everyone happy, taking them towards *Nibbāna* as well.[36]

Therefore, *mettā* must be cultivated as virtue parallel with the mental purity, with the perfect morality and forbearance. Once *mettā* grows up and comes into force, it possesses a great benefit and a mystic power that is capable of bringing us peace and protection, of dominating anger and hostility, of taming fierce beasts, of transforming violent men into decent and mild persons, criminals and murderers into saints. The Buddha taught: "Hatred never ceases through hatred in this world; through love alone they cease. This is an eternal law."[37]

The Buddha manifested a complete compassion and is respectfully seen as the compassionate protector of all beings. The Buddhist moral path inspires altruistic, compassionate friendly attitudes towards mankind as well as deep ecology. Plants, animals and human beings are inseparably dependent on each other as parts of nature. In Buddhism, the loving-kindness and compassion be in spite of the socio-cultural diversity and all living beings in this planet. Buddhists practice of loving-kindness toward

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34 AN. IV. 302.
35 SN. 151.
36 W. E. Soothill, *The Lotus of The Wonderful Law*, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1965: 122 - 5.
37 Dhp.8.

non-harming the life of all beings, not only to protect mankind, but also to protect animals and vegetation. "Buddhism's traditional interdependence between human life and the natural world has been transformed to give it considerable contemporary relevance."[38]

The Buddha strongly upheld the purity of heart filled with loving-kindness marked with the principle of "*Live and let live*" to promote tolerance, compassion and love for all creatures. His disciples have to abide by an even stricter code of ethics than the laymen and abstain from practice which would involve even unintentional injury to living creatures. For instance, the Buddha promulgated the rule against going on a journey during the rainy season because of possible injury to worms and insects that come to the surface in wet weather.[39] "O Moggallāna, do not do such a thing, because the insects will be confused."[40]

The *Dhammapada* testifies to this fact as follows: "All are afraid of the stick, all fear death. Putting oneself in another's place, one should not beat or kill others and all are afraid of the stick, all hold their lives dear. Putting oneself in another's place, one should not beat or kill others."[41] This shows that the Buddha did not condone any kind of harm or injure to any creature. In Buddhist meditation (*vipassanā*), compassion is the sublime emotion that impels one to help another in distress and balancing compassion is sympathetic joy, which is a rejoicing in the happiness or

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38 David L. Gosling, *Religion and Ecology in India and Southeast Asia*, London: Routledge, 2001: 168.

39 Lily de Silva, 'Early Buddhist Attitudes toward Nature'. In *Dharma Rain: Sources of Buddhist Environmentalism*, eds. Stephanie Kaza and Kenneth Kraft, Boston: Shambhala Publications, Inc, 2000: 96.

40 Vin.III. 34.

41 Dhp.129-130.

success of others.[42] This has to be distinguished from personal involvement in others' troubles and the experience of sadness; it means the detached readiness to help. It also is a virtue, which uproots the wish to harm others. So, compassionately one feels that one views the harm to others as harm to oneself. Compassion, altruistic joy and equanimity if developed in such a way, will lead to the state of non-returning, in the case of a monk who is established in the wisdom found here in this teaching, but who has not penetrated to a higher liberation.[43]

Innumerable stories, legends and behavioral experience have been depicted in the Buddhist literatures, like the *Nikāya* the *Vinaya Piṭaka*, the *Jātaka* and the *Avadāna* stories to illustrate for being mindful to maintain equanimity in feeling the distress of the others around human beings.[44]An interesting story in recorded in a Buddhist *sūtra*. A king of heaven was stalemated in a war with a demon, and neither side emerged as winner. As the king of heaven was leading his soldiers back, he saw the nest of a golden-winged bird in a tree by the roadside. If the soldiers and chariots pass by here, the eggs in the nest will certainly fall to the ground and be scattered, he thought to himself. So he led his thousand chariots back the same road by which they came. When the demon saw the king of heaven returning, he fled in terror. The conclusion of the *sūtra* was that if you use mercy to seek salvation, the lord of heaven will see it. This story tells us that mercy may not seem like much at first glance, but it is in fact extremely powerful. The Buddhist sutras frequently mention "the power of mercy," from this we

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42 Roderick S. Bucknell, Chris Kang, *The Meditative Way: Readings in the Theory and Practice of Buddhist Meditation*. Curzon Press, 1997: 91.

43 Nyanponika Thera, *Aṅguttara Nikāya: Numerical Discourses of the Buddha: An Anthology of Suttas from the Aṅguttara Nikāya*. Bhikkhu Bodhi (trans.), Altamira Press, 1999: 265 - 270.

44 S.K. Pathak, *Buddhism and Ecology*, Bauddha Sanskrit Kendra, 2004: 32.

know that mercy is indeed a potent force. If a Buddhist wants to learn to use this strength of mercy, he must be like the king of heaven in this story, and be ready to change the route of a thousand chariots rather than let a nest full of bird eggs fall to the ground. This story includes multiple facets of Buddhist teachings, including karma, rebirth, non-injury, and compassion.[45]

In some instances in Buddhist literature, animals are portrayed as sacrificing their lives for the sake of human beings. In other cases, humans are seen as giving up their own flesh and sometimes their lives so that animals may survive. In the *Jātaka*, a rabbit offers his body to a Brahman for food, jumping into fire piled up by the rabbit himself. The Brāhmaṇa was in fact the god Indra in disguise, who then places the figure of the rabbit in the moon. But these stories are only half the picture. Several parables and birth stories tell of humans sacrificing their flesh so that animals may keep living. In the *Jātakamālā*, the *Suvarṇaprabhāsa*, and the *Avadānakalpalatā*, a story is told in which a Buddhist throws himself before a hungry tigress so that she may feed her cubs.

In the early texts, great care is taken not to harm animals for fear that other members of the offended species might take retribution, or that one might be reborn as that same sort of animal. And in the *Śuraṅgama Sūtra:* "All monks who live purely and all Bodhisattvas always refrain even from walking on grass; How then can those who practice great Compassion feed on the flesh and blood of living beings?."[46] The *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra* teaches*:* "The Bodhisattva, whose nature is Compassion, is not to eat any meat… For

[45] Christopher Chapple, *Op. Cit.* 24.
[46] Kerry S. Walters & Lisa Portmess, *Religious vegetarianism: From Hesiod to the Dalai Lama*, New York: State University of New York Press, 2001: 65.

fear of causing terror to living beings…let the Bodhisattva who is disciplining himself to attain Compassion, refrain from eating flesh."[47]

Buddhists, especially those of the Mahāyāna school, can refer to numerous references in their religious texts that support Buddhism's vegetarian ideal.[48] One indicator of the Buddhist commitment to the ethic of not injuring life forms is found in the abundant references to animals in the teachings of both the Buddha and the later Buddhist. For instance, in the *Jātakamālā*, didactic tales told by the Buddha drawn from his past lives, he portrays himself as a rabbit, a swan a fish, a quail, an ape, a woodpecker, an elephant, and a deer. Animals are said to have contributed to his desire for nirvāṇa, seeing animals and humans suffer caused Buddha to seek enlightenment.[49] In another anecdote, he feels compassion when he sees a tired farmer plowing the earth, a bird eating a worm dredged up by the plow, and the welts inflicted on the back of the ox by the farmer, the weariness of both beast and man helped initiate his quest for total awakening.

We who train ourselves in developing loving kindness must not eat meat. Eating meat negates loving kindness and compassion, and causes us to turn our back on the pursuit of universal liberation. Love is the only force strong enough to overcome hatred, and for this reason it is the most powerful weapon in the world. Clearly the practice of *ahiṃsā* on an international scale would entirely preclude the possibility of war or any other form of

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47 Suzuki D.Teitaro, 'Chapter Eight: On Meat-Eating'. In *The La□kāvatāra Sūtra*, Routledge & Kegan Paul Limited, 1978: 215 – 221. Also see Bart Gruzalski, *On The Buddha*, USA: Wadsworth publishing company, 1999: 73.

48 Mary Lou Randour, Susan Chernak McElroy, *Animal Grace: Entering a Spiritual Relationship with Our Fellow Creatures*, New World Library, 2000: 71.

49 Tom Regan, *Animal Sacrifices: Religious Perspectives on the Use of Animals in Science*, USA: Temple University Press, Philadelphia, 1986: 220.

bloodshed or butchery, including capital punishment and the slaughter of animals for food. The idea of ahimsa is that it should be universal in practice and universal in application.[50]

The present Dalai Lama has expressed a strong conviction numerous times that it is important not to harm other sentient beings including animals. He considers it part of the Buddhist practice of harmlessness not to eat meat. Although Tibetans as a culture eat meat, Buddhists in general do not.[51]

The strongest pillar of Buddhism is its philosophy of compassion towards all people. Buddhism also offers definite and positive instructions with regard to the manner in which humans should develop universal loving kindness towards all living things that exist in the universe, whether in close proximity or at a distance, seen or unseen, large or small, fierce or timid. Even those seeking to come into existence like feta bodies of unborn babies or those in the stage of eggs are encompassed within this range of universal loving kindness in Buddhism. It specifies this attitude thus declaring may all beings be well and happy. Ultimately, loving-kindness and compassion extend to all living things: people, animals, plants, the earth itself.

V.2. The Buddhist Precept of taking life

Having taken the Three Refuges (*Tisaraṇa*), the Buddhist layperson takes it upon him to observe the precepts. The Buddha taught the

[50] Sangharakshita, *The Essential Teachings of the Buddha*, New Delhi: New Age Books, 2007:167.
[51] Gabriel Cousens, *Conscious Eating*, Berkeley: North Atlantic Books, 2000: 398.

advisability of comparing one's own life with that of other beings: "Everyone fears violence, everyone likes life; comparing oneself with others one would never slay or cause to slay". In the conventional sense, however, *pāṇa*, (Sanskrit, *prāṇa*) is a "sentient being"; but in the highest and ultimate sense it is only psychic life or vital force. Preventing the existence of a sentient being is taking away life or killing.[52]

V.2.1. The precept of taking life in the meaning

Sīla may be translated as moral or ethical conduct or behavior, or as the five moral precepts, or as virtue, rightness. It refers in the main to right conduct of body and speech, and as such constitutes the first and initial branch of Buddhist training and discipline.[53]

The first precept, regarded as the most important, is the resolution not to kill or injure any human, animal, bird, fish or insect.[54]The First Precept states: "I undertake to abstain from taking life." This includes the lives of animals. It seems reasonable to assume that most animals would prefer not to die, so taking an animal's life is likely to break this precept.

A Buddhist Monk's first vow is, "I abstain from destroying life." This is borne out by the fact the *Bhikkhus* are forbidden from cutting down boughs.[55] Therefore, monks and nuns are even prohibited from injuring plants and seeds.[56] The first of the five precepts bans the taking of life. As most narrowly interpreted, it applies primarily to the killing of human beings; however, from

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52 H. Saddhatissa, *Buddhist Ethics*, Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2003: 59.
53 I. B. Horner, *Ten Jātaka stories*, London: Luzac & Co, 1957: xiv.
54 Peter Harvey, *Op. Cit.*202.
55 Vin. I. 88.
56 Vin.V.34; DN.I. 64.

the beginnings of Buddhism, there were also regulations intended to prevent the harming of animals as well. Monks were forbidden from intentionally killing an animal, or drinking water living creatures in it.

The first and most fundamental Buddhist precept requires followers to refrain from killing not just human beings, but all living beings. This prescription against killing "is central to the Buddhist tradition. Indeed, it is in fact one of the few common features across the vast Buddhist tradition and its many sects, strands, and branches".

The well-known five precepts form the minimum code of ethics that every lay Buddhist is expected to adhere to. Its first precept involves abstention from injury to life. It is explained as the casting aside of all forms of weapon, being conscientious about depriving a living being of life. In its positive sense, it means the cultivation of compassion and sympathy for all living beings.[57]

For the purpose of keeping the precept against killing, the Buddha defined killing very specifically as the act of purposely taking life. In the rules he set down for monks, the Buddha further clarifies the conditions necessary for an act of killing:[58]

- There must be a being (presence).
- You must know that there is a being (knowledge/awareness).
- You must intend to kill (intension, i.e, *mensrea*).
- You must plan to use a method to kill the being (planning).
- You must kill the being, using only the planned method (result).

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[57] DN. I. 4.

[58] Henepola Gunaratana, *Eight mindful steps to happiness: walking the path of the Buddha*, USA: Wisdom Publications, 2001: 115.

Other sets of precepts include one out of 250 for monks, one out of 348 for nuns, one out of 10 for both male and female novices, and one out of 6 for married female novices. In addition to the 5 precepts mentioned above, both male and female lay Buddhist are enjoined to abide by an expanded set of 8 precepts on either four or six specified days each month: not to take life, not to steal, to refrain from all sexual activity, not to lie, not to drink intoxicants, to avoid perfume, dancing, and the theater, not to sit or sleep in an adorned chair, and not to eat after noon.[59]

In the monastic code of discipline, it is an offence requiring expiation if an animal is intentionally killed.[60] Its first precept involves abstention from injury to life. It is explained as the casting aside of all forms of weapon, being conscientious about depriving a living being of life. In its positive sense, it means the cultivation of compassion and sympathy for all living beings.[61]

V.2.2. The precept of taking life in practice

Life is so precious. An important idea mentioned earlier is the value of life. If it is life itself that is valuable, are the lives of all living beings of equal value?[62] The First Precept is the practice of protecting all lives, including the lives of minerals. Protecting human life is not possible without also protecting the lives of animals, plants, and minerals. The first Buddhist precept is the admonition not to kill, but to cherish all life. Therefore,

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59 Charles S. Terry and Richard L. Gage (trans.), Basic *Buddhist Concepts*, Tokyo: Kosei Publishing Co, 1987: 140.
60 Vin. IV. 4.
61 DN. I. 4.
62 Tom Regan, *Matters of life and death: New Introductory Essays in Moral Philosophy*, McGraw-Hill, 1993: 27.

according to Buddhism, one who believes in the law of causation, will be careful not to cause pain to people, animals, plants, or the earth itself, for harming them is simultaneously harming oneself.

Avoiding causing injury and killing plants and animals: *Saṃgha* was the main instrument of the Buddha to execute his preaching and to convey the same to the common people. Therefore, the Buddha first of all tried to set right his own house by prescribing strict code of moral conduct. *Pātimokkha* rules for monks and nuns were laid down for the same purpose. In Buddhism, killing or injuring living beings is regarded as both unwholesome and fundamentally immoral. On the one hand, killing or injuring them is bad karma entailing evil consequences for the perpetrator after his death, and on the other all living, sentient beings are afraid of death and recoil from pain just like oneself.

In the case of killing animals one is forgiven by confession. The monks and nuns often carry cloth-bag to strain water before drinking because there are so many small creatures in water. The principle of *ahiṃsā* embodies clearly in Vinaya through the precept of restraining oneself from causing injury to living beings or not killing of living creatures. This precept can be understood by another meaning, that is, the practitioner is expected not only to shun killing but also void inciting others to kill. A Buddhist not only does not kill but also protect animals. Ambedkar puts it "Brāhmaṇism has in it the will to kill. Jainism has in it the will never to kill. The Buddha's *ahiṃsā* is quite in keeping with his middle path".[63]

[63] Leolla Karunyakara, *Modernisation of Buddhism: Contributions of Ambedkar and Dalai Lama –XIV*, New Delhi: Gyan Publishing House, 2002: 100.

The Zen Master Thich Nhat Hanh reminds us that "The practice of the First Precept is a celebration of reverence for life. When we appreciate and honor the beauty of life, we will do everything in our power to protect all life".[64] While practicing the protection of humans, animals, plants, and minerals, we know that we are protecting ourselves. We feel in permanent and loving touch with all species on Earth. We are protected by the mindfulness and the loving kindness of the Buddha and many generations of Saṃghas who also practice this precept. This energy of loving kindness brings us the feeling of safety, health, and joy, and this becomes real the moment we make the decision to receive and practice the First Precept.[65]

An offence requiring expiation is also committed if a monk uses water while knowing that is contains breathing creatures that will be killed by his action. [66] To avoid this, a water-strainer is made a part of the traditional kit of a monk.[67] Again, it is an offence to sprinkle water on the ground if it is known that there are living creatures there that will be harmed by this.[68]

The Buddha explains that a monk receives food as a gift from a donor, and his loving-kindness for donor and other creatures is not compromised by such eating, if it is 'blameless' by being 'pure in three respects'.[69]If a monk should make use of human flesh there is a grave offence. A monk should not eat the flesh of elephants, horses, dogs, snakes, lions, tigers, leopards, bears,

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64 Thich Nhat Hanh, *For a Future to Be Possible: Commentaries on the Five Wonderful Precepts,* CA: Parallax Press, 1993: 24.
65 Thich Nhat Hanh, *Op. Cit.* 123.
66 *Vin*. IV. 125.
67 *Ibid*. II. 118.
68 *Ibid*. IV. 48- 9.
69 MN.II. 30 - 5.

hyenas (even in times of scarcity). Whoever should eat the flesh of any of these animals, there is an offence of wrong doing.[70]

The Buddha makes it very clear that, killing beings will bring up fear and hatred in the present, in the future, and pain and suffering in mind. Moreover, it will lead to hell to the animal kingdom, and to the world of the ghost. He advises everyone not to kill, because all sentient beings tremble run so at the stick, to all life is dear. In other words, a Buddhist is expected not only to shun killing but also avoid inciting others to kill. The first precept to be taken by a Buddhist is this respect of life, this refrains from killing beings.

This precept is to be found in almost every code of ethics, and each must uses his common sense in applying to it the need of daily life. Clearly, killing for sport or for personal adornment can never be defended, but in the far more difficult problems of the extermination of vermin, of killing for food, and in self-defense, no dogmatic statements can be made. [71]

The treatment of animals is included in the first Buddhist precept not to harm or injure living beings. In the *Mahāvagga*, the Buddha proclaims: "A monk who has received ordination ought not intentionally to destroy the life of any living being down to a worm or an ant".[72] This concern for animal and plant welfare shaped monastic life. In the early days of the Buddhist community, the monks traveled during all three seasons, winter, summer, and the rainy season. The public, however, protest that "they crush the green herbs, they hurt vegetable life, they destroy the life of many small living

[70] Vin. i. 218-220.
[71] Christmas Humphreys, *Buddhism: An introduction and guide*, London: Penguin Books Ltd, 1990: 111.
[72] Mahāvagga I. 78. 4. Also see Kenneth Kraft (ed.), *Inner Peace, World Peace: Essays on Buddhism and Nonviolence,* NY: State University of New York Press, 1992: 54.

beings", particularly when traveling during the rainy season. Subsequently, the Buddha required that all the monks enter retreats and stop wandering during the monsoons. This public protest clearly indicates that the practice of ahimsa had by that time exerted broad influence, sufficient for people to advocate the adoption of this ethic by members of a religious order.[73]

The injunction against destroying life is known as the First Precept. In addition, the Buddha also tells us not to "hurt" others, for example: "He who for the sake of happiness hurts others, who also want happiness, shall not hereafter find happiness."[74]Probably because not killing and not hurting are so important, Buddha repeatedly asks us not to do either in many places throughout the *Dhammapada*. The fact that the First Precept and other teachings forbid killing and hurting is not controversial among Buddhists. Where the controversy comes in is the question of *whom* Buddhists are forbidden to kill or hurt.

In *Vajraccheddikā Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra* the Buddha says: *"*The great friendliness marked by proving what is beneficial; the great compassion by protection. He also taught his disciples to have *"*compassion on all creatures"[75] and "never to destroy the life of any living creature, however tiny it might be."[76]

The Emperor Aśoka, who was great king around 300BCE in India, was so impressed with the doctrines of Buddhism, especially its emphasis on nonviolence, that he founded monasteries, schools, hospitals, and other institutions to further its influence. He made laws against killing animals on

[73] Christopher Chapple, *Op. Cit.* 22.
[74] Dhp. 131.
[75] SN.v. 241.
[76] K.T.S. Sarao, *The Origin and Nature of Ancient Indian Buddhism*, Delhi: Eastern Book linkers, 1989: 50.

observance days, the castrating or branding of cattle, and indiscriminate burring of forests; some Theravada kings have also prohibited or limit the slaughter of animals.[77]

The Aśoka had recorded as his public services in some Rocks Edict. Repeated in very major Rock Edict is the injunction or information:[78]

- The king abstains from killing animals and all men including the king's huntsmen and fishermen have stopped hunting and fishing (Minor Rock Edict IV in Greek and Aramaic).
- Commendable is abstention from killing living beings (Rock Edict III).
- Due to the king's admonitions have increased the abstention from slaughter of living creatures, and non-violence to beings (Rock Edict III).

Emperor Aśoka made fifty-six official 'no slaughter' days per year, approximately four per lunar month, when no fish could be captured or sold, and animals might not be killed even in game reserves.[79] The Emperor prohibited the castration or branding animals on various holy days, as well as completed banning of killing of young goats, lambs or pigs, or of their mothers while still in milk for them.[80]In 257 BCE King Aśoka said that in contrast to before, only two peacocks and a deer were killed to provide food in the royal kitchens and that in time even this would be stopped.

The Buddha praised Brāhmaṇas of old for not sacrificing animals-probably historically correct-and, in the *Kūṭadanta Sutta,*[81] he described a

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77 Peter Harvey, *Op. Cit.* 203.
78 Ananda W.P. Guruge, *Humanistic Buddhism for social well-being*, Los Angeles: Buddha's Light Publishing, 2002: 91.
79 N.A. Nikam & R. Mckeon, *The Edicts of Aśoka*, Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1959: 56.
80 *Ibid*. 56-57.
81 DN. I. 127–49.

sacrifice which he had himself conducted for a king in the past life. In this, no animals were killed, no trees were felled to act as sacrificial posts, workmen were not forced to help, and the only offerings were items such as butter and honey.[82] The existence of a monastic rule which obliges monks to avoid causing injury to plants and animals also seems to point in the direction of a rudimentary ecological concern. In the light of other factors, however, such as those monks are not required to be vegetarian. Harris takes the view that "none of this seems closely tied to an explicitly ecological ethics."[83] Nevertheless, the relationship of a tree-deity to 'his' or 'her' tree is generally seen as a close one.[84]

The Buddha is described as having avoided harm to seed and plant life and there are monastic rules against harming trees and plants. It is an offence requiring expiation for a monk to fell a tree or to ask someone else to do so.[85]

The most fundamental of them are the 5 precepts for lay Buddhists: not to take life, not to steal, not to indulge in improper sexual activity, not to lie, and not to drink intoxicants. Stated positively, these precepts exhort us to love and protect living creatures (including both human and nonhuman beings), to be generous and munificent, to lead sober lives free of dissipation.[86] These five precepts enshrine, broadly speaking, the principles of non-violence, non-appropriation, chastity, truthfulness, and mindfulness.[87] Observing the precepts is the second of the Mahayana Buddhist Six Perfections. Mahāyāna Buddhism also teaches the ten good deeds, precepts

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82 DN. I. 180.
83 Damien Keown, 'Introduction'. In *Contemporary Buddhist Ethics*, Damien Keown. Cuzon Press, 2000: 8.
84 Peter Harvey, *An Introduction to Buddhist Ethics: Foundations, Values, and Issues*, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2000: 175 - 176.
85 Vin. IV. 6.
86 Charles S. Terry and Richard L. Gage (trans.), *Op. Cit.* 140.
87 Sangharakshita, *Op. Cit.*166.

corresponding to three aspects of the Eightfold Path: not to kill, not to steals, not to indulge in improper sexual activity; not to lie, not to use bad language, not to slander, not to equivocate, and not to covet, not to be angry, and not to hold wrong views.

In every country in the world, killing human beings is condemned. The Buddhist precept of non-killing extends even further, to include all living beings.[88] We must look deeply. When we buy something or consume something, we may be participating in an act of killing. This precept [non-killing] reflects our determination not to kill, either directly or indirectly, and also to prevent others from killing.[89] Nonviolence against humans cannot take firm hold in a society as long as brutality and violence are practiced toward other animals.[90]

The Vinaya also requires monks to strain all water they drink to be sure there are no small creatures in it that would die through being drunk. Monks are also forbidden to wander during the rainy season, to avoid stepping on and crushing the new growth of vegetation. During this season they were to build a hut near other monks or otherwise live communally, but still living off daily alms. Monks are also forbidden to dig holes or farm for fear of accidentally killing worms or insects in the soil.

It is not true to say that fishermen, farmers, or hunters cannot observe the first precept. Like people in other trades and occupations, they may not be able to observe all the precepts all the time or in all circumstances, given

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[88] Thich Nhat Hanh, *Interbeing: Fourteen Guidelines for Engaged Buddhism*, Parallax Press, Berkeley, 1983: 42.

[89] Thich Nhat Hanh, *Touching Peace: Practicing the Art of Mindful Living*, Berkeley: Parallax Press, 1992: 82.

[90] Robert Thurman, *Inner Revolution: Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Real Happiness*, New York: Riverhead Books, 1998: 123.

their family obligations and livelihood, but they can certainly practice them on special occasions, like holy days, or when they are not actually engaged in their professions. In fact, there may be more opportunities to practice than at first seems possible. We observe the precepts in accordance with our abilities, training by degrees until we are able to make the precepts part and parcel of our lives.

Right livelihood rules out trade on flesh, seen as including the butcher, hunter and fisherman: jobs which no committed Buddhist would carry out.[91] In addition to nurturing and protecting animal life, we should also treasure plant life. Even a blade of grass is vital because it purifies the air we breathe.[92]

We avoid cruel and hurtful behavior because we see the consequences of such actions that they lead to profound unhappiness for us and for everyone around us, now and in the future. We practice skillful action because we want our lives to be helpful and harmonious, not destructive and contentious, and because we want a calm and happy mind, untroubled by regret or remorse.[93]

The Buddha said "Mahamati, meat is not eaten by anybody for any reason, there will be no destroyer of life."[94]And "meat eating I have not permitted to anyone, I do not permit, I will not permit.[95]

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91 Peter Harvey, *Op. Cit.* 203–204.
92 Hsing Yun, *Op. Cit.* 13.
93 Henepola Gunaratana, *Op. Cit.*111.
94 Tony Page, *Buddhism and Animals: A Buddhist Vision of Humanity's Rightful Relationship with the Animal Kingdom*, London: UKAVIS Publications, 1999: 136.
95 *Ibid.*138.

The Vietnamese monk Thich Nhat Hanh who is meditators and social peace activists was emphasized: "Do not live with a vocation that is harmful to humans and nature."[96]Some Sri Lankan Buddhists are increasingly resorting to the same means to discourage the slaughter of animals and cruelty towards animals. After all, the very first precept of a Buddhist is to abstain from killing and this is what is promoted by caring Buddhists.

We cannot support any act of killing; no killing can be justified. But not to kill is not enough. We must also learn ways to prevent others from killing.[97] If the Buddha believed fish to be sentient, it is highly improbable that he would deny that many of the other animals commonly killed and hurt by humans (e.g. mammals and birds) are not sentient. Therefore, at least fish, birds, and mammals could not be killed or otherwise hurt according to the First Precept and other teachings which protect sentient beings. It is quite possible that the First Precept covers other animals as well.

Buddha reiterates the importance thing: "To abstain from destroying life, to abstain from immorality. Right acts are to abstain from taking life, from stealing and from lechery."[98]We can infer a great deal merely from the First Precept and the teachings against hurting other beings. It is clear that the Buddha does not want us to kill or hurt animals ourselves. Therefore, Buddhists cannot be hunters, fisher, trappers, slaughterhouse workers, vivi sectors, etc., nor can we "euthanize" homeless animals in so-called animal "shelters". This is suitable with right act, right livelihood in the Noble Eight fold path that lead people go to liberation.

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96 Thich Nhat Hanh, *Interbeing*, Delhi: Full Circle, 1997: 65.
97 Thich Nhat Hanh, *Op. Cit.* 6.
98 Christmas Humphreys, *The Buddhist Way of Life,* London: George Allen and Unwin, 1980:84.

V.2.3. The precept of taking life in usefully

In the contemporary globalizing world, there are too many who take life and too few people who save lives. In society, people are arrested and jailed mostly because they have violated the five precepts. If we wish to gain freedom, to eradicate delusion, to ignite the bright light of wisdom, if we wish to gain liberation from life and death, to ride the Bodhi boat and cross the limitless ocean of karma, then we will see that abiding by the five precepts is fundamental to human morality.[99]

The practice of Buddhist moral precepts deeply affects one's personal and social life. On the personal level, the precepts help one to lead a moral life and to advance further on the spiritual path. Moreover, popular Buddhism believes that the practice of morality contributes to the accumulation of merits that both support one in the present life and ensure happiness and prosperity in the next. On the social level, observing the five precepts helps to promote peaceful coexistence, mutual trust, a cooperative spirit, and general peace and harmony in society. It also helps to maintain an atmosphere which is conducive to social progress and development, as we can see from the practical implications of each precept.

In the *Connected Discourses of the Buddha*, there is a story of a novice monk who was near the end of his life span. One day, he saw a group of ants drowning in water and reached out to save them. Through his act of compassion, he gained a long life. All these stories serve as reminders for us to act with compassion. Protecting life is a basic for us to act with

[99] Hsing Yun, *Cloud and Water*, USA: Buddha's Light Publishing, 2004: 85.

compassion. Protecting life is a basic moral principle of being human and is the best tool for transforming anger, violence, and sadness into tranquility.[100] Therefore, to raise the quality of life we should promote protection of all living beings.

Life and limb are precious to every living being and nobody has the right to destroy the life of another for any reason. But we know that human beings kill others individually and collectively in the name of human rights, religion, peace, nation, race, culture and population control all assumed good purposes. Hatred, jealousy, power, greed, ill will, selfishness, cruelty, callousness, pride, ignorance are incentives that provide and drive one to commit *pāṇātipāta*. This is a deviation from the Noble Eight Fold Path - right understanding, thought and action.

The First Precept is born from the awareness that lives everywhere are being destroyed. We see the suffering caused by the destruction of life, and we undertake to cultivate compassion and use it as a source of energy for the protection of people, animals, plants, and minerals. The First Precept is a precept of compassion, *karuṇā* the ability to remove suffering and transform it.[101]

The first precept admonishes against the destruction of life. This is based on the principle of goodwill and respect for the right to life of all living beings. By observing this precept one learns to cultivate loving kindness and compassion. One sees others' suffering as one's own and endeavors to do what one can to help alleviate their problems. Personally,

[100] Hsing Yun, Xingyun, *Living Affinity: Nurturing the Environment, Our Relationships and the Life of the Spirit*, USA: Buddha's Light Publishing, 2009: 70.

[101] Thich Nhat Hanh, *For a Future to Be Possible: Commentaries on the Five Wonderful Precepts*, Berkeley: Parallax, 1993.

one cultivates love and compassion; socially, one develops an altruistic spirit for the welfare of others.

V.3. A Buddhist perspective on Animal Rights

The core of religious living and the idea of our community, then, for a Buddhist, is not to be taken in the narrow sense of human society alone, but in the broader sense of a shared community comprised of all living or sentient beings. There is another, less favorable side to the Buddhist view of animals, however. The way in which early Buddhists talked about animals reveals that they thought about them in rather negative ways. For Buddhists, any animal other than a human was in an inferior position and could, if it lived a perfect life, be reborn as a human. Similarly, if a human lived immorally, he or she would be punished by being reincarnated as a nonhuman.[102]

V.3.1. The meaning of Animal Rights

An animal is defined as "a living being other than a human." This is a controversial definition, because animal is often defined as "a living thing capable of spontaneous movement".[103] In regard to animal rights, we have to explore two points. The first is the right of humans to exploit animals for their own pleasure, comfort, profit, and survival, and the second is the right of animals to live a natural life and die a natural death, without human interference or exploitation. These are the extremes, of course: Most animal

[102] Paul Waldau, 'Religion and Animals: Buddhism'. In *Encylcopedia of Animal Rights and Animal Welfare, Volume 1*, ed. MarcBekoff, Greenwood Publishing Group, 2010: 455.

[103] Robert A. Palmatier, *Speaking of Animals: A Dictionary of Animal Metaphors*, USA: Greenwood Press, 1995: xi.

rights groups recognize the dependence of humans on animals and of animals on humans, for the survival of both.

Animal rights activists believe that animals are of equal or similar importance to humans, and thus, animals must receive equal or similar treatment to that of humans.[104]Animal Rights is the philosophy of allowing non-human animals to have the most basic rights that all sentient beings desire: the freedom to live a natural life free from human exploitation, unnecessary pain and suffering, and premature death. This is what the animal rights movement is about; it is not about working for equality between human and non-human animals.

Animals, humans and nonhumans, are sentient, and their lives have significant value. To obstruct an animal, to cause it pain, distress, suffering, misery, or terror; to mutilate an animal; or to kill an animal is harmed the animal. [105]Animal rights are based on the idea that animals share similar emotional and physical feelings to humans, and therefore should have similar rights to health and wellbeing. They address the interests, welfare and ethical treatment of animals, including animal cruelty.

Animal right, also known as animal liberation is the idea that the most basic interests of non-human animals should be afforded the same consideration as the similar interests of human beings. We have a duty not to harm animals, and animals have a right not to be harmed by us. It developed in the late 1970s.[106]Animal Rights is a movement that intends to protect all

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[104] John M. Kistler, *People promoting and people opposing animal rights: in their own words*: ABC-CLIO, 2009: 2.

[105] Clifford J. Sherry, *Animal rights: a reference handbook*. Greenwood Publishing Group, 2002: 244.

[106] Eugene C. Hargrove, *The Animal Rights, Environmental Ethics Debate: The Environmental Perspective*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992: xiv.

animals from being exploited and abused by humans. This includes the use of animals for anything that causes them pain and suffering, such as medical experimentation, imprisonment in circuses and zoos, and fur production. Animal rights activists want animals to be considered as individuals, rather than property.[107]The Animal Rights movement had a strong comeback in the 1970, where most of the modern terms were coined. Oxford psychologist Richard Ryder coined the word "speciesism," which came to be the basis of the animal rights movement. Basically, speciesism is the assignment of different values to beings depending on their species. Ryder wrote extensively on the issue and considered it as serious as racism.[108]

In 1975, Peter Singer wrote what is now considered the basic reference book for animal rights activist. The book *Animal Liberation* has been used as course book for Singer's Bioethics course at Princeton University. Other books considered as essential to the animal rights movement include James Rachels' *Created from Animals: The Moral Implications of Darwinism* and Tom Regan's *The Case for Animal Rights.*

The animal rights movement is not interested in making animals and humans equal. Rather, they work for the basic rights of all animals to live free of human abuse, and avoid unnecessary pain or premature death at the hands of humans. Animal right organizations go further in saying it is also morally wrong to use animal product for food or clothing, they oppose the use of animal in experiment and entertainment completely. Organization such as people for the ethical treatment of animals, in the USA, hope to end

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[107] Harold D. Guither, *Animal Rights: History and Scope of a Radical Social Movement*, USA: The Board of Trustees, Southern Illinois University, 1998: 123.

[108] Roderick Nash, *The Rights of Nature: A History of Environmental Ethics*, England: The University of Wisonsin Press, 1989: 142.

the use of animals in these way. They work towards this by campaigning and protesting, or even by rescuing animal from research laboratories.[109]

V.3.2. Buddhist perspective on Animal Rights

Buddhism entails a philosophy that is sensitive to the pains and needs of animals, and this philosophy is not merely peripheral, but belongs "to the core of the tradition" forming "the foundation of Buddhist morality"[110]

Animals in the *Jataka* speak out against harming other species, against animal sacrifice, and against hunting and eating animals.[111] The Buddhist is to remember that "All have the same sorrows, the same joys" and must be protected.[112] He who for the sake of happiness does not hurt others, who also want happiness, shall hereafter find happiness.[113] Consideration for animals must have mention here, for the books in very many places teach it, not merely in connection with the rule against taking life, but as a form of kindness. The *Jātakas*, in those 'birth stories' a genuine sympathy for animal life, with that racy rustic humor which accompanies it, is often made the means of giving point to the moral, that the dumb animals claim of us, not merely the cold technical avoidance of killing, but friendliness that will neither hurt them nor cause them fear.[114]In the same that meaning, The Buddha commented:

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[109] Barbara James, *Animal Rights*. London: Hodder Murray, 2002: 9.

[110] Paul Waldau, *The Specter of Speciesism: Buddhist and Christian Views of Animals*, USA: Oxford University Press, 2002: 138.

[111] Christopher Key Chapple, 'Animals and Environment in the Buddhist Birth Stories'. In *Buddhism and Ecology: The Interconnection of Dharma and Deeds*, eds. Mary Evelyn Tucker and Duncan Ryuken Williams, Cambridge,Harvard University, 1997: 135-38.

[112] Burtt, E. A., ed, The *Teachings of the Compassionate Buddha: Early Discourses, the Dhammapada, and Later Basic Writings*, New York: New American Library, 1955: 139.

[113] Dhp. 54.

[114] Reginald S. Copleston, *Theravada Buddhism*, Delhi: Eastern Book Linkers, 1993: 113.

"All living beings are afraid of the stick,
All living beings fear death.
Comparing oneself to others,
Don't hurt or cause another."[115]

Those who resorted to these activities were usually relegated to the margins of the society. This policy is far removed from the ideals that the Buddha proclaimed when he advised rulers that birds and beasts should be given ward and protection.

The concern for animal welfare was not confined to the Buddhist monastic community. Aśoka, one of the best known Indian emperors, converted to Buddhism and establishes several laws that required kind treatment to animals. These include restricting meat consumption, curtailing, and establishing hospitals and roadside watering stations for animals. Excerpts from Aśoka's inscriptions are as follows, translated from rocks and pillars still standing throughout India: "Formerly, in the kitchen of the Beloved of the gods, king Priyadarśin (Emperor Aśoka), many hundred thousands of animals were killed every day for the sake of curry. But now when this Dharma- rescript is written, only three animals are being killed (every day) for the sake of curry (viz.) two peacocks (and) one deer (and) the deer again, not always. Even these three animals shall not be killed in the future."[116]

In his fifth Pillar Edict, Aśoka decrees the protection of a large number of animals that were not in common use as livestock; protects from slaughter young animals and mother animals still milking their young; protects forests from being

[115] Dhp.129.
[116] Christopher Chapple, *Op. Cit.* 24-25.

burned, expressly to protect the animals living in them; and bans a number of other practices hurtful to animals. In this Aśoka was carrying out the advice to the *Cakravartin* king given in the *Cakkavattisīhanāda-sutta*[117] that a good king should extend his protection not merely to different classes of people equally, but also to beasts and birds. Animal life is observed with accuracy and sympathy and we see not only the large forms like elephants and horses but a train of ants going up a Palāṣa tree in flower.[118]

In Sri Lanka, around 300 BCE, an adept Buddhist practitioner (Arahant Mahinda) petitioned King Devānaṃpiyatissa on behalf of animals, to remind the emperor of his Buddhist obligation to protect, represent, and defend all creatures in his realm:[119] "Oh! Great King, the birds of the air and the beasts have an equal right to live and move about in any part of this land as thou. The land belongs to the peoples and all other beings and thou art only the guardian of it."[120]

Aśokan model of benevolent state Arahant Mahinda's declaration set the tone for the creation of an Aśokan model of benevolent state in Sri Lanka. The social and legal history of Sri Lanka provides innumerable examples of the Buddhist attitude to animal life. Our former Kings established some of the worlds' first wild life sanctuaries. Five of the kings governed the country under the 'Maghata' rule, which banned completely the killing of any animal in the kingdom.[121]

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117 DN. no.26.

118 Krishna Chaitanya, *Arts of India*, New Delhi: Shakti Malik, Abhinav Publications, 1987: 49.

119 Lisa Kemmerer, *Animals and World Religions: Rightful Relations*, New York: Oxford University Press, Inc, 2011:119.

120 A.R.B. Amerasinghe, *The Legal Heritage of Sri Lanka*, Colombo: Sarvodaya, 1999: 130-133.

121 Walpola Rahula, *History of Buddhism in Ceylon: the Anuradhapura Period, 3rd Century BC – 10th Century AD*, M. D. Gunasena, 1996: 73.

King Silakala (524-537 CE) decreed the preservation of life for all creatures throughout the Island. King Kassappa IV (898-914 CE) granted safety to all creatures on land and water and in doing so observed in all respects the conduct of the ancient kings. Virtuous Kings moved by compassion for animals distributed young corn full of milky juice to cattle, and rice to the crows and other birds. King Mahinda IV made arrangements for the distribution of rice cakes to apes, wild boar, gazelle and dogs. King Parakramabahu I had commanded that safety of life protective measures be extended to all creatures without exception living on dry land and in the water on the four uposatha days in every month.[122]

Several Kings established Animal Hospitals and one King i.e. Buddhadāsa (314 CE) became a reputed medical and veterinary surgeon. The people, influenced by the principle of Ahimsa generally kept away from occupations that required the killing of animals to earn a living e.g. hunting, fishing and the slaughter of animals for food. Those who resorted to these activities were usually relegated to the margins of the society.

Buddhists should be more proactive in animal welfare work and campaign for law reform in this area because Buddhism more than any other religion (except Jainism) recognizes the right to life of all living beings rather than only humans. In addition Buddhism extols compassion to all forms of life. 'Kill and eat' is not a Buddhist tenet.

At a minimum, the *Dhammapada* is consistent with animal rights. Indeed, it seems to mandate many of the goals of the animal rights movement, for example the abolition of the meat industry and vivisection.

[122] A.R.B. Amerasinghe, *Op.Cit.* 130-133.

Given that the *Dhammapada* is one of the core scriptures of Buddhism, it is difficult to see how Buddhists who do participate in activities which kill animals can justify the discrepancy between their practice and the words of the Buddha.

Blaise Pascal, a French philosopher and mathematician, in the seventeenth century, he made an unequivocal of no meat in his meal.[123]The humane man will grant the animals of this world what he grants his fellow men: the right to live and be happy. The philosophers know that animals contain all the characteristics that make a human: individuality, emotions, desires, ability to suffer. And the scientists know that humans are just another animal, just another creature of complex psychology.

Ritson argued against meat-eating on the grounds that it is unnatural, unnecessary, unhealthy and immoral. He repeated the notion that meat 'is the cause of cruelty and ferocity' among those who devour it, and drew attention to the widespread existence of vegetarian cultures.[124] Finally, if we believe in the right to life, we have no excuse for killing animals.

Although raising animals for food is not the best way to increase the amount of animal pleasure, it may be argued that it is the best way to increase the amount of animal and human pleasure.[125] In developing the classical utilitarian position on the use of animals for food, it's claimed that it is implausible to think that the suffering an animal experiences from confinement, transportation, and slaughter-related activities are outweighed

[123] Blaise Pascal, *Thoughts on Religion, and Other Important Subjects: Recently translated from the French of Blaise Pascal*, London: Samuel Bagster, 1806: 62.
[124] Richard D. Ryder, *Animal revolution: changing attitudes towards specialism*, UK: Oxford, 2000: 92.
[125] Peter Singer and Tom Regan, *Animal Rights and Human Obligations*, New Jersey: Prentice-hall, Eaglewood Cliffs, 1976: 180.

by the pleasures of eating these animals. One can live and live well without going hunting, eating meat, wearing furs or even leather clothing, and doing all the other things that directly or indirectly contribute to animal suffering or the violation of putative animals right.[126]

According to Mahatma Gandhi, Indian leader, "The greatness of a nation and its moral progress can be judged by the way its animals are treats."[127] People's beliefs about animal rights come from their family background, education, religion, society and the experiences in their life. Each of us is unique and we have our own unique set of beliefs. Our beliefs form the codes and laws of our society. These in turn affect the way in which the animals in our society are treated.[128]

As regards the consumption of meat, Percival says, "They never eat meat, or anything that has had life" and Tennent says, "The mass of the population were nevertheless vegetarians and so little value did they place on animal food".[129] "On these grounds, a great deal of the killing of non-human animals must be condemned."[130]Animal right campaigners have written their own declaration of rights for animals:

"-have the right to live free from human exploitation, whether in the name of science or sport, exhibition or service, food or fashion.

-have the right to live in harmony with their nature rather than according to human desires.

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126 Tom Regan, *Op. Cit.* 373.
127 Mohandas Gandhi, quoted in Margaret C. Jasper, *Animal Rights Law*. Dobbs Ferry, New York: Oceana Publications, Inc, 2002: vii.
128 Barbara James, *Op. Cit.* 11.
129 A.R.B. Amerasinghe, *Op. Cit.* 132.
130 Peter Singer, *Practical Ethics- Second Edition*, Kundli (India): Replica Press Pvt. Ltd, 2003:119.

-have the fight to live on a healthy planet."[131]

There are many ways in which government can protect wild animals. They can set up areas nature reserves, national park and wilderness areas, where wild species and their habitat are protect. Environment and wildlife concerns can be taken into consideration when planning for housing and city development. "Many animals are hunted have simply for please, in what are called blood sport. Hunting has become a sport rather than a necessity."[132]

This policy is far removed from the ideals that the Buddha proclaimed when he advised rulers that birds and beasts should be given "ward and protection".[133] Cultural beliefs, history and prejudice have had an enormous impact on how humans view animal sentience. Most people have over history assumed that many animals feel pain, hunger, thirst, heat, cold, fear, anger and other basic emotions, because we have everyday evidence that they do.

According to Charles Darwin: 'Animals, whom we have our slaves, we do not like to consider our equal.'[134]Most people think that the lives of human beings are of special value. They believe that any human life is so much more valuable than the life of any nonhuman animal that faced with a choice between saving the lowliest member of our own species or any member of any other species; they would always choose to save the human.[135]At present the killing of a chimpanzee is not regarded as a serious

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131 Barbara James, *Op. Cit.* 7.
132 *Ibid.* 42.
133 David J. Kalupahana, *Ethics in Early Buddhism,* New Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2008: 127. See, Subhash Chandra Malik, *Dissent, Protest, and Reform in Indian Civilization*, Indian Institute of Advanced Study, 1977: 20.
134 Barbara James, *Op. Cit.* 5.
135 Tom Regan, *Op. Cit.* 284.

matter. Large numbers of chimpanzees are used in scientific research, and many of them die in the course of this research.[136]If human life does have special value or a special claim to be protected, it has it in so far as most human beings are persons. But if some non-human animals are persons, too, the lives of those animals must have the same special value or claim to protection.

Actor Richard Gere says, "As custodians of this planet it is our responsibility to deal with all species with kindness, love and compassion. That these animals suffer through human cruelty is beyond understanding. Please help to stop this madness."[137]Animals should not be used by humans, and should not be regarded as their property.[138] In order to save the most animals, increasing numbers of animal rights activists are becoming vegetarian. The bonus in this dietary change is that vegetarians have lower rates of heart disease, osteoporosis, and certain forms of cancer than flesh eaters. In addition, vegetarians are also helping the environment and the world hunger problem, since less water, land, and energy are needed to feed a person on a vegetarian diet than on an animal-based diet.

The Dalai Lama says that: "We need others for our very existence. The practice of compassion and non-violence is one's own self-interest."[139] To practice nonviolence, first of all we have to practice it within ourselves. In each of us, there is a certain amount of violence and a certain amount of nonviolence. Depending on our state of being, our response to things will be

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[136] Peter Singer, *Op. Cit.* 118.
[137] Barbara James, *Op. Cit.* 52.
[138] Peter Singer, *Animal Liberation*, Random House, 1975, See also Tom Regan, *The case for Animal Rights*, University of Californa Press, 1983, also Gary Francione, *Animals, Property, and the Law*, Temple University Press, 1995; this paperback edition 2007.
[139] Leolla Karunyakara, *Op. Cit.* 118.

more or less nonviolent. Even if we take pride in being vegetarian, for example, we have to acknowledge that the water in which we boil our vegetables contains many tiny microorganisms. We cannot be completely nonviolent, but by being vegetarian, we are going in the direction of nonviolence. [140]

Whereas some of the great religions of the East have emphasized the desirability of protecting nonhuman life while tending to ignore nonhuman suffering, the animal welfare moment of the West has emphasized the reduction of suffering while condoning killing for food and other purposes. Now the modern animal rights ideology brings both threads together in its quest to conquer suffering and to protect nonhuman like universally.[141]

As working on animal rights issues follows clearly from fundamental Buddhist teachings, they are by no means exclusively Buddhist. Our hope is that many people, regardless of their religious views, will wholeheartedly embrace them in their future work for animal rights.

V.4. The Buddhist Tradition toward Protect Environment

A thoughtful interpretation of Buddhist attitudes toward the natural world that the Buddha as a forerunner of environmental protection.[142] Buddhism has a long history of environmental protection, well before the concept became popular as a modern social cause. As custodians of this planet it is our responsibility to deal with all species with kindness, love and

[140] Thich Nhat Hanh, *Op. Cit.* 19.
[141] Richard D. Ryder, *Op. Cit.* 3.
[142] Susan Jean Armstrong and Richard George Botzler, *Environmental Ethics: Divergence and Convergence*. McGraw-Hill, 2003: 200.

compassion.[143] When we do our part to protect the environment, we give future generations a fair chance to live peacefully and work happily on a healthy and thriving planet.[144]

When we talk about protecting the environment, we should first realize that there are two facts to the problem: preserving inner sanctity and maintaining outer ecological balance. We alone are responsible for our inner peace. To do this, we have to see into the emptiness of the three poisons greed, hatred and delusion. Addition to protecting the physical environment, we have to take good care of our internal spiritual environment. The *Vimalakīrti Sūtra* says, "If the bodhisattva wishes to acquire a pure land, he must purify his mind. When the mind is pure, the Buddha land will be pure" and "If one wants to be in a pure land, one should purify the mind. When the mind is pure, the land is pure."[145] External environmental protection, such as natural habitat privation, air purification, water source clean up, noise pollution control, trash management, and radiation protection, must rely upon the joint efforts of everyone.[146]

"Man is a child of nature and not the master of nature."[147] Venerable Thich Nhat Hanh writes: "A human being is an animal, a part of nature. But we single ourselves out from the rest of nature. We classify other animals and living beings as nature, as if we ourselves are not part of it. Then we pose the question, "How should I deal with Nature?" We should deal with nature the way we deal with ourselves . . . ! Harming nature is harming

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143 Barbara James, *Op. Cit.* 52.
144 Hsing Yun, *Op. Cit.* 1.
145 See Weimojiejing (*Vimalakīrtinirdeśa-sūtra*), T 14, 538c, *zongjinglu*, T 48, and Burton Watson (tr.), The Vimalakirtinirdesa: 29.
146 Hsing Yun, *Op. Cit.* 10-11.
147 E.F. Schumacher, *Small is Beautiful: Economics as If People Mattered, 25 Years Later…with Commentaries*. Hartley & Marks Publishers, 1973: 84.

ourselves, and vice versa."[148] The harmony and equilibrium in the individual, society and Nature is being destroyed. Man is sick, society is sick, Nature is sick. The way out is to reestablish harmony and equilibrium.

Nature continues to evolve other species: 'let the earth bring forth living creatures, according to their kind, cattle, reptiles and wild animals,' all according to their kind. Deep ecology in Buddhism is a practice of loving-kindness, non- harming the life of all beings not only to protect mankind, but also to protect animals and vegetation. The Buddhist moral path inspires altruistic, compassionate friendly attitude towards mankind as well as deep ecology.'

The *Aggañña Sutta* of the *Dīgha Nikāya*[149] that relates the episode of the evolution of the world and society emphasizes the fact that moral degeneration of man causes the degradation of his personality as well as his environment. We humans are made entirely of non-human elements, such as plants, minerals, earth, clouds, and sunshine. For our practice to be deep and true, we must include the ecosystem. If the environment is destroyed, humans will be destroyed, too.

Buddhism is a religion that embodies the spirit of environmental protection. The sutra not only advocates loving our neighbors, they teach us to love our environment too. Throughout its history, Buddhism has had a profoundly positive impact on the environment. Monasteries have planted trees, dredged rivers, repaired roads and bridge, and thoughtfully used and cared for nature resources. During discourse, monastic encouraged devotees

[148] Thich Nhat Hanh, "The Individual, Society, and Nature."*The Path of Compassion: Writings on Socially Engaged Buddhism*. Ed. Fred Eppsteiner, Berkeley: Parallax, 1985: 41.
[149] DN.I. 27.

to free captured animals, promoted vegetarianism, and reminded all to value the gifts of nature. From these actions, we see that monastic were environmental activists before the term "environment protection" was coined. This tradition of nurturing the nature world continues to this day.[150]

Buddha's tenets represent an environmentally friendly aspect. Take, for example, the original reason for the *Vassāvāsa*, 'rainy season" and a period when new life, including new crops, abounds. He desired to minimize the destruction of newly grown vegetation and insect-life under the feet the touring monks.[151] They were instructed to remain in the monasteries only for three months, which was an effective check on them from possible killing and destruction of insects, small creatures and green crops. The *Vinaya Piṭaka* informs that the Buddha also taught the *bhikkhus* that one should not dig the ground as there are living things, like the earthworm in the ground, which will be destroyed if the earth is dug.[152]

Among the charitable deeds of the emperor *Asoka* was planting of medicinal herbs, development of wayside wells and planting of shade trees for both humans and animals.[153] He banned the killing of a wide variety of non-food animals, birds and fish, and drastically reduced the slaughter of animals to feed the large royal household.[154]

Nowadays, some people choose to follow a vegetarian or vegan lifestyle for environmental reasons. "Today young children who refuse meat spontaneously are being allowed this dietary freedom by more permissive

[150] Hsing Yun, *Op. Cit.* 7.
[151] Marie. B.Byles, *Footprints of Gautama The Buddha, W*heaton, Illinois: Theosophical Publishing House, 1957: 116.
[152] S.K. Pathak, *Op. Cit.* 139.
[153] N.A. Nikam& R. Mckeon, *Op. Cit.* 56.
[154] *Ibid.* 56-57.

twentieth century parents: they like animals and therefore, quite logically, decline to eat them."[155] We want to save the planet; we have to stop eating meat first. Ocean fish generally live their lives under nature conditions, and in this respect their lot is better than that of farmed animals. We don't eat any animals or animal products. This is also very un-arbitrary. Products such as milk and eggs come from enslaving animals in sometimes horrendous conditions. It makes sense that if we're trying not to kill animals, we also should try to avoid inflicting other forms of violence on them.

Much of our daily products also involve animals such as leather shoes, milk from cows, honey from bees, soap from animal fat, drugs with animal serum. However, there are many new products today that are free from animal derivatives. Given more choice, we are at liberty to make wiser decisions on how to live life in a more harmless way. Consider becoming a vegan. This accords with one of the duties of compassionate: protecting animals and birds.[156]

In the *Śuraṅgama Sūtra*, the Buddha said: "If a man can control his body and mind and thereby refrains from eating animal flesh and wearing animal products, I say he will really be liberated."[157]A brief examination of the morality, environmental impact, and healthiness of eating meat easily produces the reasonable conclusion that one should probably avoid meat as much as possible. "It can also be argued that it is better for the environment to be vegetarian."[158]

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155 Richard D. Ryder, *Op. Cit.* 92.
156 DN. III. 61 - 5.
157 Kerry S. Walters & Lisa Portmess (ed.) *Religious Vegetarianism: from Hesiod to the Dalai Lama,* USA: State University of New York Press, 2001.
158 Barbara James, *Op. Cit.* 15.

To protect the environment, the Buddha ceaselessly reminded his disciples to protect trees and animals. The *Vinayamātrikaśāstra* states, 'there are five types of trees one should not cut: bodhi trees, medicine trees, large roadside trees, tree in cold groves, and nyāgrodha trees.'[159]

However, unlike today there was no paucity of green forests, rainfall, animals and other natural resources in the Buddha's time, he always talked of preserving natural surroundings. If we practice the Buddha' teaching and truly follow the principle of love and compassion towards all the beings including forests and their inhabitants, that would create a balanced and happy environment. For some of us, the most effective way to do so is through religious practice. For others it may be non-religious practices. What is important is that each of us makes a sincere effort to take seriously our responsibility for each other and for the natural environment.

The Buddha strongly opposed the sacrifices and the slaughter of animals. He pointed out, "Love all so that you may not wish to kill any." This is a positive way of stating the principle of *ahiṃsā*. The Buddha reiterates the importance of being nonviolent: "To abstain from destroying life, to abstain from immorality. Right acts are to abstain from tacking life, from stealing and from lechery."[160]

The Buddha's age-old doctrine of compassionate love has refreshing relevance to the modern world. It creates the foundation for a balanced view of the entire world and of the environment in which we live. It is only by

[159] Hsing Yun, *Op. Cit.* 6.
[160] Christmas Humphreys, *Op. Cit.* 84.

exercising compassion toward all that a human being can perfect him or himself and become a cherisher and sustainer of life.

A person enlightened with the Buddhist ideals and practicing the same can contribute valuably in saving the physical, biological and social environment. "…the need for universal compassion for sentient beings who are alike in that they dislike pain and wish for happiness; the inalienable dignity which living creatures possess by virtue of their capacity to achieve enlightenment in this life or in the future."[161] It is then obvious that Buddhism, in its teachings, should place such importance on the harmony between man and nature. Man's duty is the preservation of the beauty of life and not its destruction. The follower of the *Dhamma* is instructed to protect trees, forests and wild life.

The Buddha's age-old doctrine of compassionate love has refreshing relevance to the modern world. It creates the foundation for a balanced view of the entire world and of the environment in which we live. It is only by exercising compassion toward all that a human being can perfect him or himself and become a cherisher and sustainer of life.

Man is expected to utilize the resources nature provides without polluting and harming nature, to make life richer and happier. This can only be done if man tries to satisfy his needs and not his greed. Over exploitation impoverishes natural resources impairing nature's replenishing capacity. Wastage in the modern world is another detrimental factor, reminding us of the prudent use of nature's bounty in a short episode in the *Vinaya Piṭaka.*[162]

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[161] Peter Harvey, *Op. Cit.* 121.
[162] Vin.II. 23.

Non-violence-based Buddhist religious activities were also directed towards the environment.[163] The *Kūṭadanta Sutta* points out that the state administration should provide protection to flora and fauna. In the teachings of the Buddha, a basic concern is shown regarding the evils related to the destruction of life. As the first precept in Buddhist ethics, this concept is rooted in a whole orientation to oneself, others and the natural world. The Buddha was a pioneer in the world to preach love to all beings and left a timeless legacy in the form of a message of truth and *ahiṃsā*.

[163] DN.I. 182.

CHAPTER SIX
CONCLUSION

Buddhism has flourished in most regions of Asia, in some cases for more than two thousand years. Its heritage has been preserved in written texts, architectural structures, political systems, and village customs. Not unsurprisingly, its view of animals is complex. Periodically shifting and, to a substantial extent, determined by cultural attitudes that often predate the emergence of Buddhism itself.[1]

In Lord Buddha's view, everybody yearns for happiness. To harm others in order to serve one's own happiness is totally inappropriate. Thus, not to harm others is the most appropriate way to find one's own happiness. In his personal life, Lord Buddha had a special respect for life, even towards the tiniest of the tiny insects or plants. He presented himself as a quintessential example and made rules for the members of the Saṃgha to not to throw the remains food on green vegetation or in the water where small insects live. He advised his lay-disciples not to kill living beings to offer food to him or to the members of his Saṃgha. He pointed out that people by abstaining from killing accumulated much merit. He criticized all forms of animal sacrifices as cruel, irresponsible and wasteful which invited dire consequences through the retributive karma of such actions.

It is undeniable that animals have feelings. An injured animal, such as a pet dog or cat, reacts much the same as we might when we are hurt. It screeches, yelps, or cries. This is not surprising since animals have nervous

[1] Ian Harris, 'A Vast Unsupervised Recycling Plant: Animals and the Buddhist Cosmos'. In *A Communion of Subjects: Animals in Religion, Science, and Ethics*, eds. Paul Waldauand Kimberley Christine Patton, Columbia University Press, 2006: 207.

systems similar to ours with respect to feeling physical pain. No doubt some animals can suffer emotionally and psychologically as well. Since the capacity for suffering is well developed in animals, as it is in humans, both equally deserve to be treated with kindness.

If we do not kill animals it means we protect our bodies as well as improve the loving kindness and getting merit in the future. The human beings should not only love one another but should also love animals. Avoiding all harm to other beings including not eating them or using products made from them is an excellent exercise in mindfulness, and can certainly increase compassion and empathy towards the suffering of others through it. It warns us that eating meat can injure our potential for developing universal compassion. Moreover, when we do not kill any animals that means we care our earth mother and take care of our children. So we cannot attain enlightenment by eating animals.

The Buddha explained that a monk may eat meat provided it is 'pure in three respects' (*tikoṭiparisuddha*): the monk has not seen, heard or suspected that the animal has been killed specifically for him.[2] The foregoing argument should not be taken as a justification for meat-eating. Our concern is to speculate on the rationale behind the three-fold rule on this subject enunciated by the Buddha and to refute the charge that the Buddha's rule involves a moral contradiction with the other parts of the Buddha's teaching such as his insistence on loving-kindness and the precept on the taking of life. Buddhist vegetarianism is originally derived from the Buddha's condemnation of animal sacrifice but has perhaps also been influenced by the practices of certain Hindu and Jain renouncers. The

[2] Vin. I. 237- 238.

principle of non-violence (*ahiṃsā*) is thus expressed in the edicts of King Aśoka, which prohibit animal sacrifice and place restrictions on the consumption of meat and the categories of animals which can be killed. The question is often raised as to whether the Buddha himself was vegetarian. Various canonical sources insist that the Buddha never ate meat.[3] Despite this, one widespread tradition suggests that the Buddha died from eating contaminated pork. This legend has been the subject of much debate over time, and exegetes have attempted to lessen the scandal of a meat-eating Buddha by arguing that the term translated as "pork" actually referred to a mushroom dish.[4]

Nowadays, Thousands-millions and billions of animals are killed for food. We eat meat they will kill animals more for my eating. If we become vegetarian we will rescue about 600 million animals from killing by butcher from slaughter house every year. We human beings can live without meat, especially in our modern world. We have a great variety of vegetables and other supplementary foods, so we have the capacity and the responsibility to save billions of lives. There are many individuals and groups promoting animal rights and following vegetarian diet.

Karma rules the lives of animals and humans alike.[5] The Buddha taught that life is a stream of becoming in which no permanent self-endures.

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[3] It has been pointed out by some scholars that even the rule of Pure in Three Ways (*tikoṭiparisuddha*) is most probably an interpolation and that the Buddha could never have condoned the eating of meat (see, for instance, K.T.S. Sarao, *Origin and Nature of Ancient Indian Buddhism*, Delhi: East Book Linkers, 1989: Chapter 4).

[4] Bernard Faure, *Unmasking Buddhism*, Wiley-Blackwell, 2009: 118. This is also noteworthy that as the Buddha was invited by Cunda to his last meal a day earlier, if Cunda had served him meat, then it would have violated the Rule of *Tikoṭiparisuddha*. Thus, it is quite certain that the last meal of the Buddha could not have been pork (See K.T.S. Sarao, *Op. Cit*: Chapter 4).

[5] Kenneth Kraft, "Nuclear Ecology and Engaged Buddhism." In *Buddhism and Ecology: The Interconnection of Dharma and Deeds*, eds. Mary Evelyn Tucker and Duncan Ryuken Williams, Cambridge: Harvard Uiversity, 1997: 277.

Individuals are composites of perception, feeling, volition, intelligence, and form, all subject to the law of karma.

Buddhists believe that we have lived many lives already and are likely to be reborn many more times. This is also likely to encourage Buddhists to consider the long-term effects of their actions on the planet. The law of karma states that our actions have consequences. Buddhists should be mindful of the consequences of their actions on the environment and on future generations.

Buddhism shows that both animals and human beings are the products of ignorance conjoined with craving, and that the differences between them are the consequences of past Karma. In this sense, though not in any other, 'all life is one'. It is one in its origin, ignorance-craving, and in its subjection to the universal law of causality. But every being's Karma is separate and individual. So long as a man refuses to become submerged in the herd, so long as he resists the pressure that is constantly brought to bear upon him to make him share the mass mind and take on the identity of mass activities, he is the master of his own destiny. Whatever the Karma of others around him may be, he need have no share in it. His Karma is his own, distinct and individual. In this sense all life is not one, but each life is a unique current of causal determinants, from lowest to highest in the scale. The special position of the human being rests on the fact that he alone can consciously direct his own personal current of Karma to a higher or lower destiny. All beings are their own creators; man is also his own judge and executioner. He is also his own saviour. He was reborn in many lives-sometimes as poor animals, sometime as long living gods and sometimes as human beings. He always tried to learn from his mistake and develop the 'ten perfections'. This was so

he could purify his mind and remove the three root cause of unwholesomeness the poisons of craving, anger and the delusion of a separate self. By using the perfections, he would someday be able to replace the poisons with the three purities-nonattachment, loving-kindness and wisdom.[6]

Buddhism teaches the doctrine of karma, which is the law of cause and effect relating to our actions. Karma means that whatever one sows, one reaps, be it good or evil. The consequences of meritorious acts are always good. Evil acts, on the other hand, ensure painful retribution. Buddhists are aware that we are constantly creating new karma by our actions. One who believes in the law of causation, therefore, will be careful not to cause pain to people, animals, plants, or the earth itself, for harming them is simultaneously harming oneself.

Buddha-nature is the true nature of the consciousness of every sentient being. And since that consciousness is inherently pure, it represents the potential for each of us to become a perfectly enlightened Buddha. People must cultivate it. The Buddha-nature is like a seed, a kernel; every one of us has planted within us.[7] The Buddha pointed out that the cycle of birth and rebirth depended upon the merit and demerits of the karma.[8]The Mahāyāna tradition emphasizes the phenomenal nature of the world of experience and the Buddha-essence or Buddha-nature of all sentient beings. Every sentient creature is believed to possess the innate potential of Buddhahood, regardless of its place in the rebirth realm. The one who aspires to

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6 Kurunegoda Piyatissa, *Buddha's Tales for young and Old, Prince Gooaspeaker*-Vol.1, New York: Buddha Dharma Education Association Inc, 1994: 22.

7 Hsuan Hua, *The Great Means Expansive Buddha Flower Adornment Sutra: Chapter: 7&8*. Dharma realm Buddhist Association, 1983: 34-35.

8 B. Subrahmanyam, *Jatakas in South Indian Art*, Delhi: BKP, 2005: 18.

Buddhahood, the bodhisattva, teaches all sentient beings the emptiness of phenomenal things, and the possibility of attaining by transfigured perception. Mahāyāna's affirmation of spiritual potential or Buddha-nature in all sentient life, coupled the Theravādin emphasis on compassion and karma, gave rise to the centrality of vegetarianism in Buddhist thought and practice.

In some of the *Jātakas*, animals have played undisputed role. They are literary made to act, speak, suffer and behave in every aspect like human beings. The stories are perfect illustrations of both how Indian feel about animals and their intimate understating of their reactions. The stories really reflect the Indian concept of the brotherhood of all living things including vegetation, from the lowest to the greatest, as beings bound to the wheel of life.[9]

The Buddha, it is believed, used these tales to stress the importance of human values, which contribute to harmony and progress, and to explain concepts such as rebirth, karma. Explain that the *Jātaka* Tales are a method of teaching Buddhists the lessons of *karma*, *saṃsāra* and *dharma*. Similar to the students' mapping of the upward and downward movement of the characters in Four on a Log, the overall structure of the *Jātaka* Tales is the movement through the cycle of *saṃsāra* followed by the Buddha before reaching enlightenment. He is said to have lived 550 lives- some in human form, some in animal form and with each life his example carried a lesson. The stories of his many lives are known collectively as the *Jātaka* Tales.

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[9] *Ibid.* 208.

In the *Jātaka* Tales, each story contains a life lesson, often told with humor, and a reminder that one's *karma* is bound to one's actions. This lesson plan is designed to bring the meaning of *karma* and the related concept of *saṃsāra* to life through the reading of the *Jātaka* Tales.[10] This lesson can be used either as an extension of lessons of the birth of Buddhism and the history of Asia, or as an introduction to world literature.

Moral teachings are put in the mouths of an animals, to show that they too have a share in our evolution, and there are lesions that we men can learn from animals; wisdom from the elephant, devotion from the dog, caution from the tortoise, fickleness of mind from the monkey and how to avoid that all, and so through many tales.[11]

Jātaka have their origin with the origin of Buddhism in the sixth-fifth century CE and are tales about his previous lives while he was on the path to become a Buddha. In the book on the Buddha's previous existences, or *Jātaka* Book, 547 of the stories of his previous lives have been collected together. Buddhist generally accept the *Jātaka* as being likely, if not literally true, and hold the stories as sacred for teaching and inspiration. Many of the *Jātakas* can be classified as fables, since Buddha was frequently an animal in previous lives.[12]

In Theravāda countries, several of the longer *Jātaka* tales are still performed in dance, theatre, and formal recitation to this day, and several are associated with particular holidays on the Lunar Calendar used by

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[10] Alethea Helbig and Agnes Perkins, *Many Peoples, One Land: A Guide to New Multicultural Literature for Children and Young Adults*, Greenwood Publishing Group, 2001: 150.
[11] M. M. Higgins, *Jatakamālā or A Garland of Birth Stories*, Delhi: Winsome Books India, 2005: vii.
[12] Steven J.Voris, *Preaching parables: a metaphorical interfaith approach*, USA: Paulist Press, 2008: 88.

Cambodia, Thailand and Laos. *Jātaka* stories remain very popular in South and Southeast Asia today, where the *Jātaka* book is well known.[13]

There is general opinion that these stories are of immense value as they help to know adequacy the history, religion, geography, social and economic condition prevalent in the society during the period. Thus there is no comparison with other literary works. The *Jātaka* stories have enriched the literature of many other people directly or indirectly and therefore they have greater value in universal literature, not only as regards literature and art, but also from the point of view of the history of civilization. They represent almost all aspects of human society right from the monarchs, minister, counselors, and physicians to the lowest strata including snake charmers, blacksmiths, horse trainers, the people engaged in different professions in the society, besides representing flora and fauna.[14]

The views of the Buddhists on the world and its temporary tenants, whether men, animals, or trees, are totally different from our own, though we know how even among ourselves the theories of heredity have led some philosophers to hold that we, or our ancestors, existed at one time in an animal, and why not in a vegetable or mineral state. It is difficult for us to enter fully into the Buddhist views of the world; it is important not to imagine that highly educated men among the Buddhists were not so silly as to accept the *Jātakas* as ancient history.[15]

The *Jātaka* stories, over millennia, have been seminal to the development of many civilisations, the cultivation of moral conduct and good behaviour, the

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13 Naomi Appleton, *Jātaka stories in Theravāda Buddhism: Narrating the Bodhisattva Path*, England: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2010: 78.

14 B. Subrahmanyam, *Op. Cit.* 208.

15 J.S.Speryer, *The Jātakamālā or Garland of Birth-Stories*, Delhi: Motilal, 1990: xi.

growth of a rich and varied literature in diverse parts of the world and the inspiration for painting, sculpture and architecture of enduring aesthetic value. The Buddha himself used *Jātaka* stories to explain concepts like *karma* and *rebirth* and to emphasize the importance of certain moral values. It is in continuation of this noble tradition that these stories are now retold in print to an audience which had been denied access to them by language and other cultural barriers. These stories are ever more relevant in the fragmented societies of today, where especially children, in their most formative years, seek helplessly for guidance in steering their lives to success and fulfillment.

It is not uncommon for the Bodhisattva (the past-life Buddha) to appear as an animal as well. The stories sometimes involve animals alone, and sometimes involve conflicts between humans and animals; in the latter cases, the animals often exhibit characteristics of kindness and generosity that are absent in the humans. The rich narrative literature of Buddhist traditions presents Śākyamuni Buddha's career as a Bodhisattva in hundreds of inspiring stories. The Jātaka literature as contained in the Pāli commentary on *Jātaka* of the Pāli Canon and *Jātakamālā*, the Sanskrit compilation of the Mahāyāna tradition, recounts many lives in which he practiced the ten or six perfections or *Pāramitās*.[16]

The *Jātaka* tales are a huge source of wisdom.[17] They have had a profound influence over mankind since time immemorial and they find reflection not just in Indian literature, but also the literature of the whole world. All *Jātaka* stories hold out advice on developing moral conduct, good

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[16] Ananda W. P. Guruge, *Humanistic Buddhism for social well-being*, USA: Buddha's Light Publishing, 2002: 64.

[17] Jhampa Shaneman and Jan V. Angel, *Buddhist Astrology: Chart Interpretation from a Buddhist Perspective*, USA: Llewellyn Publications, 2003: 78.

behavior and they teach us how to correct our ways. They played and continue to play a vital role in the cultivation of peace and generosity. *Jātaka* stories took a prominent place in primary education in Buddhist *vihāras*. *Jātaka* stories speak eloquently of those human values, which contribute, to harmony, pleasure and progress. These stories are ever more relevant in the fragmented societies of today, where especially children, in their most formative years, seek helplessly for guidance in steering their lives to success and fulfillment.

And since the main teaching of the Buddha was that actions bring their due effects under immutable law, against which all prayers are unavailing, and that each life is the outcome of previous lives, it is not surprising that part of his method of impressing this on his listeners was by means of the descriptions of the past lives of himself and of others, showing not only the relationship between people but also in graphic form what evil is like and what good qualities are like.[18]

It could be said that the *Jātaka* Tales are a method of teaching Buddhists the lessons of karma, *saṃsāra* and dharma. Similar to the students' mapping of the upward and downward movement of the characters in four on a log, the overall structure of the *Jātaka* Tales is the movement through the cycle of samsara followed by the Buddha before reaching enlightenment. He is said to have lived 550 lives some in human form, some in animal form and with each life his example carried a lesson. The stories of his many lives are known collectively as the *Jātaka* Tales. Each tale emphasizes a virtue that is practiced to perfection.[19]This lesson is designed

[18] Ethel Beswick, *Jataka Tales: Birth Stories of Buddha*, Varanasi: Pilgrims Publishing, 2007: 1.
[19] Pamela.Y.Taylor, *Beasts, Birds, and Blossoms in Thai Art*, Oxford University Press,1994: 14.

to bring the meaning of karma and the related concept of *saṃsāra* to life through the reading of the *Jātaka* Tales. It can be used either as an extension of lessons of the birth of Buddhism and the history of Asia, or as an introduction to world literature.

In 300 BCE, the *Jātaka* Tales were written to provide Buddhist followers access to gain knowledge and morality.[20]They have been translated into different languages and spread around the world. Ever since, *Jātaka* tales have become story books that are both enjoyable as well as knowledgeable. Originally written in Pāli language, *Jātaka* Buddhist tales have been translated in different languages around the world. *Jātaka* tales are an important part of Buddhist literature. *Jātaka* stories represent former incarnations of Buddha, at times like an animal, a bird and sometimes like a human being, the future Siddhārtha Gautama.

The *Jātaka* tales have stood the test of time and will continue to do so, as long as man remains in material pursuit and is led by greed and selfishness. After thousands of years, the *Jātakas* are still as fresh as ever. They are an immortal part of literature, still providing fresh insights, still opening doors for new realizations and still changing lives. There's a deep truth in each tale, such as show kindness to animals and be honest and you will be rewarded for your honesty. As per the laws that govern retributive karma, what you send out will come back to you. And this principle is very clearly brought out in the *Jātaka* tales. These tales are stories that the Buddha told about the many times he was reborn on Earth, sometimes as a prince or a poor man, sometimes as an animal or a tree. These stories

[20] Shubha Tiwari, 'An Anylysis of Intizar Husain's Short Story: Complete Knowledge'. In *Indian Fiction in English Translation*, ed. Shubha Tiwari, New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers and Distributors, 2005: 58.

celebrate the wonderful joy, compassion, wisdom, and kindness that the Buddha showed in each of these lives to help others. The One, who has resolved to become a Buddha, strives in each of his births to become better and wiser, till at last he becomes a Buddha.[21]

All ancient civilizations had taken upon themselves the responsibility of maintaining moral values in society. Though they had different values systems, yet a common factor in those times was propagating moral teachings through story telling. In Buddhist communities too, *Jātaka* tales were a major source for inculcating in people a deep sense of moral values.[22]The Buddha took birth again and again in different life forms and species to bring home the virtues of compassion, truthfulness and exemplary life.

These stories can serve as examples in guiding children to imbibe good moral values in their daily activities. By reading these stories, children and adults can develop their knowledge and learn how to face the difficult situations in modern life. They can easily develop human values and good qualities like patience, forbearance, tolerance and the four sublime states of mind-loving-kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy and equality. The major purpose of these stories is to develop the moral and ethical values of the readers. Without them, people cannot be peaceful and happy in their hearts and minds. And the reader will find that these values are very different from those of the wider, violently acquisitive, ego-based society.[23]

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21 M.M. Higgins, *Op.Cit.* xii.

22 Ole Bruun, *Human Rights and Asian Values: Contesting National Identities and Cultural Representations in Asia*, eds. Michael Jacobsen and Ole Bruun, London: Curzon Press, 2000:104.

23 Ruchi Sugan, *Tales of Buddha*, Delhi: Veena Publications, 2004: xii.

The stories teach valuable lessons to correct our current life style. Today those who are enslaved to the modern development of science and technologyhave become lazy due to easy availability of things they need. They get used to giving up their effort to achieve goals when there are even minor difficulties. They give up, change their minds, and try something else. We need to preserve these qualities for the future peace and happiness of the world. *Jātakas* teach the way leading to Buddhahood. They are the landmarks of that Path. Even the hard-hearted may be softened by them. For the benefit of mankind these stories are written and they are in accordance with the course of facts as recorded by scripture tradition.[24]The *Jātaka* tales depict the Buddha in several of his births in form of animals. These stories, though simple, are high on moral content which is considered good for one's emotional, moral and spiritual health. The Buddha is the protagonist and the central character in each of these stories.

The Buddha himself used *Jātaka* stories to explain concepts like karma and rebirth and to emphasize the importance of certain moral values. Buddhist animal tales "illustrate and underscore the position that life from one form to the next is continuous," through reincarnation, and that compassion for all creatures is foundational in the Buddhist religion.[25] In the *Jatakas*, animals have their own lives, their own karma, tests, purposes, and aspirations. And, as often brief and painful as their lives may be, they are also graced with purity and a clarity which we can only humbly respect, and perhaps even occasionally envy. *Jataka* stories focus on animals as individuals, with personality, volition, flaws, and moral excellence. The

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[24] M.M. Higgins, *Op. Cit.* xii.

[25] C.K. Chapple, "Animals and Environment in the Buddhist Birth Stories" Buddhism and Ecology: The Interconnection of Dharma and Deeds. Ed. Mary Evelyn Tucker and Duncan Ryuken Williams, Cambridge Harvard University, 1997: 143.

Jatakas help remind Buddhists of the significance of other species, and instruct Buddhists to live mindfully with an awareness of the likely effects of each and every action, and the knowledge that human actions toward spiders and piglets matter not only to the spider and the pig, but also in an ultimate sense to one's future existences.

As a human being, one likes to be happy and peaceful. Therefore, we need to respect the happiness and peace of every living being, of animals. We are human beings we should love, sympathy and protect all animals. We will not destroy ancient forests that are homes to millions of animals, nor will he raise an animal to be destroyed to please his senses of vanity or appetite. Animals need our protection, our love to them. Around us, there are millions of animals live in the earth, if we love and protect them we will happy with them in this life and after life. A long time ago we realized that anyone who cares about the Earth really cares must stop eating animals. The more we read about deforestation, water pollution, and topsoil erosion, the stronger that realization becomes. The Buddha said time and time again in the sūtras such things as: "My followers should give up all evil actions that directly or indirectly injure others."

The Buddha was a lover of nature. He spent long periods in forests, in caves and under trees and encouraged his monastic to do so. The rules of discipline for monastic deal with measures for the conservation of nature. Buddhists try to cultivate the positive qualities of *mettā* (loving kindness) and *karuṇā* (compassion) towards all sentient beings, including animals. Choosing to ignore the suffering of animals deepens negative habits and qualities of mind. Buddhists try to practice ahimsa (non-violence) and this applies to animals as well as humans. A disciple of the Buddha must

maintain a mind of kindness and cultivate the practice of liberating beings. If the person who eats meat it means he cuts off his seeds of great compassion. Whenever a Bodhisattva sees a person preparing to kill an animal, he should devise a skilful method to rescue and protect it, freeing it from its suffering and difficulties.

We humans are made entirely of nonhuman elements, such as plants, minerals, earth, clouds, and sunshine. For our practice to be deep and true, we must include the ecosystem. If the environment is destroyed, humans will be destroyed, too. We all Buddhists are impossible to distinguish between sentient and non-sentient beings. Every Buddhist practitioner should be a protector of the environment. Minerals have their own lives, too. The First Precept is the practice of protecting all lives, including the lives of minerals.

Compassion should be the basis of all our interactions with others, regardless of their views and actions in the area of animal rights. Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees.[26] We Buddhists express compassion for all sentient beings, but this compassion is not necessarily extended to every rock or tree or house. Most of us are somewhat concerned about our own house, but not really compassionate about it. We keep it in order so that we can live and be happy. We know that to have happy feelings in our house we must take care of it. So our feelings may be of concern rather than compassion.

As we know, our planet is our house, and we must keep it in order and take care of it if we are genuinely concerned about happiness for ourselves, our children, our friends, and other sentient beings who share this great

[26] Peter Singer and Tom Regan, *Animal Rights and Human Obligations*, New Jersey: Prentice-hall, Eaglewood Cliffs, 1976: 3.

house with us. If we think of the planet as our house or as our mother-Mother Earth, we automatically feel concern for our environment. Today we understand that the future of humanity very much depends on our planet, and that the future of the planet very much depends on humanity. But this has not always been so clear to us. Until now, Mother Earth has somehow tolerated sloppy house habits. The mother earth is warning us that there are limits to our actions.

Interdependence is a fundamental law of nature. Not only higher forms of life but also many of the smallest insects are social beings who, without any religion, law or education, survive by mutual cooperation based on an innate recognition of their interconnectedness. The most subtle level of material phenomena is also governed by interdependence. All phenomena on the planet that we inhabit to the oceans, clouds, forests and flowers that surround us arise in dependence upon subtle patterns of energy. Without their proper interaction, they dissolve and decay. Ultimately, humanity is one and this small planet is our only home. If we are to protect this home of ours, each of us needs to experience a vivid sense of universal altruism. It is only this feeling that can remove the self-centered motives that cause people to deceive and misuse one another.

The natural environment and the sentient beings living in it are very closely interlinked and interdependent. If we examine different animals, for examples, those whose very survival depends on taking others' lives, such as tigers or lions, we learn that their basic nature provides them with sharp fangs and claws. Peaceful animals, such as deer, which are completely vegetarian, are gentler and have smaller teeth and no claws. From that viewpoint we human beings are supposed to have a non-violent nature. As to

the question of human survival, human beings are social animals. In order to survive we need companions. Without other human beings there is simply no possibility of surviving; that is the law of nature. Consciousness is something that we share with other animals, and if human lives possess unique value, it cannot be in virtue of our possession of consciousness alone.[27]

All the living beings in the six paths of existence are our parents. If we should kill and eat them, it is the same as killing our own parents. Since to be reborn into one existence after another is the permanent and unalterable law, we should teach people to release sentient beings.Life is so precious, when we appreciate and honor the beauty of life, we will do everything in our power to protect all life. A Buddhist's behavior towards animals should help improve the quality of life of the whole world, not just for his or her own spiritual, material, and living fields. People acknowledge that in life we are inclined to see the happiness. We desperately want to keep up our happiness but it doesn't work like that. It goes and then comes with suffering. The person who wants to be happy in the present life, he should practice the ethics of morality, equality and universal brother. This is an eternal truth taught by the Buddha.[28]

Buddhist environmentalists find in the causal principle of interdependence (*paṭiccasamuppāda*) an ecological vision that integrates all aspects of the ecosphere particular individuals and general species in terms of the principle of mutual codependence. Within this cosmological model

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[27] Tom Regan, *Matters of life and death: New Introductory Essays in Moral Philosophy*, USA: McGraw-Hill, Inc, 1993: 287.

[28] Leolla Karunyakara, *Modernisation of Buddhism: Contributions of Ambedkar and Dalai Lama -XIV*, New Delhi: Gyan Publishing House, 2002: 235.

individual entities are by their very nature relational, thereby undermining the autonomous self over against the other, be it human, animal, or vegetable. This planet is the place where life in its myriad forms in the shape of humans, animals, and plants exists as a cooperative microcosm of a larger ecosystem and as a community where humans can develop an ecological ethic. Such an ethic highlights the virtues of restraint, simplicity, loving kindness, compassion, equanimity, patience, wisdom, nonviolence, and generosity. These virtues represent moral ideals for all members of the Buddhist community consisting of both religious practitioners and lay persons which includes political leaders, bureaucrats and the ordinary citizens. We cannot find the joy of good behavior until we let go of the wrong. We tend to act with a mind filled with attachment, which leads us to all kinds of depravity. First we must oppose and give up this tendency. Then we can see how comfortable, relaxed, free, and peaceful we feel because such a life-style shall not be ethically reprehensible.[29]

There are many Animal welfare Societies around the world. Animal welfare laws need to be enacted for the protection of animals, and heavy penalties and punishment including long sentences of imprisonment and confiscation of vehicles used in illegal transport of animals should be imposed on these killers and abusers. Many of the earth's habitats, animals, plants, insects and even microorganisms that we know as rare and seriously need to be protected for the sake of our future generations. We have the capability and the responsibility to do this. Thus, we must act before it is too late. If we want an end to violence, it means that we must first reject the slaughterhouse, the animal circus, and animal skins and remember that

[29] Henepola Gunaratana, *Eight mindful steps to happiness: walking the path of the Buddha*, USA: Wisdom Publications, 2001: 113.

kindness to animals has been a cornerstone of every great religion in the history of the world.

All of us want to be healthy, live long, and hence desire to be free from illness. One important secret of this is not to eat meat. Out of a concern for the total living environment, Buddhist environmentalists extend loving kindness and compassion beyond people and animals to include plants and the earth itself. Though the harsh realities of survival in this cruel and competitive world stare us in the face, yet we must realize we will no longer have the present beautiful heaven on Earth planet if we continue to live in an irresponsible manner. Therefore, it is very important that we should protect our environment by practicing the Five Mindfulness Trainings advocated in the Buddha's teachings. Protection of animals is an integral part of this issue.

In the third century BCE, after Aśoka was converted to Buddhism he took many measures for the humane treatment and protection of living beings through his Dhamma Policy of loving kindness. He not only built hospitals for human beings but also built hospitals for taking care of animals. He also cut down on the killing of animals in the royal kitchen and ordered that guests be provided only vegetarian food in the royal kitchen. He also declared many animals as endangered species who could not be harmed in any way and whose meat could not be eaten. In the overall scope of the Buddhavacana, all occupations that are associated with the killing of animals fall outside the trades recommended by the Buddha as the means for a Right Livelihood. It was due to the efforts of great human beings like the Śākyamuni Buddha and King Aśoka that vegetarianism and compassionate attitude towards animals gained greater acceptance in the Indian society.

Thus, it may be said that the contribution of Buddhism is immense towards the animal rights' movement and vegetarianism in the world today. A large number of men and women, especially the young, look forward to Buddhism and its message of mettā and karuṇā towards flora and fauna. It is in this light that the teachings of the Buddha have become even more important when we are faced with all sorts of violence committed in the present day globalizing world and profit-driven economic system.

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