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(A PEER REVIEWED (REFEREED) JOURNAL
ON SANSKRIT & RELATED STUDIES)

VOLUME-XIV

UPAKATHĀVIŚEṢĀMKAḤ

उपकथाविशेषांकः

धन्योऽयं भारतो देशः धन्येयं सुरभारती ।
उपासकाः वयं यत्र धन्या अहो परम्परा ॥



EDITOR

DR. MANASHI SHARMA

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सम्पादकीयम्

अये सुरभारतीसपर्यायां निरताः सहृदयाः !

प्राच्याशोधपत्रिकायाः अयं चतुर्दशाङ्कोस्त्रभवतां करकमलयोरुपायनी क्रियते । विदुषामाशीर्वचोभिः, सतां शुभकामनाभिः, सुहृदां प्रीत्या सम्प्रति पत्रिकेयं चतुर्दशसंख्यके अंके प्रविशति ।

पुरातनभारतीयोपकथासाहित्यं विश्वसाहित्यजगति अत्यन्तं महत्वपूर्णं स्थानमधिकरोति । मनुष्याणां स्वाभाविकानुभूतीनामभिव्यञ्जनमेव एतादृशानां साहित्यानामुद्भवस्य कारणं वर्तते । जीवने नानापरिस्थितीनां प्रभावेन जागृताणांहृदि सुप्तानां भावनानां अभिव्यञ्जनाभिलाषः मानवस्य नैसर्गिकी प्रवृत्तिः । अतः कल्पनायाः रञ्जनेन रञ्जयित्वा एतासां भावनानां चमत्कारित्वं सम्पादयति । एवमेव हि कथाकथनस्य परम्पराप्राचीनकालावधि प्रचलिता सती लघुकथा, उपकथा, आख्यानं वा इत्यादिनाम्ना साहित्यजगति विशेषसाहित्यवर्गस्य विकाशं लेभे । साहित्यं खलु समाजस्य दर्पणमिव । विवरणविषयकसाहित्यविधेषु आख्यानानि सर्वोत्प्रेक्षा रूपकात्मकानि वर्तन्ते । अतः भिन्नकालेषु रचितेषु साहित्यकृतिषु तदानीन्तनयुगानां सामाजिक-सांस्कृतिकावस्थानां प्रतिफलनं भवति । एवमेव हि उपकथाकोटीरचनास्वपि प्रतिफलितेभ्यः सामाजिकचित्रेभ्योतीतकालीनसमृद्धयोः सभ्यतासंस्कृतयोः परिचयो लभ्यते । कथाकथनछलेन मूलतः नीतिकथाशिक्षणम् मानवीयप्रमूल्यानामुपदेशश्च एतादृशानां रचनानामुद्देश्ये सत्यपि एतासु तत्कालीनाचारविचाराणां, धर्ममतानां, शिक्षापद्धतिशासनव्यवस्थादीनाञ्च सम्यक् चित्रमुपलभ्यते ।

प्रकृतिभेदेन इदं आख्यानसाहित्यं उपदेशात्मकपशुकथा नीतिकथा, लोककथा वेति वर्गद्वयेषु विभाजितुं शक्यते । नीतिकथाः उपदेशप्रधानाः लोककथाश्च मनोरञ्जनप्रधानाः । अपि च लोककथासु पात्राणि मनुष्याः एव, न तु पशवः, पक्षिणो वा । संस्कृतनीतिकथासु पञ्चतन्त्रहितोपदेशौ अतीवलोकप्रियौ । गुणाढ्यकृतबृहत्कथा लोककथासु प्रचीनतमः संग्रहो वर्तते । बृहत्कथामञ्जरी, कथासरित्सागरः, वेतालपञ्चविंशतिका, अवदानशतकं, सिंहासनद्वात्रिंशिका, जातकमाला, वेतालपञ्चविंशतिका, शुकसप्ततिश्च अस्य वर्गस्य इतराः उल्लेखनीयाः कृतयो वर्तन्ते । एवमेव हि महाभारतपुराणयोगवशिष्टरामायणादिष्वपि बहूनि उपदेशात्मकानि आख्यानान्युपलभ्यन्ते ।

बौद्धजातकानि भारतीयाख्यानसाहित्ये उल्लेखनीयं स्थानमधिकुर्वन्ति । प्रधानतया बोधिसत्त्वस्य भिन्नानां जन्मनां वर्णनोपेतानां जातकानां प्रत्येककथासु बुद्धस्य चरितं केनापि सुकृतेन धर्माचरणेन वा संश्लिष्टत्वेनोपस्थाप्यते यत् खलु आख्यानस्यैवांशरूपेण विवृण्यते । पुनरपिस्थानेषु बुद्धेन सन्दिग्धविषयाणाम्



समाधानावसरे नैतिकशिक्षा: उपदिश्यते । एवमेव भारतीयाख्यानानि न केवलं वास्तविकजीवनस्य समस्यानां साहित्यस्य च मध्ये संयोगसूत्रान्वेषणस्य अपि तु मनुष्यपशुपक्षिवृक्षादीनां पारस्परिकसौहार्दपूर्णसम्बन्धस्य दृष्टान्तानुपस्थापनस्य आदर्शमञ्चरूपेण वरीवर्तन्ते ।

आधुनिककालेपि नैतिकप्रमूल्यसमृद्धानाम् एतानां कथानां प्रासङ्गिकता वर्तते । एतासु प्रतिफलितानां तात्कालिकसमाजानां शिक्षा-अर्थव्यवस्थादीनां विमर्शस्य प्रभूतावसरं वर्तते । एतद्विविच्यैव प्राच्यायाः अयमडकः उपकथाविशेषांकरूपेण प्रकाशितुं निर्णीतः । अंके सस्मिन् कुलतः 21संख्यकेषु शोधलेखेषु उपकथासु वर्णितान् विभिन्नविषयानधिकृत्य विमर्शः क्रियते । आशास्महे शोधपत्रेषु विमृष्टविषयाः विदुषां पर्यालोचनाय, जिज्ञासुनां ज्ञानपिपासाप्रशमनाय पाठकान् शैक्षणिकपरिशीलनाय च उपकारकाः भविष्यन्ति ।

अन्ते च प्रकाशनप्रक्रियायाम् अनेकधा साहाय्यं कृतवद्भ्यः महाविद्यालयस्य अध्यक्षमहाभागान्, उपदेष्टृमण्डलस्य सम्पादकमण्डलस्य च सदस्येभ्यः भूरि कृतज्ञतां ज्ञापयामि । टडकनस्य मुद्रणस्य च गुरुदायित्वं सुष्ठुतया निर्वाहयते 'ग्राफिक्स' इति मुद्रणशालायाः स्वत्वाधिकारिणे श्रीमद् रमेन भागवतीमहोदयाय असमाकं सर्वेषां पक्षतः धन्यवादान् व्याहरामि ।

इति शम्

मानसी शर्मा
प्रधानसम्पाकः



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The Sanskrit Fables in World Literature and Art Forms

Prof. Manjula Devi

The Sanskrit fables and tales, which have their origin in the Vedic literature, contain no such rigid distinction. These are specially intended to teach practical wisdom and lessons of polity. The fables and tales always attract the human mind, which have a didactic motive and a sententious note. It is interesting to note that, in the fables, all sorts of human behaviour are transferred to the animal kingdom. Thereby, the stories become allegories, which provide moral instruction through amusement. The Pañcatantra, the Hitopadeśa, the Vetālapañcaviṁśati, the Simhāsanadvātrimśikā, the Śukasaptati, etc., deserve particular mention among the Sanskrit fables. The fables have an extensive circulation, both in the country of its origin and throughout the nations as various versions of translations and adaptations are composed all over the world. This is due to the vast popularity of the fables that these texts have gained currency in different parts of the world. Equally, the fables have enriched the diverse art forms of the various nations of the world.

Sanskrit fables and tales have their origin in the Vedic literature as the *Rgveda*, the first specimen of world literature, itself contains copious materials with the characteristics of the fables. There is no such rigid distinction between the fables and the tales. Yet, Ramaranjan Mukherji, the noted Indologist, in his essay, entitled, ‘Sanskrit and Sanskritic Fables’, incorporated in the *Cultural Heritage of India*, observes, ‘While the fable becomes enriched by the folktale or spicy stories of human adventure, the tale becomes complex by assimilating the features of beast stories and also their didactic motive.’¹



Embracing into its body, the elements of the fable and of the tale, the *Pañcatantra* deserves a prominent place in the Sanskrit fable literature. The *Pañcatantra*, written in prose with an admixture of illustrative aphoristic verses, is specially intended to teach practical wisdom to princes. It is held that the *Pañcatantra* was penned by one Viṣṇuśarman, to whom the sons of King Amaraśakti of Mahilāropya, a city in the South India, were entrusted, on his promising, to beget them the lessons of polity within six months.²

The term *pañcatantra* itself suggests that it is divided into five books (*tantra*), each of which deals with an aspect of practical wisdom. The books are entitled *Mitrabheda* (which handles separation of friends), *Mitrasamprāpti* (which deals with the acquisition of friends), *Kākolūkīya* (which illustrates the theme of war and peace describing the enmity between crows and owls), *Labdhapraṇāśa* (which has its central theme, the loss of what was gained) and *Aparikṣītakāraka* (the theme of which is hasty or ill-considered actions). The five books also contain the valuable verses through which the fundamentals of moral, religious, philosophical and political ideas along with the general codes of conduct are unravelled. The *Pañcatantra* possesses a universal appeal owing to the lucidity with which the noblest thoughts have been expressed.

It is interesting to note that the beasts and birds, i.e. the animals, and the human beings are brought together in a most natural way to play their distinctive roles in the stories of the *Pañcatantra*. Here, all sorts of human behaviour are transferred to the animal kingdom. Thereby, the stories become allegories, which provide moral instruction through amusement. The tales and stories always attract the human mind, and thus, the *Pañcatantra*, the *Hitopadeśa* of Nārāyaṇapaṇḍita, and such fables become widely acclaimed books of stories. These stories have always a didactic motive and a sententious note. This didactic motive of the fables bring into a peculiar pattern of the fable literature, the pattern of enclosing stories within a main story. The characters usually try to support their motto by allusions to other fables, and this causes the insertion of a tale within a tale. Thus, the *Pañcatantra* contains seventy-eight subtales within its framework.

The earliest collection of fables, known to us, is Guṇāḍhya's *Brhatkathā*, composed in Paiśaci-prākṛta, a very low form of Prākṛta, spoken by the degraded class. Daṇḍin calls it the *bhūtabhāṣā*.³ Scholars hold that the original *Brhatkathā* was written in prose, which is now lost. The two Kashmirian versions of the *Brhatkathā* are available



in Sanskrit, one is Somadeva's *Kathāsaritsāgara* and the other is *Bṛhatkathāmañjarī* of Kṣemendra.

Diverse works were composed in Sanskrit mostly inspired by the *Bṛhatkathā* and the *Pañcatantra*, of which the *Vetālapañcaviṃśati*, the *Simhāsanadvātriṃśikā*, the *Śukasaptati*, the *Kathārṇava*, the *Puruṣaparīkṣā* and the *Bhojaprabandha* deserve particular mention, besides the *Hitopadeśa*, which is avowedly based on the *Pañcatantra*.

The original text of the *Pañcatantra* was lost at times, and later on, the *Tantrākhyāyikā* is recognised as a true version of the primary text of the *Pañcatantra*, with insertion of more tales into it, and thus, it is an enlarged edition of the original *Pañcatantra*.

The *Pañcatantra*, along with the *Tantrākhyāyikā*, had an unequalled success in that, it was translated in various languages all over the world. In the whole field of world literature, observes V. Raghavan, the distinguished Indologist, 'There has been no work more remarkable than the Sanskrit *Pañcatantra* of which two hundred versions arose in more than fifty languages, three-fourths of which are non-Indian.'⁴

The *Pañcatantra* has an extensive circulation, both in the country of its origin and throughout the world. It was first translated into Pahlavi, also known as Pehlevi, the language of Persia, or Iran, in the Middle East. The Pahlavi was the official language of the Sassanian or Sassanid empire of Persia, the Neo-Persian Empire, known to the historians, from 3rd century B.C. to 10th century A.D. It was the Persian royal physician (*rājavidya*) Burzoe, also known as Burzoy, who translated the work into Pahlavi in 570 CE. It is said that he travelled to India in search of a book of wisdom, a book greatly sought by the then king of Persia, viz. King Khosru Anushīrvan, also called Khusroy I, who ruled from 531 CE to 579 CE in Persia. The title of the translated work is *Karirak ud Damanak*, which is derived from the name of the two jackals that figure in the first book of the *Pañcatantra*, viz. Karaṭaka and Damanaka. The book by Burzoe is also lost now, which became the basis of the Syriac translation under the title *Kalilag wa Damnag*. The translation was done by the famous Syrian priest and writer Bud in 570 CE. Syria is now officially known as Syrian Arab Republic in Western Asia. After two hundred years, around 750 CE, Abd-allah-ibn-al-Muquaffa translated the Syriac version into Arabic, with the title *Kalilah wa Dimnah*. In this version, half its contents are based on the older works like the Syriac translation and some are Muquaffa's own additions. This Arabic version led to the composition of various versions, including a second Syriac version in 10th century A.D., and an 11th century version in Greek by



Symeon, entitled *Stephanites kai Ichnelates*, from which translations were made into Latin and various Slavic languages. The Slav countries in central and Eastern Europe are, viz. Russia, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Serbia, Croatia, Bosnia, Bulgaria and others. In 12th century A.D., the Hebrew version of Rabbi Joël came out, which became the source of the most European versions of the *Pañcatantra*. The Hebrew was the spoken language of ancient Palestine in Western Asia, and now it is the official language of the state of Israel in the Middle East.

In 13th century A.D., Johannes De Capua, who was an Italian Jewish convert to Christianity, also known as John of Capua, rendered the Hebrew version into Latin, under the title *Directorium humane vitae*, which was printed about 1480 C.E. From Capua's work, was made the famous German version by Anton von Pforr, under the title *Das Buch der Beispiele der alten Weisen*, or *Book of Apologues of the Ancient Sages*, first printed in 1481 CE. A Persian version was also made in 1130 CE, which was recast later under the title, *Anvār-i-Suhailī*, or *Lights of Canopus*.

Thus, different subsequent translations and adaptations of the *Pañcatantra* are available in various languages of Europe and Asia. The tales of *Pañcatantra* are also available in English literature under the title, *Fables of Bidpai*, which is an English translation of the later Syriac version, done by J.G.N. Keith - Falconer, published from Cambridge in 1885. This work is also known as *Fables of Pilpay*. A.A. Macdonell holds that Bidpai or Pilpay is derived from Bidbah, the character of the Brāhmaṇa philosopher in the translation work, which is equivalent to Sanskrit term *vidyāpati*, i.e. 'master of sciences', 'chief scholar'.⁵ *The Moral Philosophie of Doni* is another English version of the *Pañcatantra*, and these works are mainly found as the derivative works, developed later on.

The similarities of stories, found in the *Pañcatantra*, with those in the *Aesop's Fables* attest to the fact that the stories travelled widely and orally in the ancient world. The *Aesop's Fables*, or the *Aesopica*, a collection of fables, is credited to Aesop, a slave, and a storyteller, believed to have lived in ancient Greece (620 - 564 BCE). The stories, associated with his name, have descended to modern times through a number of sources, and the new stories are still being added to Aesop's corpus. Thus, Aesop's glory as the fabulist has become worldwide. With regard to the place of origin of these fables, scholars are widely divided in their opinion. But the resemblance between the fables of the *Pañcatantra* and those of Aesop is striking, and thereby the scholars establish that the tales are indebted to their Indian origin, or it can be explained due to common world heritage.⁶



The *Pañcatantra* stories travelled to Indonesia through old Javanese written literature, and possibly through old versions. It has been translated into Turkish (spoken in Turkey, Cyprus, etc.), Danish (spoken in Denmark, Greenland, etc.), Georgian (the official language of Georgia, a country at the intersection of Europe and Asia), Icelandic (a North Germanic language, spoken in Iceland, a country in Europe), and in several other languages in the East.

Many English translations of the *Pañcatantra* are available in different parts of the world. Amongst them, Johannes Hertel, a German Indologist, did an extensive work on the translation and critical edition of the *Pañcatantra*, which is a research-based work, published in Harvard Oriental Series (Vols. XI, XII, XIII & XIV), Harvard University Press, Cambridge, USA.

Other scholars like Theoder Benfey, a German scholar of Sanskrit and Comparative Linguistics, Franklin Edgerton, an American linguistic scholar, Arthur W. Ryder, Salisbury Professor of Comparative Philology at Yale University, New Haven, Patrick Olivelle, Professor of Sanskrit and Indian religions at the University of Texas, Austin, Texas, and the like, also have contributed in a major way to the study of *Pañcatantra*, through their English translations and critical editions.

Likewise, the *Hitopadeśa* fables also gained wide currency in many languages of the East and the West. Charles Wilkins, an English Orientalist, translated the *Hitopadeśa* into English in 1787, who was also the first translator of the *Śrīmadbhagavadgītā*, into English in 1785. In Sinhalese literature also, there is a didactic poem *Subāsītaya* by Alagiyavanna Mohottala of 17th century, which is based on the *Hitopadeśa*. In Indonesia also, there is a fable, titled *Tantri Kāmandaka*, which is, principally, based on the *Pañcatantra* and the *Hitopadeśa*. It is also translated into the Newari language, which is now known as the *Nepāla-bhāṣā*.

The *Vetālapañcaviṃśatikā* or the *Vetālapañcaviṃśati* is a series of twenty-five stories, very old in its origin. One of its old recensions is found in the twelfth book of the *Kathāsaritsāgara*, by Somadeva, which was compiled in the 11th century A.D. But its old text is entirely lost, and it has come down to us in different recensions, made in later ages. The two other recensions, in Sanskrit, are those by Śivadāsa and Jambhaladatta. There is also another recension of the *Vetālapañcaviṃśati* by Veṅkaṭabhaṭṭa.

It contains twenty-four stories with the frame story itself, making up the twenty-fifth. The tales of the fable revolve around the mighty legendary king of ancient India, Vikramāditya of Ujjain, and the Vampire, *Vetāla*, a predatory undead spirit. The *Vetālas*



are the ghosts or spirits, who are believed to make their abode in the corpses and charnel grounds. It is also believed that the corpse no longer decays while it is inhabited by a *Vetāla*. King Vikrama promised a *Yogin* that he would capture a *Vetāla*, and in return, the *Yogin* promised to grant Vikrama special powers for the prosperity of his kingdom. This is where the plot of twenty-four substories begin. Each time, Vikrama tries to capture a *Vetāla*, it narrates a story that ends with a riddle, which Vikrama has to answer. The *Vetāla*, though mischievous in character, eventually proves to be a good spirit, who warns Vikrama about the nefarious motive of the *Yogin*, who is trying to plot his death, and thus, helping Vikrama vanquish his real enemy. Afterwards, the *Vetāla* is released with the promise that he would come to Vikrama's aid, whenever, he is in need.

The stories of the *Vetālapañcaviṃśati* are well-known as *Baitāl Pachīsī*, and its English version is *Vikram and the Vampire*, by Sir Richard Francis Burton, which is however, not a translation, but a very free adaptation. During the reign of Muhammad Shah III (1720-1747), the stories of the *Vetālapañcaviṃśati* were rendered into *Braja-bhāṣā*, in India, and it was retranslated into Hindi in 1805. The Hindi translation of the *Braja-bhāṣā* recension differs little from Śivadāsa's version, and many translations were made into European languages, based on the Hindi version, known as *Baitāl Pachīsī*, i.e. the Twenty-five Tales of a Spirit. John Platts made an English version of the fable, which was published from London in 1871. W.B. Barker rendered the English translation of the Hindi text of the fable, and H. Oesterly made a German translation of the work.

The twenty-five stories of *Vetāla* have been, very often, translated into popular Indian languages, and is found also in a strongly changed form in the Mongolian *Ssiddhi-kür*, written in Kalmyk language. The Kalmyks are a Mongolian subgroup in Russia and Kyrgyzstan. Here, in the word *ssiddhi-kür*, the word *kür* is Mongolian, and the term *siddhi* is Sanskrit *siddhi*, which means, 'the dead, endowed with supernatural powers'.⁷ The *Ssiddhi-kür*, however, has only thirteen stories, which have little correspondances with the Indian stories, excepting the framestory.

The Tibetan version of the *Vetālapañcaviṃśati* also is available. The spread of Indian literature in the Tibet, Mongolia and Siberia coincided with the dissemination of Buddhism in these regions. The process started in Tibet in 7th century A.D., and continued for a long time, making a great impact on its cultural life. Buddhism and its literature in Tibetan translations reached the regions, now known as Inner and Outer Mongolia, through Tibetan missionaries during the second half of the 12th century



A.D. It may be mentioned that a large number of Indian Sanskrit texts, both Buddhist and non-Buddhist were preserved in Tibet, which formed a precious collection. Rahul Sankrityayan, one of the most widely travelled scholars of India, a writer and a polyglot, found abundant texts preserved in original Sanskrit in the Shalu (Tibetan Zhwa lu) monastery in Tibet, during his visit there in 1930-31. While returning, he brought a number of them to the K.P. Jayaswal Research Institute, Patna.⁸

The fable is also translated into Newari, which was the language of the royal court of Nepal till 1768 C.E. The Malla kings of Nepal, an independent Hindu kingdom in the Himālayas, were patrons of learning, and they encouraged and patronized the production of literature in Maithili, Bengali, Sanskrit, etc., and thus, many Sanskrit texts were translated into Newari.

Its numerous adaptations for the screen in the form of TV serials are also available, and thus, it is adapted for various art forms also, such as performing art, painting, drawing, sculpture, filmmaking, crafts and architecture.

The *Simhāsadvātriṃśikā* or the *Simhāsanadvātriṃśatikathā*, i.e. the ‘Thirty-two Throne Stories’, also called the *Vikramacarita*, i.e. ‘Life and Deeds of Vikrama’, is a popular fable as its text is available in different recensions. Apparently, the South Indian recension stands closest to the original text.

The throne of Vikramāditya was a gift from Indra, and when king Śālivāhana vanquished him and killed him in battle, the throne was buried in the earth. King Bhoja of Dhārā in Malwa region in Central India (modern Dhār) once, by chance, unearthed it, and as he was ascending the throne, images of maidens, sculptured on the throne, became animated, and related the tales in praise of Vikramāditya to Bhoja, and regained their liberty.

The stories are indeed very fantastical, and by far, are not so lively as those of the *Vetālapañcaviṃśati*. The stories are meant to describe the nobility of the king Vikramāditya. Since in all the recensions, the frame story makes reference to King Bhoja and Dhārā, the work could not be of an age, earlier than 11th century A.D., which is observed by Winternitz.⁹ Probably, it was written in honour of Bhoja, during the period of his reign. In about 1574 C.E., this work was translated into Persian under an order of Akbar, the Great. This translated work has been rendered into French by Baron D. Lescallier, which was published in 1817 from New York. The fable has been translated into many Indian languages, and in Siamese language also, spoken by the Central Thai people and vast majority of Thai Chinese. The title of the work in Siamese language is



Sib-songlieng. It has been translated into Mongolian language under the title, *Story of Ardshi Bordshi Chan*. Ardshi Bordshi is Rājā Bhoja, and Chan in Mongolian language is Lord.¹⁰ There are other English translations of the work under the title, *Throne of King Vikrama*, known as a collection of Indian folk tales.

The *Śukasaptati* or the *Śukasaptatikathā* is a collection of seventy stories of erotic nature, but of didactic import in it. It is said that the story was related to Indra, in his assembly, by Nārada, in the form of a parrot. It is narrated that one Devadāsa kept a parrot, and when the king sent him away to a distant land, with an intent to seduce his wife, the parrot, to whom the care of his whole family was entrusted by Devadāsa, began to relate, each night, one story to her, which kept her absorbed in listening to the story, till dawn. And thus, by the end of narrating seventy stories, the husband returned, and the evil intention of the king to seduce his wife failed.

The date and the author of the original *Śukasaptati* is not known. The work has been translated into Persian under the title, *Tutinameh*, which literally means ‘Tales of a Parrot’, in the 14th century A.D. A lavishly illustrated version of the *Tutinameh*, containing two hundred and fifty miniature paintings, was commissioned by Mughal Emperor Akbar in the later half of the 16th century A.D., which was made over five years after he ascended the throne in 1556 CE. It was drawn by the two Persian artists, named Mir Sayyid Ali and Abdus Samad, working in the court workshop. It is now preserved in the Cleveland Museum of Art in Cleveland, Ohio, which houses a diverse permanent collection of more than 61,000 works of art form around the world. A second version of the *Tutinameh*, made for Akbar, is now dispersed among several Museums, but with the largest part in the Chester Beatty Library in Dublin, Ireland, which is presently known as the Chester Beatty, established in 1950 CE.

The original authorship of the *Tutinameh* is credited to Nachshabi, a Persian physician and Sufi saint, a contemporary of Hafiz (also known as Hafez), the Persian lyric poet. On Nachshabi’s *Tutinameh*, Kadiri made another Persian rendering in the 18th, or in the beginning of the 19th century A.D., and one hundred years after Nachshabi, was prepared the Turkish version by George Rosen, published from Leipzig in 1858.

A.B. Keith has observed that through the *Tutinameh*, many Indian stories have gained currency in West Asia and in Europe.¹¹ P.K. Hitti, a Lebanese - American Professor and scholar at Princeton and Harvard University, who single-handedly created the discipline of Arabic studies in the United States, observes that the basis of the famous Arabian book of fables, *Thousands and One Nights*, was a Persian work,



containing several stories of Indian origin.¹²

And thus, it is derived that due to the vast popularity of the fables, the *Pañcatantra* and the other texts travelled widely to the different corners of the world, and thereby various versions of the fables exist in most of the world languages as translations and adaptations. Equally, the fables have enriched the diverse art forms of the different parts of the world.

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12. Vide, *Ibid.* Also vide, note 16.



The Content and Context of Śukasaptati: A Reading of Its Fables from a Western Translation

Dr. Pranjal Sharma Bashishtha

A late addition to the Kathā-Upakathā (tales-and-fables) tradition of Sanskrit literature is Śukasaptati, which is a nearly twelfth century CE text by one Cintāmaṇi Bhatt. The text contains seventy-two tales, including different types of fables. The content of the text is also varied and closely related to the contemporary socio-religious context.

The present paper primarily attempts at a critical evaluation of the content of Śukasaptati by emphasizing an investigative consideration of its fables. It also aims to discern their contextual bearings. In the process, B. Hale Wortham's translation of Śukasaptati has been the primary text. The research methods used in the paper have been analytical and comparative.

Keywords: *Animal fable, clash of religions, fable, Female Power, pure fable, patriarchy*

Śukasaptati ("Parrot Seventy", meaning "Seventy Tales by a Parrot") is a collection of antique Indian tales in Sanskrit prose attributed to certain Cintāmaṇi Bhatt, who is thought to have amassed it in and around the twelfth century CE. Like its prototype texts like *Pañcatantra*, *Vetāl Pañcaviṅśati*, *Hitopadeśa*, and *Kathāsaritsāgara* of the *Kathā-Upakathā* (tales-and-fables) tradition, it has considerable relevance to the academic community, though it has till now received little critical attention. In-depth discussions on it are hard to find.



Nevertheless, *Śukasaptati* has immense appeal to the readers, which is attested by its rich history of translation. It was translated into Persian in the fourteenth century itself, "but that [translation] was crude and clumsy." (Winterniz 382). It became a base of *Tutināmā* ("Parrot Book") an "ornate" (382) Persian translation of *Śukasaptati* by certain Nachshabi in the same century. Nachshabi's book became a base of several similar works done till the nineteenth century (382). The present researcher has been able to go through the *Tutināmā* of certain Qadir Bakhsh through *Totā Itihās*, a Bengali wrought version brought out by Chandicharan Munshi for the first time in 1805.

Śukasaptati was translated into English by B. Hale Wortham in London in 1911. However, as Wortham mentions, this translation titled *The Enchanted Parrot*, is only a "Selection" of the stories in *Śukasaptati*: "Some of the tales have been omitted as unsuitable for translation into English." (Wortham 8). The complete Sanskrit text has been recently translated into English by A. N. D. Haksar in 2000.

The Sanskrit text has been translated into several regional languages also. For example, a Bengali version by Nrisimha Prasad Bhaduri came out in 2001, and an Assamese by Thanewar Sarma in 2005. A Sanskrit version with commentaries in Sanskrit and Hindi under the editorship of Ramakanta Tripathi appeared in 2002. A Hindi version by Sushma Gupta has been published recently, in 2020. Gupta's translation is, however, based on another translation, i.e., the one by B. Hale Wortham.

The present paper has the objective of attempting at a critical evaluation of the content of *Śukasaptati* with special reference to its fables. It also aims to delve into its context. While doing so, the present researcher has relied on Wortham's translation, considering its literary and historical importance. It warrants mention here that Wortham's omission of a few tales in *The Enchanted Parrot* has not affected the overall narrative and appeal of *Śukasaptati*.

Like *Pañcatantra*, *Vetāl Pañcaviṅśati*, *Hitopadeśa* and *Kathāsaritsāgara*, *Śukasaptati* has a frame narrative that inter-weaves its tales. Its title mistakenly hints that there are seventy tales in it, whereas, in actuality, it has a total of seventy-two tales, out of which the one about a young couple named Madana and Prabhāvatī serves as the main tale or the frame tale. The main tale has an unnamed third-person narrator, perceivably human. In his tale about Madana and Prabhāvatī, there appears an anthropomorphic parrot, which tells two tales to Madana and sixty-nine to Prabhāvatī in between. A few of the embedded tales told to Prabhāvatī have further embedded tales, told by a secondary narrator in the form of an intelligent young woman.



Viewed independently, a few of the tales in *Śukasaptati* are pure or 'animal' fables, for they have only animals as characters. There are humans along with animals in a few other fables. Many other tales are not exactly fables as they have only humans as characters. There tales are not parables too. They do not have the essential religious preaching and moral lessons of parables. In truth, as it will be clear soon, they abound in immoral acts.

Yet, in one way, these, save the main tale, are all fables, as their principal narrator is a parrot. Thus, they are records of a human (Cintāmaṇi Bhaṭṭ's) perception of a parrot's probable perception of humans and animals. The point gets further complicated when the narrative reveals at two junctures that the parrot is, in reality, a human under a curse. It will be clarified later.

Śukasaptati opens with a hymn to Sārādā, who is none other than Goddess Sarasvatī, the epitome of "Divine Wisdom" (Wortham 9). It sets the ball into motion following the typical Indian fashion of folk tales:

"There is a city called Chandrapura, whose king was Vikramasena. A man of noble family called Haridatta lived there too. He had a wife named Śringārasundarī, and a son – Madana. Madana's wife's name was Prabhāvātī, the daughter of Somadatta, a man of importance in the town." ⁽⁹⁾.

The speed of the narrative at this point is notable. The parrot also appears soon thereafter. Yet, it has not rushed to tell stories to Prabhāvātī. A Brāhmaṇ gives the parrot to Haridatta with the assurance that it will give the latter's spoiled son Madana "knowledge and wisdom." ⁽¹⁰⁾. Here a link with Goddess Sarasvatī occurs, and the author's (Cintāmaṇi Bhaṭṭ's) intention of imparting "knowledge and wisdom" also permeates. These are then supported by the positive transformation that Madana undergoes after listening to the first story of the parrot. Listening to the story, Madana, unmindful of his responsibilities towards his parents, becomes responsible and blameless: "At these words Madana repented of his conduct, returned home and behaved with due regard to his father and mother." ⁽¹³⁾.

Speedily again, the narrative now talks about Prabhāvātī. Madana leaves for a far away country, and Prabhāvātī, left in loneliness and under the evil counsels of her friends, falls in love with another man. As she prepares to go out to meet her lover one evening, the parrot exclaims: "I never heard of any woman of decent character doing such a thing!" ⁽¹⁴⁾. The parrot then tells her a story about marital promiscuity, and "as



night by now tolerably far advanced [Prabhāvātī and her friends] went to bed." (17). At this juncture, the unnamed narrator of the main story seems to have expanded his thematic scope to include sexual morality, besides the existing one of familial responsibility.

Prabhāvātī sets out to be unfaithful in marriage sixty-nine times, once every evening since then. Every time she prepares to go out, the parrot tells her a story and thus spoils her design. Her friends' mentality behind giving counsel for having an extra-marital affair, her subsequent intention to violate marital sanctity, and the erotic contents of most of the tales told by the parrot can give the false impression that the whole text is about sexual freedom. However, the sexual morality that the parrot always stresses and many woman characters' attempts at making pretence of being sexually faithful inside marriage point to the contrary.

Śukasaptati is thus essentially about society's advocacy for women's restrictions in the domestic sphere. It is a product of the patriarchal society that wants to achieve male dominance over women. The parrot's last conversation with Madana, held after his return, includes the topic of Prabhāvātī's unfaithfulness. Here, it echoes a typically patriarchal notion: "Affection in women means nothing; pride in women means nothing" (122). Slightly before this, Prabhāvātī shows a sign of hegemonic acceptance of the parrot's "words of wisdom" with the following words:

"Women are unstable; they have little or no affection for their husbands; they think much of themselves; they are ignorant; weak; careless in the performance of their duties. Women exercise their powers of attraction, and then when they have caught a man they draw him out like a fish in a net...." (121).

Imparting of "knowledge and wisdom" is, then, the leitmotif of *Śukasaptati*. It has not supported any kind of misconduct— be it familial or matrimonial— at any point. At this juncture, the truth about the parrot needs to be reasserted. Shortly after the main tale unfolds, the parrot appears with the following description: "One day a certain Trivikrama... took with him *a confidential friend in the shape of a parrot.*" (9; emphasis added). Then, towards the end of the tale, the parrot goes to heaven. It is revealed that it was a man, after all, a man with a typical masculine mindset. It needs to be noted that its fine accomplishment of the task of counselling Prabhāvātī earns its freedom and heavenly bliss. Its description at this point goes in the following way:



"While the festival was proceeding, a rain of flowers fell from heaven, and the Parrot– the adviser and confidant of Prabhāvati– *freed from the curse which had compelled him to wear a parrot's form*, ascended to the abode of the gods, and [as it typically happens in an Indian folk tale] Madana and Prabhāvati passed the remainder of their lives in peace and happiness." (127; emphasis added).

Now a question arises regarding the context of the text. What is the context of the text's depiction of so much sexual misconduct? This recurring concern of text is relatable to what the French critic Hippolyte Tyne (1828-93) termed as 'race', 'milieu', and 'moment'. The time of the composition of *Śukasaptati*, as it has been mentioned above, is the twelfth century CE, which belongs to the late ancient era in India. It was a period in which the Tāntric ways of worshipping Śakti, the Mother Goddess, culminated (Harper and Brown 53). Against this culmination, many forces, such as Vedic Brāhmaṇism, Vaiṣṇavism, and Neo-Vaiṣṇavism were working. For example, in *Prahlāda Caritra*, a Vaisnavite Assamese text by Hema Sarasvatī of the fourteenth century, propagates Vaiṣṇavism by undermining the Vāmāchārī (i.e., Tāntric) cult. Prabhāvati's attempt at achieving sexual misconduct is another way of showing how the Female Power became vital at the time.

Though obliquely, *Śukasaptati* has also shown the clash of religions. The opening hymn to Goddess Sarasvatī implies that the author Cintāmaṇi Bhaṭṭa is a follower of Vedic Brāhmaṇism. Yet, Goddess Durgā appears in a story (No. III; page 20). It needs to be noted here that Durgā has been shown here as a foolish goddess. She gives a boon to a "rascal" (20), utilizes it to deceive others. Such points in the text suggest that its author wanted to suppress the Female Power, epitomized by Durgā and Padmāvati.

Lastly, it is time to take up the issues of the content and context of the animal fables in *Śukasaptati*. Wholesome animal fables are not many in the text. A few of them are told by the parrot, and a few others by a young Brāhmiṇ girl. However, they have an important function to play. They do not have anything to do with the recurring concern of the text about sexual misconduct. What are their functions, then?

Firstly, a few of them, are retellings from their versions in *Pañcatantra* and *Hitopadeśa*. Thus, they continue the tradition of imparting nīti ("useful moral conduct"), once done by its prototype texts in the *Kathā-Upakathā* tradition. Secondly, it relates to the theme of the "knowledge and wisdom", a theme that came to the fore quite early in the main tale.



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Morā Parittā, Peacock Fable, and Moral Teaching in Therāvāda Buddhism: A Study

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The Buddha was predominantly an ethical teacher. His chief concern was to show humans a path to peaceful life through the cultivation of the right knowledge, conduct, and concentration. That he did through various methods. Teaching through fables is one of them. These fables underpin some of the Parittā chanting (protective chanting) that the Buddhist followers, particularly the Therāvādī, recite during their observance days. This paper throws light on the Buddhist chanting of Morā Parittā (peacock's protective chanting) and traces back to the Morā Jātaka tale that underpins this practice. Then, the work tries to find out the relevance of the peacock story to the Buddhist concept of tanhā (desire) and its resultant suffering and tries to establish how the fable behind this chanting is a moral lesson on the efficacy of walking a righteous path and keeping suffering at bay.

Keywords: *Parittā chanting, Morā Parittā, Buddhist fables, Peacock tale, Buddhist moral teaching*

Introduction

It was commonplace among the spiritual gurus to use fables, similes, and allegories to impart moral lessons to the laities. Fables being laconic fictional stories that feature animals, plants, legendary creatures, and many more interesting characters, the lessons given through them have a good impact on the listeners. As morality and life lessons are



something without which people cannot live their lives peacefully, spiritual gurus adopted these tools to teach people in an effective and widely acceptable way. If we minutely study Pañcatantra¹, the fables of the Holy Bible², Jātaka Tales, and Milinda Paṇḥa³ and Kīrtan Ghoṣā⁴, we'll find that there are deep messages behind the anecdotes. They all tell us how to act and behave in different situations of life so that we can live harmoniously with our fellow beings. In this small space of this paper, probably it will be hard for the author to cover the fables found in all the faiths and their buried moral lessons with a solid claim on the finding. The author, thus, would like to restrict the discussion to the Buddhist Morā Parittā chanting, the fable that supports this practice of chanting, and the moral teaching behind this story with reference to the Buddhist view of desire and suffering, and the need of following a righteous path. Much of the ideas put forth here are derived from the relevant sutta and Jātaka tales and the fieldwork conducted at a number of vihāras and monasteries of Northeast India. Indeed, conversations with monks and novices from different vihāras helped in finding the significance of the Parittā chanting, particularly Morā Parittā and its supporting fable, Morā Jātaka, and the Buddhist ethical teaching behind it. Then, the author does not claim the finding to be conclusive.

I. Parittā chanting: its place in the Therāvāda belief system

Chanting is common in every religious tradition. It is recited during different occasions through which our mind sends out positive energy and in so doing calms down and releases stress. Parittā chanting is a well-known Buddhist practice of Sutta (verse) chanting that is conducted across the world by Buddhists, particularly in Therāvāda traditions. It is believed that many of these chantings are selected by the disciples of the Buddha from his basic teachings⁵. According to Monier-Williams, the word Parittā is derived from the Sanskrit term Paritrāṇa which means rescue, preserve, deliver, or protect.⁶ Rhys Davids and William Stede also translate the word as protection or safeguard.⁷ Hence this chanting is used to ward off dangers, misfortunes, evils⁸ from the house and the vicinity. Parittās present how we can express our seeking (spiritual or mundane) humbly through the delineation of different situations where animals or other celestial bodies ask for heightening spiritualism. These Parittās may be reverential, invocative, protective (from fear, danger, and snares), healing (diseases and delivery pain, etc.) and help-seeking.



"To ward off adversity and
 To bring all good things of life,
 To remove all suffering,
 Fear and disease,
 To promote the welfare
 Of all in the world,
 And to bestow
 Longevity in this life,
 Do we now chant the auspicious Protective Discourses."⁹

Of the Parittā chantings, Karaniyā Mettā Sutta (Loving Kindness), Maṅgala Sutta (Blessings), Ratana Sutta (Jewels), and Ātānātiya Sutta (Discourse of Protection) are generally recited.¹⁰ The uposāths¹¹ or the days of observance are considered to be the most favourable occasions of chanting these suttas. This practice is mainly for monastics where the monks take the lead role. The novices and the devotees also join the chanting as observers and imitators. On the said occasions, the abbot and other monks recite the suttas in presence of the novices and the devotees at vihāras or monasteries. The novices observe and imitate what the monks chant. The devotees mindfully listen to the chants with their hands folded. It is almost like a compulsory evening chanting at the vihāras during vassavāsa, the three-month rains retreat. During this period, the monastics do not go out. They spend most of their time reading texts, performing religious rituals, and practicing meditation. Some vihāras or monasteries offer courses on Dhamma studies during which the organiser makes the participants join in their Parittā chanting sessions. Karaniyā Mettā Sutta or Loving Kindness chanting is very powerful that not only does good to the reciter but also to those who listen. When it is practiced day and night, it brings invaluable benefits, like one falls asleep happily, enjoys sound sleep without any bad dreams.¹² During the time of this chanting, the windows and doors should be kept open so that the sound can traverse far and wide. For, this recitation is meant for the good of all beings and hence the love sent out through the chanting should reach all the beings.¹³ Over and above these chantings recited usually on the uposāth days, Aṅgulimālā Parittā (Aṅgulimālā Protection) and Morā Parittā (The Peacock's Protection) are also chanted during some specific occasions.¹⁴ In the Tai Buddhist tradition of Assam and Arunachal Pradesh, who are the Therāvāda followers, protective chanting (Pilik in Tai) is recited during crises. This practice is an indispensable part of the Tai Buddhist's



personal security system.¹⁵ For them, it is necessary for facing a life crisis. The monks consider it an important duty to chant the verses to the laity in their need apart from the usual chanting at vihāras or monasteries. They believe that refusing to perform the Parittā ritual in the community's crisis is like the refusal of a doctor to come during a patient's need. The Tai have their versions in Tai. Again, the recitation of Mettā Sutta (Mettā Suk in Tai) is especially effective for the protection of the subjects from evil spirits. Aṅgulimālā Parittā is recited by the monks for lessening the labour pain and for the safe delivery of the expecting mothers. Morā Parittā is chanted as a charm to protect the subjects from snares and the clutch of enemies. The Tai Buddhist communities believe that chanting Morā Parittā keeps the house safe and sound. Hence it is chanted when a house is newly built and when a house is burnt accidentally. The second verse of the peacock's prayer for protection goes like this:

*"ye brāhmaṇavedagūṣabbadhamme,
te me namote ca maripālayantu;
namatthuBuddhānarīnamatthubodhiya,
namovimuttānarīnamovimuttiyā;
imaṃ so parittaṃkatvā morocarati esanaṃ."*¹⁶

Meaning, honour to those Brāhmaṇas¹⁷ who comprehend all Dhammas. May they protect me. Honour to the Buddhas, to their Enlightenment. Honour to those released from bondage and to their deliverance. Having made this protection, the peacock goes about seeking food.

It is a narration of the peacock's prayer to the Buddha, the Arahant, for its safety.

II. Morā Jātaka Fable (Peacock tale) that underpins Morā Parittā : Buddhist Simile of warding off evils

Parittā chanting, like other rituals of a tradition, has not become a practice overnight. It has scriptural support. Above all, it is supported by the teachings of the Buddha, who delivered his teachings through various methods, viz., discourses, similes, and fables. Morā Parittā has root in Morā Jātaka. The sutta recited here has a connection to one of the Buddha's past lives when he was born as a golden peacock. This anecdote was told by the Buddha at Jetavana to a backsliding man who relapsed into bad habits as enchanted by a woman.¹⁸ As the fable goes, when Brahmadata was the king of Benaras, the Buddha was born as a peacock, a very charming golden peacock, on the hill of Danḍaka in the Himalayan mountains. The peacock was safe from all creatures



as it chanted a self-composed Brahma spell in the morning in the gesture of worshipping Sun,

*"udetayarīcakkhumāekarājā,
harissavaṇṇopaṭhavippabhāso;
taṃ Tarīnamssāmīharissavaṇṇaṇṇapaṭhavippabhāsaṃ
tayājījaguttā viharemu divasaṃ."*¹⁹

Meaning, there rises the golden one, the one who has sight, the sole monarch, who illuminates the earth. I adore you, golden one who illuminates the earth. Protected by you we live today safe and secure. The bird also used to chant in honour of the past Buddhas and their glories every morning and evening, and prayed for its protection. And praying devotedly for its protection, the bird (Bodhisatta peacock) lived happily (Imaṃ so parittaṃkatvā// Moro vāsamakappayī).²⁰

Then there was a hunter who had seen the bird and told his son about its wonders. At that time, queen Khemā of Benares had a dream of a golden peacock holding a religious discourse. She demanded the king to bring the golden peacock to the palace. The king sent the hunter to catch the bird, but the hunter could not. For, the bird created such a shield through the power of its prayer and charm that even when it stepped upon the snare set by the hunter the snare did not close. The hunter tried for seven years and died. The queen also died out of sadness. At this, the old king became very angry with the bird and left an inscription saying that whoever eats the flesh of the golden peacock shall ever be young and immortal. So six successive rulers of the kingdom tried to capture the peacock but failed. The seventh successor king sent a clever hunter to catch the bird. He had a charming peahen that could sing very sweetly. The hunter noticed that the peacock used to recite a charm before it came out in the morning. Hence, early in the morning, the hunter set up the snare with the peahen which sang very melodiously before the golden bird started reciting his usual charm. At the enchanting tune of the peahen, the bird got tempted and approached her and was finally caught in the snare. Then the hunter brought the bird to the palace and presented it to the king. The king spent a good time with the bird having a regular discourse with him. One day the golden peacock narrated the story of its previous life as a pious king in the same kingdom and also explained the power of his prayer and charm to the king. The bird also requested the king to unearth the jewelled car from the royal lake to validate his narration. When the peacock was found true, the king offered his kingdom to the Bodhisatta (the peacock),



but the latter returned it and went back to his original adobe. After telling the story to the backslider, the Buddha disclosed the truth that the golden peacock in the story was Himself (the Buddha) and the king was his disciple Ānanda. Later, the backslider became a monk. Since then, the chant is known as *Morā Parittā* that is recited to protect one from evils and enemies. As said before, in Buddhism, the evils are the ill thoughts and uncontrolled desires and hence the enemies are within that are to be killed by wholesome practice. So long as one makes his way through wholesome practice, nothing can harm him.

III. *Tanhā* (desire), *dukkha* (suffering), and *Parittā* chanting: the Buddhist morality behind

Buddhism assiduously promotes the virtues of non-greed, non-hatred, and non-illusion for the welfare of humans in particular and the nourishment of the environment in general. One should cultivate these three virtues (*kuśalamūla* in Pāli) to exist peacefully with fellow beings. The Buddha called them the holy man who have cultivated these traits. The Buddha said,

"He who has cut off the thong (of hatred), the band (of craving), and the rope (of false views), together with the appurtenances (latent evil tendencies), he who has removed the crossbar (ignorance) and is enlightened- him do I call a holy man."²¹

On the other hand, greed (*lobha*), hatred (*dveśa*), and illusion (*moha*) are the three evil roots (*akuśalamūla* in Pāli) that are the sources of the unwholesome and negative mental states.

"There is no fire like lust; there is no grip like hatred; there is no net like delusion; there is no river like craving."²²

The evil of greed breeds craving, self-indulgence, desire for material gain, attachment, and lust. Hatred manifests in dislike, grudge, antipathy, anger, vengefulness, and irritability. Delusion is another name for ignorance or wrong views. These three evils are interconnected. Of the three, ignorance or delusion is fundamental. Because of ignorance, we are unaware of the real nature of things. We fail to understand the ephemeral and interconnected nature of the environment. That, what we think or act has effects on others. Hence greed-driven, individuals indulge in acts like getting attached to the desired things and other unyielding things. It prevents one from practicing letting go. Owing to hatred, individuals use harsh speech, lying, slandering speech, harbour ill-will, and engage in forbidden acts like killing. It is toxic. In Buddhism, these three



evil roots are always blamable and thus are reprimanded by the wise. They not only harm the self but also the others. The word 'root' is used to refer to the intention from which an action stems. Therefore, no matter how a person tries to pretense the nature of an action, the truth can be traced to the thoughts that give rise to that action. The antidotes of delusion, greed, and hatred are wisdom, generosity, and loving-kindness respectively. As opposed to the three evil roots, these are the three wholesome roots that the Buddha advised humans to cultivate.

The fable of peacock tale or Morā Jātaka is a simile expressive of the Buddha's view of suffering, causes of suffering, and the shield that can protect from suffering. Regarding tanhā (desire) and attachment as the cause of suffering and the bondage in this saṃsāra (worldly life), the Buddha said that one who has demolished all the causes (kamma, good or bad), and thus has extinguished the fire of desires is the most excellent of men.²³ In the peacock fable of Jātaka tale, the peacock was free from suffering when it recited the prayer and charms, and did not heed to the passion. Its bondage is when it was moved by the inputs of its senses. It was caught when it could not resist its long for sensual pleasure arose on hearing the melodious song of the peahen. Here the bird's daily practice of dhamma is the protective shield that kept its passion in control. But it was caught off-guard when it was not shielded by the dhamma protection. The Morā fable thus depicts the situations in which one can remain protected from the evils with a strong focus on the dhamma and the circumstances in which he suffers when he slips away from the righteous path.

Conclusion

The connection between Morā Parittā chanting and Morā Jātaka is justified by the Buddhist moral teaching. The idea of protection is at the root of the Buddhist concept of mettā or loving-kindness, one of the four sublime mental states (Brahmavihāra). Keeping the mind in the positive frame by sending out loving-kindness to self and other beings is an act of protection in the Buddhist meditative practice. It is cultivating a welcoming mental state so one can maintain a good bond with others. The meditative practices that are used today for overcoming mental stress happened to be the way to gain protective powers earlier. Examples are not rare in the Buddhist legends regarding this idea. As one of the legends goes, when the Buddha was informed of the demise of a monk due to snakebite, he said that the monk would not have died if he practiced mettā or loving-kindness. The concern for protection, health, and well-being is likely to



be the backdrop to the development of Parittā chanting. Then, the prime requisite of this practice, which is evident from the foregoing discussion on Parittā chanting, in general, and Morā Parittā, in particular, is the strong feeling of loving-kindness that the practitioners must possess while performing this chant. Simple heartless recitation of the protective chanting is not what exactly the Buddha meant. It is the inner joy borne out of the chanting that should be transmitted to the heart of the listener. Then only, the positive energy sent out through the recitation would be multiplied as it traverses from one ear to another.

Endnotes and References

1. Written approximately in 200 B.C. by the celebrated Hindu scholar Pandit Vishnu Sharma, Panchatantra is the oldest surviving collection of Indian fables. It is a volume on morality that, particularly, stresses on the right conduct of life. Written in a chain of interesting stories, these are time-tested tales that bear moral and philosophical significance to guide the readers on how to live a meaningful life by understanding the values of life and human nature. See Vilas, Shubha, Pandit Vishnu Sharma'a Panchatantra, Bengaluru: Wonder House Books, 2019.
2. Genesis 8:6-12, p.6; Proverbs12:10, p.579; Number 22:28, p.143; Daniel 6:22, p.768; Matthew 21:2-3,5, p.841; Holy Bible, Kings James Version, 1611, American Bible Society, New York.
3. Mendis, N. K. G. (Ed.), The Questions of King Milinda, Kandy, Buddhist Publication Society, 2007, p. 48, 170.
4. Kīrtan Ghosā āru Nām Ghosā (Kīrtan Ghosā and Nām Ghosā), Introduction and Commentary by Rabi Chandra Barman, 5th Edition, 2015, Bina Library, Guwahati, Gajendropākhyān, pp.189-197.
5. Reference of Mettā Sutta, Ratana Sutta, and Maṅgala Sutta is found in Khuddaka Nikāya. See Lay, U Ko, Guide to Tripitaka (PDF), Retrieved from http://www.buddhanet.net/pdf_file/tipitaka.pdf, p. 134.
6. Williams, M., A Sanskrit-English Dictionary, Delhi, Motilal Banarsidass, 1990, p.595.
7. Rhys Davids, T. W. and Stede, W., Pali-English Dictionary, New Delhi, Munshiram Manoharlal, 1989, p.426.
8. By evils, the Buddha did not always mean the external evils. It embraced all the evils



including that arise in our minds. Hence the chants used in Paritta? sutta are meant for removing the evils from both outside and within.

9. Buddharakkhita, Ven. Dr. Acarya, Manual of Buddhist Devotional Practice, Bangalore, Buddha Vachana Trust, Maha Bodhi Society, 2016, p.25.
10. The information is collected from the author's field visits in Assam and Arunachal Pradesh and her active participation during the rituals. Also, it is based on the author's personal conversations with Gyanowada Bhikkhu of Margherita Buddha Vihara, Margherita, January 11, 2022.
11. Uposāths are Buddhist days of observance. These days are considered to be the time of renewed dedication to Dhamma practice observed by the laities and monastics throughout the world of Therāvāda Buddhism. Uposāth days vary from place to place and culture to culture. In many places like Assam and Arunachal Pradesh, full moon, no moon, and eighth days of the fortnight are observed as uposāthdays. These days are also known as the days of sacrifice (upavās). On uposāths, the devotees spend the day in vihāra campus performing merit-making acts, like offering alms to the monks, listening to the chants of the monks, and undertaking eight-precepts (āstasīla).
12. Bodhipala, Bhikkhu, Bodhi Vandana, Gaya, International Buddhist Culture Centre, 2017, p.68.
13. Ven. Ananda Bhikkhu, General Secretary of Maha Bodhi Society, Bengaluru, said this in his class during three months Certificate Course on Fundamentals of Buddha Dhamma conducted online from August 8, 2020 to October 31, 2020 by Maha Bodhi Society, Bengaluru, Mahabodhi Research Center (Affiliated to Karnataka Samskrit Univeristy, Govt of Karnataka).
14. Information about the recitation of Aṅgulimālā Parittā and Morā Parittā in the Tai Buddhist tradition is gathered from Gyanowada Bhikkhu of Margherita Buddha Vihara and Vimala Tissa Bhikkhu of Golden Pagoda, Namsai.
15. Sarma, R., Buddhism in Tai Life of Assam, New Delhi, Aayu Publications, 2022, p.175.
16. Bodhipala, Bhikkhu, Morā Parittā (The Peacock's Protection), verse 2, Bodhi Vandana, pp.73-74.
17. Here Brāhmaṇas are referred to those who have unloaded the burden of evils, i.e., the Buddha, or an Arahant.
18. Rouse, W. H. D.(trans.), The Jātakaor The Stories of the Buddha's Former Births (PDF), vol. II, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1895, Retrieved from <https://>



indianculture.gov.in/rarebooks/jataka-or-stories-buddhas-former-births-vol-ii,159 Morā Jātaka, pp.23-26.

19. Bodhipala, Bhikkhu, Morā Parittā (The Peacock's Protection), verse 1, Bodhi Vandana, p.73. Also see Rouse, W. H. D.(trans.), The Jātakaor The Stories of the Buddha's Former Birthsp.23.
20. Bodhipala, Bhikkhu, Morā Parittā (The Peacock's Protection), verse 4, Bodhi Vandana, p.73.
21. Dhammapada (26:398) says, Chetvā naddhiṃ varattaṃ ca// sandāmaṃ sahanukkamaṃ, / ukkhittapalighaṃ buddhaṃ// tam ahaṃ brūmibrāhmaṇaṃ. The Dhammapada, translated by Acarya Buddhariikkhita,2016, Buddhist Publication Society, Kandy, pp.169-170.
22. Dhammapada (18:251) says, Natthirāgasamoaggi, // natthidosasamogaho, // natthimohasamaṃjālaṃ, // natthitanhāsamā nadī. Ibid., pp.106-107.
23. Ibid., 7:97, pp.43-44.



An Analytical Study of the Moral Values in the Selected Jātakas of Jatakamālā of Āryaśūra

आर्यशूरकृतजातकमालायाः निर्वाचितजातकेषु
नैतिकमूल्यबोधानां विश्लेषणात्मकमध्ययनम्

Dr. Swapan Mal & Arpita Nath

From the start of civilization, there was a great heritage and culture in India. We see an immense influence of Vedic literature and Classical Sanskrit literature on Indian tradition as well as Buddhist literature. The tales and fables like Pañcatantra and Hitopadeśa and so on are very unique and experimented with methods for the teaching of innocent people. In the Buddhist tradition, we can see the same but more innovative and unique concept for the benefit of the people of society. As per the heritage of Buddhist literature, Lord Buddha was born many times in this world and he was able to recall his previous birth. In this connection, the disciples of Lord Buddha collected the stories of various births, like Śivirāja, Agastya, Haṁsa, Mahābodhi and so on. The collection of the story is called Jātakamālā or Bodhisattvāvanamālā. The great poet Āryaśūra selected the 34 stories in his book Jatakamālā. Many teachings are found here, like Dāna, Atithisatkāra, Dayā, Kṣamā, Pavitratā, Satkarma etc. Teachings of Lord Buddha as we find in these selected Jātakas of Āryaśūra are described in this article through an analytical method.

Keywords: Jātaka, Bodhisattva, Avadāna, Dāna, Atithisatkāra, Satkarma.



प्राचीनकालादेव भारतीयसंस्कृतौ सभ्यतायां साहित्ये च भारतवर्षस्य यद् शाश्वत-सनातन-ऐतिह्यं निहितमस्ति तत्तु संस्कृतसाहित्याश्रितमेव । वैदिककाले वेदोत्तरकाले च आध्यात्मिकतत्त्वानां दार्शनिकतत्त्वानां मानविकीतत्त्वानां सम्यक् प्रतिफलनं परिलक्ष्यते । तत्र कालक्रमेण देववादस्योत्पत्तिः विकाशश्चापि दरीदृश्यते । तथा भगवतो विष्णोः दशावतारस्य भावनापि भारतीयसाहित्ये विशेषतः कविजयदेवकृत-गीतगोविन्दमिति गीतिकाव्ये दृश्यते । तत्र केशवस्य विष्णोः अवताररूपेण भगवतो बुद्धस्य उल्लेखो वर्तते । तत्र कथितमस्ति-केशवधृतबुद्धशरीरं जय जगदीश हरे !^१ बौद्धसाहित्याश्रितस्य जातकसाहित्ये अवदानसाहित्ये वा भगवतो बुद्धस्य श्रीमुखतः तस्य बुद्धस्य पूर्वजन्मनः 34 (चतुस्त्रिंशत्) संख्यकाः कथाः कथिताः । एताः कथाः बोधिसत्त्वस्य महाकरुणातः उद्रिक्ताः । मानवहृदयाणां नैतिकतायाः सर्वोत्कृष्टं वस्तु भवति करुणा । तत्र बोधिसत्त्वोक्तजातकेषु कथासु करुणा एव मूलीभूता अस्ति । एताः कथाः अवदानमिति नाम्नाऽपि प्रसिद्धाः यतोहि बोधिसत्त्वस्य उदारचरित्रस्य परिचायिका भवन्ति एताः कथाः भवन्ति अनुश्रुतयः । सर्वेषां प्राणीनां मोक्षार्थं सरलतया सुखबोधोदात्मकेन विविधाः कथाः कथिताः सन्ति ।

बौद्धसम्प्रदायस्य मूलसिद्धान्तो वर्तते प्रज्ञा-करुणयोर्माहात्म्यम्, संसारस्य अनित्यत्वम्, क्षणिकत्ववादः, प्रतीत्यसमुत्पादवादश्चदयः । एतेषां सिद्धान्तानामनुसारं बौद्धाः स्वीकुर्वन्ति यत् भवचक्रमाध्यमेन जीवाः पुनःपुनः कृतकर्मानुसारं मनुष्यतः मनुष्येतरः उतो मनुष्येतरतः मनुष्यरूपेण शरीराणि धारयन्ति । किन्तु यदि जीवाः प्रज्ञा-करुणा-मैत्री-प्रेम-दानादिमाध्यमेन स्वीयकार्यं करिष्यन्ति तदा तेषां बुद्धत्वप्राप्तिर्भविष्यन्तीति जातकस्य मूलकथितविषयो वर्तते ।

जातककथायाः संग्रहः त्रिपिटकान्तर्गतस्य सुत्तपिटकस्य खुद्दकनिकाये अस्ति । आचार्यपाउमबोलमहोदयेन सम्पादिते संग्रहग्रन्थे ५४४ संख्यकाः जातककथा वर्तन्ते । ईशवीयपूर्वाब्दे द्वितीयशतके चित्ते चुल्लनिदेशग्रन्थे ५०० संख्यकाः कथाः सन्निविष्टाः सन्ति । चैनिकपर्यटकः फा-हियेनमहोदयः ईशवीयपञ्चमशतके लङ्कादेशे 500 संख्यकां जातककथां दृष्टवान् । गुप्तयुगीयबौद्धग्रन्थे ३४ संख्यकायाः जातककथायाः उल्लेखोऽस्ति । महावस्त इति ग्रन्थे ८० संख्यकायाः जातककथायाः उल्लेखो प्राप्यते । बौद्ध-थेरवादपरम्परानुसारं जातकसंख्या ५५० भवति । परन्तु चुल्लनिदेशग्रन्थे पञ्चजातकशतानि इति पदानुसारं तथा बौद्धमतानुसारं जातकसंख्या ५४७ भवति । आचार्य-आर्यशूरो भगवतो बुद्धस्य पूर्वजन्मनः वृत्तान्तमाधारीकृत्य संस्कृतभाषायां जातकमाला इति संग्रहग्रन्थं सम्पादितवान् । मूलपालिभाषाश्रितग्रन्थानुसारं चतुस्त्रिंशत्संख्यकाः कथाः आर्यशूरकृतेऽस्मिन् सन्निविष्टाः सन्ति । आर्यशूरमहोदयकृतेऽस्मिन् ग्रन्थे यानि जातकानि सन्निविष्टानि सन्ति तानि भवन्ति-व्याघ्रीजातकम्, शिबिजातकम्, कुल्माषपिण्डीजातकम्, श्रेष्ठिजातकम्, अविषह्य-श्रेष्ठिजातकम्, शशजातकम्, अगस्त्यजातकम्, मैत्रीबलजातकम्, विश्वन्तरजातकम्, यज्ञजातकम्, शक्रजातकम्, ब्राह्मणजातकम्, उन्मादयन्तीजातकम्, सुपारगजातकम्, मत्स्यजातकम्, वर्त्तकापोतकजातकम्, कुम्भजातकम्, अपुत्रजातकम्, बिसजातकम्, चुडुबोधिजातकम्, हंसजातकम्, महाबोधिजातकम्, महाकपिजातकम्, शरभजातकम्, रुरुजातकम्, क्षान्तिजातकम्, ब्रह्मजातकम्, हस्तिजातकम्, सुतसोमजातकम्, अयोगृहजातकम्, महिषजातकम्, शतपत्रजातकम् ।

बौद्धधर्म दर्शनञ्चाश्रित्य आर्यशूरमहोदयकृतः संस्कृतभाषायां जातकमाला इति ग्रन्थः अतीव प्रसिद्धरूपेण वर्तते । अस्य ग्रन्थस्याऽपि मूलविषयो वर्तते प्रेम-मैत्री-करुणा-दान-श्रद्धादिः । दुःखात्मकं कामिनीकाञ्चनादिविशिष्टं



भोग्यविषयं परित्यज्य ज्ञान-करुणादिविषयेषु चित्तस्य स्थिरीकरणमावश्यकमिति जातकमालायामुपदेशो वर्तते। अयमुपदेशो समाजस्य जीवानां कृते अव्यर्थो भवति, यतोहि अनया कथया भगवतो बुद्धस्य स्मरणं भवति तथा च प्रेम-मैत्री-करुणा-श्रद्धा-दानादीनामुद्बोधनं भवति।

आर्यशूरकृतजातकमालायां गद्यपद्यविशिष्टं रचनासमृद्धं जातकं वर्तते। प्रसिद्धकवेः विष्णुशर्मणः पञ्चतन्त्रमितिग्रन्थानुसारमार्यशूरकविना लिखिता इयं जातकमाला। यथा पञ्चतन्त्रे रचनाशैली विषयशैली नैतिकमूल्यबोधात्मकं तन्त्रं वर्तते तथा अत्र जातकमालायामपि दृश्यते। अस्यां जातकमालायां मुख्यचरित्राणि भवन्ति - देवता, यक्षः, प्रेतः, हस्ती, मृगः, वानरः, व्याघ्रः, सिंहः, महिषः, हंसः, मत्स्यः इत्यादिः। सर्वेषां प्राणिनां कृते हिंसा कदापि न करणीया, दया-करुणा-मैत्री-प्रेम-दानादिभावमवलम्ब्य सर्वजीवं प्रति समत्वदर्शनं प्रदर्शनीयमिति अस्यां जातकमालायां कथितोऽभ्युपदेशः।

जन्-धातुना सह निष्ठार्थे क्तप्रत्यययोगेन तदुत्तरं स्वार्थे क-प्रत्ययसंयोगेन जातकशब्दस्य निष्पन्नं भवति। अर्थात् जातकस्य अर्थो भवति अतीतजन्मनः कथा। बहुजन्मयावत् यदा जीवाः शुभकर्माणि कुर्वन्ति तदा तेषां मुक्तिर्भवति। भगवतो बुद्धस्यापि बहुवारं जन्म अभवत्। तस्मिन् जन्मनि तस्य आचरणे सद्गुणानां विकाशः, सत्कर्मणां सम्यग्भ्यासोऽभवत् तदा तस्य बोधिलाभोऽभवत् अर्थात् सः बोधिसत्त्वः इति नाम्ना परिचितोऽभवत्। न एकस्मिन् जन्मनि एतादृशं सम्भवति, बहुजन्मनः सत्कर्मणोऽभ्यासस्य फलमिदम्। बोधिशब्दस्यार्थो भवति बुद्धत्वम्, सत्त्वशब्दस्यार्थो भवति प्राणी। यद्यपि सत्त्वशब्दस्यार्थो भवति बुद्धिः, चरित्रम्, ज्ञानम्, प्रकृतिः। अपरोऽर्थो भवति - प्राणी, सजीवपदार्थः। समाधिराजसूत्रकारेणोक्तं यद् बोधति सत्त्वान्, इति बोधिसत्त्वः। पि. घोषमहोदयेनोच्यते यत् बोधिः स चासौ महाकृपाशयेन सत्त्वानलम्बनात् सत्त्वश्चेति। अन्ये प्रवदन्ति यत् आत्मा, मनः, इन्द्रियम्, चेतनेति सत्त्वशब्दस्यार्थः। प्रज्ञाकरमतिमहोदयेनोक्तं यत् तत्र बोधौ सत्त्वम् अभिप्रायोऽस्येति बोधिसत्त्वः। अपरार्थः भवति यत् गर्भः, अज्ञातम्, अव्यक्तम्।^{१२} इयं बोधिसत्त्वावस्था प्राणिनां कृते मोक्षदायिका भवति। जातकमालायाः अपरं नाम भवति बोधिसत्त्वावदानमाला। अवदानशब्दस्यार्थः सुकर्म शुभकर्म वा। अतो बोधिसत्त्वस्यार्थो भवति भगवतो बुद्धस्य पूर्वाजन्मनः अवदानकथा तथा सुकर्मणां कथामाला।

भगवान् बुद्धः सर्वज्ञः जातिस्मरश्चासीत्। बोधिसत्त्वावस्थायां सः पूर्वजन्मनः सर्वं वृत्तान्तमवगतमासीत्। यदा बोधिसत्त्वः कोशलदेशीयराजारूपेण समालङ्कृतः आसीत् तदा एकवारं संस्मृतवान् यत् सः पूर्वजन्मनि एकः श्रमिकः आसीत्। तस्मिन् जन्मनि सः भिक्षुकाणां कृते श्रद्धाचित्तेन भोजनव्यवस्थां कृतवान्। तस्य भोजनव्यवस्थानामकस्य पुण्यकर्मणः फलरूपेण सः बोधिसत्त्वः परवर्तिनि जन्मनि कोशलाधिपतिपदं समालङ्कृतवान्। कुल्माषपिण्डीजातके बोधिसत्त्वेनोक्तम् -

सुप्तप्रबुद्ध इव जातिमनुस्मरामि
यस्मामिहैव नगरे भृतकोऽहमासम्।
शीलान्वितोऽपि धनमात्रसमुच्छ्रितेभ्यः
कर्माभिराधनसमर्जितदीनवृत्तिः ॥
सोऽहं भृतिं परिभवश्रमदैत्यशालां
त्राणाशयात्स्वयमवृत्तिभयाद्विविक्षुः।



भिक्षार्थिनश्च चतुरः श्रमणानपश्यं
 वश्येन्द्रियाननुगतानिव भिक्षुलक्ष्म्या ॥
 तेभ्यः प्रसादमृदुना मनसा प्रणम्य
 कुल्माषमात्रकमदां प्रयतः स्वगेहे ।
 तस्याङ्कुरोदय इवैष यदन्यराज -
 चूडाप्रभाश्चरणरेणुषु मे निषक्ताः ॥^३

बोधसत्त्वस्वरूपकोशलाधिपतेः भार्याऽपि पूर्वजन्मनः कथां श्रुतवती । पूर्वजन्मनि सा दासीरूपेण कार्यरतावस्थायामेकं मुनिं भोजनेन सेवितवती । तस्य पुण्यकर्मणः पुण्यफलात् सा परवर्तिनि जन्मनि कोशलाधिपतेः राज्ञी अभवत् । तत्रोक्तमस्ति-

बाल्येऽनुभूतमिव तत्समनुस्मरामि
 दासी सती यदहमुद्धृतभक्तमेकम् ।
 क्षीणास्रवाय मुनये विनयेन दत्त्वा
 सुप्तेव तत्र समवापमिह प्रबोधम् ॥
 एतत्सममरामि कुशलं नरदेव ! येन
 त्वन्नाथतामुपगतास्मि समं पृथिव्या ।
 क्षीणास्रवेषु न कृतं तनु नाम किञ्चि-
 दित्युक्तवानसि यथैव मुनिस्तथैव ॥^४

अनेन प्रकारेण अस्मिन् कुल्माषपिण्डीजातके बोधिसत्त्वेनोपदिष्टमस्ति यत् पुण्यकर्मणा दयाभावेन प्रशान्तचित्तेन श्रद्धाभावेन प्रेम-करुणा-मैत्रीभावेन च सर्वं दानं भवति महत्कर्मस्वरूपम् । चौर-राजा-अनल-वारिप्रभृतिभिः दानं कदापि नष्टं न भवति । काम-क्रोध-लोभादिरिपुतः मुक्तिर्भवति सम्यक् दानेन । दुःखमयसंसारत् परित्रातुं दानं भवति प्रधानमवलम्बनम् । तस्मात् दानं सर्वेषां कृते आनन्ददायकं भवति । पुण्यकर्मोद्देश्येन दानेन सर्वं सम्भवति । यः कदापि दानं न करोति सः जीवः चाक्षुषदर्शनयोग्यं न भवति । कृपणजनः समाजे निन्दितो भवति । इहसंसारेऽधिकं भवति दुःखदायकं वस्तु । तस्मात् दुःखदायकं द्रव्यं त्यक्त्वा अपरेषामानुकूल्यार्थं यदि कामभावं विहाय द्रव्यं प्रदत्तं स्यात् तर्हि तत्कर्म समाजे प्रशंसायोग्यं भवति । यथोक्तं जातकमालायाम्-

अल्पस्यापि शुभस्य विस्तरमिमं दृष्ट्वा विपाकश्रियः
 स्यात्को नाम न दानशीलविधिना पुण्यक्रियातत्परः ।
 नैव द्रष्टुमपि क्षमः स पुरुषः पर्याप्तवित्तोऽपि सन्
 यः कार्पण्यतमिस्रयावृतमतिर्नाप्नोति दानैर्यशः ॥
 त्यक्तव्यं विवशेन यन्न च तथा कस्मैचिदर्थाय यत्
 तन्न्यायेन धन् त्यजन्यदि गुणं कञ्चित्समुद्भावयेत् ।
 कोऽसौ तत्र भजेत मत्सरपथं जानन्गुणानां रसं
 प्रीत्याद्या विविधाश्च कीर्त्यनुसृता दानप्रतिष्ठागुणाः ॥



दानं नाम महानिधानमनुगं चौराद्यसाधारणं
 दानं मत्सरलोभदोषरजसः प्रक्षालनं चेतसः ।
 संसाराध्वपरिश्रमापनयनं दानं सुखं वाहनं
 दानं नैकसुखोपधानसुमुखं सन्मित्रमात्यन्तिकम् ॥^६

भगवान् बुद्धः पूर्वजन्मनि सर्वेषां प्राणिनां कृते स्नहपरायणः आसीत् । बोधिसत्त्वावस्थायां पवित्राचरण-
 इन्द्रियसंयम-सन्तोष-करुणादिभिः सर्वेषां समीपे सोऽतीव प्रियः आसीत् । यथोक्तं जातकमालायाम्-

आचारशुद्ध्या निभृतेन्द्रियत्वात्सन्तोषयोगात्करुणागुणाच्च ।
 असंस्तुतस्यापि जनस्य लोके सोऽभूत् प्रियस्तस्य यथैव लोकः ॥^६

अस्मात् कारणात् वनस्य हिंस्रपशवोऽपि बोधिसत्त्वं प्रति हिंसां न दर्शयन्ति । ते पशवः हिंस्रभावं परित्यज्य
 तपस्वीवत् वने विचरन्ति । उक्तञ्च जातकमालायाम्-

मैत्रीमयेन प्रशमेन तस्य विस्यन्दिनेवानुपरीतचित्ताः ।
 परस्परद्रोहनिवृत्तभावास्तपरिस्ववद् व्यालमृगा विचेरुः ॥^७

अतः सर्वेषां प्राणिनां कृते भगवतो बोधिसत्त्वस्य बुद्धस्य करुणा-दया-स्नेह-लोकोपकार-श्रद्धादयः प्रदर्शिताः ।
 यद्ध्यस्माकं जीवनेऽपि परमपालनीयमस्ति । यथोक्तं जातके - तदेवं सर्वसत्त्वेष्वकारणपरमवत्सलस्वभावः
 सर्वभूतात्मभूतः पूर्वजन्मस्वपि स भगवानिति बुद्धे भगवति परः प्रसादः कार्यः । जातप्रसादैश्च बुद्धे भगवति परा
 प्रीतिरुत्पादयितव्या ।...एवं दुष्करशतसमुदानीतत्वात् करुणावर्णेपि वाच्यमेवं स्वभावातिशयस्य निष्पादिका
 परानुग्रहप्रवृत्तिहेतुः करुणेति ॥^८

एकदा पूर्वजन्मनि भगवान् बुद्धो बोधिसत्त्वावस्थायां शिविदेशस्य राजा अभवत् । तदा सोऽतीव दानशाली
 राजा आसीत् । प्रजानां कृते सः सर्वं प्रदातुमुत्साही आसीत् । यतः दानं विना राजकार्यं यथायथं न चलति । तथा च
 दानादेव विनयभावोत्पद्यते । प्रार्थितवस्तुप्रदानकाले याचकानां हृदये यत् सन्तोषः जायते तद्दृष्ट्वा शिविराजः
 प्रसन्नो जातः । तत्र शिविजातके कथितमस्ति-

उदारभावात्करुणागुणाच्च वित्ताधिपत्याच्च स राजवर्यः ।
 रेमेऽर्थिनामीप्सितसिद्धिहर्षादकिल्बिष्टशोभानि मुखानि पश्यान् ॥^९

अनन्तरं कस्मिंश्चिद् दिवसे भगवान् शक्रः वृद्धब्राह्मणस्य छद्मवेशेन शिविराजस्य दानशीलत्वं विचारार्थं
 शिविराजस्य चक्षुद्वयं याचितवान् । तदा तत्र समवेताः अमात्याः मन्त्रिणः सैनिकाः स्वजनाः मित्राणि चक्षुद्वयं
 प्रदातुं वारंवारं वारितवन्तः । परन्तु दानशीलः शिविराजा तन्मतमुपेक्ष्य कथितवान्-

यदेव याच्यते तदेव दद्यान्नानीप्सितं प्रीणयतीह दत्तम् ।
 किमुह्यमानस्य जलेन तोयैः दास्यामयतः प्रार्थितमर्थमस्मै ॥^{१०}

शिविराजा छद्मवेशधारिणं शक्रं चक्षुद्वयं प्रदत्तवान् । अनन्तरमेतत्प्राप्य देवराजः शक्रः चिन्तितवान्-

अहो धृतिरहो सत्त्वमहो सत्त्वहितैषिता ।
 प्रत्यक्षमपि कर्मेदं करोतीव विचारणाम् ॥^{११}

तदन्तरं शक्रदेवः सानन्दं पुनः शिविराजस्य समीपं गत्वा बहुशक्तिविशिष्टं चक्षुद्वयं प्रत्यर्पितवान् । तदा तत्र



राजा दानमाहात्म्यविषये कथितवान् यत् दानं बिना जीवानां नास्ति अभ्युदयस्य कृतेऽपरमार्गः । विनय-दयादिभ्यां दानं सञ्जातं भवति । अतः सम्यक् दानेन सम्यगुपभोगेन च धनं सफलीकुर्वन्तु । एतद्भवति सुख-कीर्तिप्राप्त्यर्थं यथार्थोपायः । सांसारिकधनं क्षणिकं सारहीनञ्च । अतः तद्धनं लोकोपकाराय प्रदातव्यमस्ति । धनप्रदानेन धनवृद्धिर्भवति, धनस्याप्रदानेन धनं नष्टं भवति-

परानुकम्पाविनयाभिजाताहानात्परः कोऽभ्युदयाभ्युपायः ।
यन्मानुषं चक्षुरिहैव दत्त्वा प्राप्यंमयाऽमानुषदिव्यचक्षुः ॥
एतद्विदित्वा शिबयः प्रदानैर्भोगेन चार्थान् सफलीकुरुध्वम् ।
लोके परस्मिन्निह चैष पन्थाः कीर्तिप्रधानस्य सुखोदयस्य ॥
धनस्य निःसारलघोः स सारो यद्दीयते लोकहितोन्मुखेन ।
निधानतां याति हि दीयमानमदीयमानं निधनैकनिष्ठम् ॥^{१३}

श्रेष्ठि-जातके अविषह्यश्रेष्ठि-जातके च भगवतो बोधिसत्त्वस्य दानशीलताया प्रबलमाहात्म्यं दृश्यते । तत्र श्रेष्ठि-जातके प्रारम्भेऽनुश्रूयते- बोधिसत्त्वभूतः किलायं भगवान्भाग्यातिशयगुणादुत्थानसम्पदा चाधिगतविपुलधनसमृद्धिरविषमव्यवहारशीलत्वाल्लोके बहुमाननिकेतभूत उदाराभिजनवाननेकविद्या विकल्पाधिगमविमलतरमतिर्गुणमाहात्म्याद्राजा समुपहतसम्मानः प्रदानशीलत्वाल्लोकसाधारणविभवः श्रेष्ठी बभूव ॥^{१३} अविषह्यश्रेष्ठि-जातकानुसारं भगवान् बोधिसत्त्वः पूर्वजन्मनि त्याग-शील-कुल-विनय-विद्या-ज्ञान-नम्रतादिगुणैः युक्तः एकः धनीश्रेष्ठः आसीत् । अधिकधनाधिपतित्वात् सः अतिथिसत्कार-दानादिकार्येषु सर्वदा निमग्नः आसीत् । तथा च सः कृपणतादिदोषेभ्यः विमुक्तत्वात् अविषह्यः इति नाम्ना प्रसिद्धोऽभवत् । तद्यथानुश्रूयते- बोधिसत्त्वभूतः किलायं भगवांस्त्यागशीलकुलविनयश्रुतज्ञानाविस्मयादिगुणसमुदितो धनदायमानो विभवसम्पदा सर्वातिथित्वादनपरतदानसत्रो लोकहितार्थप्रवृत्तो दायकश्रेष्ठः श्रेष्ठी बभूव । मात्सर्यादिदोषाविषह्योऽविलह्यमय इति प्रकाशनामा ॥^{१४}

पूर्वानुरूपं दानशीलत्वं दृश्यते शशजातके । तत्र पूर्वजन्मनि भगवान् बुद्धो बोधिसत्त्वावस्थायां कस्मिंश्चिदरण्ये शशकरूपेणाविर्भूतोऽभवत् । तस्य शशकस्य चरित्रमध्ये सत्त्वगुणः, ओजः, सन्तोषः, कायिक-वाचिक-मानसिकहिंसारहितगुणः प्रतिफलितोऽभवत् । शशकस्य मध्ये अतिथिसत्कारस्य गुणोऽपि दृश्यते । तस्मिन् जातके शशकस्य कृतेऽतिथिसत्कारस्य परीक्षणार्थमेकवारं देवराजः शक्रः दरिद्रब्राह्मणवेशेन तत्र गतवान् । तदा सः शशकः स्वीयदेहमुत्सर्गीकृत अतिथिसत्कारार्थमङ्गीकृतवान् । तस्मिन् काले सः ब्राह्मणः शशकेन पूर्वकालादेव मित्रतावशात्तादृशेऽतिथिसत्कारेऽसम्मतोऽभवत् । तदा शशकः कथितवान्-

देयं च दित्साप्रवणं च चित्तं भवद्विधेनातिथिना च योगः ।
नावाप्तुमेतद्धि सुखेन शक्यं तत्स्यादमोघं भवदाश्रयान्मे ॥^{१५}

एकवारं बोधिसत्त्वावस्थायां सः भगवान् बुद्धः तपोवनेऽगस्त्यनामकमुनिरूपेणाविर्भूतोऽभवत् । तदा तस्यान्तरेऽप्यतिथिसत्कारत्वं दानशीलत्वमादि वैशिष्ट्यं प्रादुर्भूतमासीत् । लोककल्याणाय सः एतादृशस्य चरित्रस्य समधिकारीति प्रसिद्धोऽभवत् । यदि मुनिजीवने एतादृशः दान-अतिथिसत्कार-लोभ-द्वेषादिधर्माणां समुद्रिकतं भवति तर्हि लोकसमाजेऽप्येतस्य धर्मस्योद्धोधनं प्रयोजनीमिति श्रूयते जातकमालायाम्-तपोवनस्थानां



लङ्कारस्त्यागशौर्यं प्रागेव गृहस्थानामिति त्यागशौर्येणालङ्कर्तव्य एवात्मा सत्पुरुषेणेति । दानप्रतिसम्प्रहर्षणायामप्युन्नेयं लोभद्वेषमोहबाल्यविगर्हायां कल्याणमित्रसंपर्कगुणे सन्तोषकथायां तथागतमाहात्म्ये च ।^{१६}

जातकमालायां प्रतिफलितेषु जातकेषु लोककल्याणाय परोपकाराय सर्वजनानां शिक्षार्थञ्च बहवः उपदेशाः सन्ति । पूर्वपूर्वजन्मनि बोधिसत्त्वावस्थायां भगवान् बुद्धः यत् यत् विषयमनुभूतवान् तत्सर्वं विविधेषु जातकेष्वनुश्रूयते । अस्यां जातकमालायां यदुपलभ्यते तन्महौषधिवत् मानवानां कृते परमप्रयोजनमस्ति । अनुभव-चिन्तनानामन्तिमस्थानमतिक्रम्य भगवान् बुद्धः विचारकस्वरूपं चिन्तकस्वरूपं वा भूत्वा यदमृतवचनं कथितवान् तदवश्यमेव परमौषधीव मन्वते । अस्मात् कारणात् जातकमाला अतीव महत्वपूर्णेति । मन-शरीर-संसार-दुःख-आत्मावलम्बन-पुरुषार्थ-लोभ-ईर्ष्या-द्वेष-शीलादिविषयेषु तत्कालीनसमाजे कीदृशी अवस्था आसीत् ? समाजे कीदृशी विधिव्यवस्था आसीत् ? तस्मिन् समये समाजे कथोपकथनशैली कथमासीत् ? वाद-विवादावस्थायां तर्कस्योपयोगः कथमासीत् ? तदा मनुष्याणां मध्ये व्यसनं कथं प्रचलितमासीत् ? राजनीतेः कुटिलता कथमासीत् ? आतिथ्यस्य स्वरूपं किम् ? मानवसमाजे दान-विनय-पुण्यकर्म-शील-परोपकाराणां गुरुत्वञ्च कीदृशमासीदित्येतादृशानां सर्वेषां प्रश्नानां सम्यगुत्तराणि प्राप्यन्ते जातकमालायाम् । महापुरुषस्य मुखारविन्दात् कथ्यते इयं जातकमाला । अतः जातकोपदिष्टं वचनं सर्वेषां मङ्गलार्थमङ्गीकर्तव्यामाचरणीयञ्चति ।

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सन्दर्भग्रन्थसूची

मुख्यग्रन्था

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गौणग्रन्था

घोष, वारिदवरण, बुद्ध ओ बौद्ध, करुणा प्रकाशनी, कलिकाता, संस्करण १९४२
 चतुर्वेदी, परशुराम, बौद्ध साहित्य की सांस्कृतिक झलक, साहित्य भवन, इलाहाबाद, संस्करण १९५८
 देव, नरेन्द्र, बौद्धधर्म दर्शन, बिहार राष्ट्रभाषा परिषद, पटना, संस्करण १९७१
 धर्मरक्षित, भिक्षु, बुद्ध-धर्म के उपदेश, अजन्ता प्रेस लिमिटेड, पटना, संस्करण १९५१
 महास्थविर महाबोधिसभा, बुद्ध-वचनमृत, सारनाथ, वाराणसी, संस्करण १९५६
 वियोगी मोहनलाल महतो, जातककालीन भारतीय संस्कृति, बिहार राष्ट्रभाषा परिषद, पटना, संस्करण १९५८
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Exploring the Narrative World of Fable: A Critical Study of Hitopadeśa

Dr Purabi Goswami

Traditionally fables functioned as a powerful medium of moral instruction. Pandit Viṣṇuśarma composed Pañcatantra Kathāmukhaṁ (a collection of fables) to make the dull sons of a king wise and intelligent. Lessons on social, familial and political issues were given through fables. Considering the significant role that the fables played in ancient India to impart knowledge the paper writer seeks to look into the process of meaning-making. For example, how the narrator in a fable carries away the reader with the narrative and convinces the reader about the moral emphasis. In other words, the paper will examine the hermeneutics of fable writing bringing in Western as well as Classical Sanskrit theoreticians' deliberations on the ideas on interpretation.

Fable as a literary form exists from the ancient time. It owes its existence to the oral culture of the antiquity. India plays a crucial role in the subsistence of this form. As K.D. Upadhyaya puts it: "Especially in the field of folktales and fables she has played the part of the mother country. Indian fables have influenced the entire folktale literature of the western world and even Aesop's fables of Greece contain some Indian stories in their changed and distorted versions. The history of the translations of Pañcatantra in the middle ages in the different languages of the western world is very significant for the student of folklore" (181). In this way the origin of the fable is always attributed to the orient. At an apparent glance it may appear that it is a form of literature which is more suitable to a child's mind; but a detailed analysis of the form enables us to understand that it can create an enduring appeal even in an adult's mind. Even H. J. Bluckhum in his book on fable asserts: "Stripped and focused as it must always be,



fable is then, like any work of art, dense enough to abide repeated examination and to abound in stimulus" (xiii). He further explains that it is a more independent form of literature compared to parable¹ because parable is more often used to illustrate and argue a particular issue.

In Indian culture the term fable immediately brings to our mind the name of *Pañcatantra Kathāmukhaṁ*. Scholar Viṣṇuśarmā accepts the task of educating the dull and sluggish sons of king Amaraśakti. The medium he chooses to teach them lessons on all affairs of life is fable. Majority of the stories in *Hitopadeśa* are extracted from the *Pañcatantra*; yet *Hitopadeśa* is more popular because of its simplicity. There is an uncertainty regarding the authorship² of *Hitopadeśa* and it is also considered as a collection of stories collected by king Dhavalacandra. The verse included in the introduction of *Hitopadeśa* (2019) says, "*Pañcatantrāttathānyasmād gṛanthādākṛṣya likhyate.*" King Dhavalacandra attributes the authorship to a scholar called Nārāyaṇa. The king includes one verse in the book which proves that. The verse is as follows: "*Tābannārāyaṇena pracaratu racitaḥ saṁgrahoyaṁ kathānām.*" *Hitopadeśa* is composed in imitation of *Pañcatantra* and a great number of stories in it are taken from *Pañcatantra*. Viṣṇuśarmā, whose name is mentioned in the introduction of *Hitopadeśa* is the composer of *Pañcatantra*. Hence the authorship of *Hitopadeśa* is also attributed to him.

Despite the indeterminacy regarding its authorship, *Hitopadeśa* has a plausible influence on its readers. We can again refer to Bluckham as he says, "Politically, opinions, a message may be cast in the form of a fable to baffle or deceive the official mind with meanings that cannot be literally construed as evidence, but get through plainly to those for whom they are intended" (xiv). Holding on to this comment we can deliberate how a fable convinces its reader about its credibility. For instance in *Hitopadeśa* we find five sections. They are named as Kathāmukhaṁ, Mitralābha, Suhr̥dabhedā, Vighraha and Sandhi. Each of these sections has one underlying proposition. The first section entitled, Kathāmukhaṁ initiates the story and tells how king Sudarśana of Pāṭaliputra, handed over his sons to scholar Viṣṇuśarmā to make them adept in all branches of knowledge. The king expresses his extreme faith in the scholar by uttering the following verse:

yathodayagirerdrabyaṁ sannikarṣeṇa dīpyate;
tathā satsannidhānena hīnavarṇōpi dīpyate. (45)



The meaning of the verse can be explained in this way: As the faded objects in the hills from where the sun rises become bright, similarly the ignorant people achieve the light of learning from the learned.

The second section, Mitralābha elaborates on how to achieve a friend (mitra means friend and lābha means gaining). Suhr̥dabheda (which means separated from the near ones) is about the rift and the distance that occur among friends. Vighraha is on war and Sandhi expounds the agreement and settlement done after the war. Through layers of stories the narrator convinces the listeners about the underlying agenda. For instance, in the section Mitralābha talking about the stories of betrayal; the narrator builds up the situation for the climax where the last story narrates the unflinching friendship among a crow, a turtle, a mouse and a deer. By citing many didactic verses the section unfolds how friendship can be sustained. The following verses are spoken by the king of mice Hiraṇyaka after they lost their friend Manthara (the turtle). The grief-stricken friends extol the value of friendship above everything else through these verses:

*svabhāvajam tu yanmitram bhāgyenaivābhijāyata,
tadakṛtrimasauhārdamāpatswapī na muñcati. (194)*

A simple translation of which can be like this: A friend like oneself can be achieved only through good luck; such friends never quit their companion in all types of crisis.

Hiraṇyaka laments:

*na mātari na dāreṣu na sodarye na cātmaje,
biśvāsastādṛśaḥ puṃsām yādṛṣmitre svabhāvaje. (195)*

The meaning of which is: A person never trusts his mother, wife, brother or son the same way as he trusts his close friend.

However, as we are dealing with the question of conviction; different theoreticians and philosophers have multiple opinions regarding the ways of understanding and accepting a text. For instance John Locke opines that human mind is a tabula rasa i.e. it is like a blank paper³. In that sense human mind is very impressionable; yet philosophers like Gadamer observes (in his Truth and Method): "an understanding inevitably involves some prejudices" (239). An interpreter can never approach a text blank; the early experiences will definitely play a role. Gadamer further elaborates:

The overcoming of prejudices - the wholesale demand of the Enlightenment - will itself turn out to be a prejudice, whose revision alone



will clear the way for an appropriate understanding of the finitude which not only dominates our humanity but just as much our historical consciousness. Does standing in traditions actually mean first of all being subject to prejudices and limited in one's freedom? Rather, is not all human existence - even the most free - limited and conditioned in many ways? If that is the case, the idea of an absolute reason is simply not a possibility for historical humanity. Reason for us is only real as historical, that is, without reservation, it is not itself lord but always remains dependent upon the given in which it participates. (260)

Philosopher Wolfgang Iser came up with the idea of an 'implied reader' who completes the blanks in the text based upon personal experiences but constrained by the instructions provided by the reading selection (112). The question is again taken up by Stanley Fish in the reader-response theory, an Anglo-American phenomenon which was influenced and eventually created by Structuralist and Poststructuralist ideas. Fish introduces the concept of "informed reader" (1970: 134) for total reading experience. An informed reader is an efficient speaker of the language out of which the text is built up and possesses a comprehensive semantic knowledge of the language which is an essential criterion of a mature reader. In other words s/he possesses knowledge of the language both as a producer and a comprehender. In *Is There a Text in This Class?* he clarifies: "[T]he reader of whose responses I speak is complex, an informed reader, neither an abstraction nor an actual living reader, but a hybrid - a real reader (me) who does everything within his power to make himself informed including suppressing [...] what is personal and idiosyncratic and 1970ish in my response" (49). This is how the key theorists conceptualize reader and the reading experiences. Derrida, on the other hand, questions the authenticity of written texts and interpretations. Gentzler's elaboration of Deconstruction makes many things clear. Gentzler explicates in the following way:

In contrast to all the theories discussed in this study, at the foundation of Derrida's thought is the assumption that there is no kernel or deep structure. Derrida "bases" his "theory" of deconstruction on non-identity, non-presence, on unrepresentability. What does exist, according to Derrida, are different chains of signification - mutually supplementing each other, defining and redefining a phantasm of sameness, which never has existed nor will exist as something fixed, graspable, known, or understood. This phantasm, produced by a desire for some essence or unity, represses the possibility that whatever may be there is always in motion, in flux, "at play", escaping in the very process of trying to define it, talk about it, or make it present (147).



In Indian classical theory too philosopher Bhartṛhari talks about three levels of language. An Indian critic Gopinathan explains Bhartṛhari's views in the following way: "...the three levels of language mentioned by the fifth century philosopher-grammarians Bhartṛhari, in his work *Vākya-padhyāḥ*, namely *paśyantī*, the highest or the deepest level of consciousness, *madhyamā* or the intermediate common mental level and *vaikharī*, the spoken linguistic level" (8). In Indian theory of semantics Bhartṛhari anticipated many of Derrida's ideas on word and meaning. The relationship between signifier and signified for which Derrida coined the term *différance* is marked by a difference between the signifier and signified and a deferral of the signified. Harold Coward discovers the affinities and says, "This insight of Derrida is nicely paralleled by Bhartṛhari's view that the dynamic of separation into word (*śabda*) and meaning (*artha*) is beginninglessly present in language at all its levels from the uttered or fully sequenced speech (*vaikharī vāka*) to the apparently unitative intuition (*paśyantī vāka*), in which sequencing is present only as a pregnant force" (8). For Derrida too, *différance* or articulation originates in the experience of space and time (1997: 65). Bhartṛhari discussed both the phonetic and semantic realization of language. He provided both the material and transcendental view of language. A remarkable example is his *Sphoṭa* theory. G.N. Devy elaborates the idea referring to a śloka in Bhartṛhari's *Vākya-padhyāḥ*:

*nādasya kramajanmatvānna purvo na paraśca saḥ,
akramaḥ kramarupeṇa bhedavāniva jāyate.
pratibimbam yathānyatra sthitam toyakriyāvasaḥ,
tatpṛavṛittimivanveti sa dharmasphoṭanādayoḥ.
ātmarūpam yathā jñāne śreyarūpaśca dṛśyate,
artharūpam tathā śabde svarūpaśca pṛakāśate. (147)*

He provides the translation of the verses in the following manner:

Since the phonetic manifestation is sequential, language expresses itself in a sequentially graded body, though in itself it is without a sequence in terms of a 'pre' and a 'post' existence. The relation between *nāda* (phonetic manifestation) and *sphoṭa* (semantic realization) is like that between the reflection of something in flowing water and the stream, a reflection which is of a steady object but which acquires the movements of the stream. As knowledge reflects its own nature as well as the nature of the giver of that knowledge, so do phonetic signs reflect their own forms as well as the forms of significance. (147)



Unlike Derrida Bhartṛhari does not talk about the loss of the origin, but believes in the soul of a word. He says no meaning is possible unless there is '*sphoṭa*' which holds the meaning. Keeping in view the fluctuations in meaning or in the interpretive act we can approach our postulation how the narrative in a fable carries away the readers with it.

The stories included in the section called "Vigraha" basically talks about war and very interestingly the parties who fight war belong to the animal worlds which are common in fable. If we have to find out the gist of the section; it's about how the kingdom ruled by the goose and the kingdom ruled by a peacock fight a war where there are instances of betrayal and loyalty. However, there are many detours before reaching that point and each of the stories also gives a life-lesson in addition to preparing for the ultimate point. So the sub-stories function at two levels: They can stand as stories independently and they can also be constituents of the main story. We can take one story to illustrate it. The fourth story in this section is about a common quail and a crow. It tells how the clever crow escapes the wrath of a milkman but the simple quail is misunderstood as the culprit and is killed. Hence the story ends with the moral:

*durjanairucyam ānāni sammatāni, priyāṅyapi
akālakusumānīva bhayaṃ sañjanayanti hi. (24)*

The meaning of the verse can be understood in the following manner: The sweet talks of cunning people should be suspected like flowers bloomed in odd seasons.

The story also hints at the cunningness of the crow that cheats upon the party of the goose in the war. It foreshadows what will happen in the ultimate war.

K. D. Upadhyaya elaborates how through the world of animal, knowledge was imparted in the ancient times:

It was, however, a distinct and important step when the mere story became used for a definite purpose and when the didactic fable became a definite mode of inculcating useful knowledge. We cannot expect to find fables in the Ṛgveda but we can find a reference where Brahmanas are compared to croaking frogs. It is clear that we have recognition of a certain kinship between men and animals which comes out clearly in the Upaniṣads where we have the allegory of the dogs who search out a leader to howl for food for them. Granting that we have not here the didactic fable in which



the actions of beasts are made the means of advising men, still we can realize how easy it was to pass to this form of instruction (182).

The stories in *Hitopadeśa* provide lessons on every domain of life. The last two sections can specifically be called on politics. In western culture too political fable was used to talk about political themes. For instance, in some fable Napoleon too figures. As the critics in the essay "Fable as a Literary Genre" assert:

Many legends have been preserved about the political use of fables in ancient times. The political fable flourished in the West and in Russia. On the one hand [it was] laudatory and patriotic: the year 1812 served as a theme for many fables. Napoleon figures in them in the form of a kite, a snake, a wolf (in Krylov). On the other hand, [it was devoted to] political satire. 'If the opinion that the fable is a ruse of slavery still did not exist, then we would have to give birth to it. It is not insignificant that fables are the richest branch of our literature. In them the intellect steals by the censorship,' writes Vyazemsky (Notebook). Much evidence has been preserved that in the 10s to 30s of the 19th century the readers' attention (and in particular the censors') was directed at finding a second, implicit level [of meaning] in every fable (103).

Of course that is a modern use of fable; but it depicts the changes which the genre of fable has undergone and also enlightens us how it has been adapted for different social and political purposes. In these fables the tone is satirical and the note of political didacticism is missing.

In Sanskrit literature the origin of fable does have a political background. King Amaraśakti was perturbed by the thought that his sons will not have the social skills and political intelligence to rule over his state. Hence to transmit political lessons was one of the aims at the time of the germination of the genre of fable. The last section of *Hitopadeśa* is about the agreement or deal made after a war. Here too through many sub stories the message is conveyed that agreement is better than a war. It provides a detailed description of the different political treaties made after wars. It illuminates on sixteen types of sandhi such as kapāla sandhi, upahāra sandhi, santāna sandhi, saṃgata sandhi etc.

*kapāla, upahāraśca, santānaḥ, saṃgatastathā;
upanyāsaḥ, pratīkāraḥ, saṃyogaḥ, puruṣāntaraḥ.*



*adṛaṣṭānara, ādiṣṭa, ātmādiṣṭa, upagrahaḥ;
parikrayastathocchinnastathā ca parabhūṣaṇaḥ.
skandhopaneyaḥ sandhiśca, ṣoḍaśaite prakīrtitāḥ;
iti ṣoḍaśakaṃ prāhuḥ sandhim sandhibicakṣaṇāḥ.(114-116)*

The agreement done between two equal parties is called kapāla sandhi. The treaty done by offering tax and other bribes are called upahāra sandhi. The treaty made by bestowing a daughter as bride is called santānaḥ sandhi. The agreement attained by friendly understanding is called saṃgata sandhi. The agreement done to fulfill one's selfish ends is called upanyāsa sandhi. The treaty done in expectation of a return is known as pratikār sandhi. Rama and Sugrība did pratikār sandhi. In this way we find sixteen verses in the Hitopadeṣa which illustrate these sixteen varieties of sandhi.

Nonetheless, at the end it is suggested that the most practical kind of agreement is 'upahār sandhi' because no enemy goes back without taking something in return as they defeat the other party in the war. In this way the section demonstrates some harsh political realities.

The transportation of the readers to a different realm happens in every fictional literature. To make the readers totally involved in the narrative and to make them identify with the characters is a very challenging job for the author in a fable. Nonetheless fable has established itself as genre which along with its educative role is also a medium of amusement. As a critic called Perozo opines:

A standard definition of the fable is: 'A literary composition in which...a lesson is taught.' This definition is in accord with the commonly accepted conception of the fable; but it is unquestionably true that the fable is also an instrument of amusement and pleasure. The reader is annoyed when the fabulist offers him a sermon in the guise of an amusing tale. The lessons contained in a well-written fable, however, are so elemental, so easy to catch that the writer has no need of elaborate stratagem to get them across. As a matter of fact, moral instruction under all circumstances is more effective if the lesson is merely suggested rather than brought out explicitly. The task of the fabulist ends with the presentation of his dramatis personae in human attitude; the inference to be drawn from the story is the business of the reader, and this inference may take the form of a useful truth, or sometimes of a jocular 'kick' or an ironical surprise. It must not be



forgotten that the fabulist is not always and necessarily a preacher (365-366).

In the theoretical discussion made so far it is shown how every literature including the fable is a "verbal object"⁴. We cannot ignore this fact even when we talk about aesthetic achievement. The act of telling by the author also makes us aware of it. It is not something which comes to us readymade.

In the essay "Author and Reader in the Fable" John D. Lyons remarks: "... the author draws attention to his way of saying things and particularly to the rhythm of his speech. The art of telling thus becomes visible, has a being in time, and is not a simple window through which we can look at the occurrence of an event" (63). Hence the role of the intermediary (author) is not ignorable. The differences between *Pañcatantra* and *Hitopadeśa* also speak about that.

Inspite of everything it is a matter of mutual work happening between the reader and the author. The fact that the fable is an object made of language keeps it open to be looked at from all perspectives pertained to language. However, it cannot be an instance of infinite deferral as is analysed by Derrida. The presence of 'sphoṭa' is somehow undeniable. The success of Viṣṇuśarmā in making the princes intelligent proves that. In the essay, "Basic Education in India" Subrahmanyam Gowrie suggests: "Education cannot come from above, it must come from within and below. This is as preposterous as building a twenty story building without first laying the foundations. Britain tried to transfer western civilization into the Indian mind without taking account of the thousands of years of traditions that had become the very life blood of India" (47). He further elaborates that the Western education system is making Indian children to learn rhymes of a foreign land pressurizing them to live in an unreal dream whereas the stories of *Pañcatantra* and *Hitopadeśa* are more familiar to them. This believe that those stories will be successful in making the Indian children learned also emphasises the idea that there is something like the soul of a word, due to which the transference of meaning becomes possible.

End notes:

1. Parable is a story with a didactic purpose. Unlike fable it includes human beings as central characters.
2. Scholars are of the opinion that *Pañcatantra* was written in the 3rd century and *Hitopadeśa* was written in the fourth century. The difference in time negates all



possibilities of both the texts being composed by the same writer. Refer to page 1, *Hitopadeśa*. Trans. Lakshmi Narayana Goswami.

3. Tabula rasa is a Latin word meaning a blank slate. John Locke used the term in his *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* to talk about human mind. He believed that the human mind at birth is like a blank slate.
4. Emphasising the idea that fable is a created object, La Fontaine focuses on choices and flexibilities which can happen in fable writing because it is an act of telling with a visible presence of the narrator. Refer to "Author and Reader in the Fables" by John D. Lyons.

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Environmental Awareness in the Hitopadeśa with special Reference to Mitralābha

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The study of environment is the most important issue in the present time. Environmental degradation is the greatest dangers that our generation will face in the future. Everywhere reckless destruction of natural flora and fauna is in evidence. Creating environmental awareness and love for environment in our generation has become important. We learn about the environmental consciousness through literature. We find the description of the environment in the ancient Sanskrit literature. Our ancestors were very much conscious about protecting the environment. They have pointed out the necessity of harmonious relationship between living beings and the entire environment through the literature- like the Vedas, Upaniṣads, Epics, fable literatures etc. It is evidenced in these literature that different natural creations like earth, rivers, water, stone, birds, animals etc., had a special position; animals and plants constitute one vibrant system, every part of which is alive and responsive. In the Hitopadeśa, rivers, water, birds, plants and animals are the part of nature and environment which take a role or character of the stories narrated in it. In this paper an attempt is made to highlight the environmental awareness as depicted in the Hitopadeśa.

Key words : *Hitopadeśa*, environmental awareness, fable literature, present time.



Introduction

The meaning of awareness is knowledgeable or being conscious or being alert. It is the state or ability to perceive, to feel or to be conscious of events or objects or sensory patterns.

Literature treats the subject of nature and examines it in various ways. The rich Sanskrit literature starting from the Upaniṣads, the *Rāmāyaṇa*, the *Mahābhārata*, the Mahākāvya, dramas, fable literature etc., have dealt with various aspects of nature in different contexts. This literature points out to the imperative need for a good relationship between living beings and the entire environment.

Methodology

Descriptive and analytical methods have been applied in this study. Mainly *Hitopadeśa* of *Nārāyaṇa* has been used as direct source of data collection and the description of nature. For analytical and other purposes various modern works, journals and research papers have been referred to.

Objectives

The main objectives of this study are:

1. To highlight the concept of environment of environment.
2. To analyse the environmental awareness in the *Hitopadeśa*.
3. To highlight its relevance in the present time.

Discussion

Environment the Concept

The meaning of environment is anything which surrounds the humans. Actually, the natural world i.e. air atmosphere, land, and water, in which people, animals and plants live in, -and the surroundings are included in the term environment. There are various kinds of interactions between animals, plants, soil, and other living and non-living things in the environment.

The word 'environment' is as old as human civilization itself. Environment is the most important aspect for living beings. It protects and nourishes us. We have therefore the responsibility to protect them. The study of environment has become more important than anything else during the present time, as there is reckless destruction of natural



flora and fauna to satisfy the greed of human world. Creating environmental awareness and love for environment in our generation has become very important; failing which environmental degradation will be the greatest danger of the near future.

We need to develop environmental awareness through text reading. It is imperative that one understands the concept of ecocriticism. Ecocriticism according to Cheryl Glotfelty is "the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment"¹ "Ecocritics and theorists ask questions like: How is nature represented in this sonnet?"² Ecocriticism of texts is the answer of literature to the challenges of environmental concerns in the present world.

The present generation is curious and observant and hence an environmentally interpretative reading of a literature catering to the imaginations of this generation can aid them develop an eco-sensitivity that they will carry into adulthood.

A Note on Fable Literature

The term 'fable' means a short story which deals with a moral and general truth, using animals as characters.

The fables of Sanskrit literature have occupied a very prominent position in the fable literature of the world. About the origin of fable of literature, A. Berriedale Keith says that the fable is connected with the two branches of science known by Indians as the *Nītiśāstra* and the *Arthaśāstra*, which have in common as opposed to the *Dharmaśāstra* that they are not codes of morals, but deal with man's action in practical politics and conduct of the ordinary affairs of everyday life and intercourse³. The story of the fable is generally related in prose, but the moral is fixed in the memory by being put in verse form.

Fables are broadly divided into two types. One is characteristics of human and emotional story and the other is the story of didactic with humanism. There are three main aims of fables. These are (1) leisure time spent usefully, (2) entertainment and (3) moral teaching children or princes.

The *Hitopadeśa*

The *Hitopadeśa* written by Nārayaṇa Śarma, a small book of stories, representing fable literature, teaches ethics and morals. Some scholars opine that the *Hitopadeśa* is the Bengal version of celebrated *Pañcatantra* which is written by Viṣṇu Śarma. Though, literally, many stories from the *Pañcatantra* are repeated in the *Hitopadeśa*, it has some



new materials as well. This book has many new verses not available in the *Pañcatantra*. Instructive ślokas from *Manusmṛiti*, Cānakya's Arthaśāstra etc. are collected by Nārāyaṇa Śarma and presented beautifully in verse from in the *Hitopadeśa*. The Book⁴ is in four divisions as *Mitralābha* (the acquisition of friends), *Mitrabheda* (the separation of friends), *Vigraha* (making war) and *Sandhi* (concluding peace). The object of the *Hitopadeśa* is to train the young mind in the chief affairs of life by acquainting them with the accumulated experiences of the past ages. The work is very interesting as well as instructive. According to M. R. Kale, "The work aims at teaching the principles of policy, guiding them in the more agreeable form of stories written mostly in prose interspersed with verse. It belongs to that class of compositions which imparts instructions through fables inspired by the wisdom of its place and time. Yet every fable in this work and every maxim drawn from it can still be applied to human characters irrespective of time and place."⁵

Upādānas of Environmental Awareness in the *Hitopadeśa*

Some of the aspects of nature, their utility and the values imbibed from them by humans are represented here:

i. Rivers and water

Rivers and water have a special role in our environment sometimes positive and sometimes negative. It is said in the *Hitopadeśa* that a river is an important source for drinking water⁶ and has such others uses.⁷ Every family needs water⁸. Life is not possible without water and animals even die for want of water⁹. The most important thing is that water is the main source of life for aquatic animals too¹⁰. Rivers are also conscious of keeping the water free from pollution. Excess water is drained to keep the water fresh and protected.¹¹ The flowing water washes away the waste materials and keeps the environment clean.

The drawback of the river water flowing into the sea is that since the rivers flow downwards into the sea, it becomes salty and souseless for drinking. It is stated in the *Mitralābha*, the first division of *Hitopadeśa* thus:

*āsādyatoyāḥ prabhavanti nadyaḥ
samudramāsādyā bhavantyapeyāḥ*¹²

ii. Stone

Stone is an element of nature and some of it is also worshipped by people. Answering as to how some of these stones could be transformed into divinity or



Godliness, it is said in the *Hitopadeśa* that the Brāhmins sing Vedic mantras (hymns) and turned these stones into gods. Thus a stone also attains divinity when well consecrated by the great.

*aśmāpi yāti devatvaṁ mahadbhiḥ supratisthitaḥ.*¹³

iii. Plants

Plants play an important role in the maintenance of environment congenial to human habitation. In the *Hitopadeśa*, it is said that like humans, plants too have feelings. In this respect, Nārāyaṇa Śarma, the author of *Hitopadeśa* describes that the tree withdraws not its shade even from its cutter.

*chetḥ pāśvagaṭāchāyāṁ nopasaṁharati drumāḥ.*¹⁴

Again trees play an important role in the well being of humans. Man receives many benefits from trees. The trees please the gods and kings with flowers as *mālā* (garlands), ancestors with fruits, provide living place for birds and shade to all living beings. In the *Hitopadeśa*, it is stated that flowers ascend the head of gods and kings:

*.....sumanaḥ saṅgādārohati satāṁ śiraḥ.*¹⁵

There are various names of trees mentioned in the *Hitopadeśa* such as *Śālmali* tree (silk-cotton tree), *Parkati* tree, *Champak* tree etc. Here the trees are illustrated as the living place of birds. The first story of *Hitopadeśa* begins with *Śālmali* tree, where the crow *Laghupatanaka* is said to have taken rest at night. Again, birds coming from various regions are also described to take rest at night in this same tree.

The various parts of the plant kingdom serving humans is brought out beautifully in the following verse which says that the ripe fruits serve as food, grass as bed and that the bark of trees are used as dress.

*varam vanam vyāghragajendrasebitarim/
drumālayaḥ pakvaphalāmbubhakṣaṇam*¹⁶//

iv. Indispensability of plant kingdom

There are certain products of plant kingdom which become indispensable for certain religious or sacrificial rites. One such is the sesame which is described as a sacred crop in *Hitopadeśa* and without which sacrificial rites cannot be performed. Without the offering of the sesame cakes, the rites to the ancestors is not possible. Sesame also consists of oil¹⁷, which is used as medicine.



Various parts of the tree are offered in the sacrificial altars and the smoke that emerges from sacrificial fire makes the environment free from pollution. So, it is our sacred duty to protect trees. In this respect, it is said in the *Mahābhārata* that "a person who plants a tree earns equal virtue as also performing a sacrifice According to the *Mahābhārata*, one must plant and protect trees like one's own son."18It is said in the *Mahābhārata* thus:

*puṣpitāḥ phalavantaśca tarpayantiḥa mānavān/
vṛkṣadam putravat vṛkṣāstārayanti paratra tu//
tasmāt taḍāge sadvṛkṣā ropyāḥ śreyo 'rthinā sadā/
putravat paripālyāśca putrāste dharmataḥ smṛtāḥ/19*

v. Animals

Animals are the main *upādāna* of nature. The very first books i.e the *Mitralābha* begins with the story of a crow named *Laghupatanaka* and a hunter. Having seen the hunter who looked like a messenger of death, *Laghupatanaka* felt the dread of the forthcoming danger and followed the hunter. While following the hunter, *Laghupatanaka* was confined in the trap of the hunter and a mouse named *Hiraṇyaka* came to the rescue of the flock of doves along with the dove *Chitragriva*.

In the stories of the *Hitopadeśa*, there is description of various animals like *Chitrāṅga* (a deer), *Dīrghakarṇa* (a jackal) *Jaradgava* (a vulture), *Subuddhi* (a crow) *Karpurtilaka* (an elephant) and so on. The animals in these stories express their feelings like human beings. While some hunters desire to kill the animals, there are some animals who are ready to help their friends to keep them away from danger and thus create environmental awareness. So, it is our duty to protect the animals that have a direct relation to the environment.

This book gives a beautiful description of the forest with detailed information on its animals and tree. The description is so picturesque that it is very easy for a child to transport himself in his mind to these natural surroundings. The new generation reading it gets a lot of information on the fauna and flora of an Indian forest. If this is combined with a nature trip to identify some of the trees cited, the new generation's awareness about the preservation or the loss of such flora or fauna is heightened.

Its Relevance in the Present Time

Since time immemorial co-existence between humans and environment has been described in various folktales and other books. But when there is a conflict in the co-



existence some of the living species become extinct. At present it has become very essential to save these living species from extinction and for this we must come forward to protect our environment. Through this research paper and attempt has been made to reveal some facts of the present situation in the interest of well being of all living beings. The examples of rivers, animals, birds and forests in the *Hitopadeśa* tell us

1. how the animals behave more humanely while humans have lost humanity.
2. how the cruel acts of human beings are hazardous to nature putting to extinction some aspects of environment and polluting the environment.

Through the fables of the *Hitopadeśa* it is said that all should treat forests and nature with a kind heart so that we can make this earth worth living.

Conclusion

From this present study, it is clear that the writer of *Hitopadeśa*, Nārāyaṇa Śarma was very much aware of the protection and preservation of environment for all round well being of people. He tried to educate or teach people about these things and his writings or teachings are very much relevant in this also. Because imbalance in environment has become a great threat to human beings at present. So all should come forward to save lives and nature. Environmental awareness is most important to ensure the survival of this beautiful planet. The awareness about the environment presented in ancient thought will surely be helpful for the protection of our environment.

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5. *Hitopadeśa of Nārāyaṇa*, by M.R. Kale, P. Cover page
6. *ambubhakṣaṇam*, Ibid., 146
7. *samudramāsādyā bhavantypeyāḥ*, Ibid.46
8.udakaṁ.....etānyapi satāṁ gehe nocchidyante kadācana, Ibid., 60
9. Ibid., 158



10. *ambhāṁsijalajantunām.....param valam*, Ibid., 159
11. *tarāgodarsamsthānām parīvāha ivāmbhasām*, Ibid., 159
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The Paśupakṣivicintana of Hari Narayan Dikshita: Clarion call for Ahimsā

Ms. Ramya Bhatt

Mankind has been closely living with birds and animals. The Indus people worshipped animals and deified them. Mohenjo-daro and Harappā seals revealing a male god surrounded by four, show the importance of animals in this planet. Even today we can see deities having animals as their weapons or vehicles.

Description of birds and animal can be found in our literature as early as the Vedas. Smṛtis, Epics, Purānas, Kāvya and popular fables like the Pañcatantra and Hitopedeśa follow. In all these literature, humans have been depicted as closely interacting with the fauna and many a time, values are taught to humans through fables in the form the behaviour of the animals and birds.

Paśupakṣivicintana of Dr Hari Narayan Dikshit is one such work which highlights the concept of Ahimsā through a plea to the human world to let the fauna live peacefully without fear.

The concept 'अहिंसापरमोधर्मः' has a deep root in Hindu culture. This *dharma* to be followed while dealing with animals, is again and again stressed and highlighted in our literature starting from the Vedas. The *Rgveda* mentions cow as *aghnyā*- 'should not be killed'. The *Matsya Purāna* says that those who ill-treat cows do not prosper. It is also mentioned in our *Śāstras* that adhering to vegetarianism is the path of *ahiṃsā* towards



animals. The *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* (5.11.17) says that just touching an animal is equal to sacrifice. Even in later times, the *Manusmṛiti* (V.38) and the *Yājñavalkya Smṛiti* (V.180) say that animals are to be protected than killed. *Ahiṃsā* is defined as non-killing, non-hatred and non-harming in texts such as *Vārāha Purāṇa* (203.4-5) which says that those who take joy in violence (*hiṃsā-vihārin*) of destroying green grass, killing buffaloes and goats, do not live long.

The *Manusmṛiti*¹ fixes fine for injuring birds and animals. The same text² states that eating meat by injuring sentient beings is detrimental to heavenly bliss. The *Manusmṛiti*³ further declares that man who has control and respect for all living beings gains complete success:

त्रिदण्डमेतन्निक्षिप्य सर्वभूतेषु मानवः ।
कामक्रोधौ तु संयम्य ततःसिद्धिं नियच्छति ॥

In these lines, the work *Paśupakṣivīcintana* of Dr. Hari Narayan Dikshit upholds the banner of Ahimsā. An attempt is made here by the kavi to bring to the notice of the people the principle of Ahimsā and vegetarianism, through narrating the story of the problems of animals and birds at the hands of the human beings.

Introduction to the Author:

The author Dr Hari Narayan Dikshit, formerly Professor and Head of the Department of Sanskrit, Formerly Dean, Faculty of Arts, Kumaun University (Uttarakhand), has authored more than thirty works such as - *Samskṛta-anuvāda-kalikā*, *Samskṛta-nibanda-raśmi*, *Śrīmad-Appayadikṣita-carita* (Gadya), *Menakā-viśvāmitra* (Dṛśya), *Śrīhanumad-dūta* (Sandēśa), *Bhīṣmacarita*, *Rādhācarita* and *Bhāratamātābrute* (Mahā-kāvya), *Paśupakṣivīcintana* (Khaṇḍa kāvya) and so on. He has been conferred with various awards by various institutions like the Bharatiya Bhasa Parishad, Calcutta's Samskrita Sahitya Academy(1991), Delhi Sahitya Academy (1992), Rastrapati Puraskar, Delhi (2003) and so on.

The work *Paśupakṣivīcintana*:

In *Paśupakṣivīcintana*, a Khaṇḍakāvya, Dr Hari Narayan Dikshit raises his voice for saving animals and birds. The poet seeing the plight of animals and birds at the hands of human beings, out of pity has penned this work in order to spread concern for animals and birds. He started this work on a Kṛṣṇa Janmāṣṭami day and completed on a Diwali day in the year 2005 CE. Dr Hari Narayan Dikshit has highlighted the sufferings



of birds and animals in this work and present to the human world as a plea to let the fauna live peacefully without fear. The work has been composed in two parts each having 190 verses. While Pūrvārdha brings out the plight of animals, the Uttarārdha narrates the woes of birds. This Khaṇḍakāvya concludes with six verses at the end, introducing the author and his intention in composing this work.

The work presents the story of a physician by name Vidyādhara who witnesses the assembly of the animals and birds where they voice out their woes at the hands of human beings.

Content of the Text:

In the beginning as benedictory verses⁴, the author prays to lord Ganeśa, goddess Sarasvatī, lord Śiva and Pārvatī in order to understand the thoughts of birds and animals and to have the power of understanding the feelings of birds and animals to complete the work. He also seeks the blessings of Śri Garuḍa, the king of birds and vehicle of lord Viṣṇu.

The work opens with introducing a doctor named Vidyādhara who in addition to curing human beings was also famous for treating animals for, he could understand the language of animals and birds⁵. Once when he was about to collect the herbs for medical purposes (vv.13-6), he reached a lake surrounded by trees where it was peaceful like Manasarovar with swans swimming, sun rays flashing and lotuses blossoming. On the other side of lake, he saw an assembly of a group of animals. To know the purpose of this assembly, the doctor reached the other side of lake silently. It was a meeting of herbivorous domestic animals well known for their peacefulness. An Elephant was presiding over the meeting (vv.17-23). It was an assembly of animals that were ill treated by humans (vv. 24-5).

While narrating the story, the poet brings forth many a home truth through the mouth of the animals and also through their behaviour, suiting the style of a fable literature.

The animals were welcomed by the elephant and were advised to speak out their minds. Great people do not talk unnecessarily and so too the elephant, the mighty animal says the poet⁶ : महान्तो नैव जल्पन्ति किञ्चिदप्यनपेक्षितम् ।।

Now representing Buffaloes, one Buffalo starts speaking about how humans torture them(vv.33-42) - by making them to pull carts, by killing them as *balidāna*, selling the



old ones to flesh eaters; female Buffaloes are milked leaving nothing for their small ones and the unproductive one's are sold in markets for flesh.

Then a Bull represents its community(vv.43-53)- Tractors have replaced them and hence they are neglected:Even those who use them show their mean nature by ill treating them, depriving them of food and by beating with sticks to fulfill their wishes.They use iron rods, ropes, sticks to torture the bulls. Humans make bulls unproductive in order to make them more suitable for working conditions. When they become old they are sold for flesh in markets.Also the oxen are protected till they milk and are sold in market for flesh after they stop producing milk.Hence bulls and oxen should beprotected.

Next comes the desert animal, Camel⁷. Humans tie a rope through their nose which is irritating for camels and make them suffer. They are made to travel in the deserts without considering their hunger and thirst. Old camels are sold, like bulls for money.

When the horse started its speech⁸, the poet adds that the wise do not lose the opportunity to speak out their mind when the time comes (v.63cd): भाषितुं समये प्राप्ते बिलम्बन्तेनधीजुषः ॥ The horses belonging to tonga man have a cruel master. Beyond capacity, the horses are made to load people and made to run fast. By continuous beatings by the cart driver, the horse's body gets wounded. Hoofs are covered with metals permanently which is a big curse. Horses are made to work day and night even without being given sufficient food.

A donkey talks about the plight of its group; men call them as 'fools'. They are provided with wastages as food such as hay or straws or brans. Donkeys are considered untouchables. Even washermen who make donkeys to work donot provide sufficient food to them. In order not to run away their legs are tied with ropes. Their bodies are full of beaten marks. Such is the plight of donkeys.

Now the goat gives out their problems . Goats are the most docile animals and hence the poet says that when supported by the mighty even the docile become vociferous (v.87 cd):बलिनां रक्षणं लब्ध्वा ब्रुवते निर्बला अपि ॥ Goat's flesh are cooked and taken as food by men. It is sold in markets.Humans, in the name of *bali* kill and offer goats as sacrifices. Through the mouth of the goat the poet brings forth the everlasting argument of the Cārvakas, as to why humans, who want to go to *svarga* do not offer themselves as bali (v.96):



वदन्ति ते यद्वलिवेदिकायां बलीकृतो यातिपशुस्तु नाकम् ।
सत्यं यदीदं तदमी किमर्थं स्वं नात्र कुर्वन्ति बलिं तदर्थम् ॥

On daily basis goats are killed to satisfy the human tongues: so the population of goats is getting reduced . As days go on goats may come to extinction.Hence such goats need to be protected.

Pitiable condition of the sheep¹¹- as hairs are removed from their bodies they suffer in cold. Sheep are sold in market for flesh and they are given as *bali* to satisfy the deities. Hence sheep need to be protected. Having said this the sheep steps down to make way for deer. The poet adds here his opinion that the sheep being good and the amicable spoke only what was necessary (v.114 cd): सज्जनास्सरलात्मानो ब्रुवते नानपेक्षितम् ॥

On its turn the deer reports¹² that people hunt down deers for their flesh and for their skin .Humans degrade themselves in the name of humanity. Hunters are always in search of deers in order to fetch their horns; they use many cruel ways with the result that deers have become scared of men than lions just like deers, men hunt down rabbits too.Rabbit's life too has become pityful and miserable¹³.

Now, having recorded all the pitiable tales of the herbivorous animals, the poet, through the mouth of Gajarāja brings forth the anguish he feels for such callous attitude of human beings. He decries the habit of eating meat when there are tasty vegetables available in plenty (v.137):

नाना स्वादुषु शाकेषु देशेऽस्मिन् उद्भवत्स्वपि ।
हन्त मांसाशनाभूतामनुष्या अधिसङ्ख्यकाः ॥

He is very much pained at the thought that in Bhārata, where '*ahimsā*' is taught as the supreme *dharma*, such activities are carried out, killing the very spirit of that *dharma* (v.144):

अहिंसा परमो धर्मो मन्यते स्मात्र भारते ।
किन्तु हन्ताद्यधर्मोऽयं दृश्यते समुपेक्षितः ॥

The more men consume animal flesh, the more will be the spreading of evilness, feels the poet (v.145):

अद्य मांसभुजां सङ्ख्या जनानां वर्धतिऽनिशम् ।
दुर्गुणानां हि विस्तारे विलम्बो नात्र जायते ॥



The poet laments that such a plight of beings coexisting with humans will lead, at the end, to destruction of human clan itself.

Not stopping with animals, cruelty of humans extends to birds too. As the physician Vidyādhara goes to forest, on the third day, he listens to the conversation of the assembled birds under the leadership of 'Pakṣirāja' Garuḍa. Garuḍa advices them to talk about their woes one by one; since the wise should not delay in conveying their messages (Uttarārdha, v.14cd): विलम्बो नैव कर्तव्यो वक्तव्यवचने बुधैः ॥

A *Mayūra* (Peacock) comes forward to voice its problems¹⁴. Peacocks dance spreading their feathers to please people, sing to keep them happy from worries: they predict rain during monsoon and make farmers happy. But men in lust for beautiful feathers cut them and kill the *Mayūras* for the sake of flesh. The poet adds here the statement that the peacock remained quite after stating the case as the worse do not explain what they have said (v.24.cd): बुधेषु कथनं स्वीयं व्याख्यान्ति नहि पण्डिताः ॥

Now the turn of the parrots¹⁵ - Parrots are forced into cages as if they have committed some crime. Parrots and such domesticated birds are fed with left over food in a contaminated plate which is not cleaned properly on regular basis. Humans don't chant 'rama' japa themselves but parrots are made to say repeatedly. Such caged parrots lose their flying capacity out of fear and cry to their self. People sell parrots and their younger ones in the market for money (30ab): कतिपये शुकशाबकविक्रयं बिदधते बत रूप्यकलब्धये ।

Representative of the *Kapotas* (Pigeons) reports (vv.34-9) - Not only the illiterate, but even the educated eat the flesh of pigeons in order to rejuvenate themselves. Pigeons are soft and easy to be caught. Such birds do not wish anything from men. But still they are hunted by humans for getting cured of their diseases.

The humans to satisfy their tongue and to show off their sophisticated life style, kill hens and eat them on daily basis is the report by a *kukkuṭa* (hen). While carrying hens from one place to another they carry them as though they are already lifeless; hens are cooked in different ways. Also some hens are killed in step by step process while some are killed at one blow. They grow hens with great care, sell them and make money. The eggs are also sold in large numbers as big business. Number of people eating such eggs are increasing day by day causing fear to hens.

On its turn *Tittiri* (Partridge) states¹⁷ - Partridge's flesh is liked by men and hence killing them has reduced their population which is already depleted. After the *Tittiri*, a



vartaka rises up and tells the trouble undergone by their class. The other birds also report their woes caused by human beings who should, in fact protect them.

Listening to all this, Garuḍa¹⁸ broods over the plight of the birds at the hands of the humans. Through the mouth of Garuḍa, the poet brings out his ideas regarding the problem on hand. He wonders as to how the humans well-known for following ideals like *ahimsā* (non-violence), *satya* (truth), *asteya* (non stealing), *śauca* (cleanliness), *indriyanigraha* (control the senses), *dayā* (compassion), *kṣamā* (patience), *titīkṣa* (endurance) along with *sattvaguna* have turned killers and flesh eaters (vv.77-8):

अहिंसासत्यमस्तेयं शौचमिन्द्रियनिग्रहम् ।
दयां क्षमांतितिक्षां चाधीत्यापिमनुजा इमे ॥

सात्त्विकै राजसैश्र्वान्नैस्संपन्नसदना अपि ।
किमर्थं चकुतो जाताःपक्षिहिंसकभक्षकाः ॥

Doves are eaten in the place where King Śibi (who offered himself to save a dove) had ruled!. The country where Mahāvīra, Gauthama, Guru Nānaka and Mahātmā Gandhi were born has become the slaughter house of birds (vv.79-80):

कपेता बत भुज्यन्ते देशेऽस्मिन् भूपतेःशिबेः ।
बिस्मितोऽहमिदंश्रुत्वा तस्याप्यात्मारुदन्भवेत् ॥
महावीरस्य बुद्धस्य नानकस्य च गान्धिनः ।
खगा देशेऽत्र खाद्यन्ते दुःखस्यात्किमतःपरम् ?

Humanity is depleting in this earth. Compassion, like river Gaṅgā, is getting dried up. Ahimsā, like Yamunā, is getting destroyed. Himsā is increasing (vv.82-3). Out of greediness and lust, foolish men eat the flesh of birds. In this Kali age, humans, instead of being protectors of the fauna have become destroyers (v.87cd): तमन्ये रक्षका एव जाताबतात्र भक्षकाः ॥

Thus Garuḍa discussing the plight of the birds with them, advises them to pray to the Lord, who alone can help them in their plight, since in their world, the protect or (men) has become the annihilator.

Now, from vv.151-58, the poet shortly talks of Dr. Vidyādhara's worried mood and wish to help the animals and birds. After thus cogitating for a week, Dr. Vidyādhara decides to write to the Rāṣṭrapati of Bhārata upraising him of the situation and request him to take some possible action to protect the animals and birds. From vv.160-89, the



poet narrates context of the letter to the Rāṣṭrapati. In that letter he reiterates that Lord Brahmā has given different varieties of food sources from plants; hence it is not correct on the part of the humans to kill animals and birds and eat their flesh (171):

शाकानि चान्नानि बहूनि वेधसास्वाद्दूनि सृष्टानि धरातलेऽखिले ।
तत्तानि हित्वा पशुपक्षिभक्षणं न शोभते मानवदेहधारिणाम् ॥

His final request is that the Rāṣṭrapati of Bhārata should abolish the practice of killing and eating these species; this would result in the protection of human race, declares the poet (v. 180):

त्वया प्रभो तत्पशुपक्षिहिंसाविधीयमाना बहुधा मनुष्यैः ।
निषेधनीया च समापनीया येनात्र भूयान्मनुजत्वरक्षा ॥

Conclusion

The present work though a *Khaṇḍakāvya* falls under the category of fable literature; it stands unique in exhibiting the injustice experienced by the animal world caused by the highly evolved human world. Not missing any of the members of the fauna, the pain and injury caused by humans to them as voiced by each of them is well presented by the poet. The avarice and lust of human world to consume meat has increased so much that man is unaware of his own behavioural change, which would finally destroy the human population.

Ahimsā, an essential virtue to be developed by humans to evolve spiritually has always been emphasised in our literature. The whole work, written as an appeal to the President of India is actually an address to every citizen of this country to realise his folly and rise up to do his duty of protecting the animal world. Thus the work stands out as a votary of *Ahimsā*.

End Notes

1. Manusmṛt, VIII.297: क्षुद्रकाणां पशूनां तु हिंसायां द्विशतोदमः । पञ्चाशत्तु भवेद्दण्डः शुभेषु मृगपक्षिषु ॥
2. ib id. V.48: नाकृत्वा प्राणिनां हिंसां मांसमुत्पद्यते क्वचित् । न च प्राणिवधः स्वर्ग्यस्तस्मान्मांसं विवर्जयेत् ॥
3. .ibid. XII.11
4. *Paśupakṣivicintana*, Pūrvārdha, 1-6
5. ibid., vv. 9-12
6. ibid., v. 31cd



7. *ibid.*, vv.54-61
8. *ibid.*, vv.62-72
9. *ibid.*, vv.73-86
10. *ibid.*, vv.87-107
11. *ibid.*, vv.108-14
12. *ibid.*, vv.115-24
13. *ibid.*, vv.125-30
14. *ibid.*, vv.16-24
15. *ibid.*, vv.25-32
16. *ibid.*, vv.41-51
17. *ibid.*, vv. 53-66
18. *ibid.*, vv. 67-150

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Buddhist Fables and Murals at Ajanta Caves: Some Reflections

Shoumanya Mukherjee

Art includes the various branches of creative activities such as Architecture, Sculpture, Painting, Music, Literature, Dance etc. Ajanta Caves in India are famous for its greatest tradition of painting all over the world. In fact Ajanta is a different world where we find the illustrations of various Buddhist fables which are the reflections of Buddhist teachings. Ajanta has 30 caves including cave no 15A which are divided into two parts i.e. Sātvāhana caves and Vākāṭaka caves. Amongst all these caves this paper attempts to explore the principal values of Buddhism from the murals of cave no 1, 2, 16 and 17 as they constitute the major amount of surviving murals based on Buddhist fables at Ajanta.

Key words: Buddhism, Fables, Murals, Ajanta caves, Values.

Introduction:

Buddhism is one of the oldest religions and philosophies of the world. The distinctive feature of Buddhism is its art. Art is generally defined as: 'The expression or application of human creative skill and imagination, typically in a visual form such as painting or sculpture, producing works to be appreciated primarily for their beauty or emotional power'. India is famous for its different kinds of art and some of them are surely created by Buddhists. Various ancient dynasties in India such as *Magadha, Suṅga, Nanda Mauryan, Post-Mauryan Kingdoms, kuṣāṇia, Gupta, Pāla, Sena* etc. bear some significant masterpieces of Buddhist art.



We know that art includes the various branches of creative activities, such as Architecture, Sculpture, Painting, Music, Literature, Dance etc. India is famous for its greatest tradition of painting all over the world. In most cases this art was born out of its profound philosophy and culture. One can find that painting at the Ajanta caves are based on mainly Jātaka stories (exhibiting the past life and rebirth of Lord Buddha) that convey different aspects of ancient India such as Socio-economical, Political, Educational, Judiciary and many important values taught by Gautama Buddha. This paper is an attempt to explore those cardinal values which are not only the *Asset of India*, but Pillars of any civilized society, expressed by the murals of caves 1, 2, 16 and 17 at Ajanta.

Time, Place and Patronage:

Ajanta is considered as the source and inspiration of Buddhist paintings across the world. The Western Ghats of the Deccan plateau at Aurangabad district of Maharashtra, a state of India are famous for Buddhist rock-cut caves of Ajanta. There are total 30 caves including 15A and they are divided into two groups namely *Sātavāhana* period (roughly traced back to 2nd century BCE to 1st century CE) caves or *Hīnayāna* Buddhist style caves. These Caves are 9, 10, 12, 13, 15A¹ and the rest are *Vākāṭaka* period caves or *Mahāyāna* Buddhist style caves² (roughly traced back to 3rd century-5th century CE). The first group of caves was patronized by the *Sātavāhana* Dynasty³ while the later group was flourished under the patronage of the *Vākāṭaka* Dynasty specially the *Vākāṭaka* King, Hariṣeṇa⁴.

Features of the Ajanta Caves:

Amongst the 30 caves, five caves 9, 10, 19, 26, and 29 are worship hall (Chaitya) with a *stupa* and the rest are monastery (*Vihāra*). The first group of caves do not contain any figurative sculpture, but they highlighted on the stupa, because *Hīnayāna* Buddhism does not allow pictorial exhibition of Buddha. So, except symbolic motifs and stupa of caves 9 and 10, small sculptural activity is seen in the caves of the earlier group. We find that the caves 9 and 10 are *stupa* where worship halls of *Caityagṛha* are situated whereas caves 12, 13, and 15A are *vihāra-s*⁵. The latter group of caves are attributed to the theistic *Mahāyāna*⁶. 1-8, 11, 14-29 are the later period caves. Amongst these caves, 19, 26 and 29 are *Caityagṛha-s* and the remaining are *vihāra-s*. Like the first group, the latter phase caves have also mural paintings. The craftsmanship of caves 1, 2, 16 and 17 still shined. Though almost all



of these caves are adorned with various paintings and sculptures but caves 1, 2, 16 and 17 exhibit the major amount of surviving ancient Indian wall paintings⁷ based on Buddhist fables.

Murals:

Ajanta caves are famous for their paintings and rock-cut sculptures recognized as one of the finest existing examples of Ancient Indian art, specially, wall paintings that express many things of ancient India including values and teachings of Lord Buddha through gesture, pose form, fables and parables.

Cave 1: The excavation of cave 1 was done from late 463 CE to 477 CE under the reign of *Mahārāja Hariṣeṇa* of the Western Vākāṭaka Dynasty and the patron of this cave is unknown⁸. In cave no 1, there are 15 paintings⁹ depicting various philosophical, religious, social and other aspects of ancient India. Wall painting, *Maitrībāla* depicting non-violence. *Mahāsudarsana* wall painting and painting of king *Śibi* are famous for expressing justice, compassion, goodness and calmness etc. Painting of King *Udrāyana* of *Roruka* portrays renunciation of his kingdom and accepting Buddhism. Painting *Sarīghapāla*, a *Nāga* king, conveys that through suffering one can only attain *Nirvāṇa* or liberation, the principal aim of Buddhism. *Jānaka* wall painting narrates King *Jānaka* of *Videha* realization that a happy and free life can be led only by rejecting mundane belongings and happiness. Painting *Sumāgadhā* daughter of *Anāthapiṇḍada*, the merchant of the city of *Śrāvastī*, shows the invitation of *Sumāgadhā* to Lord Buddha and his disciple who welcomed them with food and drink. Through the wall painting of *Mahośadha*, King of *Videha* the intelligence of his wife *Viśakhā* by which he was able to remove six corrupted minister and exile from his kingdom is exhibited. Through *Māravijaya* it is described how *Bodhisattva* attained Enlightenment and became Lord Buddha. The *Mahāprāatihārya* painting illustrates Great Miracle made by Lord Buddha and his teaching for achieving *Nirvāṇa* or salvation. Painting *Campaka*, the displeased wife of a *Nāga* king, tells that only human being can escape from the cycle of rebirth, another principal teaching of Lord Buddha. Through the painting *Nāgakumāra*, a *Nāga* prince, his rebirth as human being and sainthood in the next life has been expressed. The wall painting King *Prabhāsa* teaches that *Bodhisattva* or Enlightening state can be achieved only by conquering desires.

Cave 2: Cave 2 was excavated in early 465-69/ 475-78 CE/ 478-80 under the reign of *Mahārāja Hariṣeṇa* of the Western Vākāṭaka Dynasty and the patron is



unidentified¹⁰. The whole cave is painted except for the area flanking the doorway in the front interior wall. Like the 1st cave this cave too has some murals depicting Lord Buddha's teachings along with other things. Amongst the paintings, the painting *Bhūridatta*, second son of a *Nāga* king, expresses the absurdity of sacrifices in the form of human or other animals, rituals and cast systems and all of these activities are prohibited in Buddhism. Mural on *Kṣāntivādin*, an ascetic, exhibits forgiveness, one of the cardinal values of Buddhism. Through the painting of *Harṁsa*, a goose king, the virtues of just and loyalty are taught. *Vidhūra*, the loyal Prime Minister of the *Kuru* king, exhibits the wisdom possessed by the Prime Minister that is able to transform *anāga* king's wife's mentality. *Bhagavatprasūti* mural narrates the last birth of *Bodhisattva* (Enlightened One) in this world or *Sarīsārathat* indicates that Lord Buddha attained liberation, the ultimate goal of human being according to Buddhism. Another mural which is named one thousand *Buddha*-s, is believed portraying the Great Miracle in which the *Buddha* multiplied himself, so that the rows of *Buddha*-s reached the sky.'

Cave 16 : Cave 16 was excavated in the late 462-69, 477-78, 478-79 CE in the time of *Mahārāja Hariśeṇa* of the Western *Vākāṭaka* Dynasty and the main patron of this cave was *Varāhadeva*, the prime minister of *Mahārāja Hariśeṇa*¹¹. Like the other cave, this one too is adorned with many colourful paintings. Mural *Devavatāra* spreads the message against cheating or dishonesty through the story of a nun, *Utpalavarṇā* who took the form of great king by her superhuman power to attend Lord Buddha's sermon from the very first row. The *Vartakāpota* (vartaka means quail) painting depicts one of the fundamental value of Buddhism i.e. telling truth in every situation. Generosity, another supreme value is expressed by the mural Prince *Viśvāntara*, who donated everything-his kingdom, valuables, children even his wife though later on he was given back all of these things for his generosity, one of the greatest virtues. Through the mural *Bisa* (lotus stalks) some virtue like detachment, truth etc of a Brahmin family is depicted. We know that taking alcohol is injurious to health and this is narrated in the mural named *Kumbha* (jug). Through the narration of wall painting *Mukapangu*, it is advised that duty is for the sake of duty and we find it is the motto of *Karmayoga* described in the *Bhagavad Gitā*. Teaching on Enlightenment is given in the mural *Nanda*, who is Lord Buddha's half-brother and who used to immerse in his wife's beauty but ultimately attained sainthood through the teachings of Lord Buddha. *Mahāsamāja* painting depicts Lord Buddha delivering



his sermons before the *Mahāsamāja* (Great Assembly) of gods. Birth, marriage, renunciation and Enlightenment of Buddha are portrayed in the mural *Bhagavān*.

Cave 17: Cave 17 was excavated in the year 463-471/ 479-480 CE under the reign of *Mahārāja Hariśeṇa* of the Western *Vākāṭaka* Dynasty and under the patronage of Upendragupta II, the local king of Rishika and a vassal of *Mahārāja Hariśeṇa*¹². In this cave we find highest number of murals (almost 30 murals) than the previous caves mentioned above. Most of the murals express Buddha's teachings and the events relating to his life. Mural *Avalokiteśvara*, shows the care and protection given by the *Bodhisattva*, *Avalokiteśvara*, to travellers from eight kinds of perils. The wheel of transmigration and the concept of hell are exhibited in the painting *Saṁsāracakra*, though we find that Buddhism does not believe in the concept of hell and heaven. On the news of Buddha's Enlightenment and the birth of his son, Śuddhodana, Gautama Buddha's father organized a celebration and Buddha was an invitee to this occasion. This story was expressed in the painting named Śuddhodana. The story of becoming a monk of a common man named *Udayi*, the son of the court priest at *Kapilāvastu*, the kingdom of King Śuddhodana, and a nun of a woman named Gupta through the teaching of Lord Buddha are narrated in the mural *Udayi*. Benevolence, another important virtue, is portrayed through the mural of *Dhanapāla*. *Dhanapāla* which was an angry elephant and used to be involved into rampages was disciplined and calmed by Lord Buddha through the power of his benevolence. There is another mural named *Rāhula* which expresses the way of becoming monk of *Rāhula*, son of Buddha. Through the painting *Sumati*, a Brahmin student, Buddhist doctrine of rebirth is emphasized when we see that *Sumati* is promised that he would be Buddha *Śākyamuni* in the next life. Generosity again was depicted through the painting of King *Śibi*. Forgiveness and kindness two greatest values are displayed through the mural *Rūru* (swarnamṛga, stag) who instead of suggesting any punishment to his betrayer advised the King and other to practice forgiveness and kindness. Buddhism believes in *Karmavāda* or law of action according to which good action leads to happiness and bad action leads to suffering. This doctrine is taught in the murals called *Ṛkṣa* and *Vānara* where we find a poor woodcutter in the first painting and a peasant in the second painting suffered for their betrayal and misdeeds with them who once upon a time sustained them by providing food and affection. Non-violence and truthfulness, two prime virtues of Buddhism are exhibited through the mural of *Ṣaḍdanta*, an elephant who refrained not only himself but other elephants



from harming a human. Through the mural *Mahākapi*, a Great Monkey, again duty for the sake of duty is advocated and murals named *Hastin*, (an elephant) and *Śāśa* sacrifice of one's own interest is taught. Detachment is the key principle in order to achieve liberation, the highest goal of Buddhism and in the mural *Bodhi*, we find this detachment from sensual pleasure is depicted. By the story *Sarvaṁdada*, another important mural, doing good for all is addressed where we find a king, titled *Sarva?dada* (Giving Everything), sacrificed himself for the good of a pigeon. Through the story *Sutasoma*, the king of Indraprastha, and *Śarabha*, a type of antelope, transformation is advocated where one notices that a man-eater in the first case was transformed by the honesty and truthfulness of King *Sutasoma* and in the second case a king renounced hunting by the power of generosity shown to him by a antelope and all these three namely honesty, truthfulness and generosity are significant values in Buddhism. Loyalty, another vital virtue, is depicted through the painting *Mātṛpoṣaka*. We find truthfulness is so important in Buddhism it is again preached in the mural *Matsya* (fish). Through the story *Śyāma*, (court priest's devoted son) the duty of a son to take care of his parents at their old age is exhibited. Patience and humbleness are depicted in the painting *Mahiṣ*, [A yaksha (genius, a class of semi-divine beings)].

We find some caves have common murals. For example, *Haṁsa* for Cave 2 and 17, *Mahāsamāja* for cave 16 and 17; *Viśvāntara* for 16 and 17, *Sutasoma* for 16 and 17; *Rūru* for 2 and 17. *Prabhāsa*, *Maitṛbāla*, *Mahāprātihārya* and *Śibi* for cave 1 and 2. *Maitṛbāla*, *Mahāprātihārya* for 1, 2 and 16.

Conclusion:

Thus, we find that one of the distinguishing features of Buddhism is its murals that express various messages and values such as non-violence, justice, compassion, goodness, calmness, renunciation, honesty, detachment, forgiveness, kindness, just, loyalty, truthfulness, generosity, transformation, benevolence, patience, abstention from taking alcohol that is injurious to health etc along with other features of Ancient India. We know that these cardinal values are not only required for attaining liberation (Nirvāṇa) as prescribed by Lord Buddha, but are the bedrock of any society that help to co-exist peacefully both inwardly and outwardly. We find from 1983 the Ajanta caves have been recognized as the UNESCO world Heritage Site for their importance and relevancy in the world history.



Notes and References:

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Advaita Teachings in The Karkaṭī Fable of Yogavāśiṣṭha Teaching Advaita

Sudarsan Krishna

Fables have been an important tool in communicating abstract thoughts in an easily comprehensible way from the time of the Upaniṣads. Though the fables have been used widely to teach statecraft, they find a place in philosophical literature too. The tenets of Advaita have been taught through stories and fables in texts like the Yogavāśiṣṭha. This article tries to explain the place of fables in Advaita narrative, based on a story from the Yogavāśiṣṭha about a Karkaṭī (crab) and her interaction with the king and the minister of Kirātas.

Introduction

Starting from the Vedas, the enormous volume of scriptures lay emphasis on imparting the means to attain the four *puruṣārthas* viz., *dharma*, *artha*, *kāma* and *mokṣa*. The sages and seers have used many techniques to convey the same. Among the many methodologies used, fables take a prominent place in the communication of abstract and complex ideas. A fable is defined as "a traditional short story that teaches a moral lesson, especially one with animals as characters".¹ Complex thoughts are broken down in an easy to understand form in fables. These have been used by many a teacher to help students absorb and assimilate difficult thoughts easily.

The fable literature in Sanskrit is a treasure trove where one can find many moral lessons conveyed through animated characters. Works such as the *Pañcatantra* and the *Hitopadeśa* are popular examples of such type of literature. Further they were widely used to teach young princes the nuances of statecraft in an easily comprehensible manner.



Use of fables and short stories is an age old method of teaching. Animals and birds teaching human beings are found in the Upaniṣads too. For example, in the *Chāndogyopanīṣad*² we find Satyakāma Jābāla being taught about the various aspects of Brahman by Vṛṣabha (bull), Agni (fire), Hamsa (swan) and Madgu (flamingo) in that order and later the teacher completing it. In the Ajātaśatru-Dṛpta Bālaki narrative in Bṛhadāraṇyakopanīṣad³ we find the talks of the birds inspiring humans.

We find references of many fables and stories which convey moral lessons in the epics. The passage "अत्राप्युदाहरन्तीमं इतिहासं पुरातनम्" is a very famous and of the repeated passage in the *Mahābhārata*.

It shows the popularity of stories and how they were remembered, recollected and used in regular communication. They became part of an oral tradition of handing down thoughts and values through the centuries or to emphasize enteral values. As the fables are in an easy to assimilate form, they play a vital role in the transmission of abstract thoughts in the form of philosophical teachings (*Darśanaśāstra*) as well to lay people.

Utility of Fables in Yogavāsiṣṭha

In the system of Advaita, Brahman, the fundamental cause of the universe is accepted as *nirguṇa* i.e., without any attributes or characteristics. That being the case, the philosophers well versed in the system ascribe non-real attributes and adjuncts (*upādhi*) to explain the non-dual concept of *Brahman*. In fact, the very causality of Brahman which is used to establish the non-dual nature of *Brahman* is illusory. Hence everything other than *Brahman* becomes *mithyā*.

Brahman being transcendental, being the only reality apart from and away from the world of language and communication, fables and analogies are used to explain the idea of self in the *mokṣaśāstra*. Vide., *Śaṅkarabhāṣya* on Brahmasūtra III.2.18: अत एव च अस्योपाधिनिमित्तामपारमार्थिकीं विशेषवत्तामभिप्रेत्य जलसूर्यकादिवदित्युपमा उपादीयते मोक्षशास्त्रेषु।

It is not only the idea about *Brahman* which is being taught but also the preparations for oneself to proceed in the spiritual path, qualifying oneself in the *sādhana* *catuṣṭaya* etc., too become equally important. The ideas about the spiritual path and the practice to tread the path are terse and it is difficult to reach the destination in the spiritual journey. So says *Kāthopanīṣad*⁴: क्षुरस्य धारा निशिता दुरत्यया दुर्गं पथस्तत्कवयो वदन्ति।। Thus, it is clear that spiritual attempt needs proper understanding. And this is made feasible by analogies and tales as is seen in the *Yogavāsiṣṭha*.



The fables which have ethical and didactical values and lessons are referred to as ethico-didactical fables. The use of such tales and fables is common in philosophical texts like the *Yogavāsiṣṭha*.

The *Yogavāsiṣṭha* (YV) is one of the prominent texts in Advaita philosophy. It contains the dialogue between Sage Vaśiṣṭha and Śrī Rāma and is attributed to sage *Vālmīki*. It has been commented by Ānandabodhendra Sarasvatī. The *Yogavāsiṣṭha* has six *prakaraṇas* and among them the third *prakaraṇa* known as the *Utpatti Prakaraṇa* describes the nature of people in general and specifically the nature of spiritual aspirants. This delineation is done more through illustrative stories. These stories are referred to as *dṛṣṭānta-sūktā* (verses) in the *Yogavāsiṣṭha*.

स्वभावो हि मुमुक्षूणां नराणां वर्ण्यते ।
अथोत्पात्तिप्रकरणं दृष्टान्ताख्यायिकामयम् ॥

On the use of such *dṛṣṭānta* stories, the text observes that they contain justifications with expository logic (*vyutpādaka yukti*), very relevant and pertinent analogies and examples :

युक्तियुक्तार्थवाक्यानि कल्पितानि पृथक्पृथक् ।
दृष्टान्तसारसूक्तानि चास्य प्रकरणानि षट् ॥

The text also describes *dṛṣṭānta* stories as *dṛṣṭāntasārasūktāni*. Ānandabodhendra Sarasvatī, interprets the phrased *dṛṣṭāntasārasūktā* as दृष्टान्ताः साराः श्रेष्ठाः येषु तथाविधानि सूक्तानि आख्यायिका येषु ताहशानि । According to his interpretation *dṛṣṭānta-sūktās* are *ākhyāyikās* -short stories, to exemplify. The third *prakaraṇa* of the *YV* entitled *Utpatti Prakaraṇa* has plenty of such *dṛṣṭānta* stories.

The stories deal with different spiritual requirements, moral and philosophical values that are to be inculcated. The stories also deal with the results that arise when we follow them and the consequences of not following it. The importance and sense of story are indicated in the context itself in the *YV*. The characters in the stories in philosophical literature are presented with allegorical colour too. The birds, animals and inanimate things appearing as characters in such stories used in the philosophical literature are not just presented with animations but are also given some positive and negative values depending on the central idea highlighted.



The story of Karkaṭī (crab)

The chapters 68 to 82 of the *Utpatti Prakaraṇa* section of the *YV* deal with the story of a Karkaṭī (crab). A retold version of the *YV* is available by the name *Laghuyoga vāsiṣṭha (LYV)* by a scholar, Abhinanda, from Kashmir.

The crab, presented in the text as demoness Karkaṭī, suffers from insatiable hunger. She considers her extraordinary hunger as normal and not a disease. No attempt is made by her to cure the disease; instead she prays to Brahmā and gets a boon for abundant and continuous supply of food to satiate her hunger.

The story of Karkaṭī (crab) is told by Vaṣiṣṭha to Rāma as illustration for *dṛśyadoṣa nivṛtti* in the third *Adhyāya* of *LYV* :

एतत्ते कथितं राम दृश्यदोषनिवृत्तये ।
लीलोपाख्यानमनघं घनतां जगतस्त्यज ॥

The story deals with the importance and need of purity and the circumstances in which absolute purity can arise. The cultivable nature of this characteristic by everyone without exception is also dealt with here. The story also highlights the classifications of spiritual aspirants based on the inculcation of spiritual attitude and values, dealt with in different sections in the text.

Now let us look at the story. There was a demoness referred to as Karkaṭī, due to her form of a crab. She suffered from severe hunger. So she undertook severe penance to propitiate Brahmā, the God of creation. She wanted a boon for unending supply of food to satisfy her hunger⁸ :

भगवन्भूतभव्येश स्यामहं जीवसूचिका ।
अनायसीवायसीव विधे दास्यसि चेद्वरम् ॥

Brahmā, satisfied with her penance appeared before her and granted her the boon as requested by her. By the boon given by Brahmā, she becomes splenic disease and cholera with needling pain to take her prey to satisfy her hunger⁹ :

सूचिका सोपसर्गा त्वं भविष्यसि विषूचिका ॥
दुर्भोजना दुरारम्भा मूर्खा दुःस्थितयश्च ये ।
दुर्देशवासिनो दुष्टास्तेषां हिंसां करिष्यसि ॥

On the advice of Brahmā, transforming herself into viṣūcikā she makes people - who have not kept themselves clean, who are not used to taking wholesome (clean/



hygienic) food, who practice vicious courses, ignorant, rude and violent, live in places with unsatisfactory sanitary conditions and are immoral, her victims. She could infect them through their breath, thereby suggesting that the infection could spread through air and make the people suffer with splenetic diseases¹⁰ :

प्रविश्य हृदयं प्राणैः पद्मप्लीहादिबाधनात् ।
वातलेखात्मिका व्याधिर्भविष्यसि विषूचिका ॥

But when the infection spreads it would affect both good and bad people. So to save themselves Brahmā suggested a prayer that could be recited (LYV III. *Mantra* given between verses 30 and 31).

Here the *LYV* not only gives the type of people who could be afflicted, but also how the disease could spread and when it became virulent how it could affect all the people irrespective of their hygienic precautions.

When Karkaṭī has such a lifestyle, in course of time she develops an innate weariness, a sense of discontentment and she develops the attitude of discrimination. But the instinct of survival made her continue her lifestyle as before. Her grouse was that she was not able to attack the well informed and knowledgeable, as they maintain their cleanliness, purity and knowledge about themselves. She again prays to Brahmā who pleased with her evolution grants the boon of *jñāna* with the condition that she would continue to follow her old ways for her survival. She could take a *jñānis* as her victims. The story introduces the concept of *jñānis* overcoming the problems and thereby the cycle of saṃsāra here :

साधको हि शुचिर्भूत्वा स्वाचान्तः सुसमाहितः ।
कमेणानेन सकलाः प्रोच्छिनन्ति विषूचिकाः ॥

To distinguish *jñānis* from a *jñānis* she would question her victims regarding Brahman, the ultimate cause of the universe and related aspects.

Once during her search for food, she enters the kingdom of the Kirātas. The king of the Kirātas and his minister on their night patrol are accosted by her. She desires to test them to make them her victims¹² :

तस्मादिमौ परीक्ष्येऽहं कयाचित्प्रश्रलीलया ।
किमात्रज्ञानकावेताविति तामरसेक्षणौ ॥

She appears as a formless being before them and her sound alone is heard. She



asks them if they knew the terrible nature of the forest and whether they have come there willingly to be her victims. Undaunted, the king asks her to identify herself. She appears in her frightening form with wide open mouth as if to devour them. Questioned by her as to the purpose of their night sojourn, the minister explains that the duty of the administration is to protect the people day and night and apprehend the wicked so that they might not trouble the people¹³ :

राज्ञां रात्रं दिवं धर्मो दुष्टभूतबिनिग्रहः

She appreciates their sense of duty¹⁴ :

राजस्त्वमसि सन्मन्त्री दुर्मन्त्री न नृपो भवेत् ।
सन्नृपश्च भवेन्मन्त्री राजा सन्मन्त्रिणा भवेत् ॥
राजैवादौ विवेकेन योजनीयः सुमन्त्रिणा ।
तेनार्यतामुपायाति यथा राजा तथा प्रजाः ॥

Both the demoness and the king and the minister recognize each other as knowledgeable ones. Still she wanted to test their knowledge regarding Brahman¹⁵ :

तदेतौ परिपृच्छामि किञ्चित्संदेहमुत्थितम् ।
प्राज्ञं प्राप्य न पृच्छन्ति संदेहं ते नराधमाः ॥

Her questions were about Brahman as that which constitutes the ultimate knowledge. Her questions, in the form of a riddle, form one part of the conversation and the answers by the king and the minister, the other part. The answers are not in the order of the questions; but one can easily understand that each question is properly answered.

Her first question was about the cause of everything i.e., how can an atomic particle be the cause of myriad forms of the universe like a water bubble in the sea that reflects everything¹⁶ :

एकस्यानेकसंख्यस्य कस्याणोरम्बुधेरिव ।
अन्तर्ब्रह्माण्डलक्षाणि लीयन्ते बुद्बुदा इव ।

Her next question was regarding *ākāśa*. "What is that which is *ākāśa* and yet is not?"¹⁷: किं नाकाशं अनाकाशं ?

Another question was regarding the existence (be-ness). She asks them "what is that which though is yet it is not?"¹⁸: न किञ्चित् अकिञ्चिदेव किम् ।



Then she asks a question about effulgence. "What is that which manifests itself as cit (consciousness) and is yet a stone (or inert)?" was her query¹⁹: कश्चेतनोऽपि पाषाणः ।

If the answer for the questions would be a unitary one, then she raises an objection regarding that single cause manifesting itself as both sentient and insentient effects. Would it be possible for that single cause to manifest both as sentient and insentient effects, both with mutually contradictory characteristics and signifying living and non-living beings? She then asks if everything were to find abode in *ākāśa* what portrays these pictures in that space²⁰ : कश्च व्योमनि चित्रकृत् ?

As she ceases her questions, the minister answers her first. He says that her questions point to the non-dual Brahman. Being above the reach of the mind and the five indriyas (organs), the Brahman is endless, Absolute, subtler than *ākāśa* and atom of atoms. It is the ultimate cause of the universe and it is the all-pervasive one²¹ :

अनाख्यत्वादगम्यत्वान्मनः षष्ठेन्द्रियस्थितेः ।
चिन्मात्रमेवमात्मानुराकाशादपि सूक्ष्मकः ॥

Regarding the question about space, i.e., that which is space while it is not a space at the same time, the reply is that it is the all-pervading Brahman. As there is no such attribute as exterior or interior to this it can be said to be *ākāśa* itself; yet it is not the *ākāśa* of the elements, as it is pure *jñāna* itself²² :

आकाशं बाह्यशून्यत्वाद्दनाकाशं च चित्तवतः ।

About the natural limitation, it is said, that Brahman cannot be defined; at the same time is definitely existing²³ :

अकिञ्चिदित्यनिर्देश्यं अस्तुसत्तेनि किञ्चन ।

Regarding the possibility of a single object being the cause of both sentient and insentient objects, it is replied that it is the self-shining Light, consciousness *per se*, and yet it is like the inert stone since it does not have the power of knowing and in the absence of object of knowledge one may not have any idea about it. As it constitutes everything (intelligence and matter) it cannot know itself. It is the form of consciousness. Hence it is spoken of as inert like a stone²⁴ :

चेतनोऽसौ प्रकाशात्मा वेद्याभावाच्छिलोपमः ॥

Pleased with their correct answers Karkaṭī frees them from her clutches. The king also permits her to attack the disorderly for her survival. She also promises to be



benign henceforth and remain in their country to help the people and not torment them as before.

Conclusion

This story shows the values of purity for spiritual aspirants. For, purity and hygiene can help maintain health and will help curb distraction and disease. The value of good health need not be adequately stressed for the aspirants. Sincerity, rock like firmness of mind and fearlessness too are needed to proceed on the path of spirituality. A frightened one may not be able to pursue his goal at all. The attitude of the king and minister in the story clearly brings this out. The need of philosophical knowledge to lead life in a proper way too is shown through the encounter with the demoness.

As the story form has been made use of to communicate such ideas in the texts of *darśanaśāstra*, it cannot be gainsaid that they do not have any role to play in the philosophical texts.

Thus the ethico-didactical fables have remained very much a part of the process of teaching, communicating and expressing the abstract thoughts of Advaita philosophy to students and disciples. The masters of Advaita philosophy in modern India like Sri Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda and Sri Ramana Maharshi too have extensively used fables as a teaching tool. There is no doubt that ethico-didactical fables have played a role in the proper understanding of the transcendental concepts in Advaita philosophy.

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Characteristics of Fables in Mahābhārata vis-à-vis Pañcatantram' and 'Hitopadeśah'

Dr. Jayashree Sakalkale

Fables are ever popular source of entertainment not only for children but for elders also. We find fables, myths and fairytales all over the world in folklore and literature. India has a great tradition of storytelling. 'Rāmāyaṇa' and 'Mahābhārata' both of our great epics are consequent products of this tradition. Later on 'Pañcatantra' and 'Hitopadeśa' become popular amongst Indians and neighboring countries. In 'Mahābhārata' Fables form a part of Updeśas. Especially in Śāntiparva we find several fables. Most of these fables are told by Bhīṣma to Yudhiṣṭhira while consoling him and instructing him about his duties. This paper aims at discussing characteristics, focus of the fables of Mahābhārata with special reference to 'Śāntiparva' and its similarities with 'Pañcatantra' and 'Hitopadeśa'.

Keyword: Fables Mahābhārata, Characteristics, Pañcatantra, Hitopadeśa, moral

Introduction

Fables are defined as a narration intended to enforce a useful truth especially one in which animals speak and act like human beings.¹ Gilbert K Chesterton defines fables as 'Fables is more historical than fact, because fact tells us about one man and fables tell us about a million men'. Fables composed by Aesop are very popular in the west. In



India, they come under the genre of nītikathā in which 'Pañcatantra' and 'Hitopadeśa' are famous books translated to many languages of the world.

*Śruto hitopadeśo'yaṃ pāṭavaṃ saṃskṛtoktiṣu |
Vācāṃ satataṃ vaicitryaṃ nīvidyā dadāti ca ||²*

So many outcomes are observed of Nītikathā in this śloka from Hitopadeśa. Tradition of storytelling is one of the rich and ancient traditions of India. Purāṇas are full of stories told by someone to somebody. Mahābhārata itself is the story told by Vaiśampayana to Janamejaya. Mahābhārata too has stories including Akhyānas and Fables. Especially in Śāntiparva in which Bhīṣma is preaching various dharmas to Yudhiṣṭhira and trying to boost his moral by telling him stories. The Śāntiparva may be called the blend of stories and Updeśas. This paper aims at discussing the characteristics of fables in Śāntiparva of Mahābhārata and focus on its similarities with 'Pañcatantra' and 'Hitopadeśa'.

Literature review

Mahābhārata is the great epic of India composed by Maharṣi Vyāsa. It contains One Lakh Sanskrit Ślokas. Besides, the main story of the war and the Kuru Dynasty, it also contains many stories related to Vedic Literature, other Ākhyānas (Legends and myths), and several fables. Comparative to other Parvas, The Śāntiparva has more fables. Pañcatantram and Hitopadeśaḥ are famous books of Fables in India and translated in many languages all over the world. Pañcatantram has five chapters - Mitrabhedah, Mitrasamprāpti, Labdhapṛṇāśaṃ, Kākolukīyaṃ and Aprikṣitkārkaṇi. Hitopadeśaḥ has four chapters - Mitralabhāḥ, suhṛedah, Vighrahaḥ and Sandhiḥ. The stories are told by the learned Brahmin to the untrained princes. Though both books are popular among children, the prime aim of these books is to teach the principles of political administration and to guide them how to behave in varied situations. Both the books speak about basic human nature and attitude. Subhāṣitās are the common features of both of books. Both books have stories in which human characters are incorporated along with animal characters.

Discussion of the topic:

1) Story of The sage and the dog

This story in the Mahābhārata reads thus: The sage had a dog. The sage who was attached to the dog realizing its danger from a leopard transforms him into a leopard.



The leopard inturn was prey to the tiger and so transformed to a tiger, then to an elephant and later as a lion and finally into a *Śarabha*. After being turned to be a *Śarabha*, it thinks of killing the very sage who had all through protected and given it a better hierarchy of animal life. The sage who had quickly grasped the intention of the *Śarabha* assigns him back the life of a dog again

tatastena tapaḥśaktyā vidito gyānacakṣuṣā
vijñāya sa mahāprājño muniḥ śvānaṃ tanuktavān³

The moral of the story is that the innate or the basic nature of a being can never be changed:-

kulajāḥ prākṛto rājñā swakulīnatayā sadā
na pāpe kurute buddhiṃ bhidyamāno 'pyanānagasi⁴ II

It means that a good man never commits any sin or act of revenge even after he is neglected, insulted or discarded. This is to suggest that the King should examine ministers and other officials before they are appointed. Thus the fable cautions that if a king wants to rule peacefully he must appoint ministers and officials carefully.

nāparīkṣya mahīpālaḥ saciva kartumarhati I
akulīnanarākīrṇona rājā sukhamedhate II⁵

The *Hitopadeśa* too has a similar story in which the sage converts the mouse into the cat, then the cat into a dog and then into the tiger. When tiger seems to attack the sage, it is again transformed back as the mouse⁶. The moral of the story is

nīcaḥ ślāghyapadaṃ prāpya svāminaṃ hantumicchati I
mūṣikovyaghratāṃ prapya muniṃ hantuṃ gato yathā II⁷

The *Pañcatantra* also has the similar story of transformation of one animal to another with different moral⁸. The sage transmutes the mouse into the girl and nurtures her like his child. When she grows up, the sage wants her to be married and tries to find a suitable boy for her. She refuses to marry with the sun because the sun could be covered by the clouds. She refuses the cloud that could be blocked by the mountain and she refuses the mountain for being gnawed by the mouse and so marries the mouse.

So we find the focus of the three stories is all about human nature. The *Mahābhārata* focuses on what the king should do while appointing ministers and the *Hitopadeśaḥ* tells about how a person misbehaves after becoming mighty one. All the



three texts emphasise that the basic characteristics remain the same even when better positions are given.

2) Story of the three fish -

In this story name of the fish are *Anāgatavidhātā*, *Dīrghasūtrī* and *Pratyutpannamati*. The same story is found in the *mitrabhedaḥ* section of *Pañcatantra* and in *Sandhi* of *Hitopadeśa*, except the name of third fish. In *Pañcatantra* and *Hitopadeśa* it is *Yadbhaviṣyati* or *Yadbhaviṣa*. This variation changes the focus of the story slightly. *Yadbhaviṣyati* means the person who does not care about the future. The word *Dīrghasūtrī* means the person who always delays everything or does not take timely decision. The story tells about the capacity of different people to handle the same situation. The moral of the story is

anāgatavidhātā ca pratyutpannamatiśca yaḥ I
*dvāveva sukhām edhate dīrghasūtrī viṣyati II*⁹

3) Story of the Pigeon couple and hunter -

There is a story of a Pigeon couple and a hunter in *Mahābhārata*.¹⁰ The story is narrated to elaborate protecting the person asking for shelter.

pitāmaha mahāprājñā sarvaśāstraviśārada I
*śaraṇaṃ pālayānasya yo dharmastaṃ vadasva me II*¹¹

One day a hunter catches a pigeon hen. While returning to home he seeks shelter under the tree where she used to live with her mate. The hunter was tired, hungry and shivering with cold. She asks her husband to serve him. The pigeon jumps into the fire and offers his body to the hunter to quench his hunger.

arāvapyucitaṃ kāryamatithyaṃ gṛhamāgate I
*chettumapyāgate chāyāṃ nopasaṃharatedrumaḥ II*¹²

The śloka means even if an enemy comes to our home as a guest we must serve him, as a tree never takes off its shadow from the axeman cutting the same tree down.

This śloka is also there in *Hitopadeśaḥ* in the story of the vulture and the cat. The story of vulture and the cat also contains the thoughts of serving the *Atithi*. But the story ends up on a negative note. The cat seeks shelter near the vulture by preaching him the importance to serve the guest, hiding the real aim to live with him for hunting baby birds. When the birds try to search for the killer of their children, the cat runs away and the vulture is brutally killed by the birds thinking that it might have eaten their babies.



In the pigeon story we find some *ślokas* regarding importance and duty of a wife. The male pigeon praises his wife and her loyalty to him. The concept of *Pativrata* is elaborated in 144th and 145th *adhāyas* of *Śāntiparva*.

pativratā patigatiḥ patipriyahite ratā I
*yasya syāt kādṛśī bhāryā dhanyaḥ sa puruṣo bhuvi II*³

Finally the hunter also enters in the forest fire and commits suicide. The contrition arises in his mind. At the end three of them get the blissful afterlife. The *Nītikathā* ends on the note of ultimate salvation. More than Fables it is related to the eternal principle of Indian culture - *Atithiḥ Devo Bhava*.

4) Story of a Tiger and a Jackal -

The story was narrated to *Yudhiṣṭhira* to identify the real character of the person in the answer of his question.

asaumyāḥ saumyarūpeṇa saumyāścāsaumyadarśanāḥ I
*idṛśān puruṣāṃstāta katham vidyāmahe vyaṃ II*⁴

The cruel king *Paurika* while reborn as a jackal remembers all his misbehaviour. Now he is very well behaved, honest jackal who never eats other's food. After observing his honesty the tiger decides to make him a minister. The jackal accepts it after a lot many arguments. He says that your servants will not accept me and they will try to break our union.

na yokṣyati hī me śīlam tava bhṛtaiḥ purātanaiḥ I
*te tvāṃ vibhedayiṣyanti duḥśīlaśca madantare II*⁵

The jackal acquires very important place, so old ministers are now restless and unsettled. Corrupt ministers are frustrated. First they try to spoil the jackal but they could not then they mischievously try to spoil the mind of the tiger by placing tiger's meat at the jackal's house. Initially they succeed to create misunderstanding about the jackal. The tiger orders to kill him. The tiger's mother clears the situation. She tells him that the weaker always hates the mighty, uneducated hates the educated and a fool hates wise people. The king should observe properly and make decision wisely.

tasmāt pratyakṣadṛṣto' piyuktohyarthaḥ parīkṣitum I
*parīkṣya jnāpayannarthannapaścāt paritāyate II*⁶



The tiger apologises to the jackal. But the jackal decides to leave the king saying that it will be difficult for him to stay there after losing faith in one another.

The similar story is included in the first chapter of *Pañcatantram*.¹⁷ The story of Dantila has the same situation though it ends differently. Dantila is learned and intelligent, soon he occupies the important place closeto the king. He invites the king and the queen for his marriage and unfortunately insults Gorambhā, the king's servant. Gorambhā creates the misunderstanding about Dantila by saying that he had seen Dantila embracing the queen. The king discards Dantila but when Dantila realizes that it was a conspiracy of Gorambhā he immediately invites and felicitates Gorambhā and with his help Dantila retains his prowess. Both stories focus on the relation of king and his ministers and how the jealousy complicates the situation.

However, in the story from Mahabharata the jackal leaves the king but in *Pañcatantra* Dantila retains his position.

Conclusion:

- 1) *Pañcatantra* and *Hitopadeśa* are told by the learned to the uneducated and spoilt princes. In the *Mahābhārata*, Bhīṣma is talking to Yudhiṣṭhira who was the great learned, highly educated, well trained, sophisticated, experienced and broadminded person. But he was demoralised due to the consequences of the great *Mahābhārata* war in which the whole *Kuru* dynasty was ruined except the Pāṇdavas and Parikṣit. He earned his kingdom after a massive violence. Bhīṣma is trying to boost his moral and make him an able ruler. So the stories are told along with long Updeśas. There is nothing about political science that Yudhiṣṭhira did not know. Bhīṣma tries to make him aware of the human relations, nature and psychology.
- 2) Many similarities are clearly evident in some stories of *Pañcatantra* and *Hitopadeśa* and that of the *Mahābhārta* stories.
- 3) All fables are not related to political science. Sometimes it is about ethics, principles of our culture, human nature, behaviour, psychology and sometimes philosophical too. *Karmasiddhānta*, *Vedānta*, *Ahnikāra*, ultimate Salvation, contrition are some of them.



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Poverty Narration in Pañcatantra: A Socio-cultural Study

Dr. Dharmendra Das

Poverty is one of the major concept accepted in curriculum of humanity and social science. It is a condition which is deprived of essentials that determine the quality of life. Poverty is analyzed in Sanskrit literature as social indicator like illiteracy level. Moral teaching through poverty narration is one of the poetic components of Sanskrit fable literature. In the light of socio-cultural investigation, the current study is a modest attempt to discuss about description of poverty as reflected in Sanskrit fable particularly in Pañcatantra.

Key words: Poverty, Fable, Sanskrit, Socio-cultural, Pañcatantra, Illiteracy

0.0 Introduction

The history of Indian culture may be taken to be the history of Sanskrit literature itself, which is quite ancient. If we want to know the history of our country, it is necessary for us to study the history of Sanskrit literature. Much before the alphabet had come into existence in the other countries of the world, India had already created its own world of literature. All this literature is in Sanskrit, which is one of the foremost languages of the world. Sanskrit literature is quite vast and, in many cases, unique. This literature still continues to be the moving force in shaping human values and ideas. The wealth of knowledge available in Sanskrit literature is quite limitless. The Vedic literature which possibly is the most extant literature in the world is in Sanskrit language. Literary works comparable to the best in the world is in Sanskrit language. Classics like the Rāmāyaṇa, Mahābhārata, Bhāgavata, the Purāṇas, Subhṣitas are available in different literary



forms like prose, poetry, *champu*. In addition, source material on such subjects as Medicine, Astronomy, Architecture, Economics, Political Science, Mathematics, Music and very many other subjects are in Sanskrit. Sanskrit literature possesses invaluable wealth of knowledge. It inspires man to lead a successful life.

1.0 Relevance and scope of the present study

The fable as a narrative structure is one which is used to educate a fastidious lesson regarding deficiencies in the human character. It usually involves animals which have been imbibed with human characteristics. In Sanskrit literature, the origin of the fable is in some way connected to the *Upaniṣads*, where the relationship between man and animal is often emphasized. In today's world, the fable literature is an ideal platform to not only explore the connection between real life problems and literature but also to illustrate the relationship between humans and other life forms including animals.

Among such works is the "*Pañcatantra*" which is a famous fable in Sanskrit. The work has been translated into almost all languages of the world. Tradition ascribes the *Pañcatantra* to Viṣṇu Śarmā, whose existence has not been conclusively established. Viṣṇu Śarmā was apparently a celebrated teacher living in *Mahilāropya*. At the age of eighty, he undertook to educate three very refractory princes, in six months, in the art of governance. The stories he used as teaching aids form the *Pañcatantra*. The stories are divided into five '*tantras*', namely,

1. *Mitrabhedah* (Conflict amongst friends),
2. *Mitrasamprāptih* (Acquisition of friends),
3. *Kākolūkīyam* (War between crows and owls),
4. *Lavdhapraṇāśah* (The loss of profits),
5. *Aparīkṣitakāarakam* (Action without due consideration).

The present study is about the poverty narration and its socio-cultural importance which can be composed from fifth part (tantra) of *Pañcatantra*.

2.0 General perception about poverty in Sanskrit literature

Regarding poverty we have the iconic story of Sudāmā. The protagonist is poor but the focus of the story is not Dickensian details but his other traits, his poverty is stated as a fact and there it ends. All narratives involve choice of words which themselves among the characters. In Indian context poverty is generally not seen as an affliction to be cured contrary to how it is perceived in the west.



Poverty narration is not so popular narration in Sanskrit literature. But, through a proper investigation may be noticed in the famous Sanskrit drama of Śudraka's *Mṛcchakaṭīkam*. According to dramatist Śudraka, poverty in the sense may be understood as a condition in which a person or community is lacking in the basic needs for a minimum standard of well-being and life, particularly as a result of a persistent lack of income. Poverty may affect individuals or group, and it is not confined to the developing nations. Poverty in developed countries is manifested in a set of social problems. In this play, Cārudatta, the hero is leading a life of poverty. Everything is empty to a poor man. There are some verses collected here for references mentioned below

शून्यमपुत्रस्य गृहं चिरशून्यं नास्ति यस्य सन्मित्रम् ।¹
 मूर्खस्य दिशः शून्याः सर्वं शून्यं दरिद्रस्य ॥
 सुखं हि दुःखान्यनुभूय शोभते धनान्धकारेष्विव दीपदर्शनम् ।
 सुखात्तु यो याति नरो दरिद्रतां धृतः शरीरेण मृतः स जीवति ।²
 दारिद्र्यान्मरणाद्वा मरणं मम रोचते न दारिद्र्यम् ।
 अल्पक्लेशं मरणं दारिद्र्यमनन्तकं दुःखम् ।³
 दरिद्रयादधियमेति हीपरिगतः प्रभ्रश्यते तेजसो
 निस्तेजाः परिभूयते परिभवान्निर्वेदमापद्यते ॥
 निर्विण्णः शुचमेति शोकपिहितो बुद्ध्या परित्यज्यते
 निर्बुद्धिः क्षयमेत्यहो निर्धनता सर्वापदामास्पदम् ॥⁴

Similar kind of poverty narration in Sanskrit is noticed in Hitopadesa of Pandit Narayana. *Hitopadeśa* is a text consisting of fables with both animal and human characters. In the story of Muṣikaparibrājakakathā of *Hitopadeśa*, there is about moral teaching based on poverty narration as follows:

अपुत्रस्य गृहं शून्यं सन्मित्ररहितस्य च ।
 मूर्खस्य च दिशः शून्याः सर्वशून्या दरिद्रता ॥
 दारिद्र्यान्मरणाद्वापि दारिद्र्यमवरं स्मृतम् ।
 अल्पक्लेशेन मरणं, दारिद्र्यमतिदुःसहम् ।⁵

Poverty is not at all good for the society. One should be conscious to fight against the poverty. It is rightly said that the situation of death is far better than to face a situation of poverty. Poverty causes unending pain according to narration of *Hitopadeśa*. As the present study is on Sanskrit fable, *Hitopadeśa's* narration is decidedly meaningful in the existence of a human being. The dramatic literature may be a source of poverty



narration. Moral teaching through poverty narration is experienced in *Hitopadeśa*. *Pañcatantra* too have not lagged behind in this mission. So, the present investigation has taken the text of *Pañcatantra* to find out the socio-cultural importance of poverty narration.

3.0 Socio-cultural Significance of poverty narration in *Pañcatantra*

The concept 'culture' is defined as the sum total of social actions and achievements in different spheres. It is like a perennial river ever watching the performances, achievements, ability, diffidence, frailty and so on of human races. Like art, architecture and sculpture; literature and written records convey the messages of culture. Apart from fictional point of view *Pañcatantra* is very useful as throwing light on several aspects of social life. The poverty narrations found in *Pañcatantra* are nothing but the specimens of human speech-items committed sometimes in response mostly to specific behavioral impulses which are found neatly recorded in Sanskrit fable literature. The first story (The Barber) of fifth part of *Pañcatantra* is the source of poverty narration. Good disposition, purity of conduct, forbearance, kindness or politeness, sweetness of temper and birth in a noble family- all these make no difference when a man is without wealth:

शीलं शौचं क्षान्तिर्दाक्षिण्यं मधुरता कुले जन्म ।

न विराजन्ति हि सर्व वित्तहीनस्य पुरुषस्य ॥ ⁶

Similar type of poverty narration is found in *Nīśatakaṁ* of *Bhartṛhari*. One who is wealthy is also considered as well born, learned, a man of information, a good judge of qualifications, an able speaker and a handsome person.⁷ Everything good is invariably dependent upon gold. According to the *Mahābhārata*, the Wise man of this world is richones.⁸ It is really wonderful that a man deprived of wealth instantly becomes quite a different and changed being, not with standing his being still the master of his former senses, actions, and the same bright intellect and power of speech.⁹ The following verses of *Pañcatantra* will clear both the aspects poverty and importance of wealth as well as attributes.

Self-respect vanity, worldly knowledge, grace, and beneficence - all these vanish simultaneously when a man is reduced to penury:

मानो वा दर्पा वा विज्ञानं विभ्रमः सुबुद्धिर्वा ।

सर्वं प्रणश्यति समं वित्तविहीनो यदा पुरुषः ॥ ¹⁰



Through the anxiety of supporting the family, the talent, even of the talented, daily and constantly declines like the beauty of *Sirisha* when struck by the gales of the spring:

प्रतिदिवसं याति लयं वसन्तवाताहतेव शिशिरश्रीः ।
बुद्धिर्बुद्धिमतामपि कुटुम्बभरचिन्तया सततम् ॥¹¹

The talented even of a very talented man, when his fortune declines, is lost by the constant anxiety of acquiring ghee (clarified butter), salt, oil, rice, clothing, and fuel for the support of his family:

नश्यति विपुलमतेरपि बुद्धिः पुरुषस्य मदविभवस्य ।
घृतलवणतैलनण्डुलवस्त्रेन्धनचिन्तया सततम् ॥¹²

The house of a poor man becomes or appears like the sky, the stars in which are invisible, like a dry lake and a terrible burial ground, and seems quite ugly through originally beautiful:

गगनमिव नष्टतारं शुष्कं सरः श्मशानमिव रौद्रम् ।
प्रियदर्शनमपि रुक्षं भवति गृहं धनविहीनस्य ॥¹³

The poor people though they live before the eyes of rich persons are not seen to exist as the bubbles of water that constantly rise on the surface and disappear:

न विभाव्यन्ते लघवो वित्तविहीनाः पुरोऽपि निवसन्तः ।
सततं जातविनष्टाः पयसामिव बुदबुदाः पयसि ॥¹⁴

Multitudes of people are always attached to a rich person though void of noble birth, virtue and good disposition, as if he were the wish-tree, after having left one who is nobly-born, clever and humane(if he be a poor):

सुकुलं कुशलं सुजनं विहाय कुलकुशलशीलविकलेऽपि ।
आद्ध्ये कल्पतराविव नित्यं रज्यन्ति जननिवहाः ॥¹⁵

Also, there is no such importance in this world of a learned person without any wealth. Good actions done in the previous existence are of no use in this birth. Even learned men born in a noble family, become the slaves of a person when he possesses wealth. Everything, virtue, glory, honour, things human and divine, all are slaves to riches. The God of this world is riches:



विकलमिहं पूर्वसुकृतं विद्यावन्तोऽपि कुलसमुदभूताः ।

यस्य यदा विभवः स्यात्तस्य तदा दासतां यान्ति ॥ 16

The above all statements are thoughts of a person who had lost his fortune. These thoughts are presented by the author of *Pañcatantra* in literary forms. Practically, the poverty narration may not be accepted in the modern society. But, somehow, we may be agree with the socio-cultural thinking behind the poverty narration available in the Fable literature like *Pañcatantra*. The person in this present world is very much affected by desire. As, it is said rightly that when a man grows old his hair wears out, his teeth fall off, his eyes become dim, and the ears become hard of hearing, but his desire alone becomes fresh:

जीर्यन्ते जीर्यतः केशा दन्ता जीर्यन्ति जीर्यतः.

चक्षुः क्षोत्रे च जीर्यते तृष्णैका तरुणायते ॥ 17

Dream narration is a psycho-cultural thought found in *Pañcatantra* is also significant. The dream seen by anxiety, afflicted by the passion of love and intoxicated, is of no use, that is, whatever is seen by such persons will never be realized:

व्यधितेन सशोकेन चिन्तग्रस्तेन जन्तुना ।

कामार्त्तनाथ मत्तेन दृष्टः स्वप्नो निरर्थकः ॥ 18

The third story (Four Young Friends) of fifth part of *Pañcatantra* is another source of poverty narration. In a certain town, there lived four young fellows, who were the sons of Brāhmins. They were very friendly with one another. But they were utterly destitute. So they met to decide what to do. "Curse this poverty", they said. It is so true what they say" :

वरं वनं व्याघ्रगजादिसेवितं जलेन हीनं बहुकण्टकावृत्तम् ।

तृणानि शय्या परिधानवल्कलं न बन्धुमध्ये धनहीनजीवितम् ॥ 19

Better to resort to a forest inhabited by tigers, wild elephants, without water and full of many thorns; it also better to have grass of one's bed and the barks of trees for wearing apparel, than living without wealth (in poverty) in the midst of one's relatives:

स्वामी द्वेषि सुसेवितोऽपि सहसा प्रोज्झन्ति सद्बान्धवा

राजन्ते न गुणास्त्यजन्ति तनुजाः स्फारीभवन्त्यापदः ।



भार्या साधुसुवंशजाऽपि भजते नो यान्ति मित्राणि च
न्यायारोपितविक्रमाण्यपि नृणां येषां न हि स्याद्धनम् ॥²⁰

When persons are without wealth, their masters though well-served, hate them, their good relatives desert them all of a sudden, their virtues do not shine forth, their sons leave them off, their adversity is heightened, their wives, though born of good and noble families, do not serve them, and their friends, whose great courage is based on justice, go away. Another narration is that the glory and respect in this world is not possible to achieve without wealth. Even if a man is brave, handsome, well-formed, eloquent and however conversant he may be with the use of weapons and versed in sciences, does not obtain glory and respect in this world of mortals without the possession of wealth:

शूरः सुरूपः सुभगश्च वाग्मी शस्त्राणि शास्त्राणि विदां करोतु ।
अर्थं विना नैव यश्च मानं प्राप्नोति मर्त्योऽत्र मनुष्यलोके ॥²¹

And, it is strange that these sound organs, that very name, that unimpeded talent, that very speech and very men when deprived of the warmth of wealth, are changed in a moment:

तानीन्द्रियाण्यविकलानि तदेव नाम सा बुद्धिरप्रतिहता वचनं तदेव ।
अर्थोष्मणा विरहितः पुरुषः स एव बाह्यः क्षणेन भवतीति विचित्रमेतत् ॥²²

Poverty is narrated as a well designed picture of fewness, the home of hostility for human being. The word 'poverty' can be taken as synonym of the word 'death' according to *Pañcatantra*.²³

Analysis of social aspects of poverty links conditions of scarcity to aspects of the distribution of resources and power in a society as well as recognizes that poverty may be a function of the diminished "capability" of people to live the kinds of lives they value. Viṣṇu Śarmā faced the challenge of educating three unlettered princes, to awaken their intelligence, Viṣṇu Śarmā evolved a unique pedagogy for his aim was to teach the princes how to think, not what to think and it was thus that these entertaining and edifying stories came to be composed. In this connection, poverty narration in the form of story may be treated as a helpful implement for language teaching in ancient India.

Poverty narration in Sanskrit literature and contemporary literature are very different because in ancient India poverty was not looked down upon. In ancient times



metaphysical orientation was always considered superior to material in Indian social dynamics. The present investigation is looking it from a modern and global perspective.

4.0 Conclusion

As it has been observed from the above Sanskrit verses that the poverty is usually an indicator used relate to the levels of income and consumption. But now poverty is looked through other social indicators like illiteracy level. It has been evident that the Illiteracy as a cause that leads to poverty. Poverty narration in *Pañcatantra* is basically presented to improve the illiteracy level of the princes. The purpose is to enlighten the minds of the illiterate princes. Sanskrit fables are based on moral teaching. In this connection, moral teaching through poverty narration of *Pañcatantra* is in fact significant. The utility of the poverty narration may be acknowledged as socio-cultural oriented.

The lack of engagement of students about learning is a noteworthy issue of present-day training, where *Pañcatantra* can come to help as a method in bringing these students again towards schools. *Pañcatantra* has a component of inspiration, good judgment, thoughts and consistent considering. A man, who has studied this moral text '*Nītiśāstra*' or listened to its precepts, will never be defeated. Not even by *Indra*, the lord of heaven.

अधीते य इदं नित्यं नीतिशास्त्रं शृणोति च ।
न पराभवमाप्नोति शक्रादपि कदाचन ॥²⁴

End Notes

1. The home of a sonless person is empty; he who has not a real friend finds all time empty; the quarters are empty to a fool; and everything is empty to a poor man. (Translation)–Kale, M.R., (1994), The *Mṛichchhakaṭika* of Śūdraka, Motilal Banarsidass Publishers Private Limited, Delhi, p-11
2. Verily happiness appears splendid (tastes pleasanter) after a person has experienced troubles, like the sight of a lamp when there has been pitchy darkness. But, when a man is reduced to penury after he has enjoyed luxury, he lives a dead man, existing only by keeping up his body.(Translation), Ibid, p-23
3. Out of (these two, viz.) poverty and death, I like death, but not poverty. Death causes short-lived pain, while poverty is (i.e. entails) unending misery. (Translation), Ibid, p.-23



4. From penury a person passes to (feels) shame; being overcome by shame, he loses, he loses his spirit; devoid of spirit he is slighted; being slighted, he feels dejected; full of dejection, he comes to be sorry; being smitten with sorrow, he is left by his reason; and destitute of reason, he perishes. Ah! Pennilessness is the abode of all sorts of misfortunes! (Translation), Ibid, p.25
5. See, Hitopadeśa (Mitrālabha), Mūṣikaparivrājakathā, Verse -131 and 140
6. *Pañcatantram*, Part-5 (*aparikṣitakārikam*), Verse -2
7. *Yasyāsti vittaṃ sa naraḥ kulīnaḥ sa paṇḍitaḥ sa śrutavāṅguṇajñaḥ. sa eva vaktā sa ca darśanīyaḥ sarve guṇāḥ kāñcanamāśrayanti.* - *Nītiśatakam* of *Bhartṛhari*, Verse-41
8. *Yasyārthāstya mitrāṇi yasyārthāstya bāndhavāḥ. yasyārthāḥ sa pumārīṅloke yasyārthāḥ sa ca paṇḍitaḥ-* *Mahābhārata*, Śāntiparva-8/19
9. *Tānīndriyāṇi sakalāni tadeva karma sā buddhirapratihatā vacanāni tadeva artho śmaṇā virahitaḥ puruṣaḥ sa eva tvanyaḥ kṣaṇena bhavātī vicitrametat.*- *Nītiśatakam* of *Bhartṛhari*, Verse-40
10. *Nītiśatakam* of *Bhartṛhari*, Verse-3
11. *ibid.*, Verse-4
12. *ibid.*, Verse-5
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14. *ibid.*, Verse -7
15. *Pañcatantram*, Part-5(*aparikṣitakārikam*)-Verse - 8
16. *ibid.*, Verse - 9
17. *ibid.*, Verse -16
18. *ibid.*, Verse-11
19. *ibid.*, Story-3, Verse - 23
20. *ibid.*,Verse - 24
21. *ibid.*,Verse-25
22. *ibid.*,Verse-26
23. *mūrttaṃ lāghavamevaitadapāyānāmidamgṛham / Paryāyo maraṇasyāyānīnīrdhanatvaṇi śarīriṇām // Mītrasamprāptiḥ*, Verse-106
24. See the conclusion of *Pañcatantra kīśāṃājika evaṇīrājānaitika daśā: aitiḥāsika adhyayana*, Sharma, Dr. Dharmendra (Ed.), p.218



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The *Pañcatantra* stories: Elucidating the Socio-Political Facets in the Context of Modern Day Statecraft

Dr. Anita Sarma

The *Pañcatantra* (Five treatises) is the collection of ancient Indian 'Fables' originally written in Sanskrit verse and prose, arranged within to frame a story.¹ Literally, the *Pañcatantra* can be explained as interweaving of five skeins of traditions and teachings into a text. The book provides for stories conveying each- a lesson where the speaker is mostly an animal. These legends mostly carried through oral traditions via the medium of animals etc are known originally as '*dantakathā*' or fables in English. It is believed that though the surviving book of the *Pañcatantra* is dated to about 200 BCE, but the fables are much more ancient and are based on older oral traditions of Hinduism. Patrick Olivelle in the introductory paragraph of his translation of the book quotes Edgerton (1924) that the *Pañcatantra* is 'certainly the most frequently translated literary product of India'.² The *Pañcatantra* stories are also very much popular across the world in different religions and cultures. There is an interesting fact associated with the internationalisation of the *Pañcatantra*. As the earliest translations of the *Pañcatantra* were in Pehlavi and Arabic and it was Borzury, the personal physician of Nushirvan, the Persian emperor, who came to India in the 6th century looking for *Mṛtasañjīvanī*, the mystical herb that could give life to the dead. However, he did not get the herb, instead was introduced to the *Pañcatantra* and after reading the work he realised that the magical herb was knowledge and the corpse was ignorance.³

The *Pañcatantra* is the oldest collection of fables originated in India and is basically treated as archaic but it is considered as the most important contribution in the sphere of children's literature in India. However, the *Pañcatantra* offers much more than only being a guiding classic in the realm of children's literature. It does not only



enrich human life with its message of wisdom and knowledge but also immensely contribute in the realm of societal progression by working as an instruction or guiding manual for shaping the conduct of human behaviour. Noted Indologist from Oxford University, Patrick Olivelle in his work the *Pañcatantra: The Book of India's Folk Wisdom* states that the classic is a treatise of '*Nīti*' roughly translated as 'wise conduct' or statecraft, narrated through allegorical stories of animals⁴. The *Pañcatantra* is a *Nīti śāstra*, or a text book of *nīti*. There is no precise equivalent of the term *nīti* in English, French, Latin or Greek.⁵ *Nīti* presupposes that one has considered, and rejected, the possibility of living as a saint. It can be practised only by a social being and represents an admirable attempt to answer the inconsistent question how to win the utmost possible joy from life in the world of men.⁶ Thus the *Pañcatantra* as a literature of '*Nītiśāstra*' prescribes for all the qualifications required for building a social life founded on civil society norms and a political community having a niche with rational and sound principles. The treasure of the *Pañcatantra* was so written by Pandit Vishnu Sharma that it was alternatively taken as '*Sañjīvanī*', the miracle medicine to be found in India. It can be certainly categorised as one of the greatest books of all times as it contains such thoughtful insights on which human mind of different ages can work differently only to gain understanding, wisdom and academic pleasure of different frequency and level.

As a rapid reading to an incurious or non-critical reader, the *Pañcatantra* fables offer many life lessons like the ill-consequences of keeping a fool as friend, why and how unity becomes strength, hard sides of believing on strangers, consequences of ignoring wisdom over physical qualities, using both fair and foul means to save one's interest, ignoring unnecessary advice, using intelligence to solve problems, importance of self faith, not to believe in strangers, avoid bad mediator to avoid misunderstanding among friends, punishing a cunning friend, using intelligence to enrich the quality of life, use of faith to turn impossible situation conducive, importance of assertion of loyalty, qualities to be friends, importance of peace of mind, doing within one's own capacity, mother as real god and so on and so forth. These lessons are very important to lead a balanced and dignified life. In fact these can be treated as the core to 'art of living'. These are moulding curves that can shape the life and prepare the young children to build up their strong personality based on an ethical and rational ground. However, a critical and comprehensive study of the *Pañcatantra* tales would offer insights into human behaviour through the characters of animal world. As each part of the main



story or the frame story contains many embedded stories to carry a message, it is very much engaging for a reader to go through a sea of knowledge and wisdom. The *Pañcatantra* is divided into five volumes:

1. Mitra-Lābha (Gaining Friends): This category of fables are related to winning friends and prescribes the ways and methods to earn friends and alliances.
2. Mitra- Bheda (Losing Friends): It has a collection of stories that are related to losing friends. This category of stories are also referred as 'shirobheda' or 'Shurobheda' i.e. causing discord amongst friends and weakening the power of the opposition.
3. Kākolīkiyaṃ (War and Peace): These fables narrated through the stories of Crows and owls, talk about war and peace i.e. Vighraha and Sandhi
4. Labdhapraṇāsaṃ (Loss of Gains): This category of stories is the narration of apprehensions and warnings against losing whatever is gained due to one's short sightedness and ignorance.
5. Aparīkṣitakāraṇaṃ (Acting without thinking): This category of fables warn against hasty actions or taking actions without thinking much and considering the consequences. These stories prescribe for considered actions and warns against rush deals.

What is fascinating about the above categorisation of the *Pañcatantra* is that though it apparently deals with 'human' and 'animals' as its preliminary objects, in the core of each story a message for public life, is inherently carried. The divisions made through the five tantras, offer narrations on different aspects of personal and public life consequently contributing to the art of administration and management of the state. As an original contribution covering all the facets of individual, social and political life, the masterpiece can be treated as the oldest book of statecraft offered by the east only preceded by Aristotle's verses on Statecraft that were contributed around 300 BC. Though the contents and narration of the *Pañcatantra* are mostly observed and interpreted in the backdrop of ancient India's ethical tradition and value system, yet its teachings are equally relevant, productive and applicable in the contemporary times in all the levels of societal and political process.

Much before the western world offers on statecraft like Niccolo Machiavelli's *The Art of War* (1521) and *The Prince* (1532), Thomas Hobbes's *Leviathan* (1651),



Montesquieu's *The Spirit of Laws* (1748) etc, the *Pañcatantra* has discussed multiple aspects and issues associated with human behaviour in the context of socio-economic life which in turn deeply and intrinsically delves into statecraft and governance. In fact the book acts as a critique of different aspects of socio-political life where the people are expected to shape one's own conduct in a fair and rational way, inculcate balanced traits in their behaviour impacting both private and public life and demonstrate or rather contribute positively in the sphere of individual and community life. It is worth, to mention here that socio-political criticism being a branch of academic discourse mainly targets on socio-political issues with respect to perceived injustices and power relations of society in general. The *Pañcatantra* can also be considered as a book of socio-political criticism as the main objective of the book is to build-up a harmonious social order treating the injustices of society by shaping the conduct of individual and social life. However, in doing so, the teachings of the *Pañcatantra* distinctly acknowledge the connection and proximity of human behaviour, the role and significance of positive, moral and rational human conduct in establishing and maintaining a value-based and pragmatic socio-political environment with the art of statecraft and governance.

It is important to note here that social and political criticisms are most of the time interwoven as both the disciplines represent two different but important facets of human life. Moreover, socio-political criticism very much contributes in shaping, strengthening and continuing the art of Statecraft. The *Pañcatantra* thus can be said as a text offering both socio-political criticism through the form of literature mainly aiming to develop certain canons and policies of statecraft. The classic *Pañcatantra* can also be rightly said as the literature of political consciousness.

Elaborating the concept of Statecraft: The dictionary meaning of the term 'statecraft' is the art of conducting state affairs. The online Cambridge dictionary (dictionary.cambridge.org) defines 'Statecraft' as the skill of governing a country. Morton Kaplan's article, 'An Introduction to the Strategy of Statecraft' states "the term 'statecraft' is used in a sense which is stronger than that of 'diplomacy' as used, for example, by Harold Nicolson.⁷ In its present meaning it includes the construction of strategies for securing the national interest in the international arena, as well as the execution of these strategies by diplomats.⁸ The successful or unsuccessful conduct of statecraft may settle the fate of our way of life"⁹. The concept of statecraft provides an approach in political science to understand politics, policy making and change and the means, methods and the nature of political leadership.



The concept of statecraft was first developed as an element of academic discourse by British academician Jim Bulpit.¹⁰ Though, the concept of 'Statecraft' is essentially associated with 'political elites' in various research writings but in this context the term is used to mean basically the ways and strategies of conducting state affairs in a way that is most productive and fulfilling to the needs of the citizenry. The term can be used to mean more than the 'diplomatic' practices adopted by a nation state and to include each and every policy that has an impact on the socio-political, economic, cultural and other aspects of human life. The art of statecraft thus embraces everything that has a direct or indirect link with the grievances and aspirations of human life as a socio-political entity. 'Statecraft is the use of many instruments of national power for the purpose of defending our life and national power lubricating in national relations and automatically for the cause of peace of the world.'¹¹

Consequently, the concept claims for a better standard of the rational, intellectual and moral capabilities of those who govern and who are being governed. The art of statecraft would thus only sustain and succeed if all the egalitarian and fair principles like justice, equality, fairness, liberty, accessibility, rational decision making alternatives etc., are pre-dominantly present in a society. Here comes the relevance of the *Pañcatantra* as a treatise on statecraft grounded on socio-political criticism as it offers everything starting from shaping human conduct to participating in the affairs of community life or becoming the stake holders of the policy making process.

So, it can be fairly said that the book *Pancatantra* specifically offers a rendition of folk tales immersed in the expertise of political science. To quote G.L Chandiramani, 'the *Pañcatantra* is essentially connected with one of the branches of science known by the Indians as the 'Nītiśāstra' which in Sanskrit means 'A book of wise conduct of life.'¹² It attempts to teach us, how to understand people, to choose reliable and trust worthy friends, how to meet difficulties and solve problems through tact and wisdom and how to live in peace and harmony in the face of hypocrisy, deceit and many pitfalls in life.' All these principles constitutes the background of strong political conviction and moulds the way and nature of political decision making process. A social choice aiming for the interest of the majority or a political decision taken by an authority or regime also should have strong and rational grounds facilitating the aspirations and interest of the people and community. This has been later reiterated by Machiavelli in his 'Prince', a 16th century political treatise as an instruction guide for new princes and royals. The 'Prince' focuses on pragmatic and effective behaviour to be demonstrated



by the kings when dealing with the affairs of public life, identifying friends and foes to take realistic and corrective action and also elaborately deals with the ways and means to organise, preserve and use supreme political power. The *Pañcatantra*, thus has preceded the 'Prince' in dealing with the art of statecraft and governance long before the 'Prince' or such other western classic. Interestingly, the former has not directly jumped into making political agenda, but beforehand sought to establish a social order and community life based on strong, rational and pragmatic grounds where the interest and aspirations of everyone gets protected and reflected. From this perspective, the *Pañcatantra* somehow resembles Locke's idea of a balanced social life before engaging into a political life and power relations.

An examination of the available literatures in the oriental background dealing with statecraft and governance, Chanakya's '*Arthaśāstra*' of 3rd century B.C is the most prominent work. But like the Machiavelli's 'Prince', Kauṭilya's work also stresses on use of extreme power for political interest. Since their time, both Kautilya and Machiavelli are identified with the exercise of cold political power in its extreme ruthlessness.¹³ A close observations of Kautilya and Machiavelli's narrations will reveal that both the writers belonging to the school of realism¹⁴ were basically concerned with the problems of statecraft, concept of power and operations of various levels of government and public conduct of individuals to be demonstrated in a particular political regime and for this they focused on their respective historical context and options. The *Pañcatantra*, on the other hand emphasised on developing and grooming a rational, intelligent yet a balanced and respectful and healthy individual and social behaviour before entering the socio-political milieu and dealing with political decision making process.

The literary masterpiece of the *Pañcatantra* is 'shrewdly gleaned worldly wisdom and its inner meaning in delightful stories was intended to entertain. It captured the imagination of the people, both the rulers and the ruled alike. The prologue and backdrop of the *Pañcatantra* definitely sustains the argument that it is essentially a book of statecraft and governance as the King entrusts his three 'dud' sons to a learned man, a Brahmin, called Paṇḍit Viṣṇuśarmā, to enlighten their minds within six months'.¹⁶ As narrated by G.L Chandiramani, the *Pañcatantra* is a rare book where one finds philosophy, psychology, politics, music, astronomy, human relationship etc all discussed together in a simple and yet elegant way.¹⁷ These requisites of a matured human personality would certainly help in making strong political personalities and decision



makers having expertise in the art of statecraft and governance, as expected by the king and the teacher Viṣṇuśarmā who perhaps were eagerly waiting for the coronation of the 'three duds' in politics.

The teachings of *Pañcatantra* are highlighted through its five basic parts and each part of the verse lays down a foundation of political consciousness for an academician engaged with the discourse of political analysis. The five basic principles elucidated as Mitrabheda, Mitralābha, Aparīkṣitakārakam, Labdhapraṇaśam and Kākolūkiyam makes us to wonder how the concepts of diplomacy, alliance making, protection of national interest and retention of national power, ideas of war and peace etc were developed and discussed as important ideas associated with the machinery of governance in 200 BCE India. These preliminary ideas of the *Pañcatantra* can be treated as the founding pillars of political consciousness. Political thought and theories that were developed in different political discourses across the world and in different civilisations owe to a great extent to the original masterpiece of the *Pañcatantra*. The ideas enshrined in the great literary- academic work are equally applicable in the realm of international relations, international law, comparative political analysis and other domains of political understanding in the present times.

The first guiding principle of the *Pañcatantra*, i.e., Estrangement Between Friends (Mitrabheda) narrated through 34 fables and figured in a dialogue between two jackals named *Karataka* and *Damanaka* makes an attempt to highlight the reasons that cause conflict among friends and results in their estrangement. *The first tantra starts as "A great friendship had developed in the Jungle, between the lion and the bullock, but it was destroyed, by an avaricious jackal."* These fables describing the different facets of conflict can be treated as guiding principles to avert and manage the possible conflicts among friends in personal life to create a congenial society based on mutual and harmonious relationship. In the public front, the message carried in these stories can be extended to apply to the art of governance and statecraft like that of building, managing and retaining a healthy and mutually respectful relationship to avert loss of friends. The first principle warns people and decision makers about the presence and role of fake mediators or intermediaries or an avaricious neighbour who can misuse or exploit friendships or alliances for personal or vested interest. The message can also enrich the understanding of diplomatic practices in international relations and can be elaborated to establish reasons for respecting the unity and integrity of modern day sovereign nation states by not encroaching in internal matters. It also throws light on the do's and don'ts to keep friendship or alliances.



The second category of the *Pañcatantra* stories explaining the ways and means of *Mitralābha/ Mitrasamprāpti* or winning of Friends, starts with the verse "*Clever People and those well versed in Nītiśāstra, Even when they are without means, achieve success very quickly, just like the Crow, the Mouse, the Turtle and the Stag*". The formula of making new friends or gaining friendship is narrated through 10 fables stressing basically on the 'Principle of Unity' and the importance of 'Trust and mutual confidence' in combating the attack of the enemy and how even the physically weak can chase the powerful enemy in their aggregate capacity to win the final battle. This message can be elaborated to apply the power of alliance or union that can be very effectively used to prevent the aggression and attack of the enemy. It also lays down the fundamentals of the basics of the phrase 'united we stand; divided we fall' that is one of the basic requisites of national integration, national power and national security. More elaboration of the second principle of the *Pañcatantra* will encompass divergent facets and aspects of governance and statecraft involving the concepts of 'divide and rule policy' advantages and disadvantages of the principle of 'separation of power', importance of intelligence, shrewdness and ability to make prompt and good decisions in emergency or applying those in diplomatic practices and so on and so forth.

The third category of the stories is known as *Kākolūkiyam* or Art of War and Peace. These fables narrated through Crows and Owls talk about War and Peace i.e. *Vigraha* and *Sandhi*. Narrated through 18 fables, it starts as "*Never trust a man, Who has always been your enemy and suddenly turns friendly towards you, this was the mistake the owls made*". These fables in the third category illustrate the different means and methods of warfare and diplomatic practices and reach the conclusion of taking timely and pragmatic strategies to defeat the opponents. The narrations of the third *Tantra* addresses the basic concept of international relations 'war and peace'. The question of 'war and peace' is a broad one and, as one might expect for a topic that has engaged scholars from many disciplines since the times of Sun Tzu and Thucydides.¹⁸ Like Sun Tzu in 500 BC who asserted that 'the best way to conquer the enemy is to attack his strategy' and Thucydides in his book 'The History of Peloponnesian War' in 413 BC who emphasised the academic importance of a systematic and scientific study of war from a historical perspective, *Viṣṇuśarmā* in his volume also deals with different art and techniques of warfare through '*Kākolūkiyam*'.

The details of being engaging in a war with meagre assets and preparedness to



chase a powerful but cunning opponent are narrated through the stories of the Crow and the Owls. This category of the *Pañcatantra* stories also deals in details with the then prevalent methods of diplomatic practices i.e., peace, war, retreat, entrenchment, seeking the help of allies or intrigue/secret plan. The guiding principle of this category of fables also warn against believing a person without ascertaining his/her actual credentials. In the present day context of political discourse also, the concept of war and peace acquire immediate and the most important space. Methods and means are designed to mitigate war and establish peace in all the spheres of political activity. More particularly in the realm of international relations, a continuous and serious research is being done to curb the potentials of war and establish peace. The ways prescribed to establish peace, thousands of years ago through the *Pañcatantra* tales thus claim much credits and hugely ascertain the glorious and predominant academic tradition associated with society and statecraft of ancient India.

The fourth category of the tales is termed as *Labdhapraṇāsaṁ* i.e. Loss of Gains or the Forfeit of Profits. These stories are narration of apprehensions and warnings against losing whatever is gained due to one's short sightedness and ignorance, greed or too much curiosity. The beginning of the fourth Tantra states "*A man who does not lose his head, in the face of calamities, shall overcome them, just like the Monkey in the midst of the Sea*". This category of Tantra contains the narration of a total number of 13 fables. These fables explain the reasons of forfeiting the gains that is already possessed by one due to the ill traits of one's nature or due to succumbing to peer pressure and cunning intent in the disguise of soothing words or friendly face. The fourth category of the *Pañcatantra*, though mainly exhibits moral teachings aiming at individualistic perfection of human behaviour, an investigation of these fables in the context of socio-political issues helps in identifying the important intellectual and physical assets of private and public domain, understanding their value and worth and adopting means and methods for retaining the 'valuables' without falling prey to one's illicit intentions. This connotation can also be applied to the possessions of the state like that of the ingredients of national power, preserving and securing the elements of national security, retention of status quo or balancing power equations in politics etc. These categories of fables also help in identifying the reasons for which one can lose the assets already under possession due to own follies.

The fifth Tantra of the book *Aparīkṣitakāraṇaṁ* i.e., 'Acting without thinking' or 'action without due consideration' is another powerful message for individual and public



life. This category of fables warn against hasty actions or taking actions without thinking much and considering the consequences. These stories prescribe considered actions and warn against rash deals. The first verse states *"No wise man should follow the barber's example, pursuing what he has neither accurately observed, nor properly understood; neither correctly heard, nor sufficiently considered"*. The fifth book contains a total of 12 fables offering examples of ill-consequences of hasty and un-examined actions mainly taken by a human being in the urge of immediate decision making. Like the fourth category of the classic, the fifth categorisation of the fables also subscribes to a negative approach where warnings and cautions are given to the decision maker before jumping into a process of decision making.

This category of fables direct one to ponder, re-think and henceforth make a rational choice by evaluating the advantages and disadvantages of a consequent decision. Thus, the fifth Tantra can be considered as a basis for rational decision making practice more than only illustrating as a requisite of rational human behaviour. Decision making is an important element of statecraft deeply associated with the aspect of public administration, governance and public policy. Good decisions can positively contribute in public policy making, fulfilling the aspirations of the people and bringing about fruits of development and thereby contributing in the overall success of the regime and bad decision can do the reverse in the lives of the people and society. The ancient book, the *Pañcatantra*, by providing important supplements on 'decision making process' successfully adapts to this field of community life through treating the basics of the issue of public policy making.

The *Pañcatantra* tales provide everything needed to lead a humble, dignified and balanced human life. These elements of human conduct essentially contribute in making a qualified and efficient citizenry which is undoubtedly the main element of a powerful statecraft. The stories presented through fables are so open ended that they can be elaborated and applied to every aspect and phase of individual and community life starting from developing a wise human conduct based on moral-ethical ground to adopting a pragmatic and rational behaviour while taking decision in the context of public life as citizens or rulers. Besides, this value laden yet pragmatic literature can be explored and expanded to analyse the fundamentals of socio-political life that eventually has a link with the concept of statecraft. In fact, it is such a rich literary asset possessed by ancient India and gifted to the world fraternity that has equally enriched the domestic socio-political life of and strengthened the arena of international politics. Its contents



and themes propagate all the do's and don'ts that are needed to be observed in the realm of personal and public life being a social and political animal or stakeholder.

The proliferation of knowledge across the world, through the *Pañcatantra* is so genuine and binding that it is considered as a gift to the world community along with the great literature of 'Arthaśāstra'. If treated as a book on 'statecraft', the *Pañcatantra* contains different concepts or guiding principles in all its five Tantras that constitute the ground rules of modern day statecraft and theory building of international politics and law. Internal balancing, alliances and asymmetric approaches are as old as statecraft. They are not the inventions of modern European strategic thought, but date back to the era of Kauṭilya and Viṣṇuśarmā.¹⁹ The *Pañcatantra* thus can be safely cited as a treatise of socio-political understanding and treatment that a civilised society is expected to follow in various levels of its operation and activity. It aims to understand and analyse the guiding principles of governance, attitudes to be adopted by a ruler in a polity, the nature and means of public conduct and so on and so forth. The teachings of the *Pañcatantra* can be expanded and interpreted to analyse every element of modern day civilisation that has a direct or indirect link with society and politics. Unequivocally, these teachings are important for both the ruled and the rulers and thus as an empirical text dealing extensively with all the components of statecraft, it certainly acquires the credentials of a great text.

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Seeds of Fable in Vedic Literature

Dr. P. C. Muralidharan

The core aspects of fables such as, conveying a moral message through short narratives, having animal characters, employing the political wisdom while confronting difficult situations in life in the form of stories, are seen in many places of Vedic literature. In Vedas, on some occasions significantly the characters may be divine or sages or even the mixture of both alongside of animals. To explain a particular idea, the method of using the animal illustration was initially adopted by the Vedic seers. This method of narrating stories woven with animal characters, has later evolved into a full fledged presentation of stories during Brāhmaṇa and Upaniṣad periods. This is discussed below.

Vedas are considered sacred and extolled as *apauruṣeya* as their authority is unquestionable. The core objective of the four Vedas viz., the *R̥g*, *Yajus*, *Sāman* and *Atharvan* is to infuse the spirit of principles such as *assatyam vada*, *dharmañcara*, *mātṛdevo bhava* and so on, which are relevant even today in our day to day life. The *Sarīhitā* portion of the Vedas dealing with the *mantras* (sacred utterances) pertain to the various duties mentioned above. The *Brāhmaṇas* are explanation of those *mantras* offering interpretations on the aspects of Vedic injunctions as to show how a person should go about the performance of Vedic rites.

Two aspects constitute the understanding of *Brāhmaṇas*; one of them talks on the procedures involved in the performance of sacrificial rites; the other one is *arthavāda* (eulogizing). Sages employed this technique of *arthavāda* through a medium of short stories with characters being devas, demons and sometimes even animals as means of illustrations.



The animals seen in the tales of Vedic literature were perceived in the form of deities. *Devatānukramaṇī* (DA) citing Śaunaka says that the synthesis of many hymns of the *Ṛgveda* (RV) are actually embodying the deities themselves (DA.VII.3.23) :

शोनकस्तत्र वदति सूक्ते यस्मिन्वृचः स्थिताः ।
देवतामाश्रयन्ते ताः स्तुतां सूक्तेन तामिति ॥

To achieve a deeper understanding of the *mantras* and the varied interpretations associated with them being used in the many Vedic rites these aspects are linked essentially with the illustrations where animals play smaller roles. According to DA deities manifested in animals and other creatures (referred here as *acetana*) are being praised. The term '*cetana*' used in DA actually denotes the deities and the term '*acetana*' denotes animals and other creatures. These animals are not different from those deities that are delineated there in the Vedas (DA.VII.4.4,9) :

स्तूयन्तेऽचेतनाः केचिदिह देवैरधिष्ठिताः ।
शकुनिर्दुघणश्रेति तत्र विद्धि निदर्शनम् ॥
इतिहासपुराणैर्ये देवतात्वेन दर्शिताः ।
तानाहुश्रेतनान देवान भवन्त्वन्ये त्वचेतनाः ॥

In other words, this idea of the DA can be understood as not the deification of the animals; rather, the animals are perceived as deities themselves. This method of establishing the ideas using animal behaviour and nature that later evolved into a full-fledged fable literature in Sanskrit language, paved way for the emergence of many texts such as the *Pañcatantra* and the *Hitopadeśa*. The concept of fable can also be seen intermittently in the great epics - the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata* and in the *Purāṇas* too.

Fable is generally defined as, "a short moral story with animals being its characters". According to Monier Williams *nīti* has been explained as, "conduct especially right or wise or moral behaviour; political wisdom or science; moral philosophy or precept". Accordingly, the term 'fable' then would equal the term *nītikathā*? (moral story) in Sanskrit. The word, '*nīti*' is obtained from the root, 'nay' with the suffix, '*ktin*' meaning generally, 'to take' or 'to lead' (*Vācaspatya*, Vol. IX. p. 4126) :

नीयन्ते उन्नीयन्तेऽर्था अत्रानया वा ।

Thus the seeds of Fable literature represented explicitly in the books of *Pañcatantra* and the *Hitopadeśa* have already been sown in the Vedic texts that are evidently seen through the many narratives carrying significant interpretations on several *mantras* by many Vedic seers under different contexts:



1) Animals as similies :

i) In the *Rgveda (RV)*, the mantra uttered in the context of praising Devendra, is explained by Sāyanācārya that in the sacrificial rite the pressing stones may shake the *soma* plant just like a wolf frightens the sheep:

अत्र अस्मिन् यज्ञे एषाम् अभिषवग्राव्णां नेमिः सोमलतां वि धूनुते विशेषेण कम्पयति उरां मेर्षीं वृको न वृक इवा ।

ii) In another place as Sāyanapoints out the enthusiasm of Devendra in drinking the *soma* juice is done with a heightening description of stag :

गौरमृग इव तृषितः सन् इमं सोमं पिब ॥

iii) Sāyanācārya'scommentary on³ the comparison of Devendra's strength with that of the Elephant and his valour with that of the Lion:

हे इन्द्र गजबिशेषो मृग इव परेषां बलं दहन वज्रादीनि शस्त्राणि बिभ्राणः त्वं सिंह इव भयङ्करो अभूः ॥

2) Stories related to Animals:

i) Story of Somāharaṇa :

The idea of promoting the animal character as a device is found in Vedic literature in the depiction of Somāharaṇa story appearing in the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa (AB)*. Here the Gāyatrī chandasis personified as a vulture. Sāyana explains this context thus - After the failed attempts of Jagatī and Traṣṭup chandas who assumed the form of birds to bring the *soma* juice, Gāyatrī was requested to bring of the same by the celestials. Having taken the form of vulture she succeeded in the endeavour after confronting her opponents⁴ :

.....विचार्य गायत्र्यादीनि च्छन्दांसि प्रत्येकसब्रुवन् । हे च्छन्दांसि अस्मदर्थं सोममाहरतेति । तानि च तदङ्गीकृत्य ते लोकप्रसिद्धाः पक्षिणो भूत्वा द्युलोकं प्रत्युदपतन् ।

जगतीत्रिष्टुभोः सोमानयनसामर्थ्याभावं दृष्ट्वा ते देवा गायत्रीं प्रार्थितवन्तः । हे गायत्री त्वं नोऽस्मदर्थमिमं सोममाहरेति । सा च गायत्री तथेत्यङ्गीकृत्य देवान् प्रत्येवमब्रवीत्.....

ii) Story of Saramā and Paṇis :

The narration of the story of Saramā (divine watch dog) and Paṇis (demons) appearing in the tenth *maṇḍala* of the *Rgveda* portrays the *yukti* (strategy) (usually adopted in the stories of the *Pañcatantra*) especially at a time when story literature was not witnessed its advancement. The story narrates the talk of Saramā donning the role of an emissary, deputed by Devendra to retrieve the wealth of his cows which were



looted away by the Paṇis. Sāyana, in his commentary narrates thus- 'Articulating her master's demand Saramā acted like a bridge between her master and the demons. Saramā was not feeling deluded despite being subjected to enticements to the sister sentiments displayed by the demons and she warned the Paṇishigh lighting on the strength of her master on the chances of demons loosing the battle, if confronted by the Celestial King⁵':

हे पणयः अहं तेनैव प्रेषिता सती चरामि महतः निधीन बृहस्पतेर्गोनिधीन कामयमाना सती चरामि ।
हे पणयः अहं भ्रातृत्वं न जानामि स्वसृत्वञ्च न जानामि । इन्द्रः अङ्गिरसश्च चशत्रूणां भयङ्कराः जानन्ति ।
हे पणयः युष्माभिरपहताः गावः सत्येन मिनत्यो दवारस्य पिधायकं पर्वतं हिंसत्यो विदारयन्त्यः

तस्मादुदच्छन्तु ।

iii) Satyakāmajābāli:

The story of Satyakāmajābāli appearing in the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* is another example as to how the technique pertaining to fable was used in the Upaniṣads. Satyakāmajābāli was given a four hundred frail cows by his guru, sage Gautama and told to return to the hermitage when they became thousand. Satyakāmajābāli promised to do so (IV.4.5.):

..... कुशानां अबलानां चतुश्शाता गा निराकृत्य उवाच इमाः सोम्यानुसंब्रजेति ता अभिप्रस्थापयन्नुवाच नासहस्रेणावर्तेयेति स ह वर्षगणं प्रोवास ता यदा सहस्रं सम्पेदुः ॥

He did so exactly. On his return to the hermitage, it is to be noted, that he received the *Brahmavidyā* from the *vṛṣabha* (bull), *haṁsa* (swan) and *jala-mṛg*⁶ (water bird).

iv) Story of Sobhari :

Sobhari, son of sage Kaṇva, sought the help of King Citra (the king of rodents) to prevent rodents, his subjects, from destroying the grains, ghee etc., that Sobhari had collected and kept safely for sacrifice (*Bṛhaddevatā*. VI.58):

काण्वस्य सोभरेश्चैव यजतो वंशजैः सह ।
कुरुक्षेत्रे यवाञ्जक्षुर्हवीषि विविधानि च ॥

The rodent king felt himself honoured, for, despite taking birth in the animal race, Sobhari treated him equally on par with the great deities Devendra and Sarasvatī. Pleased, the rat king gave cows to Sobhari; Sobhari had his wishes fulfilled (*Bṛhaddevatā*.VI.60) :

आखुराजोऽभिमानाच्च प्रहर्षितमनाः स्वयम् ।
संस्तुतो देववच्चित्र ऋषये तु गवां ददौ ॥



Conclusion:

The personification of animal characters employed in Vedic literature at many places in the form of illustrations by sages obviously implies that they were well versed in the animal sciences. On the significance of the Maṇḍūkā sūkta⁷, P. N. Kavatekar writes - "Though animals may be viewed inferior, but when their significance gets extolled in the Vedic hymns, we see the elevation of their positions. Maṇḍūkā sūkta is one such example for this. During Vedic times frog was to be perceived as a symbol of rain.

Due to rainfall, earth becomes prosperous; she provides the sages who are steeped in sacrifices with the sacrificial requirements such as ghee, rice, milk and curd abundantly. The act of frogs welcoming the rain is the reflection of them being praised in this?kta. The usual practice has been to project the men of great reputation as illustrations in the stories. But in the case of Maṇḍūkā sūkta, this trend has been reversed involving the glorification of frogs, since the croaking sound of frogs heralds the rainfall"⁸ The stories or illustrations using animals seen across the Vedic literature, is not only a precursor to fable literature but also to the allegorical works of later times. In the case of the latter the characters usually are inanimate objects. The *Prabodhacandrodaya*, an allegorical play of Kṛṣṇamiśra of 11th cent. C.E. is a classic example for this, wherein the mind, intellect and other sense organs have been portrayed as natural characters. This aspect can be seen in Vedic literature itself. The conversation held by Viśvāmitra with the rivers⁹ and the instance of vāk (speech) abandoning the celestials in *Tāṇḍyabrāhmaṇa*¹⁰ amplify the significance of this. Stories seen in the Upaniśads and the Purāṇa stell us clearly of the development that has taken place in the field of story literature in the post Vedic period. The concept of birds and animals helping humans which is the fulcrum of *Pañcatantra* stories, has been found employed during the Vedic age itself as seen in the depictions of Sobhari and Somāharaṇa stories among others.

End Notes :

1. अत्रा वि नेमिरेषामुरां न धूनुते वृकः । RV.VIII.34.3,ab
2. गौरो न तृषितः पिब ॥ ibid.I.16.5,b
3. न हस्ती तविषीमुषाणः सिंहो न भीम आयुधानि बिभ्रत् ॥ ibid.IV.16.14,cd
4. ते ब्रुवं छन्दासि यूयं न इमं सोमं राजानमाहरतेति तथेति । ते सुपर्णा भूत्वा



उदपतंस्तेयत्सुपर्णाभुत्वाउदपतस्तदेतत्सदेतत्सौपर्णमित्याख्यानविद आचक्षते ।

ते देवा अब्रुवन्ना यत्रीं त्वं न इमं सोमं राजानमाहरेति सा तथेत्यब्रवीत्.....Aitareya Brāhmaṇa,
III.13.1-2.khaṇḍas

5. इन्द्रस्य दूतीरिषिता चरामि मह इच्छन्ती पणयो निधन्वः ।
नाहं वेद भ्रातृत्वं नो स्वसृत्वमिन्द्रो विदुरङ्गिरसश्रच घोराः ।
दूरसित पणयो वरीय उद्रावो यन्तु मिनतीरृतेन । RV.X.108
6. According to Madhvācārya's commentary on *Chā.U.* the Vāyu (wind god), the Agni (fire) and the Varuṇa (rain) being in the disguise of the bull, the Swan and the water bird respectively teach him the nature of the Supreme brahman.
- 7.. RV,VII.103.
8. Nītikathā kā udgama evaṁ vikāsa, Pp- 167-171.
9. RV,III.33.1-13
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Traces of Narratives in the Upaniṣad Literature

Animesh Adhyapok

The Upaniṣads are the treasure of wisdom and recognized as the 'Jñānakāṇḍa' of the Vedas. The word 'Vedānta' is also conferred to the Upaniṣads as it completes the wisdom of the Vedas. The central idea of the Upaniṣads is founded upon the worship without material presence of offerings. It stresses upon the spiritual development of individual being to be prospered to attain the supreme most experience of bliss. Bliss in the form of liberation or Mokṣa that unites the individual self with the supreme i.e. Brahman. In this journey of spiritual enlightenment the Upaniṣads laid down some of the narratives which are associated with ethical and philosophical elements of facts. In this paper a venture has been taken up to highlight on those of the narratives with their implications to the present relevance. Which are relevant in modern day context.

Key words : Narrative, Upaniṣad, Ātman, Brahman, Ethics, Philosophy.

Methodology :

Adopted methodology to prepare this paper is analytical. The principal Upaniṣads have been taken as primary sources to formulate this paper with some of the secondary sources of scriptures associated with this topic.

Introduction :

The Vedas are the lifeline of the Indian tradition with its profound treasury of knowledge from the time immemorial. The word Veda constitutes its meaning as pertaining knowledge from its derivation of the root 'vid', to know. In this context the



term '*Vedānta*' represents the meaning of end of the Vedas indicating the knowledge of the Vedas, completes after attaining the knowledge of this literature *Vedānta*. The word *Vedānta* is refers to the Upaniṣads. The Upaniṣads has its derivation from the root '*sad*' with its prefixes '*upa*' and '*ni*' comprising the meaning of nearness, totality and to loosen or attain or to annihilate. In this way the complete etymological meaning of the term Upaniṣad forms as the knowledge which, when acquired from an efficient teacher loosens the restrictions or bondages of the world completely, enhances the disciple to realize or attain the self and annihilates the *Avidyā* or ignorance, the cause of delusions and recognizing the Self as the limited or finite embodied being. However the word Upaniṣad identifies knowledge initially yet going through implications it signifies the scripture also. Humble submission of the disciple to his preceptor is also prescribed by the derivation of root '*sad*' endowed with the prefix '*upa*'.

Narratives and fables occupy a great importance in the history of literature. In Sanskrit literature either in the Vedic or Classical Sanskrit literature narratives and fables bears, legendary admirations throughout the generations. The narratives of the Sanskrit literature find its relevance with ethics and philosophical fractions to the populace since the ancient time. The resources of this tradition of narrative and legends find its root in the Vedic Literature especially in the dialogue hymns of the Vedas, Brāhmaṇas and Upaniṣads, such as *Yama-Yamī Samvāda*¹, *Pururavā-Urvaśī Samvāda*² of the *R̥gveda*; *Manu Matsya Kathā* of *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*; *Naciketā-Yama narrative*, *Satyakāma Jābāla* and more in the Upaniṣads. The objective of this paper is to trace out such narratives in the Upaniṣads with their ethical and philosophical sources of message that influences the later editions of literature.

The area of the narratives has been seen associated with the characteristics of aliedness with the traditions of that related period and their lifestyle. It is also portrayed with educational, motivational, moral and religious appreciation. Sometimes the narratives are found to be depicted with fairy thoughts and enchanted with the description of the world of the gods, *Gandharvas* and *Apsarās* with miraculous description. Two types of descriptive styles are found to be seen in this literature, one is exposition of the landscape view of prose and another one is artificial creative exposition of writing skill. The description of the former writing skill is found to be applied in the famous book of *Pañcatantra*. The *Śukasaptati*, *Siṃhāsan-Dvātriṃśatputtalikā*, *Vetāla-Panñcaviṃśati*, *Bhoja Pravandha*, *Puruṣa-Parīksā* are the books which follow the similar style of *Pañcatantra* in that concern.



In the age of Brāhmaṇa literature the prominence of the material sacrifices was more significant which gradually lost their significance in the age of the Upaniṣads. The sacrifices entertained in the Brāhmaṇas are found to be very costly to organize and was possible to organize only by the active and rich people. In those days also some types of tales must be enchanted by those people in relation to the sacrifice, which cannot be denied. For instance we may take the legend of *Śunaḥśepa*³ which is found partly in the Vedic scriptures and the later editions of this legend finds its space in the epics⁴ and Purāṇas. In the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*⁵ the reference of *Janaka Videha* is found for his profound knowledge in the form of *Sarivāda* with numerous scholars, highlights the traces of narratives of later period.

Jñānakāṇḍa of the Vedas, the Upaniṣad represents some of the narratives or legends both in discursive and descriptive manner. In the famous conversation of *Yājñavalkya* and *Maitreyī*, *Janaka* and *Yājñavalkya*, *Prajāpati-Indra-Vīrocana* and *Bālāki* and *Ajātaśatru*, we have found the facts of philosophical inferences. Similarly in the narratives or legends of *Yama* and *Naciketā*, *Jānaśruti* and *Raikka*, *Satyakāma Jābāla*, Knowledge of *dama-dāna-dayā*, *Usasti Cākrāyaṇa* and realization of the gods, the facts of both the ethical and philosophical state of teachings are found to be seen. A brief overview on these narratives will help to understand them.

*Yājñavalkya-Maitreyī Sarivāda*⁶ is a famous plot of the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*. Another plot of **Dama, Dāna** and **Dayā**⁷ of this Upaniṣad has its great impression in conveying ethical message to the humanity. The *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* belongs to the *Śukla Yajurveda* and it is the last fourteenth part of *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*. In the discussion of *Yājñavalkya* and *Maitreyī* the central theme is based upon *Ātman*. While describing the factual state of the *Ātman* *Yājñavalkya* makes significant references which are closely connected to the life of human being. According to the plot once *Yājñavalkya* ready to renounce his household, life asks *Maitreyī* and *Kātyāyanī* to spend their life with the wealth that he left for them. Then *Maitreyī* asked⁸ him whether she would be able to attain immortality through them. *Yājñavalkya* said⁹ that through wealth immortality cannot be obtained. It is a great lesson which implies wealth is not worth to achieve immortality or supreme bliss (*amṛtatva*). *Maitreyī's* knowledge and loyalty to *Yājñavalkya* to seek knowledge is also appreciable. In the course of advice *Yājñavalkya* stated about the relations and existence of human being without the intervention of *Ātman*¹⁰. *Ātman* is to be realized, heard, reflected on and meditated upon. Through this *Sarivād* or dialect *Yājñavalkya* teaches that without the existence of *Ātman* every relation



like wife, husband, son, daughter, different worlds, creatures, and races would not be available. All the elements are found to be pleasant for the reason of *Ātman*. The plot throws ethical and mainly philosophical implication towards the society which does assign moral implications in the minds of today's materialistic people and appreciate to live a life without of crave¹¹. Another narrative of the gods, human and demon represents three major elements towards humanity through adopting *Brahmacarya*. In this narrative the gods went to *Prajāpati* to learn from him¹². *Prajāpati* gave them three lessons of *Damyatā* (self restraint), *Dāna* (to give in charity) and *Dayā* (to be compassionate). Through this narrative of three virtues the great Upaniṣad symbolizes the individual beings in according their quality. The gathering of these three qualities generates a calm and successful society to be ruled out perfectly which the Upaniṣad firmly stated about.

In the *Janaka Yājñavalkya Samvāda*¹³ of this Upaniṣad, *Yājñavalkya* establishes his supremacy over the priests by solving every query put forwarded to him. This form of question and answer tradition is seen frequently in the Upaniṣad however is unique in nature, as the ability to answer determines his supremacy and perfection which we have seen in the Vanaparvan of the *Mahābhārata* in the conversation of *Yudhiṣṭhira* and *Yakṣa Samvāda*¹⁴, *Sāvitrī Satyavāna narrative*¹⁵ and *Nahuṣa - Yudhiṣṭhira*¹⁶ conversation. In later periods this tradition has been seen in the *Vetāla-Pañcaviṃśati* and *Siṃhāsandvātriṃśatputtalikā* profoundly.

In the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* we have found the *Prajāpati and Indra-Virocana Samvāda*¹⁷. The narrative is stated in the form of conversation where a great lesson about human conduct is found which is very significant to those people who has not done anything to someone but after death ornamenting the body and performed such thing beloved to the departed. In the narrative regarding to teach about *Ātman* *Prajāpati* advised them to see themselves in the water and after the observance of their face what they have told to *Prajāpati* then he realized that they are not efficient to recognize *Ātman* till then. After returning near from *Prajāpati* *Virocana* teaches about the Upaniṣad that "the Self (i.e. body) alone is to be served in this earth"¹⁸

In the *Kauṣītaki Upaniṣad* a narrative appears where *Bālāki and Ajātasatru* sat suitably discussing about *Ātman* through the introduction of numerous forms of deities classified as the deities of nature and of body. In this narrative the state of the attitude of



Bālāki is found to be incompetent than of the knowledge of king *Ajātasatru*, however king politely heard him. *Bālāki* having a little knowledge wants to advise him about the concept of Brahman (4th chapter). Throughout this narrative in the form of discussive mode the aspiration of knowledge of a king is shown for which he was to reward *Bālāki* thousand of cows¹⁹.

However all the plots of the Upaniṣads are stated in the form of conversation mode yet they have the potentiality to express the motive in that way of narratives of the later period. *Yama and Naciketā* legend is found in the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad*²⁰ and also found to be mentioned in the *Mahābhārata*²¹. The legend influences on the Indian society from ancient time and set milestones in the category of *ākhyānas*. The later editions of narratives and fairy tales adopt the descriptions of different worlds which can be traced from the Vedic literature up to epic and Purāṇic edition of narratives. *Naciketā* was the son of sage *Vājaśravasas*. Once the sage accomplished a sacrifice and after that he donated everything in the hope of the achievement of the fruit. Observing the activity of donation to all *Naciketā* also asked his father that to whom he would be given. After frequent repetition of the same by *Naciketā* father replied him rudely that "Un to Yama I will give you"²². Then *Naciketā* went to *Yama* and attained diverse form of precious knowledge regarding *Brahmavidyā*. In this narrative the teachings of the conduct with guest²³, responsibilities to parents²⁴ and *Ātmatatva* have been highlighted. Even after donating him to *Yama* *Naciketā* did not lose his devotion to his father for which he wished a boon for his father. This type of ethics and philosophical interpretation regarding human life is associated in these narratives of Upaniṣads.

Another narrative of the *Chāndogyanī* highlighting the philosophical introspection of king *Jānaśruti and Raikka* their search for *Samvarga-Vidyā*²⁵ is described in the fourth *adhyāya*. In this narrative the enunciation about Vāyu and Prāna are found to be described in the form of a narrative. In this same Upaniṣad the narrative of *Satyakāma Jābāla* is also treated in a fair way of narrative where the lessons of *Brahmavidyā* imparted to *Satyakāma* by the creatures except human being. This unique form of description is found to be traced in the later literatures of narratives like *Pañcatantra* and *Hitopadeśa*. Another narrative of this Upaniṣad about *Uṣasti Cākrāyana*²⁶ regarding his consumption of leftover foods during famine is described. In this narrative the philosophy of *anna* or food is signified as god. It is also indicated in the narrative that sharing of food at the time of scarcity of food is admissible whatever it would be fresh or left over. But normally leftover food is not to be accepted as the narrative advocated.



In the *Kena Upaniṣad* a narrative describes the false pride of the deities for their powers and self efficiency²⁷. The state of pride arose after the victory over demons which was actually the win came for the cause of Brahman. To make aware of this, *Brahman* took text of their self efficient power. But the deities were observed to be failed and accept their false knowledge and pride over their fame. The narrative makes the gratification throughout the narrative that everything that happens *Brahman* exists there.

Conclusion :

This brief discussion of exposes their roots of the tradition of narratives which gradually developed in the later literature. The narratives and dialectical legends represent their characters such as miracles, presence of deified elements, ethics, descriptions of different worlds and specially the lessons achieved from the creatures. The gradual development of such narratives formulated after the Upaniṣad literature such as epics and Purāṇas are seemed to be evident in following the structure with their upgraded version. Influence of Nachiketa and yama story of Kaṭhōpaniṣad can be noticed in the *Sāvitrī Upākhyāna* of the *Mahābhārata*. In this way the *Yājñavalkya and Janaka Samvād* also influenced upon such conversative segment of narratives in question answer format which are also found in the *Mahābhārata*. Later editions of the literature where such creation of Pañcatantra, *Hitopadeśa* and *Vetālapañcavimsati* is there following method of the interaction with animals, birds and other creatures are found to be seen. In conclusion it may be said that sanskrit fable literature has its origin in the vedic Literature.

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7. ibid., 5.1.
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9. amṛtatvaśya tu nāśāsti vittaneti. Ibid.
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11. tena tyaktena bhujjithā mā grādhah kasyasid dhanam. Iśōpaniṣat,



12. bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad ,5.1..
13. ibid., 3.1.
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Fables From Mahābhārata

R. Rajalakshmi

The word 'Fables' denote Nītikathās related with birds and animals. These are imaginary stories which convey valuable morals. As the Vedas are considered as Anādi, which literally means the one which has no beginning, it could be understood that the Vedas are the source of all the Śāstras. So, fables too have their roots in Vedas. The great epic Mahābhārata is considered as the fifth Veda, other than the four commonly known Vedas. It comprises the essence of Vedic perceptions. It is vast like an ocean and contains many Upakathās. The main theme is Dharma. So, it is very natural to find political, economic, social, personal, and many more Dharmas in it which are illustrated by varieties of stories. Among these stories, there are numerous fables. This article is a humble attempt in exploring some selected fables present in Mahābhārata.

Keywords: *Fables, Nītikathās, Mahābhārata, Upakathās, Dharma*

Introduction

The Indian great epic, *Mahābhārata* is considered as the fifth *Veda*, since it has the essence of all the *Vedas* in it. Vyāsa who is attributed as the author of *Mahābhārata*, is said to have compiled and divided *Vedas* in to four namely *Ṛk*, *Yajus*, *Sāma*, and *Atharva*. People can easily understand the *Dharma* which is told in *Vedas*, through the stories and incidents from this epic. Just as the *Vedas* are the sources of many fables, *Mahābhārata* also has plenty of them. Here is a brief analysis of some, from selected parvas of *Mahābhārata* in this article, on the basis of the lessons they provide.



Methodology

Detailed study and analysis have been made in the concern Parvas of *Mahābhārata*. *Vyāsa's Mahābhārata*, the original text was used as primary resource for data collection. For references, various editions and many modern works of *Mahābhārata* were referred to.

Objectives

- To establish the moral values among the society.
- To bring out various fables to the limelight from the great epic.
- To highlight the significance of birds and animals in the epic period.

Discussion

Destruction of Greed

In the *Sabhāparva* (Ch.55), the wise minister Vidura, foresees the destruction of the Kaurava kingdom due to greed. The Kauravas have invited the Pāṇḍavas for a feast, with the intention of following it up with a game of dice. When the game takes place, the cunning Śakuni plays on the Kauravas' behalf and the Pāṇḍavas start losing all their wealth and realize that they are about to lose their kingdom and their dignity. This takes place in the court, presided by King Dhṛtarāṣṭra, with his tacit approval. Seeing thus, Vidura, the repository of knowledge and wisdom, approaches King Dhṛtarāṣṭra and narrates a fable, with an intention to prevent the annihilation of the race.

The story he narrates is that of the wild birds which excreted golden dung every day. The owner of the house where the birds' droppings fell everyday, in his greed to become rich very soon, killed the birds thinking that they may have a lot of gold in their bellies. The reasoning faculty of his mind was blinded due to greed and he failed to realise that it was their daily food that was transformed to golden dung. By killing them, he lost both present and future gains

hiraṇyaśṭhīvinaḥ kaścit pakṣiṇo vanagocarān |
gṛhe kila kṛtāvāsālobhādrājannapīḍayat ||¹
sadopabhojyālobhāndho hiraṇyārthe pararītapa |
āyatim ca tadātvarim ca ubhe sadyo vyanāśayat ||²

Thus the story emphasises that greed veils the reasoning ability and leads to destruction. The able Vidura communicated this idea to the king who was blinded with



affection towards his sons and did not avert the game of dice, which would lead to the destruction of the Kuru race.

Speaking softly and sweetly

This fable also belongs to the *Sabhā parva* (Ch. 60). It is narrated by Vidura to Duryodhana. When Duryodhana reproached the Pāṇḍavas with harsh words in the royal court, the minister Vidura narrated the story of a goat thus -

*ajo hi śāstramakhanat kilaikaḥ
śāstre padbhirapāsya bhūmim |
nikṣtantanāṁ svasya kaṇṭhasya ghorāṁ
tadvad vairāṁ mā khanīḥ pāṇḍuputraiḥ ||³*

"There was once a goat which possessed a knife. One day, unexpectedly, the knife was lost. The goat wandered agitatedly in search of the knife and finally found it. In order to safeguard the knife, fearing it may go missing again, the goat decided to hide it under the earth. So, it started digging a pit using its leg and holding the knife in its mouth. In the process of digging, due to the to-and-fro movement of the neck, its throat got cut by the same knife. Oh Duryodhana! Both Kauravas and Pāṇḍavas belong to the same Bharatavamśa. They are your own siblings. So, using harsh words against Pāṇḍavas is like using harsh words towards yourself. Avoid saying words which pierce the heart of the hearer, (The Pāṇḍavas') It will result in your ruin, like the goat's knife that cut its very neck."

Mere individual is responsible for his or her *Karma*. Hence the harsh words towards others, will get reciprocated directly or indirectly to that person. Harsh words which hurt others, will create enmity and may lead to one's own destruction. Hence, one should be careful with the words, especially in anger.

Cordial relationship with kinsmen

In the *Udyoga parva*, before the declaration of the war between Pāṇḍavas and Kauravas, Vidura urges Duryodhana not to develop enmity with his own relatives. He emphasizes the duties to be followed among kinsmen, by narrating the story of the hunter and the birds.

"There was a hunter, who used to catch birds by spreading out his net. On one occasion, two swans were trapped in the net and they decided to escape by carrying the net jointly along while flying. The hunter could not catch them. But he was confident



that they would definitely quarrel among themselves and fall on the ground. Confirming his hope, just after flying some distance, the birds had some differences of opinion, and fought among themselves. At last, they fell on the ground and were immediately seized by the hunter. So, O Duryodhana! Whoever fights with kinsmen will face the consequences, viz. destruction, like the birds who lost their lives.

evaṁ ye jñātayo'rtheṣu mitho gacchanti vighrahaṁ |
te'mitravaśamāyānti śakunāviva vighrahāt ||⁴
sarībhōjanaṁ sarīkathanaṁ satīpraśno'tha samāgamaḥ |
etāni jñātikāryāṇi na virodhaḥ kadācana ||⁵

To maintain a healthy relationship, it is our duty to eat and converse happily together with our kinsmen and not fight with them".

Relatives are known as "*jñātijanas*" - which means those who know us very well. Another synonym is "*bāndhavas*" - which means people who have a strong bond with us. So, the words themselves suggest their importance in our lives.

Desistance from boasting

In *Karṇa parva*, in several places, Karṇa boasts about his heroic deeds and his strength that excelled Arjuna's. Hearing his boasts, Śalya, the charioteer of Karṇa, (who was himself a king, but had been tricked into being a charioteer by Duryodhana) reprimands him and advises not to do so, by narrating a fable of a boastful crow. This story is narrated in 28th chapter of *Karṇa parva*.

"Once upon a time, there was a rich merchant residing near a seashore. He had great respect and popularity because of his righteousness and virtuous deeds in the society. He lived in a kingdom well-protected by a righteous and mighty king. The merchant had many sons and he was very fond of them. The young boys too were held in high esteems like their father. These boys fed a crow with their leftover food daily. The crow enjoyed having variety of good food like milk, curd, sweets, meat and so on. As days passed, the well-fed crow became arrogant. He disregarded all the other birds which were equal or superior to him. He thought himself to be very powerful.

One day the merchant's sons saw a group of swans, who were as powerful as Garuḍa, with regard to their speed of flying and that too without a break. These boys gazed upon the swans and told the crow 'Oh crow! You are matchless and greater than these swans in terms-of flying'. Misguided by the words of the children who had little



knowledge, the crow addressed the swans thus. 'I am a mighty crow and I can not only fly in the sky higher and faster, but also in a hundred and one different types of motion'. Saying thus, the crow challenged the swans to a flying contest. The swans replied 'Oh foolish crow! We swans are the residents of Lake Mānasarovar and we have got the power of flying one place to another at will. We too can fly in a hundred and more motions. But how can you, who was living on the remnants of the food of the young boys can compete with us? Think again before challenging us' Thus, the swans warned the crow. But the crow was adamant in his decision about the contest. At last swans laughed within themselves regarding the crow's decision and agreed to the contest by adopting one single motion of flying.

The contest started and they were all flying across the ocean. The crow flew in all kinds of flying modes, but the swans followed one single style. At first, the crow was excited, proceeded very fast and was ahead of the swans. It became even prouder and happier. But after some time, the crow realized that there were no island or tree to rest whenever needed. Slowly, it got fearful and worried by this very thought itself. It also became exhausted due to over speeding. Gradually the swans went very much far ahead of the crow. And they turned back to see the crow's condition. Adhering to the characteristics of good-hearted people, the swans understood the condition of crow and returned back to help the poor bird, which had started to drown in the water. They slowly held the crow, rescued it and landed it safely on to the merchant's house. The crow which got close to death, now perceived its mistake. Thereafter it led a calm and peaceful life". Śalya narrated this fable and continued -

evam tvamucchiṣṭabhīto dhārttarāṣṭrarnai samśayaḥ ||⁶

"*Karṇa!* You too have been eating the food of the Kauravas and enjoying a royal life with them. You have become arrogant. Don't make the same mistake as the crow. You will then face similar consequences.

avaśyantū mayā vācyam budhyatām tvaddhitāhitam |

viśeṣato rathasthena rājñāścaiva hitaiṣiṇā ||⁷

Do listen to my words, which are for your welfare. Because I am not the protector of this chariot alone, as its charioteer, but also your protector".

This story not only presents the value of humility, but also shows, how cleverly the King Śalya uses crow-swan story for advising. In that situation, King Śalya was a



charioteer, who has to obey his master Karṇa's orders. But he is older and more experienced than Karṇa. So, without pointing Karṇa's mistakes directly, Śalya brilliantly uses the crow and swan story as a tool to advise and correct Karṇa.

Respecting elders

In the *Vana parva*, *Tīrtha yātrā* chapter, there is an interesting story of a snake. Many morals are told through the tale of the snake.

Once Bhīmasena was caught in the hold of a python. Generally, Bhīma is known to be a very strong person with great energy. But he could not release himself from clutches of the python. After some time, Yudhiṣṭhira came there searching for his brother Bhīma. Seeing his brother struggling with a python, he requested it to release his brother and promised to arrange for some alternate food. But the python refused and instead wanted to ask a few questions to Yudhiṣṭhira. The conversation went on as follows:

Python - Tell me, who is a true Brahmin and what is the eternal truth that everyone should know?

*brāhmaṇaḥ ko bhavedrājan vedyaṁ kiṁ ca yudhiṣṭhira*⁸

Yudhiṣṭhira : True Brahmin is the one who follows and practice truth, charity, forgiveness, good conduct, penance, mercy. Among all *Vidyās*, *Brahmavidyā* is the supreme knowledge that everyone should know.

satyaṁ dānaṁ kṣamā śīla-mānśāntyaṁ tapo ghr̥ṇā |
*dṛśyante yatra nāgendra sa brāhmaṇa iti smṛtaḥ ||*⁹

Python: - You are right, O Yudhiṣṭhira. Also, one cannot become a Brahmin merely by birth. Only if he possesses all these said qualities, he becomes a true Brahmin.

yadi te vṛttato rājan brāhmaṇaḥ prasamīkṣitaḥ |
*vṛthā jātistadāyusman kṛtiryāvanna vidyate ||*¹⁰

Having conversed with the snake and astonished by its wisdom, Yudhiṣṭhira asked 'You seem highly knowledgeable. How did you acquire all this wisdom? And how come you are a snake now?' The python started narrating his story.

"In my previous birth I was a king named Nahuṣa. I did hundred *Aśvamedhayāga* and attained *Svarga*. But the post of Indra made my mind intoxicated with arrogance. One should have humility when he attains greater positions. But I misused my position



and made the respectable sages to carry my palanquin for my visit to Indrāṇi. Desire is also one of the reasons for my downfall. While going to meet Indrāṇi, I urged the sages to move fast by saying '*Sarpa! Sarpa!*' Agastya, one of the sages carrying me, got angry and cursed me '*Sarpo bhava*' (become snake). Due to his curse, I immediately fell down from *Svarga* and became a python. I then realized my mistake and apologized to him. I asked the sage when I would be released from the curse. He told me that one day Yudhiṣṭhira would come and answer my questions and then I would regain my original form. Hence O Yudhiṣṭhira! now I have been released from the curse". Having said this, he regained his earlier form and went to *Svarga*.

In this story, if Nahuṣa had been humble even after attaining Indra's position, he could have enjoyed all the fruits of *Svarga*. Instead, he became arrogant and caused his own downfall. Especially, sages are honorable and to be worshipped. *Ṛṣis* are called '*Tapodhanas*' (rich in penance) and have great power due to their tranquil nature (*Sātvika bhāva*). There are many instances in Purāṇas and Kāvya of how a person gets great benefits due to worshipping sages and faces downfall when he or she disrespects them. Carrying a palanquin is usually done by servants. Treating great sages as servants is a great sin for which Nahuṣa was punished. In this story, the value of respecting elders and honorable persons are glorified.

Eschewing laziness

In the *Śānti parva* of *Mahābhārata* there are many fables narrated by the great Bhīṣma Pitāmaha himself, as he advises Yudhiṣṭhira regarding various kinds of *Dharmas* like *Rāja Dharma*, *Anuśāsana Dharma* and *Mokṣa Dharma* etc.

While conversing about *Rāja Dharma*, Yudhiṣṭhira asked Bhīṣma, "What actions should be performed by a king? And what makes him happy?"

Bhīṣma's answers are as follows:

A king should not be like the camel which we hear about in the history of *Kṛtayuga*. In *Kṛtayuga* there lived a camel which recalled its previous birth. It practiced severe penance and observed rigid vows in the forest. Pleased by its penance, Brahmā appeared before the camel and wished to grant a boon. The camel bowed at the feet of Brahmā and asked thus. "Oh Brahma! Let my neck become long, so that I may be able to grab any food that lies even hundred yojanas away." Brahmā granted the same and the foolish camel was very happy.



*sa cakāra tadālasyaṁ varadānāt sudurmatiḥ |
carituṁ cāpi neyeṣa durātmā kālamohitaḥ ||¹¹*

The camel became idle because there was no need to go anywhere for in search of food. It could get its food sitting in the same place. It stopped going out completely, and was trapped in the wicked hands of ill-fate.

One day while extending its neck to Hundred Yojanasin search of food, a great storm arose. The foolish camel placed its head in a cave of a mountain and decided to wait until the storm stopped. But after some time, it started raining heavily. A jackal and his wife, completely soaked in rain and shivering with cold, saw that very cave. They entered the cave very quickly and they saw the camel's neck. Being very hungry, they started to eat the camel's neck as fast as they could. Now the camel tried to shorten its neck. But the jackals held the neck very tightly and continued to eat it. At last, the camel died.

*evaṁ durbuddhinā prāptam uṣṭreṇa nidhanaṁ purā |
ālasyaṣya kramāt paśya mahāntaṁ doṣamātmanaḥ ||¹²
tvamapyevanividhaṁ tyaktvā yogena niyatendriyaḥ |
pravṛttaṁ buddhimūlaṁ hi vijayaṁ manurabravīt ||¹³*

So, O Yudhiṣṭhira! One should not be foolish and lazy like this camel. See the sad end of the camel, which is the result of its laziness. You must think wisely before you act. There is no short cut to success. You have to put in efforts to achieve anything. Manu has said that one attains victory through intelligence. A king should always think smart and act accordingly. It will definitely fetch him both success as well as happiness." This fable conveys the ill effects of laziness and foolishness and warns the readers to avoid them.

Conclusion

There are numerous fables in the *Mahābhārata*. Noble and righteous people like Bhīṣma, Vidura, Droṇa, Śalya, etc. advised others in various circumstances, with the aid of fables without hurting the listeners' sentiments. Using fables for advising, avoids directly pointing out one's mistakes. Citing examples of the behavior of birds and animals, makes the listener think calmly and realize their own faults in turn. Even today, the fable serves as a great tool to preach Dharmic values among children from their childhood and helps them to choose the right path even in future. This, in turn,



raises a healthier society and a right-thinking nation. Hence, spreading such fables gifted to us by our ancestors, to the younger generation, is a responsible activity to work towards.

lokāḥ samastāḥ sukhino bhavantu

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Life Lessons From the Caturviṁśatigurus

Dr. V. Preethi

Fables are the timeless literary devices used as an enchanting method to teach morals to everyone. The fable literature in Sanskrit, especially the works, the Pañcatantra and the Hitopadeśa are the finest ever brilliant instances of this genre in the world.

The Purāṇas are a medley of fables and fairy tales, Philosophy and religion, myth and legend. The Bhāgavata Purāṇa is the most popular among all the Purāṇas. This Purāṇa emphasizes the value of bhakti (devotion) and virakti (detachment) through stories.

The Śrīmad Bhāgavata Purāṇa (here after Bh. P.) XI. Ch. 7-9 describes the twenty-four gurus of the Avadhūta in an interesting manner. We generally consider fables as stories that pronounce a moral or ethical value. The story of the Avadhūta is a bit different. It is a story that comprises of twenty-four sub-plots and their teachings.

Once King Yadu met a young Avadhūta, and eagerly asked the Avadhūta¹ as to how he got the clear insight into things, how he could live like a child and how he controlled his senses and lived in solitude.

On hearing all these questions, Avadhūta replied that, Pṛthvī (1 The earth), Vāyu (2 air), Ākāśa (3 sky), Āpas (4 water), Agni (5 fire), Candramā (6 the moon), and Ravi (7 the sun), Kapota (8 a certain dove), Ajagara (9 the python), Sindhu (10 the sea), Pataṅga (11 the moth), Madhukṛt (12 the honey- bee), Gaja (13 the elephant), Madhuhā (14 the honey-fly), Hariṅga (15 the antelope), Mīna (16 the fish), Piṅgalā (17 the courtesan), Kurara (18 the osprey), Arbhaka (19 the child), Kumārī (20 the maiden), Śarakṛt (21 the artificer of arrows), Sarpa (22 the serpent), Ūrṇanābhi (23 the spider)



and *Supēśakṛt* (24 the wasp) -were his twenty-four preceptors; from their ways and characteristics he had learnt many lessons and by following their examples he had become free from attachment².

What the Avadhūta learnt from nineteen of them are presented by him in pithy statements. He had learnt from the *Pañcabhūtas* - Pṛthvī, Vāyu, Ākāśa, Āpa and Agni - forbearance, non-attachment in the midst of attachment, all-pervasiveness, purity and unaffectedness of the Ātman respectively; from Candra the fact that changes do not affect the Ātman; from Sūrya, reflected in waters, the truth that all individualities converge in one universal Ātman; from the Ajagara (python) to eschew whatever comes his way; from the sāgara (ocean), to remain unfathomable and unperturbed; from a *patanḡa* (moth), not to become a victim of the senses; from a *madhukṛt* (honey-bee), the method of seeking the essence of life; from the Gaja, not to be captivated by women; from the *madhuhā* (honey-gatherer), not to worry about his sustenance, from the *hariṇa* (deer), not to be enticed by music; from the mina (fish), not to crave for food; from the *arbhaka* (child) to remain free and enjoy one's own self; from the *sarpa* (snake) not to own anything (like a home); from the *Ūṛṇanābhi* (spider), the knowledge of the Lord being the creator and withdrawer of the universe; and from *peśakṛt* (wasp), the truth that when one constantly thinks of an object he attains that state, like the worm that turns into a wasp being in constant proximity with it.

The lesson he learnt from five of these teachers are narrated by him in story form. They are the stories of a Kapota, Piṅgala (the courtesan), a Kurara, girl's bangles and an arrow - smith.

(i) **The story of the Dove:** The narration opens with the statement that a man should not get very attached to anyone or anything. If he does become attached then he will feel great sorrow like the dove³ :

नातिस्त्रैहः प्रसङ्गो वा कर्तव्यः क्वापि केनचित् ।

कुर्वन् विन्देत संतापं कपोत एव दीनधीः ॥

To exemplify this, the happenings related to the kapota are told - There was a dove who built its nest in a thick forest. This dove lived in the nest with its female partner and young children. One day the parent doves went in search of food for the younger ones. A fowler came to the forest, saw the young doves in the nest and caught them in his net. When the parent doves came back, they saw their children caught in the



net. Not knowing how to save them, they too fell into the net in despair. The Avadhūta, here adds that he learnt from this episode that one who has not achieved an inner peace but is caught in the bondage of samsara would only have an unhappy existence⁴ :

यः प्राप्य मानुषं लोकं मुक्तिद्वारमपावृतम् ।
गृहेषु खगवत् सक्तस्तमारूढच्युतं विदुः ॥

(ii) **Story of Piṅgala:** There was a woman called Piṅgala who lived in the Videha city. She had dressed up very nicely in her finest clothes and waited outside the door of her house to take a lover who would want her service. There were many men that passed by and saw them as beautiful and capable of paying her well. But as her livelihood was providing sensual pleasures, she continued to expect a wealthier man visit her and let the others pass by. She was motivated by her own greed. As a result, she ended up losing half a night's sleep for this. This greed caused her to feel disgusted with her own materialistic desires. Realising her own faults, she abandoned waiting for a wealthy person and went to sleep peacefully⁵ :

पिङ्गला नाम वेश्याऽऽसीद् विदेहनगरे पुरा ।
तस्या मे शिक्षितं किञ्चिन्निबोध नृपनन्दन ॥
सा स्वैरिण्येकदा कान्तम् सङ्केत उपनेष्यती ।
अभूत् काले बर्दिवारि बिभ्रती रूपमुत्तमम् ॥
मार्ग आगच्छतो वीक्ष्य पुरुषान् पुरुषर्षभ ।
ताञ्छुल्कदान् वित्तवतः कान्तान् मेनेऽर्थकामुका ॥
आगतेष्वपयातेषु सा संकेतोपजीविनी ।
अप्यन्यो वित्तवान् कोऽपि मामुपैष्यति भूरिदः ॥
एवं दुराश्या धवस्तनिद्रा द्वार्यबलम्बती ।
निर्गच्छन्ती प्रविशती निशीथं समपद्यत ॥

The lesson learnt by the sage from this life of Piṅgalais that desire brings misery. If a person frees himself of this desire, he will become happy like Piṅgala, the courtesan who realised that futility of waiting for a wealthy lover⁶ :



आशा हि परमं दुःखं नैराश्यं परमं सुखम् ।

यथा संछिद्य कान्ताशां सुखं सुष्वाप पिङ्गला ॥

(iii) **Story of the Osprey:** An osprey (a fish-eating bird), once got hold of a piece of flesh. Seeing the osprey having some material to eat, other birds stronger than the osprey assaulted the bird. For some time, the bird withstood their attack. But, the attack became unbearable; not able to withstand the attack, the osprey threw away the piece of flesh. Immediately the other birds went away chasing the flesh. The osprey found peace as soon as he threw away the piece of flesh. One who knows that once you let go of your detachment to things you can attain infinite joy⁷ :

परिग्रहो हि दुःखाय यद् यत् प्रियतमं नृणाम् ।

अनन्तं सुखमाप्नोति तद् विद्वान् यस्त्वकिञ्चनः ॥

सामिषं कुररं जघ्नुर्बलिनो ये निरामिषाः ।

तदामिषं पतित्यज्य स सुखं समन्वितम् ॥

न मे मानावसानौ स्तो न चिन्ता गोहपुत्रिणाम् ।

आत्मक्रीड आत्मरितिर्विचरामीह बालवत् ॥

द्वावेव चिन्तया मुक्तौ परमानन्द आप्लुतौ ।

यो विमुग्धौ जडो बालो यो गुणेभ्यः परं गतः ॥

(iv) **The Girl's Bangle:** There was once a young girl who had offered hospitality to some people in the absence of her parents. These people required some peace and quiet; she made them rest and started to prepare meals for them. As she started working, her bangles were making loud noise. She removed the bangles one by one till she had only one bangle in each hand to prevent noise arising out of their clash. This teaches the lesson that learning to live in solitude helps one to get caught by strife⁸ :

वासे बहूनां कल्हो भवेद् वार्ता द्वयोरपि ।

एक एव चरेत् तस्मात् कुमार्या इव कङ्कणः ॥

(iv) **The Arrow-smith:** When the sage's mind is absorbed in the Atman, it is conscious of nothing else. There was an artificer of arrows (a craftsman who makes



arrows). While sharpening the arrow-point, he had to concentrate heavily on that. As a result he failed to notice that the king of his country had gone past his shop. He was not aware of the fact at all. He had only his job on his mind and nothing else. The sage learnt from him the power of concentration⁹ :

मन एकत्र संयुज्याज्जितश्वासो जितासनः ।

वैराग्याभ्यासयोगेन घ्नियमाणमतन्द्रितः ।

यस्मिन् मनो लब्धपदं यदेतच्छनैः शनैर्मुञ्चति कमरेणून् ।

सत्त्वेन वृद्धेन रजस्तमश्च विधूय निर्वाणमुपैत्यनिन्धनम् ॥

तदैवमात्मन्यवरुद्धचितो न वेद किञ्चिद् बहिरन्तरं वा ।

यथेषुकारो नृपतिं ब्रजन्तमिषौ गतात्मा न ददर्श पार्श्वे ॥

After narrating his experience with the twenty-four teachers, the Avadhūta tells the king that learning these lessons, has led to dispassion; the Avadhūta could obtain discriminative intelligence. Hence, he has been wandering around the world with no attachment to anything whatsoever, without the sense of ego and the feeling of possession

Conclusion:

Thus, the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, through the story of the Avadhūta's conversation with king Yadu, narrates some more stories within it to bring to light the various ethical principles that one has to learn and imbibe the philosophical attitudes taught through them. In fine, this method of narration is very effective in making a person understand the basic principles of life that turn one towards the Supreme, as the Avadhūta had declared.

End Notes

1. कुतो बुद्धिरियं ब्रह्मन्नकर्तुं सुविशारदा । यामासाद्य भवौल्लोकं चिदवांश्रचरति बालवत् ।
प्रायो धर्मार्थकामेषु विवित्सायां च मानवाः । हेतुनैव समीहन्ते आयुषो यशसः श्रियः ॥
त्वं तु कल्पः कविर्दक्षः सुभगोऽमृतभाषणः । न कर्ता नेहसे कञ्चिज्जडोन्मत्तपिशाचवत् ॥
जनेषु दह्ममानेषु कामलोभदावाग्निना । न तप्यसेऽग्निना मुक्तो गङ्गाम्भःस्थ इव दिवपः ॥



त्वं हि नः पृच्छतां ब्रह्मन्नात्मन्यानन्दकारणम् । ब्रूहि स्पर्शविहीनस्य भवतः केवलात्मनः ॥

Bh.P. XI. 7. 26-30

2. पृथिवी वायुराकाशमापोऽग्निश्चन्द्रमा रविः । कपोतोऽजगरः सिन्धुः पतङ्गो मधुकृद् गजः ॥
मधुहा हरिणो मीनः पिङ्गला कुररोऽर्भक । कुमारी शरकृत् सर्प ऊर्णनाभिः सुपेशकृत् ॥
एते मे गुरवो राजंश्चतुर्विरातिराश्रिताः । शिक्षा वृत्तिभिरेतेषामन्वशिश्रमिहात्मनः ॥ Bh.P. XI. 7. 33-35
3. *ibid.*, XI.7.52
4. *ibid.*, XI.7.74
5. *ibid.*, XI. 8. 22-26
6. *ibid.*, XI. 8.44
7. *ibid.*, XI.9. 1- 4
8. *ibid.*, XI.9. 10
9. *ibid.*, XI.9.11-13
10. एवं सञ्जातवैराग्यो विज्ञानालोक आत्मनि । विचारामि महीमेतां मुक्तसङ्गोऽनहङ्कतिः ॥ *ibid.* XI. 9.30

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Buddhist Ethics of *Brahmavihāras* With Special Reference to The *Jātaka*-Tales: A Study

Sukanta Ghosh & Bitupon Borah

Buddhism is one of the largest religions in the world, which is originated two thousand five hundred years ago in India. Buddhism is called an ethical religion because it does not depend on the existence of God, but instead it believes in the teachings of the Buddha. Buddha was a true altruistic teacher of moral philosophy. Brahmavihāras is a central concept of Buddhist ethics. It contains a series of four Buddhist virtues; they are - Mettā (loving-kindness), Karuṇā (compassion), Muditā (joy) and Upekkhā (equanimity). In Buddhism, Jātaka-tales were considered as the major sources for developing the character of the people. These tales carried strong and inspiring messages of compassion, kindness, non-violence, self-sacrifices etc. They explain the concepts of karma and rebirth, and teach moral values. The Jātaka tales brought alive the stories of the Buddha's past lives. In these stories, the Buddha in his personification as a series of Bodhisattvas, is represented as being supremely intelligent. This paper is an attempt to reawaken how the Jātaka tales teach people about Buddhist ethical principles and practices, especially the practice of Brahmavihāras.

Keywords: Altruistic, Compassion, Equanimity, Non-violence, Bodhisattvas, Moral.



Introduction

Buddhism mainly focuses on the teachings of the Buddha. Buddha was regarded as an ethical teacher. Buddhism believes that the human life is full of miseries and pain. Even the so-called pleasures and loss of it involves pain (*dukkha*). Suffering is a fact of common experience. Poverty, disease, old age, death, selfishness, greed, hatred, anger, conflicts are rampant in this world. That life is full of suffering none can deny. The main goal of Buddhist ethics is to achieve freedom from suffering. Buddhist ethics consist of certain moral principles taught by Buddha and the concept of *Brahmavihāras* is one of them. There are four *Brahmavihāras* in Buddhism; they are - *Mettā* (loving-kindness), *Karuṇā* (compassion), *Muditā* (joy) and *Upekkhā* (equanimity). These are four practices of mental development, through which people can attain subsequent rebirth in heaven of the Brahman. In Buddhism *Jātaka*-tales were considered as the major sources for developing the character of the people. By reading these stories, anyone can develop their knowledge and learn how to deal with the difficult situations of modern life. People can develop human moral values and good qualities like generosity, truthfulness, politeness, patience, discipline, honesty etc. *Brahmavihāras* are also regarded as the four sublime states of mind; they are loving-kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy and equanimity. In Buddhism, there are many *Jātaka*-tales, which put a great emphasis on these moral aspects of *Brahmavihāras*, like '*Matakabhatta Jātaka*, '*Sāma Jātaka*, '*Valāhassa Jātaka*, '*Mahāsīlava Jātaka* etc.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the study is to trace the Buddhist ethical philosophy of *Brahmavihāras* and its moral principles- loving-kindness, compassion, sympathetic or unselfish joy and equanimity. Similarly, the study also deals with the *Jātaka* tales with moral lessons, especially the four moral practices of *Brahmavihāras*.

Methodology

The paper is qualitative and descriptive in nature as it intends to study the Buddhist ethical philosophical of *Brahmavihāras* with special reference to the *Jātaka* tales in terms of its real world relevancy. The advantages of qualitative research are obtaining culturally specific information about moral values, opinions, behaviors, social contexts of particular populations and it is more flexible. The paper is based on secondary data in the form of books, articles etc. dealing with the inspiring ethical message carried by



the *Jātaka* tales and tries to present it with the present scenario.

Review of Literature

The researcher has sought to analyze the research topic 'Buddhist Ethics of *Brahmavihāras* With Special Reference to The *Jātaka*-Tales: A Study' to give it a more clear vision and to understand its practical relevancy in human life. Accordingly, the researcher has gone through the writings of certain books namely, ' *Brahmavihāra Dhamma*' by Sayadaw, M. and '*JATAKA TALES*' by Francis, H. T. & Thomas, E. J. as the primary source and followed up '*Buddha's Tales for young and Old Volume 2 - Illustrated*' by Piyatissa, V. K. & Anderson, T. and '*INDIAN PHILOSOPHY*' (Vol. 1) by S. Radhakrishnan as secondary source to carry out the research.

Analysis

'*Brahmavihāras*' is one of the central concepts of Buddhist ethics, especially in the *Mahāyāna* Buddhism. The *Brahmavihāras* are also regarded as the 'abodes of *Brahman*'. It contains a series of four Buddhist virtues. They are also known as four immeasurable or infinite. According to the Buddhist scripture '*Mettā Sutta*', Gautama Buddha have these four immeasurable virtues. These four *Brahmavihāras* have the power that helps the practitioner to attain rebirth into the higher realm of *Brahman*. Therefore, if someone wishes for his moral as well as spiritual welfare he should practice what the Buddha, as a true altruist, has instructed. In doing so, one can gradually cultivate the noble qualities of kindness; compassion and can attain the supreme peace of the heart.

Indian ancient civilization propagated their culture and values through the telling of stories. Among the oldest storytelling traditions, we find the *Jātaka*- tales, which were told by Buddhist to inspire people with moral values. "The Buddha himself used *Jātaka* stories to explain concepts like *kamma* and rebirth and to emphasise the importance of certain moral values."^[1] The *Jātaka* tales carried strong and inspiring messages of loving kindness, compassion, truthfulness, generosity, non-violence, self-sacrifice and charity. The Buddha is featured as the protagonist of each of these stories. They narrate incidents in his previous life when Buddha was the *Bodhisattva*. *Bodhisattva* refers to the Buddha in his previous life and first half of his present life before he attained enlightenment or *Nirvāṇa*. A *Bodhisattva* generates *Bodhicitta*, which is a spontaneous wish and compassionate mind to attain Buddhahood for the benefit of all sentient beings.



One source that offers a visual representation of the *Jātaka* Tales is the abundant storehouse found in the Ajanta caves. Towards the end of the century, some of the paintings inside the cave were identified as being narrative illustrations from the *Jātaka* tales. After that, studies and explorations during the early part of the twentieth century led to more discoveries and it became clear that many of the sculpture and wall paintings within the Ajanta caves were inspired by and illustrated the *Jātaka* tales. They brought alive the stories of the Buddha's past lives. In these stories, the Buddha in his personification as a series of *Bodhisattvas* is represented as being supremely intelligent. Buddha's nobility and compassion are incomparable, whether he is portrayed as a human, celestial, bird or beast and in each of these stories, the *Bodhisattva* is engaged in developing one of the ten virtues. For instance, in the depiction from the *Jātaka* tales the ten supreme qualities or the ten stages were restated pictorially. They are *pramuditā* or joyful, *vimalā* or purity, *prabhākarī* or patience and forbearance, *arci?matī* or radiant intellect, *sudurjayā* or the invincible stage, where *Dhyāna* and *Samādhi* predominate, *abhimukhī* or the manifest and turned towards, *dūra?gamā* or the stage in which one is free from the eager desire for the particular, his thoughts are not bound to any special objects, *acalā* or the immovable, *sādhumatī* or the good intelligence, *dharmameghā* or the cloud of doctrine. "This ideal of *Bodhisattva* is nurtured by the *Mahāyāna* philosophy, which comes to think that all individuals are unreal as separate particular phenomena, and that they are all really grounded in one transcendental Reality (*Ālaya-Vijñāna* according to some *Yogācāra*, or *Śūnya* or *Tathātā*, according to some *Mādhyamakas*), of which they are the partial or illusory manifestations."^[2] "The doctrine of the *bodhisattva* is so characteristic of the *Mahāyāna* that it is sometimes called the *Bodhisattvāyāna*, or obtaining deliverance by practising the virtues of a *bodhisattva*."^[3] According to *Mahāyāna* Buddhism, *Bodhisattva* is the one who has achieved Buddhahood but chooses to remain in merciful attachment to the world.

The four '*Brahmavihāras*' are also called the four *Apramā?as* or infinite feelings, because these four practices give happiness to infinite living beings. We all have these qualities, we all have a sense of *metta* or loving-kindness and it typically extends to our family, friends, the acquaintance that we have. "Hence, it is to develop loving kindness either mentally or verbally by reciting: "May all beings be happy and free from danger".^[4] In *Mahāsālavā Jātaka*, the *Bodhisattva* was the child of the king *Brahmadatta* and on his name day (*Namkarann*), they gave him the name of prince Goodness. The prince completed his education at the age of sixteen. After his father's death, the prince goodness



became the king of Benares and ruled his people righteously under the title of the great king Goodness. The great king Goodness abounded in patience, loving-kindness and mercy and ruled the land in righteousness, he was cherishing all creatures alike with the fond love that a father has for his baby. Being the *Bodhisattva*, the king Goodness has all the widely known and generally accepted qualities, like kindness, morality, forbearance and non-opposition to the will of the people. Another *Jātaka* Tale of the *Bodhisattva* or the enlightenment being was the story of the calf of a noble black color. There was an old woman who raised the little calf just as though he was her own child. The bull thought that the old loving woman brought him up like a mother. She was very poor and in need, but too humble to ask him for any help. The bull always wanted to release her from the suffering of poverty, so he started looking for work. One day a caravan leader with five hundreds carts came by the village and he faced with the problem to cross the river. Looking at the black bull, at once he thought, the bull has the strength and will to pull his carts across the river. The bull proceeded to pull all the carts across the river and that was what all one thousand bulls could not do before. When all was done, the caravan leader gave him a package containing gold coins. The bull re-crossed the river and walked directly towards the old woman. The old woman looking at the tired look in the eyes of the bull said that her child, the bull should not wish to work so hard and no matter how difficult it may be, she will always care for him. This is how loving-kindness makes the poorest house into richest home.

Karuṇā or compassion is one of the four '*Brahmavihāras*' or divine abodes. It is a part of the spiritual path of both Buddhism and Jainism. According to *Mahāyāna* Buddhism, compassion is a co-requisite for becoming a *Bodhisattva*. The Buddha recommends cultivating these virtuous mental states to both householder and monastics. "That is why the Buddha taught his *Dhamma* with Great Compassion without regard to his discomforts and weariness, fully knowing that there was no one other than himself who could save living beings."^[5] Practicing *Karuṇā* or compassion purifies one's mind, avoids evil-induced consequences and leads to happiness in one's present life. If there is a future karmic rebirth, it will be in heavenly realm. *Karuṇā* or compassion is different from metta or loving-kindness, since compassion is the desire to remove harm and suffering from others life and loving-kindness is the desire to bring about to well-being and happiness of others.

Muditā one of the four '*Brahmavihāras*', which means sympathetic or unselfish joy or joy in the good fortune of others. In Buddhism, *Muditā* is described as an inner



wellspring of joy that is always available in all circumstances. The practice of *Muditā* produces a mental state that is free, calm, fearless and open to deep insight. Therefore, *Muditā* is an important preparation for enlightenment. The story from *Matakabhata Jātaka* inspires people with the moral value of compassion, great joy and of great sorrow. In this *Jātaka* tale, the *Bodhisattva* also explains the reason for each emotion. Once upon a time there was famous a famous *Brahmin*, who was well versed in the Vedas. One day the *Brahmin* decided to perform the ritual sacrificing goat, it was to offer a feast for the dead. He ordered his pupils to take the goat to the holy river and bathe it. He asked his servants to decorate the goat with flower garland. Down to the river, the goat suddenly understood that he would definitely be killed today. The goat also became conscious of the deeds of his past lives. He was overjoyed at the thought that the results of his past unwholesome deeds were about to be completed. He laughed but at the same time, he realized another truth that the *Brahmin* by sacrificing would suffer the same terrible consequences due to his ignorance. So he felt a great compassion for the *Brahmin* and started crying loudly as he had just been laughing. When the *Brahmin* asked him why he laughed and why he wept. The goat said, in past times he was like the *Brahmin*, who was well versed in the mystic texts of the Vedas. Once he offered a feast for the dead and killed a goat for his offering. All through killing that single goat, he has had his head cut off five hundred times. Therefore, it was out of karuna or compassion for the *Brahmin* that the goat wept. After knowing about the past deeds of the goat and its consequences, the *Brahmin* decided not to kill the goat. Here it shows how religion can be a source of ignorance.

Upekkhā is a Sanskrit term, which means non- attachment, a balanced mind and tolerance. In Buddhism, abiding in *Upekkhā* or equanimity means inhabiting the mental state of non-self and non- possessive love. Every sentient being should be regarded as equal; equality should be maintained among persons. It says that loss and gain, praise and blame, whatever we accept, should be accepted without attachment. "Therefore, one who wishes to develop equanimity should nurture the spirit of indifference to the pain and pleasure of others, looking upon them as subject to their own *kamma*, and the inevitable effects of their own actions."^[6] According to Buddha, all things are subject to change and decay. Nothing is permanent in this world. *Jātaka* tales, like 'Clear-sighted the Great, King of the World' teach people to understand the impermanent nature of things and to live without attachment. 'King of the world' refers to a perfect wholesome ruler and in his state people live peacefully. Their highest goal is the harmony of an



undivided world. Once upon a time, a *Bodhisattva* was born and given the name 'Clear-sighted'. He was a king of, who developed ten rules of good government, and they are generosity, gentleness, self-control, and charity, absence of hidden ill will, absence of open hostility, harmlessness, patience, straight forwardness and goodness. With time, the reputation of Clear-sighted spread and every king in the world came to him and they welcomed him to their kingdom and asked for Advice to rule their kingdom in his name. Then Clear-sighted tell them about his five commands to the world. He advised them not to destroy life, not to take what is not given, not to behave wrongly in sexual desires, not to speak falsely and not take alcohol, which clouds the mind. The king Clear-sighted had eighty four thousand queens and the one who loved him most was called 'Most-pleasant'. One day the queen, sensing the state that was ruled by the king, said to him that he should be proud of himself because he rules over all the cities in the world, including the beautiful *Kushavati* with its four magnificent gates and seven rows of marvelous palms. Then the King of the World, Clear-sighted, said to his beloved queen that she should advise him to give up attachment to the cities of the world and all they contain, because he will die today. The queen started crying and wiping away the tears as they flowed. All the other queens also broke into tears. Then the king said that nothing is permanent in this world, anything that comes into being, whether it is a kingdom or just a tiny sesame seed - it cannot last forever. This is how, the *Bodhisattva* or Enlightenment Being got them to think about what most people do not want to think about, that all things come to an end. The great king, Clear-sighted, advised them to be generous and wholesome. Therefore, to work properly, we have first to give up the idea of attachment.

Conclusion

The Buddhist ethics is concerned with the moral principles and practices that help people to act in ways, which help rather than harm. The Buddha's teachings or philosophies try to establish great peace with the help of its fundamental moral principle of *Brahmavihāras*. In Buddhist Ethics, the principle of non-violence gives an ideal of universal peace. *Jātaka* tales are among the world's most ancient and popular tales of Buddhism, which explain the concepts of karma and rebirth, and moral values. Buddhist ethical approach or philosophy is not based on Buddhism, but it is based on simple human nature, which we all possess, compassion, kindness, forgiveness etc. Therefore, Buddhism explains its ethical teachings through logic and reason, with the help of the different examples of *Bodhisattvas* from *Jataka* tales to convince others about what a secular ethics is.



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The Two Popular Fables on the Rājadharmā

Dr. M. Archana

Human beings have always been attracted by the animal kingdom. The behavioural patterns of the animals fascinated a man's keen sense of observation. The affection showered by the domesticated animals like dogs and cats, the majesty of the lion, the enormous size of an elephant, the ferocity of tiger, the cunningness of jackal, the swiftness of a stallion or a black buck, to name a few, caught his attention and he could find a crude alignment in their natural tendencies which got reflected in the behavioural patterns of fellow human beings in their inter-personal relationships. Thus, these natural tendencies found their way in characterisation while creating plots for stories that depicted the moral lessons for understandability, highlighted the value systems for betterment of life and to live in harmony with fellow beings in a society. This paper highlights two fables that are found on Rājadharmā in the Śānti-parva of the Mahābhārata.

Origin and development of Fable literature

According to Cambridge Dictionary, a fable is a "short story that tells a moral truth, often using animals as characters". Fables are common in early literature all over the world. Ancient Indians were associated closely with their natural environment and had a unique relationship with both flora and fauna. Their fascination and keen sense of observation could be evidenced in the varied character sketches in ancient Indian literature. Fables have been an inherent part of the folk lore and the portrayal of the animal characteristics could be traced in abundance in Indian literary legacy beginning from the earliest Vedic literature through Upaniṣads, Epics, Purāṇas to classical literature.



Pañcatantra and *Hitopadeśa* are proper and popular fables. The Buddhist Jātaka tales contain a lot of fables.

The Earliest fable in Ancient Sanskrit Literature

The Tenth maṇḍala of *Ṛg Veda* contains a conversation between Saramā, a female divine dog who served Lord Indra and Paṇis, a class of tradesmen who had no regard for yajñas or vedic principles. Paṇis had stolen and hid the cows of Bṛhaspati, who in turn, had informed about it to Lord Indra. Lord Indra sent Saramā to trace the cows. Saramā, after negotiating and crossing the turbulent river Rasa, reaches the land of Paṇis and enquires about the missing cows:

किमिच्छन्ती सरमा प्रेदमानद्द्वरेहमध्वा जगुरिः पाराचैः ।

कास्मेऽहितः का परितक्म्यासीत्कथं रसायाः अतरः पर्यांसि ।।¹

This is followed by "one of the finest samples of literary dialogues which can stand as high as any if not better in the recorded dialogues in the world"². When Paṇis enquire about her, Saramā reveals that she has come as a messenger of Indra and speaks about Indra's valour asking Paṇis to return the cows. Later, when Paṇis tempt her to stay with them, she refuses their invitation and advices them on right conduct.

The *Mahābhārata*

The *Mahābhārata* is one of the two epics in ancient India, the other being the *Rāmāyaṇa*. It contains eighteen major Parvas with Harivaṁśa, as a supplement. Each parva is again sub-divided into various chapters called *adhyāyas*. Fables are found in this epic at various places.

Śānti-parva is the twelfth major parva of the *Mahābhārata*. This parva is set after the completion of war and contains duties of the ruler, dharma, good governance etc. It has three sub-parvas, viz., Rājadharmā-anuśāsana-parva (Chapters 1 to 130), Āpaddharma-anuśāsana-parva (Chapters 131 to 173) and Mokṣadharmā-parva (Chapters 174 to 365) and three hundred and sixty five (365) *adhyāyas*.

The Rājadharmā-anuśāsana-parva is embellished with innumerable fables. Of these, two fables viz. - "*vyāghra-gimāyu-kathā*- The Story of a Tiger and a Jackal" (XII.111) and "*Sarit-samudra-satīvādaḥ* - Conversation between the Ocean and the Rivers" (XII.113) are discussed in this article.



(i) The story of the tiger and the jackal

The story gets initiated with a question from Yudhiṣṭhirato Bhīṣma. Yudhiṣṭhira enquires Bhīṣma as to how to identify people who are not really pleasant, but appear to be pleasant while those who are really pleasant appear otherwise:

असौम्याःसौम्यरूपेण सौम्या श्चचासौम्यरूपिणः ।
तादृशान्पुरुषांस्तात कथं विद्यामहे वयम् ॥³

In reply, Bhīṣma narrates the story of a conversation between a tiger and a jackal and asks Yudhiṣṭhira to listen to it carefully:

अत्राप्युदाहरन्तीममितिहासं पुरातनम् ।
व्याघ्रगोमायुसंवादं तंनिबोध युधिष्ठिर ॥⁴

In an affluent city named Purika, there lived a king by name Paurika. He was a cruel king who took delight in harming others. After his death, he had to take re-birth as a jackal due to the evil acts committed by him in his previous life. The jackal, however, remembered his previous birth and was filled with remorse. Heresolved to be good, abstained from meat, was compassionate to all living beings, truthful in speech and firm in the observance of austere vows. He consumed only the fruits that had dropped from the trees. The jackal was born in a big crematorium and did not move out in search of a better place. This, naturally, affected his fraternity who were determined to change his behaviour. They offered to bring him food and requested to abandon the purity of conduct. In all his wisdom, the jackal replied that though his birth was low, it is the conduct that determines his race and that he would continue to behave in such a way that his fame may spread.

अप्रमाणा प्रसूतिर्मे शीलतःक्रियते कुलम् ।
प्रार्थयामि च तत्कर्म येन विस्तीर्यते यशः ॥⁵

He further ridiculed the other jackals who were busy filling their bellies alone succumbing to desires. He re-affirmed that he would like to continue his life in his own way devoid of discontentment and temptation:

अप्रत्ययकृतां गह्वर्यामर्थापनयदूषिताम् ।
इह चामुत्र चानिष्टां तस्माद्वृत्तिं न रोचते ॥⁶

A tiger overheard this conversation, and attracted by the character of the jackal, offered to make the jackal his minister.



Feeling honoured, the jackal in all modesty carefully addressed the king of beasts stating that it is worthy of the tiger that he should seek and choose individuals with purity of behaviour and conversant with duties and worldly affairs as his counsels. Though he would like to continue with this life as he does not have any desire for comfort, he would in all humility accept the decision of the tiger. The jackal, however, clearly stated about his henceforth relationship with the tiger. He made it clear that the advice of the jackal should be listened to by the tiger for his own good. Further, the condition laid by the jackal to the tiger was that he should not be interfered in any matter and that the tiger shall never consult with other ministers when advised by him. Besides, the jackal's meeting with the tiger will be in secrecy and that based on his advice, he should not punish the other ministers. Finally, the jackal declared that the tiger should not punish him or his followers and dependents without sufficient cause:

मया सम्मन्त्र्य पश्चाच्चन हिंस्याः सचिवास्त्वया ।

मदीयानां च कुपितो मा त्वं दण्डं निपातयेः ॥⁷

The tiger accepted the conditions and made him his minister. The other ministers were filled with envy as they had appropriated others belongings and tried to tempt the jackal to yield to their temptations. The jackal, however, refused to heed to their advice. Some of the counselors, intending to bring about an animosity between the jackal and the tiger, once stole off the meat of the tiger and placed it secretly in the jackal's residence.

When the tiger, feeling hungry, came to eat, he could not find the meat and when ordered to find out the thief, it was informed that the meat was found in the residence of the jackal. Without giving a thought, the tiger was enraged at the inappropriate act of the jackal and ordered that he be killed. The tiger's mother, however, prevailed upon the tiger by presenting before him the virtues of the jackal and the envy of the other ministers. She asserted that a good minister cannot be obtained easily and that the jackal is his well-wisher. Meanwhile, the jackal's innocence was established and he was acquitted and honoured by his master. The jackal, conversant with the virtues, advised the tiger that unselfish acts or motives are very rare and that those kings whose hearts are restless and unquiet cannot acquire true knowledge of men.

Bhīṣma concluded that having satisfied that king with conciliatory words fraught with virtue, pleasure, and profit, and having gratified the king, the jackal retired to the forest as the tiger had not trusted him:



प्रथमं यः समाख्यातः शीलवान् इति संसदि ।
न वाच्यं तस्य वैगुण्यं प्रतिज्ञां परिरक्षता ॥ ८

The jackal did not accept the entreaties of the tiger and cast off his body as a reward of his good deeds on earth.

This fable brings forth the need for a ruler in having a good counsellor amidst those who disregard the welfare of the state and selfishly exploit the closeness of the ruler in looting the properties of the State for their own prosperity. It also contains an advice to the rulers not to jump to conclusions based on the statements of others without analysing them appropriately.

(ii) The conversation between the ocean and the river

Yudhiṣṭhira, once again, asks Bhīṣma as to how, without the usual aids, having obtained a kingdom that is so precious a possession, a king should behave towards a powerful foe. In answer to this query, Bhīṣma recounted a conversation between the Ocean and the Rivers.

The Ocean once asked the rivers as to how the rivers with their mighty currents bring down huge trees with large trunks, uprooting them from their place of growth while they do not bring to the ocean a cane which has a slender branch and are devoid of strength. The ocean wondered whether they feel a sense of contempt in washing the cane:

समूलशाखान् पश्यामि निहतान कायिनो द्रुमान् ।
यष्माभिरिह पूर्णाभिर्नद्यस्तत्र न वेतसम् ॥
अकायश्चाल्पसारश्च वेतसःकूलजश्च वः ।
अवज्ञया वा नानी तः किं च वा तेन वः कृतम् ॥ ९

River Gaṅgā replied to the Ocean that the trees are firmly positioned in one location and are adamant and unyielding in respect of the spot where they are situated. When a huge current forces them, they yield and are forced to leave their place of growth. Canes, however, have a different proposition. They bend to an advancing current and smoothly position themselves yielding to the natural flow. Once the current passes away, the cane regains its original position:

तिष्ठन्त्येते यथास्थानं नगा ह्येकनिकेतनाः ।
तेषु त्यजन्ति ततः स्थानं प्रातिलोम्यान् वेतसः ॥



The use of Fables in the Teaching-Learning Process-with Special Reference of Pañcatantra

Himadri Sarma

Fable is a class of Sanskrit literature which is connected with two branches i.e, Nītiśāstra and Arthaśāstra. The Pañcatantra falls under Nītiśāstra or didactic fable literature. It is an ancient Indian collection of interrelated animal fables in Sanskrit verse and prose, arranged within a frame story. It was written to make the princes learned. So the stories of Pañcatantra were used as the means of teaching. Even in present days also the stories of Pañcatantra are used as the means of teaching. So in this paper an attempt has been made to discuss in this regard.

Keywords: Pañcatantra, fable, teaching, moral, animal.

Introduction:

In ancient India people lived close to the nature and they were surrounded by birds and animals which gave them opportunities to study their behaviour. This close association with nature has given rise to many didactic fables. *Pañcatantra* is a didactic fable which is an ancient Indian collection of interrelated animal fables written in Sanskrit verse and prose. Historians found that in between 300-500 BCE in India, stories and animal fables were narrated for educating students with a special purpose of making them learned within a short period of time. The *Pañcatantra* is a good example of that.



Once upon a time in ancient India there was a city named *Mahilāropya*. The king of the city was Amaraśakti. He was very learned man and extremely accomplished in various arts and skills. The king had three sons named Bahuśakti, Ugraśakti and Anantaśakti who were completely dull headed and not interested in studies in any way.¹ So the king was always worried regarding their studies and their future as his successors. Realising this one day the king assembled his ministers and told his problem and also asked suggestions from them. Then one of the ministers called Sumati said that- ‘Our life is transitory and these sciences take too long to master them. So we must find a shorter way to enlighten the minds of the princes’. Then he suggested that there is a *brāhmin* named Viṣṇu Śarmā who is an expert in all the sciences and has earned an excellent reputation among his innumerable disciples. When the king heard about that he invited Viṣṇu Śarmā to the palace and requested him to educate his children. Viṣṇu Śarmā accepted the challenge and promised that he will teach the princes and make them well learned within six months. So to educate the princes Viṣṇu Śarmā wrote *Pañcatantra*.

Discussion:

Human beings always have told stories. It is one of the most important things which makes us who we are and distinguishes us from other creatures on the planet. Before the invention of the television, computer or any other electronic equipment listening and telling stories were used to pass on real events, history, family connections and also as a means of entertainment. It was generally oral culture or spoken culture. That is why it is interesting to see education from the narrative perspective. When we talk about narrative learning we can not overlook the Vedic education system. Most of the ancient Indian scriptures were preserved through oral tradition generations after generations.

The *Pañcatantra* which was originally constructed or narrated by *paṇḍit* Viṣṇu Śarmā is a group of seventy two short stories divided in the five chapters viz, *mitrabheda* (the separation of friends), *mitra-lābha* (the gaining of friends), *kākolukīya* (Crows and owls), *labdhapraṇāśa* (loss of gains) and *aparīkṣitakāraka* (ill considered action). All these five chapters give five strategies. The first strategy is *mitrabheda*, which means separation of friends. The basic theme story of this *tantra* is about a lion and a bull. It tells us how they became friends with each other and later get separated by a jackal. Here Viṣṇu Śarmā creates Damanaka and Karataka as the ministers of Lion king. The



basic thing which this story wants to teach is how the ministers play an important role in deciding what is good or what is bad at a certain point of time.

The second strategy is *mitralābha* or *mitrasamprāpti*. It underlines the importance of gaining good friends². It teaches that one who has good friends will never taste defeat in his life in any kind of situation. This *tantra* starts with the story of crow, pigeon, rat and some other birds and animals where they help each other in the time of calamity. From this story it is learnt that a person with good friends can overcome all the problems³.

The third strategy is *kākolukīya* (crows and owls). It highlights the enmity between crows and owls. It teaches us how to deal with enemies with tact and wisdom. This *tantra* starts with a story of an owl and crow where an owl was about to be crowned as the king of the birds. But at that time only a crow came and started talking against the owl because of their old enmity. Finally the crowning ceremony of the owl was cancelled. When the owl got to know about this he was disheartened. Thus the story teaches that never trust a person who is your enemy and never believe a friend who was your enemy at some point of time⁴.

The fourth strategy is *labdhapraṇāśa* which means loss of gains. The stories of this chapter teach us that we can lose things which were earned by us because of our foolishness. The frame story of this *tantra* is a story of a monkey named Raktamukha and a crocodile named Karālamukha. Raktamukha lived in a blackberry tree near the coast. That blackberry tree was always full of fruits. One day a crocodile named Karālamukha came there. Then Raktamukha saw him and greeted him saying that ‘O crocodile you are my guest so I will feed you some blackberries’⁵. Then the crocodile became friend of the monkey and started visiting the monkey always. One day his wife asked him ‘where do you get these so sweet fruits?’ Then He told about Raktamukha. After hearing this his wife said that his (Raktamukha) heart will be so delicious as he eats these tasty fruits always. Please bring his heart for me’⁶. Initially Karālamukha denied to this proposal but later he had to accept it as his wife said that if he does not bring his friend’s heart she will fast and die. After that the crocodile went to the monkey and invited him to their home. The monkey refused his invitation saying that he lives in the water so it will not be possible for the monkey to go his home. Then the crocodile said ‘our house is in the sandbank. It’s a beautiful place. So sit on my back I will carry you’⁷. As soon as the monkey sat the crocodile entered in the deep water and told about



his plan that his wife wants his (Raktamukha's) heart. Then with the presence of mind monkey told 'My friend if this is the plan why did not you tell me before? My heart is safely stored in the tree. Let's go back. I will be happy to give my heart to your wife'⁸. Then happy crocodile took him to the tree. Then the monkey climbed to the top of the tree. So the story teaches that we should not trust an untrustworthy person, even if we did, it should not be totally because such trust will destroy us completely⁹.

The fifth strategy is *aparśkṣītakāraka* which means ill considered action or hasty deeds. The stories of this chapter give moral lesson that one should never do things or take decisions before examining properly, otherwise the ill considered action may lead to permanent loss of something¹⁰. The frame story of this *tantra* is a story of a merchant, a barber and some Jain monks. There was a merchant named Mañibhadra in *Pāṭaliputra* who lost his all wealth in charity. One night when he was sleeping and he dreamt that a Jain monk named Padmanidhi came and told that 'tomorrow morning I will come to your house in this form and you hit my head. As soon as you do that I will turn into gold coin¹¹. Incidentally next day morning Mañibhadra's wife called a barber and at the same time the Jain monk appeared. Then Mañibhadra hit the head of that monk as he was asked to do. Then the Jain monk turned into gold coin. All these were witnessed by the barber. So one day he also invited some Jain monks to his home and hit one by one thinking that they will turn into gold. But they did not turn into gold. Later he was taken to the court and sentenced death penalty. This story teaches that we should never do actions without knowing or examining properly¹². Here it is a kind note of information that in modern days also the stories of *Pañcatantra* has occupied a position in education system. In the course of Bachelor of Ayurveda Medicine and Surgery few stories from this chapter have been prescribed as a text for the moral values and importance of these stories. Some of the moral teachings of some other stories are mentioned here.

While reading *Pañcatantra* one thing came into notice that the interest of ruler and the ruled is antagonistic to each other and that they are always in conflict. *Paṇḍit* Viṣṇu Śarma portrayed this beautifully that whoever seeks the favour of the kings is hated by others. The best example of this is the story of '*Nīpati Dantila Gorambhakakathā*' in the *mitrabheda* of *Pañcatantra*. As per this story Dantila, a leader of citizens and the minister of treasury lived in a certain village named Vardhamāna. He was a very good servant of the king as well as the citizen. He was able to satisfy both. Because normally when someone is loved by the supreme authority then he is hated by others. It is said that—



narapatihitakartā dveṣyatām yāti loke |
janapadahitakartā tyajyate pāṛthivendraiḥ ||
iti mahati virodham vartamāne samāne |
nṛpatijanapadānām durlabhaḥ kāryakartā |¹³

Then incidentally in Dantila's marriage ceremony he thrown out a sweeper named Gorambhaka for sitting in an unwanted place in front of the king. This made Gorambhaka angry and so he wanted to take revenge on Dantila. So one day Gorambhaka lied in front of king that Dantila was embracing the queen. As a result of that Dantila was thrown out of the royal power. From this incident it is proved that if someone gets favour of the king then he is disliked by the others.

The story entitled 'Siṛṇha śaśaka kathā' teaches us that a good and honest person also can get spoiled when he is surrounded by bad people. It is said as—

asatām saṅgadoṣeṇa sādhaso yānti vikriyām |
duryodhanaprasaṅgena bhīṣmo goharaṇe gataḥ |¹⁴

Another story named 'Harṇsadvayakacchapānām kathā' teaches us that one should listen to the advice of close friends and act accordingly when he is in trouble. It is said as- *suhṛdām hitakāmānām iti.*¹⁵

The *Matsyatrayakathā*, the story of three fishes teaches that we should act immediately when we see danger in front. As it is said—

aśaktairbalinaḥ śatroḥ kartavyam prapalāyanam |
samśritavyo 'thavā durgo nānyā teṣām gatirbhavet |¹⁶

The story 'Śabaraśūkarakathā' teaches that one gets what he should get. Even God can not keep away from him. So there is nothing to grieve nor to be surprised just do your *karma*. It is said as —

prāptavyamartham labhate manuṣyo |
devo 'pi tam laṅghayiturṇ na śaknaḥ ||
tasmānna śocāmi na vismayo me |
yadasmadīyam na hi tatpareṣām |¹⁷

Every story of *Pañcatantra* conveys a moral thought which can help us in our day today life. Other than these there are certain things about *Pañcatantra* for which it



is useful in teaching-learning process. The most important element of *Pañcatantra* is participation of students and the narrator. Because storytelling is enjoyable, creative, responsive, active, inclusive and flexible. Stories being enjoyable is an important factor in imparting happiness in students. A psychologist named Martin Seligman (2003) has shown through his study that positive enjoyment is an important factor in learning.

Another element or unique feature of *Pañcatantra* is the structure or frame of the story. The structure of *Pañcatantra* keeps the reader or listener involved which is very important in learning.

In learning concentration is also important. But concentration will be possible when the learning is interesting. Viṣṇu Śarmā wanted the princes to learn, remember and use their knowledge afterwards. So he gave the knowledge of principles of political science as well as the practical knowledge of the same with the examples illustrated in the form of stories. Because narrative text is easier to comprehend and remember than expository text (factual and informational material).

In *Pañcatantra* the stories are in the form of dialogues which make them more interesting. The names of the characters used in the stories are also very interesting, because the name itself describes the physical appearance or the psychological attribute of the character. For example, *raktamukha* means 'one with red mouth'; or *yadbhaviṣya* means 'one who leaves everything to destiny and does not work'. So from the names of the characters also we can learn or assume something about the content. Viṣṇu Śarmā used the names of the characters appropriately.

Other perspective is about the development of moral and social identity. Story is the most useful and attractive piece of narration to induce moral values in the students at the very early age. Through the stories students can develop their personal, social or moral responsibilities which is very much necessary at the present time. So fable or storytelling can really be helpful in teaching-learning system.

Conclusion:

From the above discussion it can be said that *Pañcatantra* is an important world literature for its contribution in the field of practical wisdom, because it delivers the content of teachings in a interesting way. It can hold the attention of the students. So the problem of disinterest of students in learning can be solved by implementing narration or storytelling as a method of teaching and *Pañcatantra* is a great example of that. For



the social-moral upliftment of students also *Pañcatantra* or any other fable literature can play a vital role.

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2. *mitravān sādhayatyarthān duḥśādhyānapi vai yataḥ.....samānānyeva cātmanaḥ, Ibid., 2.27*
3. *mitravān sādhayatyarthān duḥśādhyamapi vai yataḥ.....cāmanaḥ, Ibid., 2.27*
4. *na viśvasetpūrvavirodhitasya śatrośca mitratvamupāgatasya, Ibid., 3.1*
5. *bho! Bhavān samabhyāgato tithiḥ, tat bhakṣayat mayā dattāni amṛtatulyāni jambuphalāni, Ibid., 4*
6. *yaḥ sadā eva amṛtaprāyāṇi idṛśāni phalāni bhakṣayati, tasya hṛdayam amṛtamayaṁ bhaviṣyati, Ibid., 4*
7. *bho mitra! Asti samudrāntare suramyepulinadeśe śmadgṛham, tat mama pṛṣṭham āruhāḥ sukkena akṛtabhaya gaccha, Ibid., 4*
8. *bhadra! Yadi evam tat kiṁ.....bhrātṛpatnyā arpayāmi, Ibid., 4*
9. *na viśvasedaviśvaste viśvate nātiviśvaset.....mūlāyapi nikṛntati, Ibid., 4. 14*
10. *kudṛṣṭam kuparijñātam kuśrutam kuparīkṣitam.....yat kṛtam, Ibid., 5. 1*
11. *tadanena eva rūpeṇa prātaḥ.....akṣayo bhavāmi, Ibid., 5*
12. *aparīkṣam na kartavyam kartavyam suparīkṣtam, Ibid., 5. 18*
13. *Ibid., 1. 142*
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Morals Imparted from the Pañcatantra and Its Relevance to New Generation

Aligunjana Sarma

Fables are a class of stories, especially supernatural ones, not based on facts. Fables mostly have animals as characters and convey morals to the people. To a certain extent, fables can be considered as the bearers of culture and literature of a country. The word 'fable' originates from the Latin word 'fabula,' which means discourse. Before being recorded in a written form, the stories were mainly propagated through narration, which has been a long-standing tradition in India. These fables of Pañcatantra, Hitopadeśa, Jātaka kathā etc. give us moral values which are relevant to present day also. In this paper, an effort will be made to find out morals from some famous stories of Pañcatantra and its relevance to present day children.

Keywords: Pañcatantra, moral education, children.

Introduction:

Fable literature occupies a unique place in the Sanskrit literature. The area of expansion of Indian Fable literature is very vast. The seeds of fables were germinated and developed in the Vedic period, and we find them in various dialogue hymns of *Ṛgveda*. Later the Vedic fables got rooted deeply in the *Brāhmaṇas* and the *Upaniṣads*. Stories described in the *Bhekasūkta*, *Śunaśepa ākhyāna* of Aitareya Brāhmaṇa, *Sārameya Upākhyāna* of *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* were some of the fables of Vedic period. Fables were presented through conversations between characters like birds, beasts, animals, angels, demons, humans etc. Fable literature is divided into two classes- Moral science and folklore. The fables, related to moral science, provides advice while folklore fables



are only for entertainment. The first class is presented through birds, beasts, animals and the second class are presented through human beings. The main purposes of fable literature are to provide entertainment and to give moral education to young children.

In ancient times, kings appointed learned Brahmins as teachers for their lineages, so that the royal prince and princesses could gather knowledge of politics, economics, and sociology from them. The Brahmins resorted to an innovative way of imparting knowledge which is by writing interesting stories having morals pertaining to these different subjects. They composed stories in a simple and understandable way by presenting birds, beasts, and animals as the characters of the stories.

In Sanskrit fable literature, *Pañcatantra*, *Hitopadeśa*, *Jātaka kathā*, *Bṛhatkatha*, *Betālpañcaviṃśati*, *Śukasaptati*, *Sinhāsan dvātrimśikā* etc are worth mentioning.

Pañcatantra: author, time and divisions

In Indian fable literature, *Pañcatantra* occupies a special position. It is an old fable literature. It is said that some verses of *Pañcatantra* are quoted from the *Arthaśāstra of Kauṭilya*. Four versions of the *Pañcatantra* were found. Amongst these, the first version was translated into *Pahlabī* language which is not available now-a-days. The 2nd version is included in *Bṛhatkathā of Guṇādhyā*. It is written in *Paiśācī* language. The 3rd. version is *Tantrākhyāyikā* which is prevalent now. The last version is the base of *Dakṣiṇī Pañcatantra*. The *Hitopadeśa* and the Nepali *Pañcatantra* represent this version of *Pañcatantra*.

The name *Pañcatantra* itself suggests that it is the *tantra* of five divisions. These five divisions are-

- I. *Mitrabheda* (separation of friends)
- II. *Mitrasaniprāpti* (union of friends)
- III. *Kākolukīyam* (peace and war). It is also known as Sandhi- vighraha tantra.
- IV. *Labdhapraṇāśa* (loss of that which was gained)
- V. *Aparīkṣitkārītā* (doing things without experiencing).

Moral imparted from some famous stories of Pañcatantra

1. Intelligence is more important than physical strength:

The story of 'the lion and the rabbit' teaches us that sometimes intelligence is



more important than physical strength. In this story, we find that the proud lion who used to indiscriminately kill animals of the forest, got killed by an intelligent rabbit. Though he was powerful, but due to the lack of intelligence, a small rabbit could kill him. It is said in the *Pañcatantra* as follows-

*Yasya buddhir balaṁ tasya nirbuddhestu kuto balaṁ |
Vane sirīho madonmattaḥ śaśakena nipātitaḥ ||²*

Through story children can gain the knowledge that power might not help in situation where intellect is needed. The one who has power but lacks intelligence, will most likely end up in the same situation as the proud lion who got killed by a rabbit. Intelligence does not measure the number of books a child has read, but the physical application of the information gained through such books are measured.

2. Proper planning can help achieve something which cannot be achieved through brute strength:

In the story 'The pair of crows and the black snake', we find that a pair of crows was residing on a banyan tree where a black snake also lived. That snake used to devour the eggs and the young ones of the crows. Not able to do anything about the situation, in their grief, the crows went and consulted their friend, a jackal. The jackal consoled them asking them not to be sad and said that the snake could not be killed without proper planning. He advised the crows to fly to the city and pick up ornaments of the King's family and throw it near the tree. He further said that when they would come to recover the ornaments, the snake would be killed. Accordingly the crows flew towards the city. They saw that the wives of the king were bathing in the river leaving their ornaments on the shore. One crow picked up the gold necklace and started to fly towards the tree. Seeing this, the kings' men also started to follow. The crow threw the necklace near the hole where the snake lived and started observing from the tree. While recovering the necklace, the kings' men saw the snake with his hood spread out. They killed the snake with a stick and took the necklace and left. From that day, the pair of crows started to live happily. So, from this story the moral that one should have patience in adverse time is conveyed. There is a solution to every problem. By proper planning one can achieve something which cannot be achieved through strength-

*upayena hi tat kuryād yan naśakyaṁ parākrame |
kākyā kanakas ūtreṇa kṛṣṇasarpō nipātitaḥ ||³*



3. A friend in need is a friend indeed:

The story of 'Four friends and the hunter' is a notable example of true friendship. In this story, we witness the true friendship between a deer, a mouse, a crow and a tortoise. One day, when the deer was trapped by a hunter in the forest, the other friends immediately went to the deer. With their unity and intelligence, they finally managed to rescue the deer and lived happily ever after. This story gives us the moral that a true friend is the one who helps his/her friends in difficult time. This story is also very relevant to the children of this generation. They will be able to understand and value friendship. They will try to be friendly with their classmates and playmates. This will broaden their outlook and will make them generous.

4. We should always listen to the advice of well-wishers and act upon it:

The story of the foolish tortoise gives the lesson to us that we should always listen to our well-wishers and act accordingly. In this story, we find that a tortoise named *Kambuḡrīva* was taking to a safe place by his swan friends Sankata and Vikata as the lake where *Kambuḡrīva* lived started to dry up. He was ferried on a stick by the two swans on which the tortoise attached itself by biting. The swans repeatedly advised him not to open his mouth. In spite of listening to the swan's advice, he opened his mouth to speak and fell to the ground and died. From this story we learn that one should always listen to the advice of well-wishers and act accordingly otherwise our situation will be same as the tortoise that fell from the stick and died. It is said in the *Pañcatantra* as follows-

mitrāṇāṃ hitakāmanāṃ na karotīha yo vacaḥ |
sa kūrma iva durbuddhiḥ kāṣṭhād bhraṣṭo vinaśyati ||⁴

This story is relevant in case of present day children because if they work according to the advice of their well-wishers they can prevent themselves from falling into perilous situation.

5. We should always believe in ourselves and not on other's saying:

The story of 'The Brahmin and the goat' teaches that we should not be carried away by what others are saying. In this story, we find that a Brahman was carrying a goat. On his way, he met three frauds who tried to fool him by saying that he was carrying a donkey, a dead young cow, and a dog instead of a goat. After listening to them, the Brahmin threw the goat there and quickly left that place. The three frauds



enjoyed the meat of the goat in their meal. So, this story teaches us to believe in ourselves and not to listen what others are saying. Because even a strong man can be fooled by a clever and rascal one as said in the *Pañcatantra*.

Bahurbuddhisamāyuktāḥ suvidyānā balotkaṭā |
Śaktā vañcayitūṁ dhūrtās cchāgabrāhmaṇaṁ yathā ||⁵

It is very necessary to teach the children to believe in themselves. They should have a firm faith on themselves and on their decisions which should not be altered in any case. Wicked people always try to deceive innocent people through flattery and false words. We should not give importance to such false words and always stand by our own decision.

6. Think before act:

The story of the loyal mongoose teaches us that we should never take any decision in rush. We should think twice before doing something so that we do not have to regret our actions. In this story, we find that a family adopted a mongoose and the mongoose was very loyal to them. One day, the mother went to fetch water keeping the mongoose as the guard to her baby. When she left, a snake entered the baby's room. When mongoose saw that the snake was about to bite the baby, he attacked and killed that snake. When the mother returned, she saw blood on the body of the mongoose. She thought that the mongoose had killed her baby. Without thinking twice she killed the mongoose. When she found out the truth she was full of regret. So, the moral of the story is that we should not jump to conclusion without checking all the facts. Before doing something, we should think twice so that we do not have to regret later. It is said in the *Pañcatantra-*

aparīkṣitaṁ kartavyaṁ kartavyaṁ aparīkṣitaṁ |
paścād bhavati santāpo brāhmaṇakulaṁ yathā ||⁶

The moral of the story is very applicable to present day as now-a-days everyone is busy in their work. Sometimes people take decisions in a rush without even thinking about the consequences. In some cases these decisions may result in losses. Therefore, one should think deeply and then take a decision.

7. We should always be careful while choosing friends:

From the story 'The monkey and the crocodile' we learn the lesson that we should always be careful while choosing friends. We should think properly whom to trust and whom not to trust. In this story, we find that a monkey was residing in an apple tree



near a river. He had friendship with a crocodile who lived in the river. The monkey always used to give an apple to the crocodile. One day, the crocodile brought the apple given by his friend for his wife. After eating the apple, she wished to eat the monkey's heart. The crocodile invited the monkey to his home. The monkey trusted the crocodile and sat at the back of the crocodile. But soon he found that the wife of the crocodile was planning to eat his heart. He did not become impatient. He thought of an idea and told the crocodile to take him back to the tree as he had left his heart there. The crocodile was easily fooled and he brought the monkey to the tree. Once ashore the monkey ran away to his safety. Therefore, we should think twice before trusting someone. We should carefully choose friends. Again, we learn that we should be patient no matter how worse the situation is. If we think with patience in difficult times, then there will be solution to every problem. It is said in the *Pañcatantra* as follows-

samutoanneṣu kāryeṣu buddhiryasya na hīyate |
sa eva durgam tarati jalastho vānaro yathā ||⁷

This story is very relevant to today's children because making friendship is universal phenomenon and if we are not careful and choose wicked people as our friends we may fall in distress like the monkey. Therefore, we should think twice before trusting someone. We should carefully choose friends. Again, we learn that we should be patient no matter how worse the situation is. If we think with patience in difficult times, then there will be solution to every problem.

8. Caution can help prevent big disasters:

From the 'Three fishes' story' we learn that caution can help in preventing bigger problems. In this story, we find three fishes viz. *Anāgatavidhātā*, *Pratyutpannamati* and *Yadbhaviṣya*. *Anāgatavidhātā* was very practical and used to plan for future. *Pratyutpannamati* was also practical and a good advisor. *Yadbhaviṣya* was lazy and a habit of procrastination. One day, some fishermen came to the pond and discussed that the pond had a lot of fishes. They would come in the next day with nets to catch the fishes. *Anāgatavidhātā* heard this conversation and gathered all fishes. Then said that they should go to another pond as the fisherman would come to catch fishes in the next day. Most of the fishes agreed to her along with *Pratyutpannamati*. But *Yadbhaviṣya* did not like the idea. She said that she was not a coward to leave from there. There was no guarantee that the fishermen would come. Even if they came, she would find out any



solution. Then most of the fishes went to another pond. The next day, fishermen came and caught many fishes. *Yadbhaviṣya* was one of them. But *Anāgatavidhātā* and *Pratyutpannamati* were safe with their families in another pond. It is said in the *Pañcatantra* that we should be cautious if we see danger near us otherwise our situation will be like *Yadbhaviṣya*.

*anāgatavidhātā ca Pratyutpannamatiṣca yah |
dvav etou sukham edhete yadbhavibiṣyo vinaṣyati ||8*

From this story, we learn the moral which is relevant to present day is that we should always be cautious and aware of our situation. We should immediately act if we sense any danger. We should not entrust ourselves with our fate but should try to discover alternate ways to solve our problems. Because caution can help in preventing bigger problem.

9. Tit for tat:

From the story 'The rat that ate iron' we learn that sometimes it is import to retaliate if someone wrongs us. In this story, we find a merchant named *Jīrṇadhana* who was incurring losses in his business. He decided to travel and trade in different parts of the country to get successful. He had a very heavy iron balance. Before leaving, *Jīrṇadhana* went to meet his friend and gave him the iron balance for safekeeping till he would return from his journey. After a long time, *Jīrṇadhana* became prosperous by working hard and returned to his place. He then went to his friend's place and asked him to return the iron balance. But his friend replied that the iron balance was eaten by rat. *Jīrṇadhana* understood everything and thought of teaching him a lesson. He took his friend's son with him and locked him in a room. When his son did not return, his friend got tensed. He then asked *Jīrṇadhana* about his son. But he replied that he was taken by a hawk. At this his friend got furious and went to court accusing *Jīrṇadhana* of kidnapping his son. In the courtroom, *Jīrṇadhana* explained everything by citing the verse-

*tulāṁ lohasahastrasya yatra khadanti mūṣikā |
śyenḥ kuṅjarahṛt tatra kiṁ citraṁ yadi putrahṛt ||9*

He said that when an iron balance could be eaten by a rat then there should not be any doubt that the boy could be taken by hawk.

The people of the courtroom understood and asked his friend to return the iron



balance and *Jīṛṇadhana* to give back his son. So, moral of the story is sometimes it is important to retaliate if someone tries to hurt us. We should teach the children that if someone tries to hurt us then he/she should be dealt with appropriately. This will teach him/her a lesson for life not to hurt anyone. If we do not resist by counter action, the deceiver will be encouraged to do more harm to us. So this moral is very important to teach the children as our society is full of unscrupulous people. The children should be aware of such people and they will need to act according to the situation

Conclusion

The *Pañcatantra* is an indispensable part of the World Fable literature. In India, from ancient times it has been playing a vital role in education system. Based on the analysis carried out on stories from *Pañcatantra* it can be seen that most of the stories are filled with morals and these are very much relevant to the current times. Although the culture and way of life has changed with time the basic ethos of human life stays similar. Therefore these fables can definitely help in supplementing the moral education of children.

However, although *Pañcatantra* narrates timeless stories full of morals in a most interesting manner, it still needs to keep up withdrawal changing times. Currently kids are more interested in visual representation rather than going through text works. Plus the advent of nuclear family has resulted in the lack of vocal narration of stories. Therefore the fables need to be adapted to the changing times. The stories can be illustrated in the form of comic books or animations. This will help in roping in the targeted audiences. In this case animation programmes with improved audio-visual devices may be of much use. I think if the stories are presented in the form of animation, with the help of modern technology children will be more interested in learning them quickly. Since the children watch television programmes, videos of storyteller, there should be a programme based on these stories which will attract them. With the help of masks, feathers and other articles, children may be inspired to perform drama based on the stories of *Pañcatantra* before audience in schools and festivals. Through different performing arts, the stories of *Pañcatantra* may be presented in more attractive ways.



End Note

1. Pañcatantra, Mitrabheda, v. 172
2. ibid, v. 159
3. ibid, v. 325
4. ibid, Kākolukīyam, v. 104
5. ibid, Aparīkṣitkārītā, v.13
6. ibid, Labdhapraṇāṣa, v. 1
7. ibid, Mitrabheda, v. 326
8. ibid, v. 409.

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Representation of Women in Pañcatantra: A socio-cultural study

Debarati Chandra

This paper will re-examine the Pañcatantra stories to review the portrayal of women in them. Women have always been worshipped, adored and revered in ancient and Modern Sanskrit literature. In Pañcatantra, references to women are very few. In some of the stories [For this paper, I have referred to Arthur William Ryder's The Pañcatantra(1925), University of Chicago Press] women are portrayed as virtuous, wise counsellors and better halves to their male partners in the true sense whereas in some stories they are portrayed with negative characteristics. The Pañcatantra stories were composed or compiled to educate the three ignorant sons of king Amara śakti. These fables are very popular with children also. So, representation of gender in these stories are a very crucial aspect to ponder over because these stories have a permanent impression on the young minds.

Keywords: *fable, women, representation, gender.*

Originally written in Sanskrit, the prelude or preamble of the *Pañcatantra* identifies an octogenarian *Brāhmin* named Viṣṇusārma as its author. Some South Indian recensions and some Southeast Asian versions of *Pañcatantra* attribute the text to Vasubhaga.¹ The *Pañcatantra* belongs to the rich tradition of oral literature in India. It is a collection of tales populated mainly with animal characters acting as heroes and villains and executed with a moralistic content and a clearly didactic tone. The preamble



to the *Pañcatantra* offers the information that the tales were composed or perhaps compiled by the 80-year-old sage *Viṣṇuśarma* as part of his efforts to both entertain and educate the three sons of King Amaraśakti. In the Indian tradition, The *Pañcatantra* is a *nītiśātra*. *Nīti* can be roughly translated as "the wise conduct of life"² and a *śāstra* is a technical or scientific treatise; thus, it is considered a treatise on Political Science and human conduct. Its literary sources are the expert tradition of Political Science and the folk and literary traditions of storytelling. It also draws from the *Dharma* and *Arthaśāstras*, quoting from them extensively. Konrad Meisig states that the *Pañcatantra* been incorrectly represented by some as 'an entertaining textbook for the education of princes in the Machiavellian rules of *Arthaśāstra*', but instead it is a book for the "Little Man" to develop *Nīti* (social ethics, prudent behaviour, shrewdness) in their pursuit of *Artha*, and a work on social satire.³ The purpose of the fables is to imply its moral without mentioning it. The *Pañcatantra*, states Patrick Olivelle, tells wonderfully a collection of delightful stories with pithy proverbs, ageless and practical wisdom; one of its appeal and success is that it is a complex book that "does not reduce the complexities of human life, government policy, political strategies, and ethical dilemmas into simple solutions; it can and does speak to different readers at different levels."⁴

Apart from a short introduction, *Pañcatantra* consists of five parts:

1. *Mitrabheda*, 2. *Mitralābha*, 3. *Kākolukīyam*, 4. *Labdhaprṇāsam*,
5. *Aparīkṣitakārakām*.

Each part contains a main story, called the frame story which in turn contains several embedded stories, as one character narrates a story to another. Often these stories contain further embedded stories. The *Pañcatantra* is a complex group of tales, interwoven into a series of frame stories, which operate on several allegorical levels. The characters are given names suggestive of the qualities they represent, and their animal personas transparently reveal the human personalities beneath. Throughout the *Pañcatantra*, the natural world functions as a metaphor for the human world; it is, in effect, a treatise on moral philosophy disguised as a set of fabulous narratives. The tales from the *Pañcatantra* are intended to teach the princes statecraft, strategy, the pleasures and perils of friendships, moral conduct and lessons in power. Human characteristics, behavioural patterns and even ethical values are ascribed to the animals.

The world of *Panñcatantra* is predominantly a male domain. But there are some references to women. In some of the stories, women are presented as virtuous, pious and are life-partners to their husbands in the true sense. They illustrate practical wisdom,



true love, devotion and faithfulness, providing an archetype of the ideal wife and mother. In Book I - "The Loss of Friends", in the story of the crow-hen and the snake, (Ryder, 74) we see the female crow as a concerning mother. She counsels her husband to move from their ancestral home for the sake of her chicks. At last she, following the advice of the jackal, picks the golden chain of the princess and throws that on the snake's hole and thus gets the devourer of her chicks killed by the king's men. In the story of the plovers and the ocean (Ryder, 145), we can see similar type of motherly concern in the female bird when she urges her husband to find out a secure place for laying eggs. She is a good foreseer who can predict that her eggs may be washed away by the sea which is very near to their nest. She emerges as a good counsellor who chastises her husband when he boasts of his own power - "How can you fail to appreciate your own strength and weakness? There is a saying: 'To know one's self is hard, /To know Wise effort, effort vain;/ But accurate self-critics are Secure in times of strain.' This much of effort brings success; 'I have the power; I can: So, think, then act, and reap the fruit of your judicious plan. And there is sound sense in this: To take advice from kindly friends Be ever satisfied" (147). When the male plover wants to make war against the sea, the hen-plover advised him to gather all the birds, make a plea to the king Garuda and with the aid of Lord Viṣṇu, they could retrieve their eggs from the sea.

In the story 'The Self-Sacrificing Dove' from Book III "The Crows and Owls", the dove tells, "Some wives their life's devotion give/ And in and for the husband live; / Whatever man has such a wife/ Is heaped with blessings all his life" (336). Here we see the female dove as the epitome of self-sacrifice. She advises her husband to accommodate the guest, that is the cruel fowler who has captivated the female bird and she sacrifices her life following her husband in order to give food and comfort to their guest. The Indian traditional customary belief is that, guest is like a god ('Atitthidevabhava'), therefore, the host is responsible to make the guest happy.

The female Dove in this story is portrayed in accordance to the classical Indian ethical discourse - "dharma". This notion embodies the traditional pursuit of moral values, the ethical order that regulates the conduct of the individual, family, civil life and state. "Dharma" is semantically connected with the idea of ṛta, the underlying natural order that connects individuals, society and the universe as a whole - it conveys the struggle for balance in the world and for the welfare of all beings, including gods, humans and animals. The interconnectedness of humanity and nature is a recurring idea of the traditional ethical system.



But there is another aspect of the woman-question. In an article "A Critical Interpretation of *Pañcatantra*", Prof. Anuradha Sharma criticizes how some of the stories of *Pañcatantra* socialize women to dance to the tune of male dictate.⁵ The world of *Pañcatantra* is predominantly a male domain. The prelude itself starts with homage to *Manu*, the archetypal man, or the progenitor of humanity according to the early Sanskrit texts and the narration starts with an expression that King Amaraśakti rules *Mahīlāropya*. The king's request to Viṣṇuśarma to teach his three dull sons is the catalyst for the composition of *Pañcatantra*. The King's name and that of his three sons end in śakti-meaning might - which is always associated with male domination. Amaraśakti means 'a man as mighty as gods/eternal power'; Vasuśakti means 'a man as mighty as vasus-a group of eight gods'; Ugraśakti means 'a man of fierce might' and Anekaśakti means 'a man of enormous might/Infinite power'. King Amaraśakti, who is described as a celestial tree, granting the wishes of all supplicants- rules his kingdom which is named as Mahīlāropya and that literally means as beautiful as a maiden. This insinuates the typical patriarchal idea that Man is the king and woman is his subject. There are very few stories where women characters have some role to play. In the frame story of Book IV, 'Monkey and Crocodile', the wife of the crocodile and her female friends are presented as evil and crafty- they plot to kill her husband's friend, the monkey. In the next story in the same chapter, "An Ass Without Ears and Heart" where King Lion orders his minister Jackal to get an ass for him, Jackal goes to a village, finds a distraught ass, lures him of female asses in jungle and brings him to the lion. In this story female asses are presented as mere alluring sexual objects. Viṣṇuśarma comments, "The things that claw, and the things that gore /Are unreliable things; /And so is a man with sword in his hand, /And rivers, and women, and kings". (Ryder, 34) In one story from Book I, Story VII, "The Weaver's Wife", we have two wives; one is an adulteress, running to her lover the moment her husband leaves the house, and the other is the Bawd (Barber's wife) who acts as their go-between. The weaver's wife manages to trick her husband into believing that she is a saintly wife; and the bawd fools the judges into believing her false story and nearly gets her husband executed. The same theme of adultery and cunningness of women runs through the story of the carpenter and his adulterous wife in Book III, Story VI: "How the Unfaithful Wife Tricked Her Husband". Viṣṇuśarma comments, 'Behold the faults with woman born:/ Impurity, and heartless scorn, / Untruth, and folly, reckless heat, / Excessive greediness, deceit.' (Ryder, 68) Not only in narration but in verses also women are portrayed as adulteresses - for example, in Book I, story VII



"The Weaver's Wife", Victor tells Cheek - 'There are seven vices in the world, namely: Drink, women, hunting, scolding, dice, Greed, cruelty: these seven are vice' (Ryder, 72). Here we can see that women or the companionship of women is considered a vice to men of work. In the story "The Weaver's Wife", the author comments- 'When husband lingers Far away, the flirt becomes Supremely gay' (Ryder, 63) - women are virtuous only when she is under the control of a man. Here the wife who is presented as a whore, was beaten badly by the husband as punishment. He also cut the nose of the barber's wife and the author comments 'In case of major dereliction, Disfigurement is the infliction' (Ryder,71). We are reminded of Sūrpaṅkhā in the *Rāmāyaṇa*, she was also punished in the same way by Lakṣmaṇa for her advances to him. In Book V, on the other hand, we have quite a different situation. The frame story presents the kind and wise wife of a *Brāhmin*- a stereotypical patriarchal husband. When she is expecting, her husband says to her, 'You have attained your purpose. You will give birth to a son; he will be the one who will continue my lineage'. But the wife replied, 'Who knows it will be a son or not?' In a highly patriarchal culture in India, the most desired virtue in a woman in general and a wife in particular is obedience. Viṣṇuśarma supports this tradition when he says in Book, I Verse 82- 'That is a true deed, which is free from stains, / She is true wife, who does as she is told'. The womenfolk are denied a voice of their own in the patriarchal society.

The *Pañcatantra* is a book by and for men, especially men of the court. It was written to instruct the future kings about the governance as well as duties and challenges of the kings. Kings are compared to women in their capriciousness. Viṣṇuśarma could have voiced his views about the unreliability of kings without mentioning women's infidelity in general but he had a pre-conceived deep-rooted belief in the immorality in the character of all women and so he could not but compare kings with women in the issue of moral degradation and weakness. In Book I, the author says, - 'For kings and vines and maidens/ To nearest neighbour's cling'(Ryder, 30). Viṣṇuśarma warns the princes against the evils such as gambling, drinking and women. Further, he treats woman merely as an object or commodity when he says - 'In case of horse or book or sword, /Of woman, man or lute or word, / the use or uselessness depends/ on qualities the user lends.' (Translator's Introduction, Ryder, 7). He means that women should be used and driven according to the will of men. Viṣṇuśarma personifies royal fortune as *śrī*, a woman and warns the kings to be on guard, because, he comments, being a woman, fortune is fickle and will run away with the next handsome and rich prince who happens



to come along. Viṣṇuśarma makes his characters his mouthpieces to voice his philosophy of life. Through his characters he gives vent to his thinking about women. His biased and discriminatory remarks are apparent in the book of Nīti. His views that women are incarnated infidelity are expressed below:

"The wench cares not/A straw to miss/The covered couch, /The husband's kiss;/
The pleasant bed;/In place of this/She ever seeks/A stolen wish. (Ryder, 63)

The stories may be simply told but they have multiple layers of meaning. It seems that these degenerated and derogatory portrayal of women in these stories are the result of subsequent moral degeneration in society. There are many instances of women being portrayed as adulteresses and deceitful in the *Jātaka* stories also. One of the glaring evidences of adultery can be seen in the story of *Cullapaduma Jātaka*⁶ where a dutiful husband doing his karma by aiding a handicapped dacoit and in response his wife begins an illicit relationship with the dacoit.

In the ancient Indus valley civilisation of India, evidences show the worship of the mother goddess. Hence, the veneration for the mother is evident during that period. During the Ṛg Vedic period, it is believed that the position of wife was honoured and women's position was acknowledged, especially in the performance of religious ceremonies. But during later Vedic period and subsequent Mauryan and Gupta period gradually women's position degenerated. The discrimination was observed primarily in terms of acquisition of education and other rights and facilities. The position of women, further experienced a decline with the prevalence of child marriage, satī, polygamy and the purdah system. The women were primarily equated with property in the epics and the puranas. During the Mauryan period too, the status of women was in a deteriorated condition. The women, belonging to upper castes were supposed to accept the purdah system. During this period, men were polygamous and satī was regarded as an accepted norm. Arthaśāstra imposed more stigmas upon them. They were not permitted to go to any places without the permission of their husbands and were not allowed to make decisions on their own. During the Gupta period, their status experienced a further decline. They experienced abuse and mistreatment from Smṛtiśāstras. Manu dictated that they would be dependent upon their fathers during the childhood stage, on husbands in youth and on sons in old age. Apart from the practices of child marriage and sati, the other aspects that imposed detrimental effects upon the status of women were prostitution and the Devadāsī system (Rout, 2016).⁷ These seem to induce the few stories in *Pañcatantra* with misogynous attributes.



Considering the impact that gender representation in children's literature has on the self-esteem of children, as well as the role it plays in indicating the status of women in society, it is essential that these ancient stories should be retold for the equal and just representation of female and male characters. Modern feminist Suniti Namjoshi has rewritten some of the fables of *Pañcatantra* as 'Feminist Fables', published in 1981. In one of the stories she has introduced the Blue Donkey, replacing the Blue Jackal in original *Pañcatantra*. Suniti's female Blue Donkey, whose colour sets her apart as a strange creature, can stand for many things-the figure of the female writer, or of those discriminated against for their sexual choices or the colour of their skin, a creature who makes those around her uneasy because they don't know where to place her.

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Comparative Study of Morality in Narayan Pandit's *Hitopadesa* and Jean de La Fontaine's *Les Fables*

নীতিশিক্ষা সমৃদ্ধ গ্রন্থ হিচাপে নাৰায়ণ পণ্ডিতৰ হিতোপদেশ আৰু
জ্যাঁ ড লা ফঁটেইনৰ লে ফাব্ল : এক তুলনা

হিমন্ত বিশ্ব চৌধুৰী
ড° বৌণক মহতাৰ

Fables are said to be the storehouse of moral wisdom. Though the moral lessons in fables are believed to be meant for children, they are equally useful for adults. Moral stories besides inculcating moral values also help people to move on a better path. Nârâyan Paṇḍit's Hitopadeśa and Jean de La Fontaine's Les Fables are widely read all over the world for the moral lessons and the practical wisdom ingrained in them. Though both the books are from different countries and their times were also different yet few similarities can be observed from the perspective of morality. This research paper attempts a brief discussion along with a comparative study of moral knowledge perceived in Hitopadeśa and Les Fables.

আৰম্ভণি : নাৰায়ণ পণ্ডিতৰ হিতোপদেশ হৈছে ভাৰতীয় সংস্কৃত সাহিত্যৰ এখন উল্লেখযোগ্য গ্রন্থ। মানুহৰ প্ৰতি হিত উপদেশ আগবঢ়োৱাই ইয়াৰ মূল লক্ষ্য। তথাপি ইয়াৰ প্ৰস্তাৱনা অংশত উল্লেখ থকা অনুসৰি পাটলিপুত্ৰৰ ৰজা সুদৰ্শনৰ মুৰ্খ পুত্ৰসকলক জ্ঞান প্ৰদানৰ উদ্দেশ্যেই হিতোপদেশৰ ৰচনা হৈছিল। ইয়াৰ ৰচনাকাল সন্দৰ্ভত যথেষ্ট মতভেদ আছে। ১৩৭৩ চনত নেপালত পোৱা পাণ্ডুলিপি এটাৰ দ্বাৰা এইটো অনুমান কৰিব পাৰি যে হিতোপদেশৰ ৰচনা চতুৰ্দশ শতিকাৰ আগতেই হৈছিল। হিতোপদেশপ্ৰধানতঃ চাৰিটা প্ৰধান ভাগত বিভক্ত মিত্ৰলাভ, সুহৃদভেদ, বিগ্ৰহ আৰু সন্ধি। পঞ্চতন্ত্র তথা অন্য নীতিশাস্ত্ৰৰ দ্বাৰা প্ৰভাৱিত হৈ নাৰায়ণে হিতোপদেশৰ সাধুসমূহ ৰচনা কৰিছিল। এই সন্দৰ্ভত নাৰায়ণে হিতোপদেশতেই উল্লেখ কৰি কৈছে যে —

“মিত্ৰলাভঃ সুহৃদভেদো বিগ্ৰহঃ সন্ধিৰেব চ।

পঞ্চতন্ত্রান্তথা অন্যস্মাদ্ গ্ৰন্থাদাকৃষ্য লিখ্যতে।”



হিতোপদেশৰ বৰ্ণনাত্মক অংশ গদ্য আৰু নৈতিক কথাংশ গদ্যত পোৱা যায়। হিতোপদেশৰ বচনাকাৰ সন্দৰ্ভতো বিভিন্ন মত দেখা যায়, কিয়নো হিতোপদেশৰ সাধুসমূহ যিহেতু বিষুশৰ্মাৰ মাধ্যমত বজাৰ পুত্ৰসকলৰ আগত বৰ্ণিত হৈছিল। সেয়েহে বহুতে বিষুশৰ্মাক ইয়াৰ বচনাকাৰ বুলি ক'ব খোজে। কিন্তু হিতোপদেশৰ শেষাংশত উল্লিখিত 'নাৰায়ণেন প্ৰচৰতু ৰচিতঃ সংগ্রহোঃয়ং কথানাম্'^২—কথাযাৰিৰ দ্বাৰা নাৰায়ণ পণ্ডিতৰ দ্বাৰাহে যে হিতোপদেশ ৰচিত হৈছিল সেয়া গম পোৱা যায়। ইয়াৰ বচনশৈলী খুবেই স্পষ্ট তথা সুশৃংখলিত হেতুকে গোটেই বিশ্বজুৰি প্ৰসিদ্ধতা লাভ কৰিবলৈ সক্ষম হৈছে।

সপ্তদশ শতিকাত ফ্ৰান্সৰ সাহিত্যত প্ৰভাৱ পেলাবলৈ সক্ষম হোৱা জ্যাঁ ড লা ফঁটেইনৰ লে ফাব্লে এখন উল্লেখযোগ্য সাধুকথাৰ গ্ৰন্থ। সেই সময়ত এই সাধুসমূহে ফ্ৰান্সৰ জাতীয় কবিসকলক বাৰুকৈয়েই প্ৰভাৱিত কৰিবলৈ সক্ষম হৈছিল। লে ফাব্লে লা ফঁটেইনে তিনিটা ভাগত প্ৰকাশ কৰিছিল। সেই অনুসৰি ইয়াৰ প্ৰথম ভাগ ১৬৬৮ চনত, দ্বিতীয় ভাগটো ১৬৭৮-৭৯ চনত আৰু অন্তিমটো ভাগ ১৬৯৪ চনত প্ৰকাশ পাইছিল। লা ফঁটেইনৰ লে ফাব্লেৰ সাধুসমূহ ৰচনাৰ প্ৰধান উদ্দেশ্য আছিল মানুহৰ ভুলসমূহ আঙুলিয়াই দি তাৰ প্ৰতিবাদ সাব্যস্ত কৰা। তেওঁ কৈছিল যে—"I use animals to teach man." ^৩ লে ফাব্লেৰ সাধুসমূহ পদ্যত ৰচিত। ইয়াৰ সাধুসমূহৰ উপস্থাপনশৈলী সৰল তথা সাধুসমূহ তেনেই চুটি। লা ফঁটেইনে প্ৰথম অধ্যায়টো ফ্ৰান্সৰ 'দ'ফা' (ৰজাৰ প্ৰথম সন্তান) লৈ সমৰ্পণ কৰিছিল। তেওঁৰ এই সাধুসমূহৰ মাজেৰে অভিজ্ঞ ব্যক্তিসকলে সমাজৰ অন্যান্যসমূহ তথা জীৱনৰ প্ৰতিচ্ছবি অনুধাৱন কৰিবলৈ সক্ষম হৈছিল। এইবোৰ কাৰণতেই সম্ভৱতঃ লে ফাব্লে যথেষ্ট সমাদৰ লাভ কৰিবলৈ সক্ষম হৈছিল।

০.১ বিষয়ৰ গুৰুত্ব : নাৰায়ণ পণ্ডিতৰ হিতোপদেশ আৰু জ্যাঁ ড লা ফঁটেইনৰ লে ফাব্লে যিহেতু সাধুকথা গ্ৰন্থ, সেয়েহে গ্ৰন্থ দুখন নৈতিক জ্ঞানৰ ক্ষেত্ৰত বেছ চহকী। যদিও ইয়াৰ ৰচনা বহু শতিকা আগতেই হৈছিল তথাপি কিন্তু এই নীতি-নিয়মসমূহ বৰ্তমানৰ সমাজখনৰ বাবেও অতি আৱশ্যকীয়। এই নৈতিক জ্ঞানৰ দ্বাৰাই মানুহে নিজক উন্নত ৰূপত প্ৰতিষ্ঠা কৰিবলৈ সম্ভৱপৰ হ'ব। ইয়াৰোপৰি এই জ্ঞানসমূহৰ সহায়তেই মানুহে ভাল বেয়াৰ বিচাৰ কৰিবলৈ সক্ষম হ'ব। আকৌ, গ্ৰন্থ দুখনত সমাজৰ কিছুমান চলি অহা অন্যান্য সম্পৰ্কে সতৰ্কতামূলক বাৰ্তা আগবঢ়াইছে যিবোৰ আজিও সমাজৰ প্ৰত্যেকজন ব্যক্তিৰ বাবে অতি প্ৰয়োজনীয়। এইক্ষেত্ৰত বিষয়ৰ যথেষ্ট গুৰুত্ব আছে বুলি ক'ব পাৰি।

০.২ উদ্দেশ্য : হিতোপদেশ আৰু লে ফাব্লেৰ আধাৰগ্ৰন্থ হিচাপে লৈ দুয়োখন গ্ৰন্থৰ পৃথকে পৃথকে কিছু আভাসৰ লগতে মুখ্যতঃ গ্ৰন্থ দুখনৰ মাজৰ যি নীতিশিক্ষা তাৰ এক তুলনামূলক অধ্যয়ন কৰাই এই গৱেষণা পত্ৰখনৰ মূল উদ্দেশ্য।

০৩ পদ্ধতি : এই গৱেষণা পত্ৰখনত নাৰায়ণ পণ্ডিতৰ হিতোপদেশ আৰু জ্যাঁ ড লা ফঁটেইনৰ লে ফাব্লেৰ মুখ্য গ্ৰন্থ হিচাপে লৈ বিশ্লেষণাত্মক অধ্যয়ন কৰাৰ প্ৰয়াস কৰা হৈছে। এই বিশ্লেষণৰ সুবিধাৰ্থে দুয়োখন গ্ৰন্থৰেই কিছুমান সাধুক উদাহৰণ হিচাপে নিৰ্বাচন কৰি লৈ গ্ৰন্থ দুখনৰ এক তুলনাও কৰা হৈছে। এই গৱেষণাকৰ্ম আগবঢ়াই নিয়াৰ বাবে ৰামেশ্বৰ ভট্টৰ দ্বাৰা হিন্দী অনুদিত হিতোপদেশ তথা Elizur Wright ৰ দ্বাৰা ইংৰাজী অনুদিত লে ফাব্লেৰ পুথি দুখনক মূল গ্ৰন্থ হিচাপে লোৱা হৈছে। ইয়াৰ লগতে বিষয়ৰ লগত সংগতি থকা অন্য প্ৰবন্ধ, গৱেষণাপত্ৰ, কিতাপ তথা ই-গ্ৰন্থক গৌণ উৎস হিচাপে লোৱা হৈছে।



১.০ নৈতিক দিশত *হিতোপদেশ* আৰু *লে ফাবল*ৰ এক তুলনা : সাধুকথাৰ মূল উদ্দেশ্যই হৈছে মনোৰঞ্জন প্ৰদান কৰা, নীতিশিক্ষা প্ৰদান আৰু সামাজিক সমস্যাসমূহৰ মাজেৰে প্ৰতিবাদ সাব্যস্ত কৰা। ইয়াত জীৱ-জন্তুৰ মুখত মানুহৰ নিচিনাকৈ সংলাপ প্ৰক্ষেপ কৰি তাৰ মাজেৰে নৈতিক জ্ঞান প্ৰদানৰ যোগেদি সামাজিক সমস্যাৰ সমাধানমূলক বাৰ্তা আগবঢ়োৱাৰ লগতে মানুহক মনোৰঞ্জন প্ৰদান কৰে। এইক্ষেত্ৰত *হিতোপদেশ* আৰু *লে ফাবল* বহু পৰিমাণে সার্থক হৈছে বুলিব পাৰি। কিয়নো *হিতোপদেশ*ৰ নামতেই ইয়াৰ উদ্দেশ্য নিহিত আছে অৰ্থাৎ হিত উপদেশ দিয়াই ইয়াৰ প্ৰধান লক্ষ্য। নাৰায়ণ পণ্ডিতে নীতিশিক্ষা সম্পৰ্কত *হিতোপদেশ*ত উল্লেখ কৰি কৈছে যে —

শ্ৰুতো হিতোপদেশোঃ যং পাটবং সংস্কৃতোক্তিসু।

বাচাং সৰ্বত্র বৈচিত্ৰ্যং নীতিবিদ্যাং দদাতি চ।^{১৪}

অৰ্থাৎ, এই গ্ৰন্থ শূনাৰ জৰিয়তে সংস্কৃতত সুৰুচিসম্পন্ন ভাষণ দিয়াৰ ক্ষমতা তথা সকলো বিষয়ত বাক্যৰ বিচিত্ৰতাৰ উপৰিও নৈতিক বিদ্যা লাভ কৰিব পাৰি।

ঠিক একেদৰে, লা ফাঁটেইনে তেওঁৰ সাধুৰ নীতিশিক্ষা সন্দৰ্ভত উল্লেখ কৰিছে যে — "You are at that age when amusement and games are permitted of princes : but at the same time you ought to give some of your thoughts to serious reflection. All this can be found in the fables....they seem puerile, I admit; but this outward appearance of puerility serves as an envelope for important truths." গতিকৈ লা ফাঁটেইনে তেওঁৰ সাধুসমূহৰ মাজেৰে মানুহক কেৱল সুখ দিয়াই নহয়, তাৰ মাজেৰে এটা উচিত নৈতিক শিক্ষাও দিব বিচাৰিছিল।

সাধুকথাৰ গ্ৰন্থ হিচাপে যিহেতু গ্ৰন্থ দুখনে সামাজিক অনিয়মসমূহৰ বিপক্ষে প্ৰতিবাদ সাব্যস্ত কৰি আহিছে সেয়েহে নৈতিক ভিত্তিত চাবলৈ গ'লে দুয়োখন গ্ৰন্থৰ মাজতেই বিভিন্ন সাদৃশ্য দেখিবলৈ পোৱা যায়। মুখ্যতঃ সামাজিক সমস্যাভিত্তিক বিষয়ৰ ওপৰত প্ৰতিষ্ঠিত *লে ফাবল*ৰ নিচিনাকৈ *হিতোপদেশ*ৰ কিছুমান সাধুৰ মাজতো সমাজত চলি থকা ঠগ-প্ৰৰঞ্চনা, অন্যায়া-অত্যাচাৰ, উৎপীড়ন আদি দেখিবলৈ পোৱা যায়। দুয়োখন গ্ৰন্থই এই অন্যায়া-অত্যাচাৰ আদিৰ পৰা নিজকে কেনেকৈ বচাই চলিব পাৰি তাৰ জ্ঞান প্ৰদান কৰে। এই ঠগ-প্ৰৰঞ্চনা সন্দৰ্ভত *হিতোপদেশ*ৰ 'বিগ্ৰহ' ভাগত নাৰায়ণ পণ্ডিতে নীলা শিয়ালৰ মৃত্যুৰ সাধুটো বৰ্ণনা কৰিছিল। সাধুটোত শিয়ালটোৱে কেনেকৈ নীলা বৰণৰ হৈ অৰণ্যলৈ গৈ সি নিজকে অন্য জন্তুবোৰৰ আগত ভগৱতীয়ে তাৰ ৰাজ অভিষেক কৰা বুলি সকলোৰে ৰজা হৈ পৰিছিল। কিন্তু এনেদৰে আনক ঠগাই জীৱন-নিৰ্বাহ কৰি থকা শিয়ালৰ এদিন প্ৰকৃত স্বৰূপ ওলাই পৰিছিল আৰু আন জন্তুৰ হাতত তাৰ মৃত্যু হৈছিল। লা ফাঁটেইনেও সমাজৰ এনে কিছুমান সমস্যাৰ তীব্ৰ নিন্দা কৰিছিল। তেওঁৰ সাধুতো ঠগ-প্ৰৰঞ্চনা, বলী-দুৰ্বলীৰ সংঘাত আদিয়ে স্থান পাইছিল। উদাহৰণস্বৰূপে *লে ফাবল*ত উল্লেখ থকা *The Ass dressed in the Lion's skin* নামৰ সাধুটো অনুসৰি গাধ এটাই এবাৰ অৰণ্যৰ সিংহৰ ছাল এডোখৰ পাই সেয়া পৰিধান কৰি নিজকে বনৰ ৰজা সিংহ বুলি কৈ সিংহৰ দৰে গৰ্জন কৰিবলৈ গৈছিল। কিন্তু সি গাধ হেতুকে গৰ্জন কৰিবলৈ গৈ তাৰ প্ৰকৃত স্বৰূপ উদঙাই দিছিল। এই প্ৰকৃতিৰ লোক বৰ্তমান সমাজতো বিদ্যমান। এনেকুৱা এক শ্ৰেণীৰ লোকে আনক ঠগ-প্ৰৰঞ্চনা কৰিয়েই জীয়াই



আছে। কিন্তু আনক বিপদত পেলো শিয়াল আৰু গাধৰ নিচিনাকৈ নিজৰো মৰণ নিশ্চিত। এনেকুৱা প্ৰকৃতিৰ লোকক দুয়োখন গ্ৰন্থতেই সমালোচনা কৰা দেখা গৈছে।

আকৌ, দুয়োখন গ্ৰন্থতেই কিছুমান উপদেশমূলক সাধু পোৱা যায়। এই উপদেশাত্মক সাধুসমূহ সকলো স্তৰৰ লোকৰ বাবে অতি উপযোগী। *লে ফাব্‌ল্‌স* প্ৰথম সাধুটোৱেই উপদেশমূলক। *The grasshopper and the ant* নামৰ সাধুটোত লা ফাঁটেইনে মানুহক কৰ্ম কৰি যাবলৈ উপদেশ দিছিল। তেওঁৰ মতে কৰ্মই ধৰ্ম আৰু ভাল কৰ্মৰ ফল মানুহে এদিন নিশ্চয় লাভ কৰিব। সাধুটো অনুসৰি ফৰিং এটাই বাৰিষাৰ সময়ত আহিবলগীয়া বিপদৰ কথা নাভাবি আনন্দত মতলীয়া হৈ নাচি-বাগি ফুৰিছিল। অন্যহাতে পৰৱৰ্তী বিপদৰ কথা ভাবি বাৰিষাৰ আগৰ পৰাই খাদ্যবস্তুৰ সঞ্চয় কৰি ৰাখিছিল। বাৰিষাৰ আগমনৰ ফলত খাদ্যৰ অভাৱত অৱশেষত ফৰিঙে পৰৱৰ্তী ওচৰত সহায়ৰ হাত পাবলগীয়া হৈছিল। *হিতোপদেশ*তো নাৰায়ণ পণ্ডিতে এই উপদেশমূলক বাণী সাধুকথাৰ মাধ্যমেৰে আগবঢ়াইছে। উদাহৰণস্বৰূপে ‘সন্ধি’ ভাগত থকা তিনিটা মাছৰ সাধুটোৰ কথাই ক’ব পাৰি। সাধুটোত উল্লিখিত নীতিশিক্ষাটো হ’ল-মানুহে কেতিয়াও বিপদ সমাগত বুলি জানিও হাত সাৱটি বহি থাকিব নালাগে। অন্যথা বিপদ অনিবাৰ্য। সাধুটোত যদুভৱিষ্যৎ নামৰ মাছটোৱে আসন্ন বিপদৰ কথা জানিও একো পদক্ষেপ নোলোৱাৰ ফলত মাছমৰীয়াৰ হাতত মৃত্যু হৈছিল।

সাধুকথাৰ গ্ৰন্থ হিচাপে *হিতোপদেশ* আৰু *লে ফাব্‌ল্‌স* যদিও সাদৃশ্য আছে তথাপি কিন্তু ইয়াৰ মাজৰ বৈসাদৃশ্যও নুই কৰিব নোৱাৰি। নাৰায়ণ পণ্ডিতৰ *হিতোপদেশ* চাৰিটা প্ৰধান ভাগত বিভক্ত আৰু প্ৰতিটো ভাগেই একোটা নিৰ্দিষ্ট বিষয়বস্তু কঢ়িয়াই লৈ ফুৰিছে। সেই অনুসৰি ‘মিঞালাভ’ বন্ধুত্ব প্ৰাপ্তিৰ ওপৰত প্ৰতিষ্ঠিত। ‘সহদভেদ’ত আকৌ বন্ধুত্বৰ বিচ্ছেদৰ কথা উল্লেখ আছে। ‘বিগ্ৰহ’ ভাগটোত সংঘৰ্ষ আৰু ‘সন্ধি’ত বুজাবুজিৰ মাধ্যমেৰে ব্যৱধান আঁতৰ কৰা দেখুওৱা হৈছে। গতিকে এইক্ষেত্ৰত দেখা যায় যে *হিতোপদেশ* নীতিশিক্ষাসমূহ সুনিৰ্দিষ্টৰূপত বাণীৰূপ হৈছে। ই পাঠকৰ মনত প্ৰভাৱ পেলোৱাৰ উপৰিও পাঠকক এক সুস্পষ্ট ধাৰণা প্ৰদানত সহায় কৰে। কিন্তু লা ফাঁটেইনৰ *লে ফাব্‌ল্‌স* এনে দেখা নাযায়। ইয়াৰ প্ৰতিটো সাধু এটাৰ লগত আনটো জড়িত নহয় আৰু ই কোনো ক্ৰমত নিৰ্দ্ধাৰিত নহয়।

আকৌ, লা ফাঁটেইনে তেওঁৰ সাধুবোৰত মানুহক উচ্চ-নিম্ন আদি বৰ্গত ভাগ কৰি তেওঁলোকৰ মাজৰ সংঘাতক প্ৰাধান্য দিয়া দেখা যায়। কিছুমান সাধুত উচ্চ তথা শক্তিশালী জন্তুৰে দুৰ্বলী জন্তুবোৰক শোষণ, আক্ৰমণ কৰা পৰিলক্ষিত হয়। এই ক্ষেত্ৰত চাব গ’লে কিন্তু ইয়াৰ সাধুসমূহ সমাজৰ দাপোণ স্বৰূপ। সমাজৰ সত্য ছবিসমূহ এই সাধুকথা সমূহৰ জীৱ-জন্তুৰ মাজেৰে সুন্দৰ উপস্থাপন কৰা হৈছে। অন্যহাতে, *হিতোপদেশ*ত কিন্তু নাৰায়ণে মানুহৰ যদিও শ্ৰেণীবিভাজন কৰিছিল তথাপি ইয়াত উচ্চ-নিম্ন সংঘৰ্ষ দৃষ্টিগোচৰ নহয়। ইয়াত তেওঁ মানুহৰ ধৰ্ম সম্পৰ্কেহে উল্লেখ কৰিছিল।

লা ফাঁটেইনে তেওঁৰ সাধুসমূহ পদ্যৰূপত বৰ্ণনা কৰিছিল। সেয়েহে সাধুসমূহৰ আলমত থকা নৈতিক জ্ঞানসমূহ আয়ত্বৰ ক্ষেত্ৰত জটিলতাৰ সৃষ্টি হোৱা দেখা যায়। সাধুসমূহৰ নৈতিক বাৰ্তাসমূহ প্ৰত্যক্ষভাৱে ফুটি উঠা নাই। ফলত এই জ্ঞানসমূহ পাঠকৰ বাবে আয়ত্বকৰণৰ ক্ষেত্ৰত কঠিনতা দেখা যায়। কিন্তু নাৰায়ণ পণ্ডিতৰ *হিতোপদেশ* যিহেতু গদ্য আৰু পদ্য দুয়োটা শৈলীতেই বৰ্ণিত হৈছে, সেয়েহে ইয়াৰ অন্তৰ্নিহিত নীতিশিক্ষাসমূহ অতি সুস্পষ্টৰূপত প্ৰতিষ্ঠিত হৈছে।



লা ফণ্টেইনে তেওঁৰ সাধুসমূহৰ যোগেদি কি জ্ঞান দিব বিচাৰিছিল সেয়া তেওঁ কিতাপ ৫, সাধু ১ৰ মাজেৰে অতি স্পষ্টভাৱে উল্লেখ কৰি কৈছে যে—

"My fable sometimes brings to view

The face of vanity purblind

With that of restless envy join'd."

অৰ্থাৎ, লা ফণ্টেইনৰ মতে মানুহে ঈৰ্ষাৰ বশৱৰ্তী হৈ বিভিন্ন কাম কৰিব পাৰে। উদাহৰণস্বৰূপে তেওঁৰ *The frog that wished to be as big as the ox* সাধুটোৰ কথা উল্লেখ কৰিব পাৰি। সাধুটোত ভেকুলীটোৱে ঈৰ্ষা বা খঙৰ তাড়নাত ষাঁড় গৰুৰ সমান আকাৰৰ হ'বলৈ গৈ মৃত্যুক আকোঁৱালি লৈছিল। যিহেতু ভেকুলী এটা ক্ষুদ্ৰ প্ৰাণী সেয়েহে তাৰ ষাঁড় গৰুৰ সমান আকাৰৰ হ'বলৈ যোৱাটো মূৰ্খৰ কাম। আজিকালিৰ সমাজতো এনেকুৱা কিছুমান মানুহ আছে যিয়ে ঈৰ্ষা বা খঙৰ বলত নিজৰ সাধ্যৰ বাহিৰত কাম কৰিবলৈ গৈ নিজকে বিপদত পেলায়। সেয়েহে লা ফণ্টেইনে তেওঁৰ সাধুসমূহৰ জৰিয়তে মানুহে কিছু পৰিমাণে হ'লেও লাভান্বিত হ'ব বুলি আশাবাদী আছিল। প্ৰকৃততে লা ফণ্টেইনৰ *লে ফাব্বল* অনুসৰি জীৱনটো অতি কঠিন আৰু নিৰ্মম। সেয়েহে মানুহে এই কঠিনতা বা নিৰ্মমতাসমূহ স্বীকাৰ কৰি জীৱন বাটত সাৱধানতাৰে গতি কৰা উচিত। ইয়াৰ উদাহৰণস্বৰূপেও *লে ফাব্বল*ত *The wolf and the lamb* নামৰ সাধুৰ উল্লেখ আছে। সাধুটো অনুসৰি কুকুৰনেছীয়া বাঘটোৱে ভেঁড়াৰ ওপৰত বিভিন্ন মনে সজা দোষ জাপি দি তাক শোষণ কৰিবলৈ চেষ্টা কৰিছিল যদিও ভেঁড়াৰ বিৰুদ্ধে একো প্ৰমাণ গোটাৰ পৰা নাছিল। অৱশ্যে কুকুৰনেছীয়াটোৱে ভেঁড়াৰ বংশৰ কোনোৱে তাক অপমান কৰা বুলি ভেঁড়াক মাৰি পেলাইছিল। এই সাধুটোৱে শক্তিশালীৰ দুৰ্বলীৰ ওপৰত হোৱা অত্যাচাৰৰ চৰম সীমা অতিক্ৰম কৰিছে। বলীয়ে সদায় দুৰ্বলীক আগৰ পৰাই শোষণ কৰি আহিছে আৰু সমাজত আজিও এইয়া পৰিলক্ষিত হোৱা দেখা যায়। সেয়েহে এনে লোকৰ পৰা নিজকে বচাই চলাটোৱেই একমাত্ৰ উপায়। এইক্ষেত্ৰত *লে ফাব্বল* আৰু *হিতোপদেশ* মাজত এক বৃহৎ অন্তৰ দেখিবলৈ পোৱা যায়। কিয়নো *হিতোপদেশ* অনুসৰি জীৱনটো সুন্দৰ, সুমধুৰ। কিন্তু সেয়া উপভোগ কৰিব জানিব লাগিব। প্ৰকৃততে *হিতোপদেশ* 'মতিৰেৰ বলাৎ গৰিয়সী' এই নীতিটোৰ ওপৰত প্ৰতিষ্ঠিত। *হিতোপদেশ*ৰ প্ৰথম তন্ত্ৰ মিত্ৰলাভৰ আৰম্ভণিতেই উল্লেখ আছে যে একতা, আত্মীয়তা তথা বুদ্ধিৰ জৰিয়তে যিকোনো বিপদৰ পৰা ৰক্ষা পাব পাৰি। ইয়াত চিত্ৰগ্ৰীৰ নামৰ পাৰ চৰাই আৰু তাৰ সংগীসকলে সিহঁতৰ মাজৰ একতা, চিত্ৰগ্ৰীৰৰ বুদ্ধি তথা হিৰণ্যক নামৰ নিগনিৰ বন্ধুত্বসুলভ সহায়ৰ ফলত চিকাৰীৰ জালৰ পৰা মুক্ত হ'বলৈ সক্ষম হৈছিল। নাৰায়ণ পণ্ডিতে আত্মীয়তাৰ সম্পৰ্কত *হিতোপদেশ*ত উল্লেখ কৰিছে যে — "স বন্ধুৰ্যো বিপন্নামাপদুৰ্দ্ধৰণক্ষমঃ।"^১ অৰ্থাৎ আত্মীয় সেইজনেই যিয়ে বিপদৰ পৰা উদ্ধাৰ কৰে।

হিতোপদেশ আৰু *লে ফাব্বল* দুয়োখন গ্ৰন্থৰ অন্তৰ্নিহিত নীতিশিক্ষাই শিশুৰ পৰা বয়স্ক সকলোকে প্ৰভাৱিত কৰি আহিছে। কিন্তু এই ক্ষেত্ৰত *হিতোপদেশ*ৰ তুলনাত জ্যাঁ ড লা ফণ্টেইনৰ সাধুৰ ক্ষেত্ৰত কিছুমান পণ্ডিতৰ ঋণাত্মক ভাৱধাৰা প্ৰত্যক্ষ গোচৰ হয়। তাৰ ভিতৰত Alphonse de Lamartine আৰু Jean Jacques Rousseauৰ নাম উল্লেখযোগ্য। De Lamartine য়ে তেওঁৰ *Meditations poetiques* ত *লে ফাব্বল*ৰ সাধুসমূহ যুৱচামৰ মন মগজুৰ বাবে অযোগ্য, নীচ তথা অসংযত বুলি উল্লেখ কৰিছে। ঠিক একেদৰে Rousseau য়েও



তেওঁৰ *Emile* গ্ৰন্থত উল্লেখ কৰিছে *লে ফাব্‌ল্‌স* সাধুসমূহ প্ৰাপ্তবয়স্কসকলৰ বাবে লাভজনক যদিও শিশুৰ বাবে একেবাৰেই অগ্ৰহণীয়। কিয়নো শিশুৰ মনটোৱে সদায় যি প্ৰত্যক্ষ কৰে সেয়াই গ্ৰহণ কৰি লয়। *লে ফাব্‌ল্‌স*ত কিছুমান এনেকুৱা সাধুৰ উল্লেখ আছে যাৰ নৈতিক বাৰ্তাসমূহ এক আৱৰণৰ মাজত আৱদ্ধ হৈ থাকে। ই প্ৰত্যক্ষৰূপত দৃষ্টিগোচৰ নহয়। সেয়েহে যেতিয়া শিশুৱে এই সাধুসমূহ পঢ়িব, তেতিয়া ইয়াৰ ঋণাত্মক দিশটোহে গ্ৰহণ কৰি ল'ব। তেওঁ এই সম্পৰ্কে উল্লেখ কৰিছে যে— "Fable can teach men but you have to tell the naked truth to the children, as soon as it is covered with a veil, they no longer bother to lift it. We teach the febles of La Fontaine to all the children, and there is not a single one who hears them. When they would here them, it would be even worse; because morality is so mixed up and so disproportionate to their age, that it would lead them more to vice than to virtue."^৮

অন্যহাতে, নাৰায়ণ পণ্ডিতৰ হিতোপদেশ অতি সৰল তথা সহজে বুজি পোৱা বিধৰ আছিল। এই ক্ষেত্ৰত A. B. Keithয়ে কৈছে যে —"Narayana's style, as intended for instruction in Sanskrit, is simple and normally satisfactorily easy."^৯

গতিকে, ক'ব পাৰি যে *হিতোপদেশ* আৰু *লে ফাব্‌ল্‌স* নীতিশিক্ষাই মানুহক প্ৰভাৱিত কৰাৰ লগতে গ্ৰন্থ দুখনৰ মূল উদ্দেশ্য পূৰণত যথেষ্ট সাৰ্থক হৈছে।

২.০ সামৰণি : ওপৰোক্ত আলোচনাৰ পৰা এইটো জানিব পৰা গ'ল যে যদিও নীতিশিক্ষাৰ ক্ষেত্ৰত *হিতোপদেশ* আৰু *লে ফাব্‌ল্‌স* মাজত বিশেষভাৱে সাদৃশ্য আছে তথাপি কিন্তু *হিতোপদেশ*ত নীতিশিক্ষাৰ বিবিধতা দেখা যায়। ইয়াত সামাজিক সমস্যাৰ সমাধানমূলক বাৰ্তাৰ লগতে ৰজাৰ দোষ-গুণ, আচৰণ আদিৰো জ্ঞান লাভ কৰিব পাৰি। কিন্তু *লে ফাব্‌ল্‌স*ত মুখ্যতঃ সামাজিক সমস্যাৰ সমাধানমূলক জ্ঞানহে পৰিলক্ষিত হয়। এই ক্ষেত্ৰত *হিতোপদেশ*ৰ ক্ষেত্ৰখন *লে ফাব্‌ল্‌স*তকৈ ব্যাপক তথাপি কিন্তু ক'ব পাৰি যে দুয়োখন গ্ৰন্থই নৈতিকভাৱে পৰিপূৰ্ণ ক্ষমতাসম্পন্ন গ্ৰন্থ যাৰ নীতিজ্ঞানে মানুহৰ মনত প্ৰভাৱ পেলাবলৈ সক্ষম হৈছে। সেয়েহে এইসমূহ গুণৰ বাবেই গ্ৰন্থ দুখন। বিশ্বব্যাপী সমাদৰ লাভ কৰিবলৈ সক্ষম হৈছে।

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Single Author:

Jaini, P.S. Gender and Salvation. Jaina Debates on the Spiritual Liberation of Women. U of California P, 1991.

In-text citation

The ultimate aim of achieving deliverance from the relentless cycle of birth and death is believed to be achieved if one gives up the attachment to worldly luxuries and pleasures and lives an ascetic life (Jaini 5).

Or

P. S. Jaini says that the ultimate aim of achieving deliverance from the relentless cycle of birth and death is believed to be achieved if one gives up the attachment to worldly luxuries and pleasures and lives an ascetic life (5).

Work by Multiple Authors:

Butler, J., et al. *The Judith Butler Reader*. Blackwell, 2004.



Translated Work:

Prabhācandra. Nyāyakumudacandra. Translated by Padmanabh S. Jaini. U of California P, 1991.

Journal Article:

Sethi, Manisha "Chastity and Desire: Representing Women in Jainism". *South Asian History and Culture*, Vol.1, no. 1, 2009, pp. 42-59. DOI: 10.1080/19472490903387209

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- (b) **Modern work** - Patnaik, Tandra: *A Study of Bhartrhari's Philosophy of Language*, New Delhi, D.K.Printworld,1994.

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