Chapter - VIII

Conclusion
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CONCLUSION

The earlier chapters have focused on the role played by animals in Buddhist literature, sculptures, paintings, and inscriptions. From those records we have come to know the importance given to animals in Buddhism on par with human being such bodhisattva, a friend and saviour. The animal characters are made to speak like human beings and convey noble teachings and morals to the society. Their wisdom is profound. Some animals are quite witty like monkey or a sparrow. Animals like fox or cat were considered to be cunning in their characteristic. The deer is the most gentle among animals. It is also a symbol of auspiciousness, holiness and sacrifice. Special qualities like wisdom, heroism and nobility were attributed to the animals. The Aśokan pillars immortalized the sculptures of lions and bulls. The best known Mauryan capital is that of the pillar of Sarnath. Here we find four lions seated back to back and facing the four directions. This capital consists of an inverted lotus with gently carved petals. On the abacus are carved a lion, a galloping horse, an elephant and a bull separated from each other by a wheel. According to historian Vincent Smith the Mauryan animal sculpture has no parallel in the world.

Animals played a role in several events in the life of Buddha. Usually their appearance is incidental – the Mūcilinda nāga protected from storm & rain, and the steed Khantaka carrying Prince Siddhartha away into the night, being examples of this. In a few other incidents they play a more important role – Prince Siddhartha rescuing the goose from Devadatta, the Buddha being looked after by an elephant and a monkey according to the commentary during his stay in the Parileyya Forest, and his calming of the infuriated elephant Nālagiri.

Nāgās have been depicted in Buddhist art, in their individual capacity; as deities; as adoring the Buddha, and also as an integral part of various Jātakas. According to C. Sivaramamurti, "The numerous figures of Nāga s in Buddhist
sculptures are due to the important role they play in Buddha’s fold and their great reverence for the Master.”

Nāga s are depicted in the form of snakes and also in the form of human beings, (male and female) with snake hoods. Nāga s are shown with several hoods, usually five or seven, while Nagins are shown with a solitary hood. Sometimes Nāga s are also seen with eight or nine hoods.

The Nidānakathā, mentions Nāga Mūcilinda, as protecting the Buddha. After attaining enlightenment, in the sixth week, Buddha sat under the Mūcilinda tree. A storm arose, Nāga Mūcilinda, shielded the Buddha with the seven folds of his hood.

The Mahāvagga, elaborating the same event, states, “... king Mūcilinda came out from his abode, and seven times encircled the body of the Blessed One with his windings, and kept extending his large hood over the Blessed One’s head, ... “ It further explains, that as the storm abated, Mūcilinda, “made his own appearance disappear, created the appearance of a youth, and stationed himself in front of the Blessed One, raising his clasped hands and paying reverence to the Blessed One.

Kanthaka was the name of the royal horse of young Buddha having pure white in colour and born on the day as the Buddha, who was present in most of the important events in his life. Kanthaka was a favourite white horse of length eighteen cubits that was a royal servant of Prince Siddhartha, who later became Gautama Buddha. Siddhartha used Kanthaka in all major events described in Buddhist texts prior to his renunciation of the world.

Kanthaka is first described in relation to the events leading up to the marriage of Siddhartha to Yasodharā, another Sākyan princess.

After Siddhartha’s marriage, Kanthaka was the horse pulling the chariot when Channa, the head royal servant accompanied Siddhartha around Kapilavastu to see
the Four sights whilst meeting his subjects, which prompted his decision to renounce the world.

Later when the prince fled the palace to become an ascetic he rode on this horse. Channa, the head royal servant, saddled Kanthaka and guided him one of the town by the bank of Anoma River.

Kanthaka was born on the same day as the Buddha was born.

Lord Buddha suffused the elephant Nālagiri with loving-kindness of mind. The elephant Nālagiri, suffused by the Lord with loving-kindness of mind, having approached, he stood in front of the Lord. Then the Lord, stroking the elephant Nālagiri’s forehead with his right hand.

The elephant Nālagiri, having taken the dust of the Lord’s feet with his trunk, having scatted it over his head, moved back bowing while he gazed upon the Lord. Then the elephant Nālagiri, having returned to the elephant stable, stood in his own place; and it was in this way that the elephant Nālagiri became tamed.

The tradition believes that had the elephant not been a beast he would certainly have become a Sotapanna (the first step to the Arahatahood) after having listened to the sermon.

The story of Siddhartha and the swan is a favourite with Buddhists all over the world. It is not found in the Pali scriptures but comes from a Sanskrit text which has also been translated into Tibetan. It is also mentioned in the book biography of the Buddha, 'the Light of Asia', by Edwin Arnold which is a free adaptation of the Sanskrit text Lalitavistara.

This story is also mentioned in the book 'Life of the Buddha' According to the Ancient texts and Monuments in India by Foucher, that both were barely twelve years old, we are told, when one day Devadatta wounded the wing of one of the fine royal geese with an arrow. The bird fell at Siddhartha’s feet. He picked it up to bind its
wing to heal it, refusing to give it to his cruel cousin, who wanted to kill it. Such was
the cause of the latter’s animosity – at least in this life, for it goes without saying that
this hostility had been constantly reborn from one existence to the other and loses
itself in the darkness of the past.

A monkey saw the elephant Parileyyaka, performing the lesser duties for the
Tathāgata. After observing an elephant attend the Buddha by bringing water and
fruits, a monkey said to himself, “I’ll do something too.” One day as he was running
about, he happened to see some stick-honey free from flies. He broke the stick off,
took the honey-comb, stick and all, broke off a plantain-leaf, placed the honey on the
leaf, and offered it to the Buddha. He took it. The monkey watched to see whether or
not he would eat it. He observed that the Buddha, after taking the honey, sat down
without eating. ‘What could be the reason?’ thought monkey. He took hold of the
stick by the tip, turned it over, carefully examining it as he did so, whereupon he
discovered some insect’s eggs. Having removed these gently, he again gave the
honey to the Buddha. The Buddha ate it.

The monkey was so delighted (because the Buddha had accepted his offering)
that he leaped from one branch to another and danced about in great glee. But the
branches he grasped and the branches he stepped on broke off. Down he fell on the
stump of a tree and was impaled. So he died. And solely because of his faith in the
Teacher he was reborn in the World of the Thirty-three (Trāyastriṃśa) in a golden
mansion thirty leagues in measure, with a retinue of a thousand celestial nymphs.

Madhu Pūrṇimā (Bengali for 'honey full-moon') is a Buddhist festival
celebrated in India and Bangladesh, especially in the region of Chittagong. It occurs
on the day of the full moon in the month of Bhadro (August/September).

Madhu Pūrṇimā is celebrated as a joyous day of unity and charity. Indian and
Bangladeshi Buddhists observe it by bringing gifts of honey and fruit to monasteries.
A Jātakas is a story about the repeated births (jāti) of the Bodhisattva, the being destined to the present Buddha in his final birth. These are the stories that tells about the previous lives of the Buddha, in both human and animal form. The tales comprise one of the largest and old collection of stories in the world. The earliest sections, the verses are the earliest part of the Pali tradition and dated from the 5th Century BCE. The later part of the stories were incorporated up to 3rd Century CE Buddha often cited examples from his past lives in order to explain the right conduct to his disciples. Since he told the stories according to a given situation, there was never a sequence to these stories.

As pointed out in the earlier chapters as of today, a total of 547 Jātakass are in existence. But there are indications that the actual number of Jātakass could be more. The Petlieik Pagoda at Pagan has representation of at least 550 Jātakass. Some scholars believe that the latter figure could be due to the human tendency of rounding off figures. But popular belief is that the actual number was indeed 550 and the remaining three have been lost.

The Jātakas narratives rose from the oral literature of Madhyadesa (the "middle country") coinciding with the areas of Harayana, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. Some of the tales are also found in a modified version in the Pañcantara, Kathāsaritsagara, etc. while in some other cases they have parallels in the Mahabharata, Ramayana, Purāṇas and a few episodes mentioned in the religious literature of Jainism. The Northern Indian flavour of the Jātakas tales is evident. Many Jātakas occur in the Mahāvastu in prose as well as in verse written in mixed Sanskrit. A careful study of the Jātakass shows that the stories are highly edifying and have various purpose to serve. However, the proto-Mahayana schools like Sarvāstivādin Buddhists also added certain sacred episodes based on earlier traditions called "Avadānas" which are also represented in arts. Yet, the Jātakass never lost their significance. According to Saddharmapundarika Sūtra, Buddha himself admitted that he had been utilizing sutras, gāthās and Jātakas to highlight his teachings.
The Buddhist Jataka stories present an anthropomorphic view of animals, showing their truly human qualities, both good and bad, heroic and evil. The Jatakass contain many kinds and levels of tales from monkish moralizing and simple animal fables, to moving compassionate animal birth stories and fragments of larger heroic epics. In both the Pali Jatakas and the Jatakasamala of Aryasura, the Buddha is shown not as withdrawing from the world but as acting with compassion and wisdom for the benefit of all living beings. In the Jatakass, we discover the essence of the Buddhist attitude brought to life—the attitude of universal compassion which is the spontaneous urge to help others flowing from the knowledge of inner oneness. In the Jatakass, we learn that long ago, as a Deer King, the Bodhisatta risked his own life to free all creatures from danger; as a monkey he saved an ungrateful hunter; as a lion he saved all the frightened beasts from their own fears; as a parrot he flew selflessly through flames to save all those trapped in a burning forest, as an elephant he offered his life so that starving men might live; as a king he offered his own flesh to save a dove; as a prince he gave his life so that a starving tigress and her cubs might live. The Jatakass, in short, dramatically express the actions, in the world, of one liberated from all self-concern. They demonstrate the natural workings of the Bodhisatta mind and heart, and by so doing, turn all of existence into a vast field of spiritual effort in which no life form, no matter how seemingly insignificant, is outside the Path. All beings are revealed as potential Buddhas and Bodhisattas. Microbe, sparrow, dog, monkey, horse, dolphin, man: each at its own level can feel compassion for the sufferings of others and act selflessly to ease the pain of all beings. At some moment in life, it seems, each is offered an opportunity and a choice. Besides revealing the character of the Buddha in his own Path to Buddhahood, the Jatakass simultaneously validate and give credence to our own natural feelings of compassion and our own spontaneous acts of selflessness. These tales ideally show us how to live in the world of suffering as well as offer us a viable and deeply spiritual vision of the nature of the universe.

The message of the Jatakass is especially poignant in our own time. As we grow increasingly aware of the depredations, our own 21st century life styles make on the planet, as the plight of whales, and mountain gorillas, wolves, and other
endangered species, as well as the cruel treatment which cats, dogs, rabbits, monkeys, rats and mice receive—often to little purpose—in our laboratories, becomes increasingly clear to us, the Jātakas can only stand out in even greater relief. Who knows, as the Jātakas suggest, among the very animals which we as a culture now maim, torment, slaughter, and devour are sensitive and aspiring beings, the Bodhisattas and future Buddhas. The Jātakas, once taken to heart, transform our own sensibilities and imaginations. After entering the world of the Jātakas, it becomes impossible not to feel more deeply for animals. It also becomes harder to believe that they are below us—that they are here for our own enjoyment and use. The Jātakas help us sense that animals have their own lives, their own kamma, tests, purposes, and aspirations. And, as often brief and painful, as their lives may be, they are also graced with purity and a clarity which we can only humbly respect, and perhaps even occasionally envy. The Jātakas validate our deepest feelings and keep alive for us today knowledge of the wisdom inherent in all life forms. To lose respect for all other species, and the fundamental wisdom they too embody is, after all, to weaken the first and most fundamental of the precepts—not to kill but to cherish all life. The most famous is the Sasa Jātakas about the hair who lived in the woods with a monkey, a jackal, and an otter. The story concerns their decision to observe the holy days (uposattha) and the moral law by giving alms. Recognizing the full moon they decided to consider the next day as the day for fasting and feed any beggar. While the monkey, the jackal and the otter collected food to be given to anyone in need of it, the hare was unable to collect any food and offered his own flesh. The hare was rewarded for having supernaturally imposed its form on the face of the moon. The animal hero here is considered as having been a Bodhisatta in a previous life. The story offers a very humane picture of its animal characters. In the Nandimagga Jātakas, there is the story of a deer who fearlessly faced a king who was hunting; by his steadfast gaze, he changed the mind of the king and saved the other animals. In the Dhammapadā we find the story of Dhanapalaka, an elephant who suffered from homesickness after being separated from his mother. The captive elephant refused food. In the Mahākapi Jātakas, a monkey saves his tribe by using his body as part of a bridge for them to cross the Gaṅgā. While some Jātakas depict superhuman qualities
expressing the life of the Bodhisatta, they also reflect a capacity for affection, which is as important as the heroic qualities of courage and sacrifice. Although we may not find a structured moral code among animals, they seem to express certain deeply valued virtues. It has been observed that animals are devoted to their offspring, sympathetic to their kindred, affectionate to their mates, self-subordinating in their community, courageous beyond praise.

Indian inscriptions engraved into stone or other durable materials, or etched into metal, are an important historical source beginning from the third century B.C.E.. The vast majority are found in South India, written on plates of copper, the stone walls of temples, or stone monuments. An estimated 100,000 inscriptions have now been found, and many of these have been cataloged and translated. These inscriptions corroborate information from other sources, give the dates and locations of significant events, trace detailed royal genealogies, and provide an insight into early Indian political structure, legal codes, and religious practices. They also document the development and use of written languages in India.

The earliest written materials on the Indian subcontinent are the Edicts of Aśoka, a collection of 33 inscriptions on the Pillars of Aśoka, as well as boulders and cave walls, made by the Emperor Aśoka of the Mauryan dynasty during his reign from 272 to 231 B.C.E..

These inscriptions have been found in over 35 locations throughout the areas of modern-day Pakistan and northern India, near towns, trade routes and religious centers. They were deciphered in 1837, by the Orientalist James Prinsep. In these inscriptions, Aśoka refers to himself as "Beloved of the Gods" and "King Piyadassi." The identification of King Piyadassi with Aśoka was confirmed by an inscription discovered in 1915 which referred to the author as "Devānampiya Aśoka."
Further, the study of inscriptions reveals various categories of sculptors and architects such as Pasanikas, Lipikaras, Lekhas, Avesanins, Silavaddhakis, Navakammikas, Mahanavakammikas and Navakammika Padhanas who laboured their skillful services for the development of Buddhist art.

Pasanikas (Skt. Pashana=stone) were the artisans engaged in quarrying, cutting and dressing the stone required by the sculptors and architects for engraving inscriptions, carving sculptures and architectural details.

The Lipakaras or Lekhas, the scribes or engravers of inscriptions, also called as Ulekha or Ullekhakas, were appointed in the royal courts to execute the royal charters. There were known as Rājalekhakas or Rajalipikaras.

Workers on stone were called as Silavaddhakis. A Nāga rjunakonda inscription records the name of a Silavaddhaki, Vidhika, who accomplished some building works at that site.

*Avesanin* is a term that occurs very frequently in the early inscriptions, meaning the foreman or the supervisor of the sculptural works.

The terms Mahanavakammika and Navakammikapadhana as referred in Amaravati inscriptions were the great supervisors of renovations

The Navakammikapadhana (Navakarmika Pradhana), the chief supervisor of the renovation work.

According to the edicts, Aśoka took great care of the welfare of his subjects (human and animal), and those beyond his borders, spreading the use of medicinal treatments, improving roadside facilities for more comfortable travel, and establishing "officers of the faith" throughout his territories to survey the welfare of the population and the propagation of the Dharma.
However, the edicts of Asoka reflect more the desire of rulers than actual events; the mention of a 100 'panas' (coins) fine for poaching deer in royal hunting preserves shows that rule-breakers did exist.

 Everywhere within Beloved-of-the-Gods, King Piyadasi’s domain, and among the people beyond the borders, the Cholas, the Pandyas, the Satyaputras, the Keralaputras, as far as Tamraparni and where the Greek king Antiochos rules, and among the kings who are neighbors of Antiochos, everywhere has Beloved-of-the-Gods, King Piyadasi, made provision for two types of medical treatment: medical treatment for humans and medical treatment for animals. Wherever medical herbs suitable for humans or animals are not available, I have had them imported and grown. Wherever medical roots or fruits are not available I have had them imported and grown. Along roads I have had wells dug and trees planted for the benefit of humans and animals.

 During the period Gândhāra, Mathura in the north India, Bharhut, Sanchi and Pauni in east, Amravati, Nāgarjunakoṇḍa and Bhattachar in the south played great role in the development of Buddhist art and architecture. This was the most flourishing period of Buddhism not only in Maharashtra but also in other parts of India.

 The Buddhist monuments in Sanchi were built over a period of 1400 years, from the 3rd Century B.C. to 12th Century A.D. These Buddhist monuments are included in the World Heritage list of UNESCO since 1989. Sanchi became an important commercial town when Aśoka (272 B.C. to 232 B.C.) occupied the Mauryan throne at Pataliputra. Agnimitra, the son of Pushyamitra Sunga shifted the capital from Pataliputra to Sanchi. The Buddhist edifices which were created during the Sunga rule (187 B.C. to 75 B.C.) such as those at Sanchi and Bharhut are among the grandest creations in India. The Sātavāhanas were a mighty power after Mauryas and a large number of Buddhist rock-cut temples were excavated during their reign in western India.
Bulls motif is shown carved on the pillars as well as on the rail on the doorway at Karle, Nasik, Pitalkhora, Bhaja, Bedsa and Kanheri, Satavahana kings seem to have issued the bull-type coins which were of long standing and were perhaps, more popular. These are the Buddhist monuments and the presence of the bull appears in some way connected with the Buddha whose birth sign is Taurus.

The bull is considered as the most formidable, deadly with its horns and quick and undaunted in attack. The subjugation of bull by man ensured abundant food supply and transport power. Its virility and association with agriculture made it a symbol of masculinity and fertility. Based on these virtues, bull became a sacred animal.

The horse is very swift and is usually depicted galloping and prancing. The ancient Indian chariots or rather rathas were driven by speedy horses. The power of horse was exploited by man until the advent of the machine age. Horse played vital role in agriculture, hunting, racing, and lent pomp and pageantry of royalty.

The deer is the most gentle among animals. He suggests childlike innocence and is looked after with tender affection even by sages. The deer is a symbol of auspiciousness and holiness. The poets in India describe the beauty of fawn eye to which most feminine eye painted deep dark with kohl is compared.

This capital consists of an invered lotus with gently carved petals. On the abacus are carved a lion, a galloping horse, an elephant and a bull separated from each other by a wheel. These animals represent the turning points in Buddha’s life. The elephant symbolizes his conception of life in the womb of his mother, the bull his youth, the horse his renunciation of worldly life and the lion his attainment of enlightenment. Together they symbolize the four quarters of the universe, the elephant being the guardian of the east, the horse of the south, the bull as at Ramapurva of the west, and the lion as in the Nadangarh example, of the north. The four lions on top represent the physical power of the world.
Thus the lion-capital as a whole is entirely symbolical of the Buddha, his Sermon and his Sangha. These three principal elements are represented collectively in the triratna symbol which appears in the succeeding age of the Sungas.

The Jātakas tales that are depicted in the paintings usually have a moral significance. The mural showing scenes from Shaddanta Jātakas portrays boundless generosity. The Visvantara Jātakas tale mural is showing the quality of charity. The Vidhurapandita Jātakas mural depicts wisdom. It seems that the monks painting these murals were interested in influencing the viewer to lead a virtuous life in the first instance. If some one was influenced enough to study about Buddhism and even convert to that philosophy would have been a secondary motive. Men, women and children from all economic status in society are depicted along with animals.

An ornament called nishka was at first offered in the barter system. Thereafter, gold was obtained from the sands of rivers in India and also from Central Asia, Afghanistan and Tibet, and used in transactions during the Vedic period. This type of gold piece was known as hiranya-pinda (ingot). Likewise Satamana and pada become the pieces for the system. This was the period between 1500 and 800 B.C. approximately. Then was invented the custom of stamping the metallic pieces by kings of the States. It is only in the Ashtadhyayi that the earliest definite mention of stamped metallic pieces or coins is made round about the 6th and 5th century B.C. It mentions that the ornament nishka now had a definite value. Satamana and pada are also mentioned in it. But it seems to be a fact that the coins in their final form had originated in India long before the time of Ashtadhyayi, that is atleast a century before Lydia or China thought of them.

The archaeological evidences clearly indicate that the coins were minted in India long before 5th Century BC in Northern and Central India. Panini wrote Aṣṭādhyāyī in 4th -5th Century BC in which he has mentioned Satamana, Nishkas, Sana, Vimastika, Karshapana and its various sub-divisions to be used in financial transaction.
Kautilya’s Arthasāstra (400 B.C) mentions Pana, Ardh-Pana, Pāda and Aṣṭabhāga identified to be silver coins, and Pāda, Astabhāga, Māsaka, Ardhamāshaka, Kakani and Ardha-Kakani, identified to be copper coins.

The Buddhist texts mention the following coin-names: Kahāpana, Addhakahāpana, Pāda, Māsaka, Addha-māsaka and Kakani.

Ancient Indian coinage was based on ‘karshapana’ unit that consists of 32 rattis (3.3 grams of silver). A ‘Ratti’ is equivalent to 0.11 gms which is the average weight of a Gunja Steel (a bright scarlet coloured seed). Subsidiary denominations of Karshapana like half karshapana (16 ratti), quarter karsspana (8 ratti) and 1/8 of karṣapana (4 ratti).

The animal word of the punch-marked coins consist of elephant, bull, lion, dog, cat, deer, camel, rhinoceros, rabbit, frog, fish, turtle, ghariyal (fish eater crocodile), scorpion and snake. Among the birds, peacock is very popular. The lion and horse symbols appear to have acquired greater popularity in 3rd century B.C. This is evidenced by the capitals of Ashok. The horse symbol is also found on some coins of Yaudheyas and on the series of the coins of Mathura rulers Sivadatta (reverse).

The Pali Theragāthā and Thergāthā, which provide a relatively complete definition of the Buddhist saint, this time as arhant. The Theragāthā and Therigāthā, books 6 and 7 of the Khuddakaṇnikāya in the Suttapiṭaka of the Pali canon, contain the songs of some 240 men and women saints who lived during and after the time of the Buddha. Like other of the more acient texts in the Khuddakaṇnikāya – for example, the Suttanipāta, Dhammapada, Udāna, and Itivuttaka – the Theragāthā and Therigāthā, show us saints who live primarily in the forest and practice forest renunciation. In contrast to these other texts, however, in the Theragāthā and Therigāthā, these forest saints provide the primary focus of discussion.
The Theragāthā is a collection of such utterances and, therefore, it is a supreme record of the feelings, emotions, the thrilling sensations of joy which they derived from solitude and from the hundred thousand objects of Nature, while they practiced meditation.

Primarily, the Theragāthā is a monumental work in the whole of Pali literature as it is a record of the psalms of the Brethren who had broken the ten fetters, who had become thoroughly purged from every kind of taint, who enjoyed the tranquility of mind and finally, who had realized Nibbāna, the ultimate goal and the summum bonum of life according to Buddhist Ethics. But it is not only this. It is a tour de force from yet another point of view which is literary and aesthetic. The spiritual songs which are undoubtedly superb also record the theras’ love of and admiration for Nature.

The gāthās of the theras mentioned in Theragāthā explains how the Nature and various Animals were responsible to create favorable atmosphere for meditation and the Bhikkus were inspired to spend more and more time in practicing meditation heartily.

All these are beautiful examples of sublime poetry. The beautiful objects of nature and the charming scenes of nature do not prove to be distracting but these, on the other hand. Create a congenial atmosphere for the monks to sit in meditation for long.

All these go to prove that Nature with Animals has been described in the Theragāthā in a sublime manner with her beauty and awe and this induced the theras to engage themselves in meditation in order to enjoy the dhyāna-sukhs and ultimately realize the Great Fruit i.e.Nibbāna.

Animals occupy an important place in Buddhism. Animals are very useful to humans. In early Buddhism period people used various animals for domestic, commercial, military, recreational or medicinal purposes. The Buddhist literature i. e.
Jātakas stories, Dhammapada etc. mentions the use of cows, sheep, oxen, buffaloes, rhinoceros, camels, asses, elephants, birds, boars, pigs, dogs, snakes, fish, tigers, lions and many creatures. Animals were used in trade and commerce, hunting, animal fights, gambling, defense, transportation, sacrificial ceremonies, medicines and as gift and food. Snakes or snake poison were used to kill enemies or even kings. Animal science (paśu vidyā) dealt with various aspects of animal life and how to tame them, train them and use them for domestic or military use.

Nāga play a prominent role in Buddhist folklore. Gifted with miraculous powers and great strength, their bodies are described as being those of snakes, but they can assume human form at will. Thus possessing the power of transformation, they are "shape shifters." Broadly they are to be divided into two classes, land-based (thalaja) and water-based (jalaja). The Thalaja-nāgās are regarded as subterranean (and therefore confused with "demons"), whereas the Jalaja-nāgās live in rivers and in the ocean.

In the Buddhist art, three forms of nāga s are illustrated, first mere animal form, second human form with serpenthood shown depicted over the head and third both the human and the animal combined in such a way that the human bust is shown attached with lower animal part as coils. Generally, nāga s in human form with their female counterparts are represented worshipping the Buddha.

The Buddha is also associated with snake. In Buddhism nāga s who play important role in several events in the life of the Buddha are Elapatra, Nanda and Upananda, Kalika and Mücilinda. While, Elapatra waited for the appearance of the Buddha in this world, Nanda and Upananda gave a miraculous bath when he was born. The nāga raja Kalika offered prayers and nagis presented flowers in the honour of the Buddha. Mücilinda protected him during a storm.

The Nāga s have also been considered along with dragons as ambivalent symbols in all cultures. In India the Nāga s are symbols of initiation of wisdom.
They are also connected with fertility cult and are regarded as auspicious emblem of vegetative fertility derived from popular beliefs. They are also considered as genii of lakes and springs and worshipped as powers of waters, alike in their beneficent and their destructive aspects. According to Coomaraswamy Nāga cult is of Dravidian origin.

The Book of Discipline (Vinaya ii.109) contains a list of four Royal Families of Nāgās (Ahirājakulāni) to be radiated with loving-kindness to avert snake bite and/or to overcome a fatality due to a venomous bite after the fact. These four Royal Reptilian Families are: Virūpakkhā, Erāpathā, Chabyāputtā, and Kanhatgatamakā. Two other Nāga tribes are generally mentioned together, the Kambalas and the Assataras.

The Indian mahāsiddha, Nāgārjuna, received his illuminating insights and tantric empowerment with the help of the nāga s in the lake beside which he meditated. Nāga rjuna is one of the main champions of Buddhist philosophy, and is traditionally portrayed with a sunshade or halo formed by a multi-headed serpent. He is called the Second Buddha, partly in tribute to his having established the Madhyamaka [Middle-Way, i.e. neither materialist nor nihilist nor idealist] school of philosophy.

Nāgārjuna was a monk in the celebrated monastery of Nalanda in Behar – the Monte Cassino of India, - and proclaimed himself the restorer of the old faith. According to this prophet, the words uttered by Sakya Muni during his life-time had been heart and noted down by the Nāga s, who had kept them to themselves in their own abode, till such time as mankind should become worthy to receive them. Nāgārjuna gave out that he had received these documents from the Nāga s and was commissioned to proclaim them to the world. This gave rise to an entirely new school of Buddhism known as Mahāyāna, or as M. Julien translates it, the ‘Grand Vehicule,’ as opposed to Hīnayāna or the ‘Petit Vehicle’.
Nāga s in Buddhist art also appear in the early monuments of Mathura, Sanchi, Amravati and various other sites. But they appear initially on the shrine doorways. They have a pre-historic origin.

Animals may not be ethical, but they have often shown virtuous'. Ethical conduct that which follows a code of moral rules and are aware, to some extent of an intelligible principle underlying them. Virtue, on the other hand, is the source from which spring unpremeditated acts of kindness, self-abnegation and heroism, prompted by love or some other primal and instinctive urge.

Anyone who has taken pleasure in feeding monkeys in a wild state will have noticed that there is usually one old male who tyrannizes over the females and their young, greedily snatching more than he needs himself rather than let the weaker members share the dana. But that does not mean that all monkeys are egoistic bullies. A few years ago it was reported from India that a monkey had jumped into a swollen river and saved a human baby from drowning at great peril to its own life. The incident is noteworthy because it concerns a wild animal; such actions by domesticated animals are so frequent that they often pass unnoticed. It suggests a special relationship between animals and those human beings who live at peace with them; perhaps a rudimentary sense of gratitude or even a dim idea of the need for mutual help against the forces of nature. Monkeys are treated with kindness by the Indian villager, and all the higher animals are well able to distinguish between kindness and enmity.

The stories of animals in the canonical texts and commentaries are sometimes very faithful to the nature of the beasts they deal with. Thus the noble horse Kanthaka** pined away and died when its master renounced the world to attain Buddhahood. That story has the ring of historical truth. In a later episode an elephant, Parileyyaka*** and an intelligent monkey were the Enlightened One's companions when He retired to the forest to get away from quarrelling Bhikkhus.
There was the case of the elephant Dhanapala,**** which suffered from homesickness in captivity and refused food for love of its mother. The Buddha immortalized it in the stanza:

*Dhanapalako nama kunjaro*

*Katukappadhebano dunnivarayo*

*Baddho kabalan na bhunjati.*

*Sumarati nāga vanassa kunjaro*

Dhammapada, verse 324

Also from the Dhammapada Commentary is the tale of Ghosaka,*****? the child who was laid on the ground to be trampled on successively by elephants and draught-oxen, but was saved by the compassionate beasts walking round instead of over him. The suckling of this child by a she-goat is reminiscent of other stories, such as that of Romulus and Remus, suckled by a wolf, and Orson, by a bear. These may or may not be legendary, but there have been well-attested cases in recent times of human children being nurtured and raised by animals.

The good qualities of animals is the subject of several Jātakas stories, the best known being that of the hare in the moon (Sasa Jātakas)* and the story of the heroic monkey-leader who saved his tribe by making his own body part of a bridge for them across the Ganges (Mahākapi** Jātakas). Less well-known stories of the same kind are the Chaddanta Jātakas,*** in which the Bodhisatta appears as a six tusked elephant, Saccamkira****Jātakas, which contrasts the gratitude shown by a snake, a rat, a parrot which the ingratitude of a prince, and the curious tale of the Mahāsukā*****? Jātakas, where a parrot out of gratitude to the tree that sheltered it refuses to leave the tree when Sakka causes it to wither. There is even an elephantine version of Androcles and the lion in the Alina Citta****** Jātakas, where a tusker gives itself and its offspring in service to some carpenters out of gratitude for the removal of a thorn from its foot.

Whether we choose to take these last examples literally, as events that occurred in previous would-cycles when animals had more human characteristics than
now, or as folk-tales of the Pañcatantra type, is immaterial. Their function is to teach moral lessons by allegory, but they are also important as illustrating the position that animals occupy side by side with men in the Buddhist world-view. By and large the Jātakas do not exalt animals unduly, for every tale of animal gratitude or affection can be balanced by another showing less worthy traits which animals and men have in common. There is at least one, however, which satirises a peculiarly human characteristic, hypocrisy. In the Vaka Jātaka,* a wolf, having no food decides to observe the Uposatha fast. But on seeing a goat the pious wolf decides to keep the fast on some other occasion. If the story were not intended to be satirical it would be an injustice to wolves. Whatever other vices it may have, no animal degrades itself with sham piety, either to impress its fellows or to make spiritual capital out of an involuntary deprivation.

The Buddhist position on animals is very simple. It does not take long to set it out. The Buddhist position is that animals are sentient beings and should be treated with care and respect. This means that they should not be killed. They should not be eaten, experimented on, hunted, used to make fur coats or leather goods, or tortured for sport or any other reason. A serious Buddhist practitioner should not eat anything that he has seen, heard or suspected to be meat. The point of the actions of a true Buddhist sangha, however, are not simply that the number of animals hunted, eaten or whatever be reduced by a number equivalent to the number of Buddhist practitioners, nor that those practitioners personally attain some reward for virtue in heaven or wherever. The point is that those right actions, being an expression of a more all embracing vision and standing upon the ground of the ultimate goodness shall be transforming acts for all, not merely for self. The sangha is designed to give a lead and to act in ways that change the spirit of the times. Specific acts of cruelty need to be omitted or countered, but what is needed is a fundamental change in the mythology of our age about the relation between people, animals and environment.

Humans and animals are not different in sentience. Buddhism does not draw a metaphysical line between humans and other animals. Animals are not to be classified
as goods. They should be treated as sentient beings. Animals may be expected to work, but they are either wild or they are part of the community. It is not acceptable to sacrifice animals for human convenience nor to kill them because they have become "uneconomic". The measure of an animal is not its utility to humans or the benefit to humans that it provides. Animals exist in their own right. There are invidious extreme cases, but the common case is quite clear. The fact that we are animals ourselves with nerves and pain and fear of death enables us to know what it is like for other animals.

Young people often have a natural sensitivity to animals. Unfortunately this is commonly driven out of them. They come up against the fact that our society is built upon the assumption that animals only exist for human benefit and have no sentence of their own. Natural sensitivity should be cultivated, not ridiculed. We should not teach young people that they are being unduly sentimental in being concerned about the suffering of animals. We should let them know that such sensitivity is perfectly right and natural.

In olden time, hunting was closely associated with warfare. It was what men at arms did when there was no war to fight. The Buddha wanted to bring about a world where there was no war. His concern about animals was not separate from his concern about war. Both sprang from his groundedness in ultimate truth and his inspiration by a spirit of measureless compassion. His approach was to train a cadre of people who would take the lead by showing an example and spreading the message. This group was the Buddhist sangha. They were to train themselves outwardly and inwardly - in behaviour and in attitude - to be exemplars of a new way of life that did not depend upon killing. To do so is an act of faith and an expression of gratitude.

Animism and anthropomorphism was widely prevalent amongst the ancient Indian people. Animals were seen as an incarnation of human spirits, or the spirits of one's own ancestors. Of course, it is true that any agricultural people has a feeling for
the force that works in nature, and comes to personalize each separate force. Buddhism propounded important oral precepts that affirmed that killing other sentient beings was a violation of the most basic moral norms of the universe. The first precept in the tradition is _I undertake to abstain from the destruction of life._ This is an ethical commitment that the tradition has from its very beginnings identified as part of the core of religious living. Society for a Buddhist, then, is not to be taken in the narrow sense of human society, but in a broader sense of a community comprising all living beings or sentient beings.

There are several reasons for the appearance of animals in Buddhist literature, sculptures and paintings. Firstly, this was so because of kamma where individuals are born again and again in different forms. Second reason is the tendency towards animism, the idea that animals and even plants which concern man have life in some similar way as men. This thought seems to have been very strong already at the time of the Buddha. The third reasons is the personification of animals which was greatly developed at the time. It was very easy to adapt these personifications for moral purposes and thus animals and men talk to each other on the same footing. This happens chiefly in stories and parables. The use of animals which were familiar to everyone was a very good method of popularizing the teaching. Many examples of this method are found in the Jātakas. Some examples from the Jātakas are like, say the Ruru Jātaka: A son of a rich merchants, who leads a profligate life tries to kill himself by throwing himself in the Ganga. A deer named Ruru saves the youth at by endangering his own life. Later, the youth betrays the deer by giving information about his whereabouts. But from the thus, the caught deer, the king comes to now about the relationship between the two. The king lets the deer go but wants to kill the youth. The deer, however, pleads with the king to let the youth go.

Abhaya-dana (the path of fearlessness) is a kind of giving meaning to take away one's fear and to give a sense of security. According to one tradition, the Abhaya-mudra is said to have originated from the gesture made by the Buddha when he was confronted by the drunken elephant Nālagiri who was set loose on the
highway at the instigation of Devadatta. Abhaya-dāna was given concrete expression by some kings of the Theravada countries, in their own ways. We have instances from the inscriptions of Aśoka such as the 7th, 5th and 2nd Pillar Edicts, which are devoted to the same idea which, today, we know as Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. Though the 5th Pillar Edict does not altogether prohibit the slaughter of animals and only takes a realistic view of the subject.

In historic India, animal deities preceded anthropomorphic ones. Empty throne of the Buddha. During the Mauryan period, the statues purely belong to the animal world. In the following period, the images centre far more on animals than on human beings. Animals predominate as characters in the Jātakas stories of and the heroes are generally not people but animals. These are, in addition, the bearers of culture. Humanity receives water from a snake, fire from a frog and sleep from a lizard. Perhaps early people were overawed by the superior natural abilities of other creatures. The animals featured, whether by frequency or by placement, in Buddhist literature and art are usually animals with impressive speed and strength — horses, bulls, deer, tigers, lions, bears, rhinoceroses. But animals may also have been preferred as Bodhisattvas simply because they are so unlike us, and therefore filled with mystery.

The emergence of animal deities is the product of cultural experience reaching over hundreds of millennia, in which human beings lived as animals among other creatures of the wild. Since these creatures no longer seemed to communicate with them directly, men and women tried to reach the animals through images and signs. The images and signs of animals depicted in Buddhist art and literature on the basis of their size, power, habits and appearance became divine beings, to be claimed by either deities or human beings. Through divine images human beings were able to bridge the vast gulf between experience and memory.

The Buddha fervently argued the importance of making ethical treatment of all sentient beings a theological priority. He opposed animal sacrifices and paid
special attention to the important task of building up an ethical system in which justice for animals is regarded as the norm rather than the exception. The Buddha's frequent reference to the migration of samskaras and rebirth across species lines reduces the psychic space between humans and other beings. In this paper, an attempt is made to show on the basis of early Buddhist literature that animals in Buddhism are not simply driven about by impulses beyond their control and that they are capable of both passion and voluntary motion. As the Animal Rights/ Welfare Movement is growing stronger by the day.

Buddhist deities are often depicted in animal form. The overwhelming number of animal Bodhisattas is a proof of this. Lion, bull, elephant remain associated with the Buddha directly. There are many Jātakas tales which may have served to assimilate local animal cults into Buddhism. The old animal cults were still part of the folk lore at the time of the Buddha, and he appears to have mixed theriomorphic traits with human ones while including them in the Buddhist pantheon. As divine aspects of women and men need to be acknowledged, so do those in animals. We need inspiring figures which are not anthropomorphic to remind us that the world was not simply created for human beings, and that other figures also need to be respected. Furthermore, the recognition of divinities that are not anthropomorphic could diffuse and mediate the tension that comes of viewing divinity solely in terms of men and women.

In the rules of the Vinaya Piṭaka, the precept against taking life is broken down in a significant way. The taking of human life is listed here as a third of the parajikas, the most serious class of offences, leading to expulsion from the Saṅgha for its violation. This is distinguished from the destruction of non-human sentient life, which is classified among the less serious pācittiya forbidding monks the use (paribhoga) of water containing living beings which might thereby be destroyed makes clear the intent to apply the rule against the destruction of life even to insects and the smallest of one-celled creatures. A number of post-canonical texts go to great
lengths to assign those who have destroyed various types of animal life under diverse circumstances to appropriate hells.

Buddhist literature is full of interesting incidents and stories relating to animal protection. In one such story, Sakka, while being chased by his enemies (asuras), advised his charioteer:

See that the chariot pole, O Matali,
Keeps clear of nests among the silk-cotton trees,
Let us choose to give up our lives to Asuras,
Rather than make these birds nestless.

Thus, in order to avoid injuring the birds or damaging their nests, Matali turned the chariot around. Seeing the chariot suddenly reverse its direction, the asuras panicked in the face of what they thought was an impending attack and took to their heels. The story concludes by noting that in this instance Sakka was saved by his righteous concern for the birds, implying that the monks to whom the story is addressed should show a similar concern for the well-being of such creatures.

The Buddha was strongly critical of the practice of hunting enjoyed by the royalty. He discouraged war as a method of settling disputes and demonstrated its utter futility. This sensitivity was extended to the minutest of the creatures. The rule for the monks that prohibits the cutting of trees. Destroying plants, digging the soil, and so forth may be interpreted as a warning that the minute forms of life may be destroyed by such actions. A certain form of life called one-faculties (ekindriya jīva) inhabits plants, trees and the soil, and even water may have creatures or breathers (sappanaka udaka) in it. An ideal king, as mentioned in the Cakkavattisihanāda Sutta, should provide protection not only to human beings, but also to the beasts of the forests and the birds of the air (miga-pakkhisu).

The Buddha's concern about the value of life emerges from compassion, which is why he was critical of capital punishment, warfare, hunting, animal
sacrifices, suicide and callousness of a physical or psychological nature toward living creatures.

The Buddha vehemently opposed animal sacrifices. The Buddha pointed out that sacrifices like the Asvamedha bring great calamities. Animal sacrifice was a prominent feature of the Brahmanical faith before and at the time of the Buddha. The Buddha out rightly rejected such as evil practice.

Stealing an animal is seen by Buddhism as a serious offence. A group of cases where monks release certain animals from traps throws important light on the Buddhist attitude towards animals. Where a monk releases an entrapped pig, deer, or fish intending to steal it, there is an offence entailing defeat and warranting expulsion from the order. However, if a monk releases such an animal out of compassion, there is no offence at all. Thus, motive is central to Buddhist ethics. In the list of five trades that all Buddhists are explicitly prohibited from engaging in, two related to animals and they are: trade in flesh; and trade in living beings. The work of sheep-butchers, hog-butchers, fishermen, animal trappers is considered so heinous that they are lumped together with thieves and executioners. Buddhism advises its followers to treat animals with the same universal, positive virtues (the Brahma vihāras) that govern human inter-relationship i.e. these virtues including loving kindness (mettā), compassion (karuṇā), sympathetic joy (muditā), and equanimity (upekkhā) are intended to be applied to all living beings. Buddhism is replete with examples of the co-existence of humans with other animals and environmentally sensitive ways of living.

In some forms of Buddhism, eating of meat is totally prohibited. In Theravada meat-eating is allowed only under certain conditions. In any case, even Theravada Buddhism recognizes, as pointed out in the Puttamamsa Sutta, that material food (kabalinkara ahara) should be taken not for pleasure (davaya), or indulgence (madaya), or personal charm (mandanaya), or for comeliness (vibhusanaya), but for sheer necessity of living. The ideal monk is described as controlled in deed and word,
restrained in food for the stomach (kayagutto, vacigutto, ahare dare yato); with light stomach, moderate in food, easily satisfied, and undisturbed (unudaro, mitaharo, appicch assa alolupo). On the other hand, a person who is immoderate as to food is described as one who thoughtlessly and unwisely takes food for the sake of amusement, pride, decoration, ornamentation, insatiability, immoderation and thoughtlessness as to food.

In Buddhism, killing or injuring living beings is regarded as both unwholesome and fundamentally immoral; for, on the one hand, killing or injuring them is bad kamma entailing evil consequences for the perpetrator after his death, and on the other all living, sentient beings are afraid of death and recoil from pain just like oneself. Time and again, Buddhism declares spiritual attitudes like benevolence as well as actual abstention from killing or injuring animate beings to be the right attitude or behaviour for monks as well as lay people.

Normally it is suppose that the animals have no developed mind, no thinking ability. They can not think and analyse the problems like Human being. But it is observed from the Buddhist literature that there are animals were developed sense organs, they can think they analyse problems and acts as a Human being or more than that

- The animals observed Uposatha, the holy day fast
- The animals kept five percepts (pañcasila),
- The animals gave respect to the yellow robes,
- The animals observing ten pāramitas,
- The animals who has sacrificed their life for others

It is observed from Buddhist literature that the animals also observed path of purification i.e. Buddhism to get free from the animal realm and to born in the next good realm.

Animals have some glimpse of the practical meaning of responsibility, and that there are cases in which possibly 'ideas are beginning to emerge'. That there is the possibility of such ideas being formed in the animal mind, and that they can be encouraged and cultivated
Buddhism takes into full account the animal's latent capacity for affection, heroism and self-sacrifice. There is in Buddhism more sense of kinship with the animal world, a more intimate feeling of community with all that lives, than is found in Western religious thought. And this is not a matter of sentiment, but is rooted in the total Buddhist concept of life.

So in the Buddhist texts animals are always treated with great sympathy and understanding. Some animals, such as the elephant, the horse and the Nāga, the noble serpent, are used as personifications of great qualities, and the Buddha Himself is Sakya Siha, the Lion of the Sakyas. His Teaching is the Lion's roar,* confounding the upholders of false views.

It is now necessary to introduce a qualification to the statement that the higher rebirth of animals must depend upon unexpended good kamma. Within the limitation we have noted it is certainly possible for animals to originate good kamma, notwithstanding their lack of moral sense. Contact with human beings can encourage and develop those qualities which we recognise as virtue in the higher animals, and even bring about in them a dawning consciousness of moral values.

Concern for animals is, therefore, not just a peripheral matter. It is symptomatic of the core spiritual concern. How animals and the natural world generally are treated is the measure of a society or civilisation. If we are collectively cruel and rapacious, it is because there is a failure at the level of spirit and ultimate concern. Those who wish a society to advance - who have compassion for all beings - must be concerned about this. In order to change things, there needs to be education and there needs to be a transformation. Such transformation requires action that impinges at the symbolic and mythic as well as - or even more than - at the practical one. Any public demonstration is a ritual. Ritual is intended to impact at the symbolic and mythic level. Those who want to change society's attitude to animals need to understand this and shape their public acts accordingly.
Thus in Buddhism animals are not seen as mere animals but as potential humans or as animals that can teach humans some lessons. That is why animals occupy an important place in Buddhism. The animals played an important role in the life of Buddha either as the animals described in various Jātakas stories, the animals appeared on the Inscriptions, sculptures, caves, on coins & seals, the animals painted in various paintings proves that they have an important place in Buddhism.
!! Bhavatu Sabha Mangalam !!