SYNOPSIS

Synopsis of the Thesis submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) in the faculty of Arts in the subject of Ancient Indian Culture.

K.J. Somaiya Centre For Buddhist Studies
Department of Ancient Indian Culture
University of Mumbai

Topic:
"A systematic survey and historical study of Animals in Early Buddhism"

Under the guidance of
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Signature of the Student
Date 16/1/2012
Place mumbai

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TITLE OF THE THESIS: A SYSTEMATIC SURVEY AND HISTORICAL STUDY OF ANIMALS IN EARLY BUDDHISM

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Ranpise Vivek Bhau
"A systematic survey and historical study of Animals in Early Buddhism"

Introduction

The Buddha was the founder of Buddhism. He, the enlightened one, was an embodiment of mercy, compassion, self-love, forgiveness, truth and purity. In Buddhism, love for animals is not sentimentality but true spirituality. Buddhist texts are replete with examples where animals are cared for.

While studying the Buddhist literature, we come across the various animals mentioned there in. The animals have played an important role in the life of the Buddha, i.e. Kanthaka horse, monkey and elephants in forest served fruits and honey to lord Buddha, wild elephant Parallelayaka who served the Buddha. The story of the elephant, Nalagiri is directly associated with the Buddha himself. The furious elephant Nalagiri was tamed by the Buddha with no other miraculous power than the power of loving kindness.

As mentioned in the Nidāna Kathā the Mahāmāyā mother of Lord Buddha saw in her dream, that the heavens opened and a beautiful elephant, young and graceful as white as the silvery snow of the Himalayas came down towards her, borne on lotus flowers and entered her womb from the right side.

Various animals are described in the Jātaka stories. They have significant characteristics, different nature, and played an important role and even sacrificed their life for betterment of others. The Jātaka stories frequently involve animals as peripheral or main characters. The animals often exhibit characteristics of kindness, compassion, and generosity that are generally lacking in human beings.

The Jātaka s depict the previous births of the Buddha and this gives the guidelines for the theory of kamma and kammavipāka, the core philosophy of the teachings of the Buddha.

However, five hundred and fifty stories related and narrated in the Jātaka belonging to the Theravāda tradition and as Jātakamālā in Buddhist Sanskrit tradition occupy the most venerable position both from the philosophical and the religious points of view. It is to be noted that many of the stories of Pāli Jātakas are repeated in Buddhist Sanskrit Jātakamālā, Of the five hundred and

Ranpise Vivek Bha
fifty stories, half of them depict animals as central characters. Out of two hundred twenty-five animal characters as the central theme of the Jātaka, seventy different types of animals are enumerated and three hundred nineteen animals or groups of animals are mentioned in the two hundred twenty-five stories. Among the animals, the monkey forms the lead pack. Monkeys are represented in twenty-seven different stories. Elephants are mentioned in twenty-four tales followed by Jackals (20), Lions (19), Crows (17), Deer (15), Birds (15), Fish (12) and Parrots (11). It is very interesting to note that animals represent prior life forms of persons living at the time as the Buddha. The actions of these animals throw enough light for understanding and explaining the present day human behaviour.

These Jātaka stories compared with Apādāna and Avadāna literature wherever it has the similarity in its theme, content, approach and style of narration. The Jātakas and Avadāna are closely related to each other. Both concern edifying tales told with the purpose of inculcating moral precepts -Saddhamma as taught and revealed by the Buddha. The difference between the two, that in Jātaka the Bodhisattva is always either the hero or one of the characters occurring in the story, while any saint may play a part in Avadāna. But there are many Avadānas in which the Bodhisattva is the hero. These are called Bodhisattvāvadānamālās.

There are stories in Anguttara Nikāya and Vinaya Piṭaka Which throw light on the position of animals in early Buddhism. In Vinaya piṭaka, it is mentioned that the Bhikkhus went out on their travels in the rainy season, destroying life of many small being, crushing the green herbs and damaging vegetables life, then Buddha implemented the vinaya (rule) for Bhikkhus to enter upon the vassaṅvāsa.

According to Buddhism, the Buddha nature is possessed by all beings. The Buddhist concept of compassion and non-violence permeates from this faith. The Buddha preached the philosophy of non-violent attitude towards even the smallest living creatures. When in Śrāvasti, in the Jeta grove in the Anāthapindaka monastery, he was walking with six monks. The monks deliberately made use of water that contained living germs. The Buddha admonished the monks for deliberately using the water that contained living things.

In the early Buddhist period, the rock edict of king Aśoka put forward his awareness towards animals. His edicts advise extensively about the well being of all creatures on this earth. Aśoka's pillar edict V gives a list of creatures which were declared protected against slaughter (avadhya).
Parrots, mainas, (some kind of red birds, ruddy, goose, nandi – mukhas (an aquatic bird) and Gelatas (Cranes), bats, queen ants, terrapins, prawns (Anassthika matsyani), edeveyakas, Gangapuputakas (a kind of fish), skate, tortoise and porcupine, tree – squirrels, barasinga stags, bulls set at liberty, okapindas (animals which find their food in houses, such as cats, mice, iguanas and mongooses) rhinoceros, white doves, domestic doves and all quadrupeds, nor are eaten, were not be killed. The she goats, cows, whether they are young or milking cows, were not to be killed, as also their off-springs which were within six months of age. Capturing of cocks was not permitted. Husks with living beings therein were not to be burnt. Forests were not to be burnt in vain or without any purpose as it would harm the animals or living creatures.

The fauna represented in the early Buddhist sculptures and painting are of two classes, namely the real and the mythical animals (ēhāmriga or Vyalas) The latter are in a large variety include lions with beak or wings, winged horses. Winged elephants, sphinxes etc. The real animals comprise quadrupeds like elephant, horse, bullock, deer, camel, lion, monkey, boar, reptiles like the nagas, python, birds like peacock, goose and aquatic animals such as fish, crocodile etc.

In Buddhist literature there are various stories of Nāgas e.g. mūcilinda, kala, atula, ampeyya, bhūridatta, mahadaddara and sankhapala. The Buddhist nāga generally has the form of a large cobra-like snake, usually with a single head but sometimes with many. At least some of the nāgas are capable of using magic powers to transform themselves into a human semblance. In Buddhist painting, the nāga is sometimes portrayed as a human being with a snake or dragon extending over his head.

The books of discipline contains a list of four Royal families of Nāgas (Abhirajakulani) to be treated with loving-kindness to avert snake bite and to overcome a fatality due to a venomous bite after the tact. These four Royal Reptilian Families are: Virupākkha, Erapatha, Chabyaputta and Kannagotamaka.

In the Aṅganāṭhya sutta, speaking of dwellers of the Realm of the four great sky kings (Catummahārajika) Nāgas are mentioned as occupying the western quarter, with virupakkha as their king.
Several Nāga-bhavana are mentioned in Buddhist texts, for example

1) Manjerika-bhavana.
2) Daddara-bhavana at the foot of mount Daddara in the Himalayas.
3) Dhatarattha, under the river Yamunā
4) Nabhasa, in lake Nabhasa
5) The Reptilians of Vesāli, Tacchaka, and Payāga

Thus in early 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 Jātaka 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 early Buddhism, and it is necessary to perform systematic survey to explore the importance significance of such animals having good position in early Buddhism.
RESEARCH PROBLEM AND HYPOTHESIS STATEMENT

The present research is based on the significance and importance of animals in early Buddhism with special reference to 5th Century A.D. It assess the special characters and important roles played by the animals as in early Buddhism. The thesis tries to explain how the animals were grateful and important, how they observed the principles of Buddhism by their act, how they contribute to the philosophy of equality among all the living beings and embodiment of compassion as emphasized in the teachings of the Buddha and play an important role in various complicated situations.

This research is focused on the holistic association of animal kingdom in the early Buddhism. The thesis has examined and studied the archaeological sources like inscriptions, sculptures, visual arts and numismatics, to assess the significance of animals in early Buddhism.

The research has included the characters of animals in the Buddhist Art. There are innumerable references to the animals in the Buddhist art because the Buddha believed and taught that each living creature had its role to play and destruction of animal life would eventually harm human life. The Jātaka tales from the theme of a number of paintings of Ajanta caves show various episodes of animals sacrificing their life for the benefit of other and become heroes. The research work has focused on the comparison of Jātakas with Avadāna literature and Apādana.

The thesis has included how the animals helped, inspired Bhikkhus and Bhikkunis to enhance their meditation in forest with special reference to the Theragāthā & Therāgātha.

Also this research work has focused on uses of animals in Yajñas (sacrifice), as food, they were used for sea-faring, their various products e.g. milk, meat, skin, hair, feathers etc. were used by the laymen; animals were used as medicine e.g. crab soup etc.

This research work has studied why animals like bull, tiger, lion and birds occupied a prominent place on the inscriptions, sculptures, coins during early Buddhism.

This research is also focused on the concept of Nāgas in early Buddhism.
AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH

The Aims and Objectives of the Research are as follows:

1) This research work has studied the animals who played an important role in the life of Buddha.

2) The research work has focused on the characteristics of the animals described in the Jātaka stories to show that how the animals were grateful in nature. Also this research work focused on comparative study of Jātakas with Avadāna & Apādāna literature.

3) The research study has highlighted the significance of animals appeared on various inscriptions, paintings, caves, sculptures, coins & seals in early Buddhism.

4) The research work has studied how the animals in the forest helped the Bhikkus to enhance the meditation, with special reference to Therghathā & Therėgathā.

5) The research work has focused on how the animals were useful to the human beings in early Buddhism.

6) The research study has highlighted on the concept of Nāgas in early Buddhism.
RESEARCH DESIGN & METHODOLOGY

The research is based on primary and secondary sources as various animals described in early Buddhist literature. The primary sources such as archaeological evidences like inscription, monuments, numismatics seals and other artifacts are studied. The canonical literature i.e. Tipiṭaka (Suttapiṭaka, vinayapiṭaka, Abhidhamnapiṭaka) literature were studied. Stories of Jātaka, compared with the Avadāna, literature and studied various aṭṭakathās. Secondary sources such as books mentioned in the Bibliography besides the translated works of the scriptures. Have been covered.

As part of this research program, I visited various places of historical importance, National and State Museums such as National Museum, New Delhi, Chhatrapati Shivaji Vaastu Sangrahalaya (Prince of Wales Museum) Mumbai, to gather information on the research theme. Visit to Ajanta Caves, Kanheri Caves, Karla and Bhaja was undertaken to do research work on fauna in sculptural and visual arts. Photographs were taken at historical places to collect material for the research study. Visited various libraries such as the Jawaharlal Nehru Library at University of Mumbai, Kalina, the Asiatic Library, Library at Chhatrapati Shivaji Vaastu Sangahalaya etc. The method is narrative as well as analytical. The research contains illustrations such as photographs, the paintings and sculptures. Acknowledgement is given to the text of the other authors in the form of footnotes. Tried to rely on scriptural, literary, archaeological, sculptural sources and paintings to give supportive evidences. on this topic.

Places visited – Lumbini, Rājgriha, Vaisāli, Bodh gayā, Śrāvasti, Bharhut, Sāmāth, Nālandā, Amarāvati, Nāgārjunakoṭāa.
SCHEME OF CHAPTERISATION

CHAPTER – I INTRODUCTION

This chapter gives a general introduction about the importance and significance of the animals in early Buddhism. The animals associated and played an important role in the life of Buddha i.e. Kanthaka horse, Monkey and Elephants in forest served fruits and honey to lord Buddha. The furious Elephant Nālagiri was tamed by the Buddha with the power of loving kindness. Beautiful, young white elephant entered in the lap of Mahāmayā, mother of lord Buddha, saw in her dream.

The grateful animals in Jātaka stories, Out of 550 Jātaka stories, half of them presents animals as Central characters. Out of 225 Central animal characters of Jātaka, 70 different types of animals are enumerated and 319 animals or groups of animals are mentioned in the 225 stories. The moral teachings are put in the mouth of animals to show that they too have a share in our evolution and there are lessons that we men can learn from animals. The stories of Jātakas were compared with the Avadāna literature and Aṇḍāna.

In the early Buddhist period, the rock edict of King Asoka put forward his awareness towards animals. His edicts advise extensively about the well being of all creatures on this earth.

The fauna represented in the early Buddhist Sculptures and paintings. The animals appeared on the inscriptions, sculptures, caves, on coins and seals, the animals painted in various paintings prove that they have an important place in early Buddhism.

How the animals in the forest helped to Bhikkus/Bhikkunis to enhance the meditation. How the animals were useful to the human beings in early Buddhism. The concept of Nāgas in early Buddhism.
CHAPTER II ANIMALS ASSOCIATED WITH THE LIFE OF BUDDHA

This chapter is focused on the animals who have played an important role in the life of Buddha.

- The role of kanthaka horse in the life of Buddha right from the childhood of Siddhārtha, the wedding competition and up to the great departure from the palace of the kingdom.
- After the attainment of the enlightenment lord Buddha practiced the knowledge achieved, under the mūccalinda tree. Unseasonal abruption of storm and heavy rain takes place that time appeared, a serpent king Mūccalinda Nāgarājā coiled himself around the body of Lord Buddha and helped Buddha from the disturbance of the storm & heavy rain.
- In the forest at Vaisāli the Elephant and Monkey offered fruits and honey to the Lord Buddha. Also other elephant served hot water to Lord Buddha.
- In Rājgraha, the furious Elephant Nālagiri is tamed by Lord Buddha by loving kindness.

The story of swan injured by Devdatta which is missing in Pāli literature is mentioned in the Sanskrit literary sources like Lalitvistara (Abhiniśkaramaṇa sutta) This incidence in the life of Siddhartha shows the importance of the quality of kindness/compassion than hunting.
CHAPTER -III  GREATFUL ANIMALS IN JATAKA STORIES AND COMPARATIVE STUDY OF JATAKA WITH AVADANA LITERATURE AND APADANA

A Jātaka is a story about ( previous ) repeated births and deaths of the Bodhisatta (Bodhisattva). The tales comprise one of the largest and old collection of stories in the world. The verses in the earliest sections are the earliest part of the Pāli tradition and dated from the 5th Century B.C. The Jātaka stories frequently involve animals as peripheral or main characters. The animals often exhibit such characteristics like kindness and generosity that are absent in the human beings. In many Jātaka stories animals “set an example” for humans and also deepen the threads of human experience. Jātaka stories focus on animals as individuals with personality, volition, flaws and moral excellence.

The Avadāna type is nearly related to the Jātakas. Both concern edifying tales told with the purpose of inculcating moral precepts, the Saddharma as taught by the Buddhas.

The difference between the two consists in this, that in a Jātaka the Bodhisatta (Bodhisattva) is always either the hero or one of the characters occurring in the story, while any saint may play a part in an Avadāna. But there are many Avadānas in which the Bodhisattva is the hero. These are called the Bodhisattvāvadānamālās. The Avadāna literature is in Sanskrit.

Like the Avadāna literature the Apādāna’s also deal with the stories of the previous lives of the Buddha, solitary Buddha, the chief disciples or some arhats and these stories stress upon the theory of kamma (karma). A noble deed never goes unrewarded. Sooner or later it is bound to be rewarded. This very fact is revealed in almost all the Apādāna s, that is why some scholars have assigned those Apādāna as the Pali counterpart of the Avadānas. The law of kamma which states, according to Buddhist Philosophy, that every being becomes what he makes himself. The Jātaka tales are a huge source of wisdom. They have had a profound influence over mankind since time immemorial and they find reflection not just in Indian literature, but also the literature of the whole world.

From the Jātaka stories we realize that how the animals are grateful, compassionate and how they sacrificed their own life for others.

This chapter focus also on the stories of Animals observing Uposatha, Animals giving importance to pañcasila and the animals served for their old parents, Animals observing 10 Pārmitās and giving respect to the holy yellow-robins.
CHAPTER - IV ANIMALS ON INSCRIPTIONS, CAVES, PAINTINGS AND COINS & SEALS

The ancient practice of inscribing cave walls or stone monuments to commemorate conquests, religious ceremonies and other important events existed in many parts of Asia. These inscriptions are valuable as historical evidence of the existence and the activities of early kings and empires, showing by their locations the extent of their domains, and giving dates for certain events.

The edicts of Aśoka, a collection of 33 inscriptions on the pillars of Aūka as well as boulders and cave walls are the earliest written materials on the Indian subcontinent and represent the first tangible evidence of Buddhism.

When Aśoka embraced Buddhism in the later part of his reign; he brought about significant changes in his style of governance which included providing protection to animals and even relinquished the royal hunt. He was perhaps the first ruler in the history to advocate conservation measures for wildlife.

The edicts also proclaim that many followed the king’s example in giving up the slaughter of animals.

Also this chapter focus on the significance of the animals painted on the paintings at Ajanta, and various places and the animals represents on seals and coins during the early Buddhism period.
CHAPTER V IMPACT OF ANIMALS, BIRDS ON THE MEDITATION OF BHikkUS AND BHikkUNIS IN FOREST

This chapter has focused on how the animals & birds help to create a healthy atmosphere to enhance the meditation of Bhikkhus and Bhikkuni’s in the forest with special reference to Ther ā gā thā & Ther ā gā thā.

In Ther ā gā thā, Bhūta thera mentions that when in the sky the thunder – cloud rumbles, full of torrents of rain all around on the path of the birds, and the bhikkhu who has gone into the cave for meditation finds greater contentment.

Cūlaka thera expressed his feelings that, the fair-crested peacocks cry out, fair-winged with beautiful blue neck, fair-faced and with beautiful song and fine cry, this great earth is well-grassed and well-watered; the sky has good clouds. There is the beautiful aspect of a happy men, meditate upon it, a good man finds it easy to go forth in the teaching of the well-enlightened one.

Cittaka thera says, Blue with beautiful necks, the crested peacocks call in Karamvi, urged on by the cool breeze they awaken the sleeper to meditation.

Talaputa thera mentions that, in a cave and on a mountain crest, frequented and plunged into by wild boars and antelopes or on a natural pleasant space, or in a grove sprinkled with fresh water by rain, having gone to your cave –house you will rejoice there (meditation).

Like the Deer roaming at will in the variegated grove, having entered the delightful mountain, wreathed in clouds, rejoice there on the un-crowded mountain.
CHAPTER VI USES OF ANIMALS IN EARLY BUDDHISM.

This chapter deals with the various uses of animals in early Buddhism as per the canonical literature.

Animals were used to offered in Yajña (sacrifice)

Animals like sheep, goats, fowls, swine, elephants, cattle, horses and mares were offered as gifts.

Animals were used in various shows such as combats of elephants, horses, buffaloes, bulls, goats, rams, cocks and quails.

Goat hair coverlets with very long fleece (gonako), woolen coverlets embroidered with flowers (pāṭalika), silk coverlets (koseyyam) rugs of antelope skins sewn together (agīva-pāveṭi), rugs of skins of the plantain antelope, all these are used in laymen’s house and all might be possessed by the order if used only as floors coverings.

Chariots were drawn by mares with plaited manes and tails.

Natural hide of a black antelope were used as clothing

Blankets were made from horse tails – vala kambalam, and from the feathers of owls.

Sea-faring traders were, when they were setting sail on an ocean voyage to take with them a land-sighting bird.

Chariots with coverings of the skins of lions and of tigers and of panthers of which the chariot called ‘the flag of victory’

Elephant of noble breed, through breed steed, used by rajah because these animals were not tremble (frightened) at a thunder-clap.

Apart from the above uses the animals were used for transportation and also for medical treatment e.g. crab soup. Various food products such as milk, ghee, meat, egg etc were obtained from the animals / birds.
CHAPTER – VII CONCEPT OF NĀGAS IN EARLY BUDDHISM

This chapter focused on the various concepts of Nāgas in early Buddhism. In Buddhist literature there are various stories of Nāgas e.g. mūcilinda, kala, Atula, campeyya, bhūridatrta, mahādaddara and saukhapala.

The Buddhist nāga generally has the form of a large cobra-like snake, usually with a single head but sometimes with many. At least, some of the nāgas are capable of using magic powers to transform themselves into a human semblance. In Buddhist painting, the nāga is sometimes portrayed as a human being with a snake or dragon extending over his head.

Among the notable nāgas of Buddhist tradition is mūcalinda, who protected the Buddha from a fierce storm by his ability to transform into a large hooded cobra whose hood covered the meditating Buddha.

Buddha being the teacher of the Realms, Human, Devas and Brahmas, many of the Dhammapada stories described several instances of Nāga’s.

The books of discipline contain a list of four Royal families of Nāgas (Abhirajakulāni) to be radiated with loving-kindness to avert snake bite and to overcome a fatality due to a venomous bite after the tact. These four Royal Reptilian Families are: Virūpaksha, Erapatha, Chabyaputta and Kannagotamaka.

There are stories for example, in the Bhūridatta Jātaka – of Nāgas, both male and female, mating with humans. Although the offspring of such unions are said to be watery and delicate it settles the question of how to translate the term ‘Nāga’. It clearly refers in modern parlance to Reptilians.

The best known of all Reptilians is Mahākāla, king of Manjerika-bhavana. He lives for an entire age and is a very pious follower of the Buddha.

The Reptilians of this world had the custodianship of a part of the Buddha’s relics until they were needed for the mahā stūpa, and when the Bodhi tree was being taken to Sri Lanka, they did it great honor during the voyage. Other Reptilian kings are also mentioned as ruling with great power and majesty and being converted to the Buddha’s teaching for example, Aravaḷa, Apalala, Erapatta, Nandopananda and Pannaka (Also Ahicchatta and Ahinaga)

In the Atanātiya sutta speaking of dwellers of the Realm of the four great sky kings
(Cātummahārājika) Nāgas are mentioned as occupying the western quarter, with Virupākkha as their king.
Several Nāga-bhavana are mentioned in Buddhist texts, for example

1) Manjerika-bhavana
2) Daddara-bhavana at the foot of mount Daddara in the Himalayas.
3) Dhatarattha, under the river Yamuná
4) Nabhasa; in lake Nābhasa
5) The Reptilians of Vesali, Tacchaka, and Payága

The miracle of the black snake of Rājagriha – The story was that a wealthy miser of Rajagriha buried his treasure in his garden. After death he turned into a black snake in order to guard it and in that term terrorized the neighbourhood. At the request of King Bimbisāra the Buddha subdued the snake, which forthwith crept into his begging-bowl.
CHAPTER VIII - CONCLUSION

This chapter summarizes the whole conclusion of the research. It concludes by showing the importance of the various animals in the early Buddhism. The research shows that animals extended support and help to Lord Buddha, animals helped to enhance the meditation of Bhikkhus and Bhikkhinis in the forest. Animals who have sacrificed their life for the betterment of the other animals and for the human beings. Because of their and their important roles, they achieved the place on inscriptions, caves, sculptures, paintings, seals & coins.

The research concludes that the animals,

a) followed uposatha,
b) gave respect to holy yellow robes,
c) observed, pañcasila
d) fulfilled the pāramitās,

It shows that the animals were attracted and followed the principles of teachings of Lord Buddha for the betterment of their next birth and for achievement of the better place in the 21 planes.

Thus human being should take inspirations from the animals to follow the Buddhism, teachings of the Buddha for their liberation / Nirvana. We have to recollect the forgotten values of the great animal hero's of the early Buddhism who have sacrificed their life for the others by taking care of the animals, safeguarding them. Not to use them for racing, helping the injured roadside animal / birds by taking them to nearest hospital. keeping in the mind that they were helped to Lord Buddha.
ORGANISATION OF THESIS

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The final thesis will be submitted along with all the above material.
FIELD VISITS

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8) Rajgriha  
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13) Bharhut  
14) Sanchi  
15) Amaravati  
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II bhavatu sabba mangalam II
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