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Introduction
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INTRODUCTION

Buddhism takes into full account the animal's latent capacity for affection, heroism and self-sacrifice. In Buddhism there is 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.

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 Dhanapāla, which suffered from homesickness in captivity and refused food for love of its mother.

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 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.

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 and rarely to be found in the human.

These Jātaka stories compared with Apadāna and Avadāna literature wherever it has the similarity in its theme/content, approach and style of narration. The Jātaka s and Avadāna are closely related to each other. Both concern edifying tales told with the purpose of inculcating moral precepts as taught by the sādharma 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 BodhisattvAvadānamālās.

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 vassāvāsa.

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 Sravasti, in the Jeta grove in the Anāthapiṇḍaka 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 matsuani), edevyakas, Gangapuputakas (a kind of fish), skate, tortoise and porcupine, tree – squireels, barasinga stags, bulls set at liberty, okapindas (animals which find their food in houses, such as cats, mice, iguanans and mongooses) rhinoceroses, 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 (Īhāmrga or Vyālas) 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 Nāgas, 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, campeyya, 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 (Ahirajakulani) 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: Virupakkha, Erapatha, Chabyaputta and Kannagotamaka.

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

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.

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.

The animals in forest helped to Bhikkus / Bhikkunis to enhance the meditation.

The present Research work is divided into Eight chapters including Chapter – I Introduction and Chapter-VIII Conclusion.

Chapter-II - Animals Associated in 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 Siddharth, the wedding competition and upto the great departure from the palace of the kingdom.
After 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 Nāgarāja coiled 
himself around the body of Lord Buddha and helped Buddha from the disturbance 
of the storm & heavy rain.

In the forest at Vaisali the Elephant and Monkey offered fruits and honey to the 
Lord Buddha. Also other elephant served hot water to Lord Buddha.

In Rajgraha, the furious Elephant Nalagiri is tamed by Lord Buddha by loving 
kindness.

The story of swan which was injured by Devdatta which is missing in Pali 
literature is mentioned in the Sanskrit literary sources like Lalivistara 
(Abhiniskaramaṇa sutta). This incidence in the life of Siddhārtha shows the 
importance of the quality of kindness/compassion than hunting.

Chapter III - Greatful animals in Jātaka Stories and comparative study of 
Jātaka with Avadāna literature and Apadāna -

A Jātaka is a story about repeated births and deaths of the Bodhisattava. The 
tales comprise one of the largest and old collection of stories in the world. The 
éarliest sections the verses are the earliest part of the Pali tradition and dated from the 
5th Century B.C. The Jātaka stories frequently involve animals as peripheral or main 
characters. The animals often exhibit characteristics of kindness and generosity that 
are absent in the human. 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.

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 
Apadāna.
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 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 Bodhisattvāvadānāmālās. The Avadāna literature is in Sanskrit.

Like the Avadāna literature the Apadāna’s also deal with the stories of the previous lives of the Buddha, solitary Buddha, the chief disciples or some arhats 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 Apadānas, that is why some scholars have assigned those Apadānas as the pali counterpart of the Avadānas. The law of karma 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 Pārmitas and giving respect to the holy yellow-robes.

**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 Aśoka 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 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 in the forest -**

This chapter has focused on how the animals & birds help to create a healthy atmosphere to enhance the meditation of Bhikkhus / Bhukkuni’s in the forest with special reference to Theragātha & Therigātha.

In Theragātha, Bhuta 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 he finds greater contentment.

Culaka 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, you, mind will certainly perish.

Chapter –VI - Usage of the 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 (patalika), silk coverlets (koseyyam) rugs of antelope skins sewn together (agiva-paveni), 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 – vāla 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.
- Crabs soup was used as a medicine to cure ear-ache.

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 - The 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. mūcalinda, kala, Atula, campeyya, bhuridattrta, mahadaddara 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 Nāgas.
The books of discipline contains a list of four Royal families of Nāgas (Abhirājakulani) 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: Virupākkha, Erapatha, Chabyaputta and Kannagotamaka.

There are stories for example, in the Bhūridatta Játaka – 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-bhāvana. 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, Āravāla, Apalāla, Erapatta, Nandopananda and Pannaka (Also Ahicchatta and AhīNāga)

In the Atanāṭiya sutta speaking of dwellers of the Realm of the four great sky kings (catummahārajika) Nāgas are mentioned as occupying the western quarter, with virupākkha as their king.

Several Nāga-bhāvanā are mentioned in Buddhist texts, for example

1) Manjerika-bhāvanā under Mount Sumeru.
2) Daddara-bhāvanā at the foot of mount Daddara in the Himalayas.
3) Dhatarattha, under the river Yamuna
4) Nabhasa, in lake Nabhasa
5) The Reptilians of Vesali, Tacchaka, and Payaga

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 Bimbisara the Buddha subdued the snake, which forthwith crept into his begging-bowl.

Chapter VIII - Conclusion -

Buddhism considers all of life to be evolving toward higher consciousness. To the Buddhist, any practice by which man sustains himself at the expense of other sentient beings is considered wrong. Buddhism considers non-human life to be Divine just as is human life. Animals are seen to be an evolving kingdom of living creatures destined in time to attain perfect enlightenment. All of life is seen to be one. According to this conviction, to harm any living thing is to do injury to the One Eternal and Divine Life. Since animals are considered to be traveling towards enlightenment just as man is, neither are they to be harmed, discouraged or hampered in their progress.