In the ancient texts, the island of Ceylon has been referred to as Tambapani (The Bronze Water) Nagadvipa (The Island of Snakes), Lankadwipa as well as Simhala (Lion) and was widely known as the land of precious jewels being inhabited by the so-called goblins, yakshas, bhutas and rakshas. In the old historical accounts of Ceylon, the legends about its origin are given which are of two types - popular and historical. According to Dipavamsa which gives historical accounts of the country in a chronological order, in 543 B.C. a Brahmin named Vijaya came to the Island and founded his Kingdom. Similar legends are also related in the Chinese work named Daitosaiki, a travelogue by a Chinese traveller Huan Tsang (Genjo) who came to India in 629 B.C. to get Buddhist scriptures and travelled all over the country for seventeen years. In this work he describes the state of Buddhism in one hundred and thirty eight countries.

Here the conditions of Sihala, the original name for Ceylon, are given, including the two legends about the origin of the country. These legends about its origin are of two types, popular and historical. The popular account is as follows:

1 Daitosaiki: vol.II, 1
Once a King from South India who gave his daughter in marriage to a neighbouring King selected an auspicious day and sent her to the husband's kingdom. On the way a lion appeared and all the attendants accompanying her including those who were holding her palanquin ran away. The princess who was inside the palanquin, when she heard about the lion, fell unconscious. The lion did not devour her and carrying her on his back disappeared deep inside the mountains. He lived with her as his wife in his lair and everyday brought her fruits, meats, vegetables etc. to eat. After some time the princess gave birth to two children, one boy and a girl. They were human beings in appearance but behaved like beasts. As they grew up they enquired about their unusual parentage from their mother. She related all that had happened and the boy suggested that they should plan to escape. One day while the lion was out the three of them fled. Their mother cautioned them not to talk about their true identity to any one as it would invite contempt from people. Walking thus they finally arrived in their mother land. As the King was already dead they lived in the village in hiding. The villagers gave them food and clothes out of pity.

Now when the lion returned back and found his wife and children missing, he immediately set out for the village crossing over the mountains and valleys. On reaching the village he attacked the villagers and their cattle. They tried in all possible ways to scare him away beating drums and blowing shells, shooting with bows and arrows but with little success. Ultimately the King made an announcement that any one killing the lion would be rewarded. The
son decided to kill him to get the reward. His mother tried to stop him telling him that it was not proper for him to kill his own father but the son refused to listen arguing that the lion had crossed the limits of decency by abducting a human girl, and did not deserve any consideration. Thus taking the King's permission he proceeded to kill the lion with a sword. People were aghast to watch the youth walk up to the lion fearlessly. The lion out of parental love looked into his son's eyes who pierced his stomach with a sword. The lion did not resent it and died with tearful eyes.

The King was watching all this and he enquired from the youth about the unusual behaviour of the lion. The son told him all that had happened. The King said, "One who kills his father can kill anybody. You have done a deed worth appreciation by saving our people from the lion but at the same time, your sin is unpardonable." Thus the boy along with his sister was exiled while their mother stayed behind. Both of them set out on separate ships, each loaded with food items and other things.

The boy's ship landed at a place which was rich in precious jewels. Once a merchant with family came there looking for the treasure and jewels. The boy killed him and took the wife and child as his own.

In due course of time the population multiplied and a kingdom was established. Thus, being the descendants of such a man, the people of Simhala are ordinary in looks, dark complexioned, square chinned with big cheeks, and violent by nature. This account of Genjo is also verified by the works like Mahavamsa, the great chronicles, a work of history written in Pali. In this work subsequently, the
Buddhist legend about the origin of the country is narrated along with the condition of Buddhism there. In *Konjaku Monogatari* also both these legends are placed side by side but the order is reversed as compared to *Daitosaiki*. The writers possibly giving importance to the Buddhistic point of view placed the Buddhist legend first and the popular one later. In the case of the above legend presented in the story titled, *The King Who Went to Mountain on a Deer Hunt, his daughter is abducted by a lion.* However the main plot of *Konjaku* story is the same as given above with some modifications in contents. For example the princess is there in the forest accompanying her father the King on a hunting expedition. Similarly the offsprings of the princess and the lion are given to be only a boy and not a boy and girl. Thus by deleting the extra elements the plot is made more coherent and direct.

Unlike *Daitosaiki* the *Konjaku* version appears in the form of a popular narrative. In *Daitosaiki* the characters have some historical authenticity, like the girl abducted by the lion is given to be Susima who is said to be the daughter of the King of Venga (present Bengal) and the princess of Kalinga. In *Dipavamsa* too it is condensed and narrated as the story of the daughter of the Venga King dwelling in the wilderness with a lion and as a consequence giving birth to two boys, Sihabahu and Sivali who were beautiful children. The name of their mother was Susima and their father was called the Lion.

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2. *Dipavamsa* : ch.IX, stanza 2-4
Subsequently the Buddhist legend associated with the origin of Ceylon Island is introduced as it appears in *Konjaku* which is as follows:

Once upon a time in Tenjiku there lived a man named Sokara. At one time, accompanying five hundred merchants, he sailed to the southern seas in search of a treasure. Suddenly there was a storm and the ship began to move swiftly northwards like an arrow and finally stopped at a big island. They were lucky not to be drowned yet they wondered what was in store for them. After some time a group of ten beautiful women passed by singing. The men who were lost and lamenting their fate were attracted by the women and approached them. As these women making sinuous movements came closer, they appeared beautiful beyond description. All the five hundred merchants including Sokara were petrified. They said, "We set out in Southern seas in search of jewels and treasure. Due to a storm we have landed up here on this unknown land. O! women while we were wondering about our fate, you have come as saviours and made us forget our misery. We request you to allow us to come with you. We are ship wrecked, and do not know where to go at this moment". The women replied, "We shall do as you direct" and asked them to follow while they led the way. They reached the place where the women lived. It had an imposing rampart and an iron gate. They all went inside and the gates got locked immediately. Inside there were many separate chambers and only women lived there. All the merchants took one woman each and lived as husband and wife without separating from each other even for a moment. The

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*Konjaku Monogatari*: vol.V,1
time passed. These women used to have a long nap in the afternoon. When they were sleeping their faces though beautiful had an aura of ugliness. Sokara got suspicious and while the women dozed during the day time, he slipped out gently and walked around to know more about the place. He found that there was a place which the women had not shown to them. It had high walls all around and a gate which was locked. Sokara climbed up the walls from the side and looked down where he found many people below. Some were dead while some were alive, some were wailing and others writhing with pain. Some lay white like corpses, while others were surrounded by blood scattered on the ground. Sokara called one of them who was still alive and enquired, "Who are you? Why are you here like this? " "I belong to South India. We were sailing for business purposes and got caught in a storm and drifted to this place. Here we were attracted by the charms of these women living here, and settled down with them forgetting even our homes. The inhabitants of this place are all women. First they adored us as their husbands but when another ship landed, they imprisoned us here like this chopping off the flesh of our limbs and devouring us every other day. All of you will also face the same fate once a new ship arrives. Try to run away from here somehow. These women are goblins. They sleep for six hours during day time. If you could escape during that time they would not come to know about it. We are imprisoned here behind the fortress walls. Our limbs are cut so we cannot escape. We are in a sad and pitiable state. You should not wait here even for a single moment and run away immediately." he said to Sokara while crying with grief.
Sokara rushed back to the chambers and while the women were still asleep, he called all the five hundred merchants and told them about what he had been told. Then Sokara along with all the others quickly left for the shore. On reaching there, they did not know what to do. They faced towards the world Mt. Palolak and prayed earnestly to god Avalokiteswara. Their voices echoed in the atmosphere.

As they prayed earnestly a white horse appeared galloping through the waves from the open seas and stopped there. No sooner did all the merchants cling to the horse, it took off and crossed the ocean immediately. On the other hand, when the goblins got up they did not find the merchants anywhere. They rushed to the shore thinking the merchants might have escaped there. As they came out of the fortress they saw the merchants flying, clinging to a horse. The women turned into their original form of Rakshinis and leaped almost four or even five yojanas after them screaming loudly. One of the merchants recalling the beautiful face of his wife longed for her. As he did so he slipped and fell down into the sea. At that instant the goblins pounced upon him and tearing his body apart devoured him. The horse halted in southern part of India and landing there knelt down, letting the merchants dismount. Then it disappeared leaving no traces behind.

Sokara knew this help was being extended by the merciful god Avalokiteshwara. He knelt down and praying to the god cried bitterly. Then he came back home and did not talk to anyone about the incident. Nearly two years passed and one day the goblin who was Sokara's mate approached him while he was sleeping alone in his
house. She looked a thousand times more beautiful than before. She came near him and said, "We are husband and wife due to the pre-destined bond of our previous births. I had full faith in you. Then tell me, why did you leave me alone and run away from there. On that Island where we live, there is a group of Yakshas who catch people time and again to devour them. That is the reason why we have built high ramparts and guarded it well. At the time when all of you were raising your voices at the beach those Rakshini's (female goblins) appeared in their real form. You all thought that it was us but we are not goblins. Sokara, I have been missing you since you left me behind. You also must be feeling the same" and she started shedding tears. Any one who had not known her true identity would have given in, seeing her cry bitterly. Sokara on the contrary was so angry that he took out his sword and attacked her. The woman bitterly resented it and left his house in rage. From there she went straight to the King's palace and then through the ministers she appealed to the King, "Sokara is my husband yet having lived with me for a long time he has abandoned me and now refuses to accept me. Tell me whom should I appeal to for seeking justice." When people saw this extraordinarily beautiful woman, everyone's heart was moved for her. The King heard about her beauty and saw her secretly while hiding. She was extraordinarily beautiful and was unparalleled in beauty. When compared to his favourite consorts she was like a jewel while they were like muck. The King thought Sokara must be a fool to refuse such a woman as his wife. He called Sokara and asked him the reason for doing so. Sokara protested, "She is a man eater. Do not let her remain in
your palace and drive her away immediately" and thus warning the King he left. The King did not believe Sokara and felt an attraction towards the woman. In the night he led her to his chamber through the back door. Secretly on drawing closer he found her a thousand times even more beautiful. The King even forgot about his duties and did not come out of his chamber for three days.

Sokara came to the palace and informed the people, "It is a terrible thing but a goblin has entered the palace in the guise of a beautiful woman. You should kill her immediately," but no one listened to him. Three more days passed. Then on the fourth day early in the morning, she came out of the chamber and stood on the edge of the roof. At that time she looked totally different and frightening with her mouth stained with blood. For a while she looked around and then from the roof flew up like a bird and disappeared in the clouds. All those who saw her, approached the King in his room to inform him about it but inside the King was nowhere to be found. Fearful and suspicious they went inside the chamber and found the blood stained beddings. There was no trace of the King. On coming closer they found only a portion of his head, red with blood. There was a great turmoil in the palace. Everyone, the ministers and officials gathered and lamented. It was too late now to take any step.

However, the prince was immediately enthroned. He called Sokara and discussed the matter in detail. Sokara disclosed "I warned repeatedly that this woman should be driven out but no one listened to me. I know the land of goblins. I wish some soldiers to
accompany me and wish to leave for that country soon to destroy the
goblins. The King ordered him to leave immediately taking the
number of soldiers he required. Sokara said "Ten thousand soldiers
with bows and arrows and another ten thousand soldiers of the death
squad carrying swords aboard a hundred swift ships should accompany
me". His demand was immediately met with.

Now Sokara accompanying the battalion of two thousand soldiers
navigated the ship to the land of goblins. Then from his earlier
experience he sent ten soldiers pretending to be merchants to the
shore to wander about. As they did so again ten beautiful women
appeared and while singing songs approached the men talking
intimately with them. Ultimately they led them into the fortress.
The other two thousand soldiers in hiding advanced along with them.
They dashed into the castle and shot at women killing them. Sokara
ran around instructing everyone. The women no longer could stay in
disguise and finally took to their form of goblins and as they
attacked, with their mouths wide open, he struck them with a sword,
cutting their backs, limbs or their waists. There was not a single
goblin who was not hurt. Those who tried to escape by flying were
struck by arrows. There was not even a single one who could
escape. Then by setting each room on fire he completely destroyed
the fortress, after which he returned back to the kingdom and
reported to the King.

The King gave that land to Sokara as a reward. Sokara,
accompanying twenty thousand soldiers settled in that country. He
lived happily ever after. That land is still inhabited by the
descendents of Sokara. The goblins were done away with for ever.
Due to this, the country is called Sokara land it has thus been told to us successively.

The story is a mixture of the elements of supernatural, adventure and suspense and reads like a short novel. The plot revolves around contrastive elements like human beings and goblins, natural versus supernatural, sympathy versus antipathy.

Broadly speaking this plot could be divided into two independent plots the events passing through the stages of good - bad and good - bad completing two rounds with a happy ending in either case.

The second interlocks with the first one. If we consider good as A and Bad as B then it can be represented graphically as follows:

A ________ B - A ________ B - A

In the Indian version of this story the latter portion is dropped. In other words, it merely refers to the visit of the merchants towards the southern seas and their escape. On comparing the two the obvious feature found in most of the Konjaku stories of Indian section viz. the absence of common names, is present. The Indian story describes the locale to be Sirisavatthus of Tambapani where the man eater witches lived on the bank extending from the river Kalyani to the Nagadvipas, synonym of Tambapani, looking for the shipwrecked merchants. The Kalyani river is Kalyani Ganga that flows along Colombo.

Similarly the Jataka story describes about the goblins at length as follows: "When a ship is wrecked these adorn and deck themselves and taking rice and gruel with trains of slaves carrying their

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1 Journal of Pali Text Society, 1880 : p. 20
children on their hips they walk up to the merchants and then invite them to partake of the gruel, rice and other food items which they bring. Thus in the land of goblins life appears to be like that of any human habitat with men ploughing the fields.\(^1\) On the other hand, the \textit{Konjaku} story sums it up in one sentence stating that the inhabitants of that land were women only.

The names of the protagonist is missing in \textit{Jataka} which merely points him to be the leader of the entourage. In the \textit{Mahavastu} story also, where the same theme is treated, the name is missing. In fact the name \textit{Sokara} appears in the Chinese work of \textit{Daitosaiki} only, presumed to be the source for \textit{Konjaku} story. Thus the \textit{Konjaku} story on one hand omits any details of the place but identifies the main character. In fact the \textit{Konjaku} writer at times even fails to realise that he is relating the story of an alien land and addresses the King as \textit{Tenno}, the term used for the Japanese Emperor exclusively.

Such a kind of Japanisation though not so obvious could be seen at other places also. For example in the story the five hundred merchants captivated by the charms of the women, took one each as their partners. According to the Indian version, "the chief goblin took the chief man and the others took the rest". Such type of class consciousness is not there in \textit{Konjaku} that plainly states that each one took one partner for herself. Thus the traces of class-consciousness inherent subconsciously in the theme have been carefully corrected by \textit{Konjaku} writer that otherwise would have puzzled the Japanese reader accustomed to a homogeneous society.

\(^1\) \textit{Jataka Stories: vol.II, p.89}
Similarly the way the merchants perceived the true identity of goblins also differs. In *Konjaku* it is more concrete whereas in *Jatakas* it is merely intuitive and perceptive. While in *Konjaku* the real nature of women is told clearly to Sokara, in *Jatakas* he perceives it as follows: "In the night when the man was asleep, the chief she goblin rose to satisfy her hunger and when she returned back from eating man's flesh her body was cold. When the head merchant embraced her he could perceive that she was a goblin."

Furthermore, in the Japanese story, having known the truth the number of persons who did not agree to comply with their leader is nil whereas in the Indian one it is half the number.

The divine power that came to their rescue for escaping is identified with Bodhisattva this symbolising the prime difference in the faith of people in both countries. In *Jataka* the white horse that comes to the rescue is projected as the reincarnation of Bodhisattva while on the other hand the Japanese version attributes it to the god of Mercy Avalokiteswara, the faith in which was in currency during the Heian period. Portraying this the *Konjaku* points that the distressed merchants prayed to the god facing towards Mt. Udaraka or Mt. Patolaka located on the southern coast of India and is regarded to be the abode of god Avalokiteswara. A scene is depicted on a pillar situated in Mathura as a picture of a flying horse with people clinging to it, which could be called one of its original manifestation.

A closer scrutiny of *Konjaku* also reveals the geographical vision of the writer. The portion relating the incident of the white
horse rescuing merchants in *Jataka* states that the horse dropped each one at his place on the way whereas the *Konjaku* story points that they all got down when the horse halted at Tenjiku and from there it disappeared suddenly, leaving it to fate for them to return to their homes. Obviously this cannot be true and possibly the Japanese writer has abruptly concluded it, without considering the geographical scale of India where in those days travel within the country might have entailed months or even years together. Furthermore it would have been as risky as escaping from the distant island of Simhala. The *Jataka* account in the Indian context being more plausible indicates, "then Bodhisattva took up even those who stood still saluting him and carried all of them even those two hundred and fifty to their respective countries and set down each one in his own place, then he went back to his place of dwelling").

Incidentally it also reflects upon the attitudes of the people to command in respective situations though in a subtle way. In the Japanese story in response to the leader's orders all the five hundred merchants complied and left the place. On the other hand in the Indian version only half of them exhibited faith in their leader and the remaining half opted to stay behind without paying any heed to him. Conversely speaking in the Japanese context this authority of the leader is unquestioned and the group spirit possibly had been prevalent since the ancient times. In fact the *Jataka* story aims to relates the meritorious deeds of Bodhisattva more than the origin of Ceylon Island. In the Indian context the

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1 *Jataka Stories : vol.II, p.91*
various deeds of this God Avalokiteswara, who is also known by other names like Padmapani, Samantamukha etc. are related in another work called Guna Kalinda Vyuha along with the origin of the Island. Here Buddha relates the virtuous deeds of the god Avalokiteswara through various episodes in nineteen chapters. In this the story of Simhala Island inhabited by the goblins the portion in of Simhala's rescue from it by a merciful god is also a part of it. The Jataka version is closer to this story related in the thirteenth chapter in giving the virtues of the Bodhisattva. In Jataka it is presented as follows: "Now at that time Bodhisattva had come to this world as a flying horse, white all over, with a mouth like the beak of a crow and hair like Munja grass, possessed of supernatural power to fly through the air. From the Himalayas he flew through the air until he came to Ceylon. There he passed over the ponds and tanks and ate the paddy that grew wild there. As he passed on thus, thrice he uttered the human words filled with mercy, "Who wants to go home? Who wants to go home? Who wants to go home?" There is no mention of any god to whom the distressed merchants prayed to. On the contrary the merciful Bodhisattva having perceived their trouble offers to help them. It is the Konjaku story that reveals the merchants firm faith in merciful nature of Kannosama, the god Avalokiteswara, and virtually scream for help. Incidentally the Guna Kalinda Vyuha presents a long account related by Buddha when questioned about the miraculous powers of the Bodhisattva Avalokiteswara by a Bodhisattva named "Sarvani Varana Vishkambhin". Here Buddha sums up the nature of
this Bodhisattva who possessing a compassionate heart and extraordinary miraculous powers walks about here and there bestowing gifts upon people all over and rescuing those in distress and comments, "You should hear all the stories about his deeds which I shall relate to you", thus giving the motive for narrating the deeds of god Avalokiteswara. Here when the protagonist is conscious of the imminent danger he is told of the abode of compassionate white horse 'Valha', by the magical lamp that emerges in the story, as being the sea bank which has golden sand and who frequents this place for eating grass. He is told that, before setting out Valha stretches out his body and screams, "Does anybody wish to return back to the land across sea. Then let him mount on my back and hold firmly." On being told by the lamp that if he wishes to return he should go to the beach and pray thus, he assures his associates of the help by the horse King 'Valha'. They accompany him to the beach where the horse King was already present grazing quietly. Seeing them he stretches his body three fold and questions, "Who wants to go across the sea" and then acceding to their request he warns them before hand "--- hold on to my back firmly and if your life is dear to you then none should look here and there while my body is stretched". The situation here is the same as in the popular tale of the talkitive turtle and the birds. The restless turtle did not pay heed to the advice and fell down below. Likewise the merchants too neglectd his advice and got distracted by the calls of the goblins fell down and died. Only Simhala was saved who reached Jambudvipa safely and while thanking his saviour reveals the horse's true identity saying, "Created from
the arms of Lord Shiva, you are the master of the three worlds. You are the compassionate Bodhisattva the protector".

The remaining portion of the story is also long and vivid whereby the goblin partner of Simhala on being taunted by the other fellow goblins for letting her partner escape, chases Simhala in order to recapature his attention by means of all her womenly viles as well as pressurising him through his parents whom she approached with a child, but failed to succeed. Eventually, she could cast her charms on the King and enters the palace. There she casts a magical spell on the inhabitants of the palace and invites the other goblin companions to devour them. When Simhala is told about it by his minister, anticipating what must have happened he rushes to the spot and chases away all the goblins. Since the King and all his family members were devoured by the goblins, people installed the wise Simhala as their King. He captured the entire Jambudvipa and brought it under his rule. Then he decided to capture the land of Tamradvipa and attacked the goblins who were routed completely. Some were killed while others pleaded for their lives pledging not to be seen ever on that land. Simhala settled the ministers, officials, warriors and commoners there and the country prospered. It was named Simhaladvipa since it was captured and civilised by Simhala.

This latter portion of the theme though not accounted in Jatakas is there in Konjaku. Although the outline is the same that portrays how Simhala annihilated the goblins and established that country, there are some differences. For example the goblin partner of Simhala when pressurising him to accept her does it not through the
physical charms but also through his parents with a child. In *Konjaku* the political pressure by her is related. Moreover she kills and devours the King alone. Then after the prince is enthroned Sokara leads the army to the land of goblins and kills them all. Later on he settles there along with twenty thousand soldiers as their King. According to *Gunakalinda* he civilised the land by persuading people to live there while he himself ruled Jambudvipa.

In Japan this story also appears in *Ujishui Monogatari* a work of fifteen volumes containing 197 stories that could be called a miniature model of *Konjaku*. The story is almost identical with minor differences like the name of the main character is Sokata, the army that he accompanied to purge the goblins had two hundred men etc. which are not of any significance. However the element of *Kanon* worship is present as it is in *Konjaku*. This Bodhisattva symbolizes great compassion, mercy and love and is known by the other names of *Kanzeon, Kanjizai, Rengeshu, Daibishoja* etc. thus having a true Buddhist color.