CHAPTER- II

BUDDHIST CANONICAL NARRATIVES: SOURCES
The seventh and sixth centuries of B.C. got remarkable position in Indian history and culture, mainly because they witnessed a powerful obsession with philosophical and religious speculation. Among the various thinkers contributing to this period, Buddha stands first in India and he has attracted the attention of the whole world. Hence he was called the light of Asia. He was also considered as a historical personage. Buddhism emerged as a distinct religion only after Buddha attained enlightenment in the sixth century B.C. It is considered to be a social religion. It is now almost extinct in India as a ceremonial and institutional religion, and has a history in this country across nearly seventeen centuries from fifth B.C. to twelfth A.D.

History of Buddhism has been traced through its doctrines and philosophies, its sects and schools, its resemblances and inters connection with other Indian religious systems. Early Buddhist literature is considered to be the soul of the religion, because it contains the origin, development and establishment of the religion. Buddhist canonical literature gave a detailed description of saṅgha community. Their rules, regulations and the activities were traced out from those works. The
remarkable fact is that all these works were considered to be produced in the second phase of the Buddhist religion. Irrespective of that limit canonical literature provides the early history of the religion also.

The contemporary interest in Buddhism is based on its social demand. In India Buddhism appeared as an opposition to the ideology and practice of Hinduism. On distinguishing, Buddhism is viewed as a system which was more compassionate to broken groups and it has been considered an economic, political and social solution to the problem of caste discrimination. Buddhism in other Asian countries has taken on the character of a socio-political movement even in recent times. It is evident that early Buddhist society was rapidly changing and becoming sharply stratified.¹ Buddhist literature (Pāli literature) did not provide any description of the society in which Buddha lived. Only a very few secondary works provide some light on the relationship between a particular text and the probable period that represents. Buddhist literature had got its present shape through deviation of a number of

centuries after the parinirvāṇa of Buddha. The texts ranging from the fifth century B.C. to the fifth century A.D. are arranged by scholars into one category.

Buddha’s sayings, discourses, speeches, and conversations were handed down orally through a succession of teachers. After the parinirvāṇa of Buddha, the community of monks chose five hundred perfected ones to compile the doctrine and the discipline. This is to retain the original doctrines of Buddhism from all kinds of mixing ups. After the two Buddhist councils the Buddhist Canonical texts had got its present shape. In the first Buddhist council held at Rājagṛha, Buddha’s teachings ‘Dharma and Vinaya’ were collected and settled. The Abhidhamma was considered as a pair of others. Dharma and Vinaya were the two principal divisions under which the traditional teachings of Buddha were collected. Second Buddhist council was held at Vaiśāli, in which the rules of morality were discussed. The texts of Dharma and Vinaya were rehearsed and settled in third Buddhist council. Abhidhamma was recognized as a part of the canon after this council. Third Buddhist council divided the two Buddhist sculptures into three parts- the SuttaPiṭaka, VinayaPiṭaka, and
AbhidhammaPiṭaka. These are technically called ‘Tipiṭakas’ or ‘Tripiṭakas’. A number of literary genres were scattered among these. Suttapiṭaka consists five major categories. They are Dīghanikāya, Majjhimanikāya, Samyuttanikāya, Anguttaranikāya and Khuddakanikāya. Among these fivefold division, Khuddakanikāya along is consisted of fifteen prakaraṇas. They are Udāna, Theragāthā, Khuddakapāṭha, Dhammapada, Jātaka, Niddesa, Apadāna, Itivuttaka, Buddhavamsa, Suttanipata, Cariyapiṭaka, Vimānavathu, Petavathu and Therīgāthā. All these are consisted of a variety of narrations. Vinayapiṭaka and AbhidhammaPiṭaka are also comprised of twelve prakaraṇas; five prakaraṇas in former and seven in later. But these divisions are fully concentrated on dharma doctrines and moral lessons through advises and philosophical explanations. They are of comparatively less literary importance than the Suttapiṭaka.

Both the two schools of Buddhism are named as Hinayana and Mahayana, Buddhist literature was preserved mainly in Pāli, Buddhist Sanskrit, and pure Sanskrit.² Lal Mani Joshi

categorized the Buddhist Literature into five groups.\(^3\) They are Buddhist literature in pure Sanskrit, Buddhist literature in mixed Sanskrit, Buddhist literature in Apabhraṃśa, Buddhist literature in Chinese, and Buddhist literature in Tibetan. As Gaurinath Sastri observes: ‘Literature of the Mahayana school is called Buddhist Sanskrit literature, yet it should be noted in this connection that Buddhist Sanskrit literature is not synonymous with the rich literature of the Mahayana school alone, but it has a still wider scope including the literature of the Hinayana school as well, in as much as the Sarvāstivāda, a sect of the Hinayana school possesses a canon and a fairly vast literature in Sanskrit. The Sanskrit canon, however, is not available in it’s entirely, but its existence is proved on the evidence of the several quotations from it in such works as the *Mahāvastu*, the *Divyāvadāna* and the *Lalitavistara*. This Sanskrit Canon shows close affinity to the Pāli canon, and it is suggested that both of them are but translations of some original canon in Māgadhi, which is lost to us’.\(^4\) The originals


of some of these texts are lost, but a few among them were preserved in Tibetan and Chinese translations.

The Buddhist texts were also rendered into the languages of the countries to which Buddhism spread. Among these languages, Pāli is the earliest. Pāli Tripitaka represents the earliest and the most complete collection of the Buddhist literature. In General Buddhist canonical literature, there are twelve divisions ‘Dvādaśaṅgabuddhavacana’. They are Khaḍgavisāṅgātha, Munigātha, Śailagātha, Arthavargīyāṇi sutrāṇi, Parāyaṇa, Sthaviragātha, Sthavirīgātha, Ityukta, Udāna, Dhammapada, Jātaka, and Avadāna. T.R.S.Sharma stated that before the collection of the Tripitaka, the Buddhist literature was divided into nine parts and was known as ‘Navāṅgasattusāsana’. This nine fold division is not the nine fold classification of the literature. It points out some specimens of nine types of composition in the literature. Besides these Piṭakas, a large number of literary works were written regarding Buddhist aspects. But most of them are unpublished. The contents in Buddhist Sanskrit canonical

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works are categorized in to twelve. They are Geya, Sūtra, Gāthā, Nidāna, Itivuttaka, Jātaka, Atbhuta-dhamma, Avadāna, Upadeśa, Udāna, Vaipulya and Veyyakaraṇa

Verses contained in the scriptures are known as Geya. Establishment of dharma in the form of prose is called SūtraGāthā is the poetry or verse of the Buddhist scriptures. The genre of historical narratives embraced in the Buddhist canon is known as Nidāna. Itivuttuka refers to the former lives of disciples. Jātaka tales are the accounts of past lives of Buddha. Miracles performed by Buddha are described in the Atbhuta-dhamma. Avadāna are the parables and allegories embodied in the Buddhist scriptures. Doctrinal discussions in the form of question and answers is called Upadeśa. Udāna includes the doctrinal statements by Buddha. Broad issues of the Buddhist teachings are called Vaipulya. The conferral by Buddha in the attainment of Buddhahood is called Veyyākaraṇa.

The above mentioned categories reveal the vastness and greatness of Buddhist knowledge systems. Warder remarked that ‘they are unhappily only a small fraction of the great literature of which they once formed a part’. Ancient literature
of Buddhism was wiped out under religious conflicts at the beginning of the Thirteenth century A.D. Warder’s view is clear in the existence of Buddhist literary treasures. ‘All the great Buddhist libraries of India were sought out and incinerated, so that of Indian Buddhist texts in their original language we have at our disposal only (a) the Canon of one of the many ancient schools, preserved intact in Ceylon, Burma, Cambodia and Siam, (b) an incomplete Canon as recognized in the latest phase of Indian Buddhism together with a selection of ancillary works preserved in Nepal, (c) a few scattered texts in Indian languages preserved elsewhere, for instance in Tibet, in certain Jain libraries, in Western India or buried in vaults in Central Asia’.\(^7\)

Translations into non-Indian languages and direct commentaries help to locate a number of texts. Most of the Buddhist Narratives were codified from other languages. Motifs of Buddhist Narratives are clear from commentaries and translations. Buddhist narratives have prominent place among Buddhist literature. This is prepared for the edification of lay men and also proved to be the efficient way of

instructing religious and moral doctrines. Among the twelve fold division Nidāna, Jātaka, Atbhutadhamma and Avadāna are fully treated as narratives.

**Major Buddhist Narratives.**

Narratives in Buddhist literature can be traced out from *Tripiṭakas*. They are dispersed in both Pāli and Sanskrit *Piṭaka* literature. The Buddhists utilized all the existing narrative styles from ancient Indian literature for preparing their own literature with an intention of propagating religious doctrines. They make use of Vedic, Puranic and secular narrative modes for this mission. Thus these Buddhist works enclose all genres of literature. The commentaries on Buddhist works also support the wide spread of religion.

The *Suttavibhaṅga* of *Vinayapiṭaka* consist the description of the *patimokha*\textsuperscript{8} speeches by Buddhist disciples in the saṅgha. The narrations of speeches provide a type of complex narration along with spoken dialects. They also help to understand the social and cultural life of monks in

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\textsuperscript{8} *Patimokha:Patimokkha* is a part of *Suttavibhaṅga*. It also contains a set of rules to be observed by the members of the saṅgha in their daily life. There are two codes; *BhikkhuPatimokkhasutta* and *BhikkunīPatimokkhasutta*. *Patimokkha* laws were chanted regularly in saṅgha.
monasteries. These speeches are narrated with different modes. There are a number of speakers and they describe their own bad deeds in front of a number of listeners. In certain cases the narration varies along with the speaker.

After the parinirvāṇa of Buddha, the monks codified the advices along with commentaries and they are found in *Suttapiṭaka*. It consists of a number of texts. It is in five sections. First part, named *Dīghanikāya*, is consisted of the description of sacrifices done by a Brahmin named Soṇadāṇḍa. *Ambaṭṭasutta* of this section elaborately discusses the stories of Ṣakya kings. *Cakkavattisutta* highlights the heroic deeds of Cakravartis. *Brahmajālasutta* of this *nikāya* portrays the life of sixty two Ṣramaṇa sects from North India. Besides the description of pāramitas are traced from story of a Brahmin named Lohita.

*Majjhimanikāya* narrates the story of Ajātaśatru. Accounts of mendicant activities of Ṣramaṇas were described by Buddha to Ṣāriputra. There is another narration of the story behind Buddha’s wandering. A representative narration can be traced from this story; through the stories Buddha highlight the importance of practicing pāramitas and also the peculiarities of
saṅgha life. In these texts imaginations of composers and their views were expressed along with similes. Aṅguttaranikāya is mainly consisted of the story of Vappasakya. He was the one among pañcavargīyabhikṣusaṅgha. In this text Buddha himself narrates the story of Sujātā. A type of parallel narration is visible here.

The divisions in Khuddakanikāya are consisted of a variety of narratives. Dhammapada, Udāna, Itivuttaka, Vimānavattu, Petavattu, Buddhavaṃśa and Cariyapiṭaka are the main narratives. They employ variety of narrative techniques.

Dhammapada is an account of the advices regarding Dharma by Buddha. The mentioning of Āryasatyas and Aṣṭāṅgamārgas are the highlighting factor of this text. It consists of 423 gāthās in 26 vargas. Each gāthā provides a specific story. Their summery is known as Dhammapadāṭṭakathā. There were more than thirty places, where Buddha often wishes the disciples. Jetavana, Veṇuvana, Śravasti, Pūrvārāma, Vesali, Kapilavastu, Āmravana, Bodhivṛksamūla, Aṅjanavana, Vāraṇāsi, Pañcaśālā, etc. are the places. In each story Buddha speaks to a single disciple, more than 250 names are mentioned; like Śuddhodana,
Rāḥula, Ānanda, Kaśyapa, Devadatta, Śāriputra, Aśvajith and so on. In this text the narration is by a single speaker who addressed more than 250 persons from various surroundings. The speaker in these speeches concentrates on the time and space of narration rather than communicative medium. These types of narration are common in Prākrit Jain literature also.

_Udāna_ (the Inspired Utterance) consists of eight vargas with ten _Udāna_ in each. The occasion for such an _Udāna_ is given in the prose introduction which ends by ‘at this moment the Buddha made this utterance’, followed by the verse. In this text narration of a particular moment is necessary and the situations along with advices are turned in a single thread.

_Itivuttaka_ (the text beginning with ‘Thus Spoken’) consists of very short 122 _suttas_; all ends in verses. It had certain resemblances with _Udānas_. In contrast to _Udānas_, prose and verses of it form a conceptual unit. The text is numerically arranged from _Eka_ to _Catukanipāta_, which are subdivided into _Vargas_. The text got its name from the beginning of the individual _suttas_. All _suttas_ were spoken at Kosambi by arhant to the laywoman Khujjutara. It is a type of conversation between two people; time and place had not
much role in this narration. A single speaker who made changes in the mode of narration may be clearly understood from this.

Vimānavattu (texts having the heavenly places as topic) is a longer one with seven vargas, 85 vattus and 1282 verses. It deals with the stories of persons who have died and enjoyed their good deeds in vimānas. There is a commentary on it and it provides a frame story for the verses and is clearly addressed to common audience.

Petavattu (texts having the ghosts as topic) consists of four vargas with 51 vattus and 814 verses. It deals with the stories of persons who had died and suffered due to their bad deeds or manners as petas. These are also addressed to ordinary people. The chronology of the different parts of Vimānavattu and Petavattu does not seem to be uniform. Some vattus are added only during the second council even in the tradition.

Nīdāna is a genre of historical narratives, and is traced from canons and is included in Nīdanakathā. In this text the life of the Buddha is told in prose interspersed with verses drawn from the Buddhavaṃśa. Nīdanakathā is divided into three parts. They are Dūrenidāna (cause, origin in the remote past),
Avidūrenidāna (cause, origin in the not so remote past) and Santikenidāna (cause, origin in the near past). Durenidāna tells the stories from the time of the former Buddha, Dipaṃkara, who declares that Sumedha will be a future Buddha. The Avidūrenidāna refers to the time from birth of the Bodhisattva in the Tusita heaven to the enlightenment. The Santikenidāna is devoted to the time up to thenirvāṇa. The stories of the gift of the Jetavana by Ananthapiṇḍika are given at the end portion. It is in the Jetavana that most of the Jātakas are supposed to have been spoken by the Buddha. Nidānakathā is the most important Theravada source for the life of the Buddha, in which a variety of narrative levels are visible and it is happened in past with exact time brakes.

Buddhavaṃśa, chronicle of Buddhas or lineage of the Buddhas is a description of the lives of 24 predecessors of the historical Buddha, begins Dipaṃkara to Sumedha the last one alone is a future Buddha. The number of 24 predecessors given in Buddhavaṃśa is probably analogous to the corresponding number of Jain Tīrthaṅkaras. The content of Buddhavaṃśa partly overlaps with the Jātakanidāna. Most of
these stories are related with the life of Gautama Buddha. It is a mixed narrative along with verses.

Cariyapiṭaka (basket of conduct) is closely connected the Buddhavaṃśa. In the introduction part Sāriputta asks the Buddha about his decision to become a Buddha and about the ten pāramitas (perfections). The first question is answered in Buddhavaṃśa, second in Cariyapiṭaka. Six pāramitas are treated in Cariyapiṭaka. This text is divided into three sections and contains 35 stories from the former life of the Buddha as a Bodhisattva. Consequently, the content of Cariyapiṭaka is similar to the Jātaka, where 32 from 35 stories can be traced. It is evident that two texts Cariyapiṭaka and Buddhavaṃśa are a type of sequential narration.

The Mahāvastu, an old Buddhist Sanskrit text, describes the life of Buddha Śakyamuni on the basis of the Lokottaravadin branch of the Mahāsāṅghika. The existing text of Mahāvastu is also intermingled with a variety of topics. The date of the work has not yet fixed but it is considered to be around the second century B.C. This text mentions about four Buddhas. Forty Jātakas are incorporated in the Mahāvastu. But the stories of the Buddha in his former birth by his pūrva-
praṇidhāna are not called Jātaka.⁹ There are a number of literary works describing the life of Buddha; original versions of some of them are lost. Fragments of the Biographies were put together and compiled. Lalitavistara, Buddhacarita and the like are the famous among them.

The Jātakas and Avadānas are the most important Buddhist narratives. These literary genres consist hundreds of stories along with Buddhist birth stories and heroic deeds of Buddhist disciples. They are rich with various narrative types and narrative techniques. In one way they are the combination of various western traditions. The details regarding these texts will be considered later¹⁰.

The above mentioned literary works are considered as the main narratives among Buddhist canons. They undergo various stages of development. The present version of these texts are the sum total of many changes due to the flow of time. The best evidence for this is the content of the books, the sort of the words they use, the style in which they are composed and the ideas they express. These narratives are

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¹⁰ Infra,ch.iii.
with full of characteristics features like serialization, fantasisation, allegorisation, and stylization. The narrative techniques found in these works can be traced out easily; and the notable point is that there are not much complex narrations. In the case of Cariyapiṭaka and Buddhavaṃśa sequential narration is seen, it may be included in complex mode of narration. In the recent literary attempts these types of series narration is common. Both among them may be consider as independent works with same subject. Second part is directly or indirectly connected with the first. The characters and situations are almost similar in both.

**Peculiarities of Buddhist Narratives.**

In most of the narratives, narrator is Buddha/ Bodhisattva or anyone among the Buddhist disciples. The most remarkable fact is that Buddhist narratives are focused mainly on religious doctrines. Buddhist scholars make use of ancient Indian literary genres and reshaped the texts into their own style. They took much effort to insert religious doctrines in ordinary literary forms. Through this literature they faced and solved the problems of lay men of the society with the support of religious doctrines. While examining the Buddhist narratives it
is evident that the situations, characters and the mode of narration all are created to communicate a particular religious doctrine towards the common mass.

Buddhist literature is originated among the monasteries. Monasteries are the major education centres of Buddhists. Most of the literary forms are directly related to Buddha. Major portion of canonical literature took its shape under Buddhist monks. A Buddhist monastery is consisted of various levels of people like monks, nuns, upāsakas and upāsikās. The authorship of Buddhist narratives is attributed to these categories. But the identity of the authors is not clearly mentioned in these texts. Sometimes it may be a collective production. There is no literary evidence about the contribution of nuns. Most of the narratives highlight some religious facts and their role in social life and also their impacts in the society.

Buddhism was both a religious and social movement. At first it was considered as a spiritual movement and later on it had got an important social dimension with the support of literary works. To understand the social dimensions of early Buddhist movement it is necessary to identify the factors
which are closely attached with it. A comprehensive analysis of early Buddhist canonical literature gives certain ideas regarding almost all factors regarding early Buddhist society.

Buddha tried to create radical changes in the society. Ordinary people suffered much from the attitudes of higher class both in religious and economic matters. Buddha adopted the method of approach in dealing with the socio-moral problems by advising the priests, kings and ordinary people through parables and fables. He was considered to be the first thinker of India who give up the theological approach and adopt a rational and practical attitude in such matters. He considered story telling as a weapon to fight against the supremacy of caste. He transformed the theological and metaphysical insights of Brahmanism and its philosophy. He was really an empiricist and was thoroughly practical and realistic in these matters. Buddhism attracted peoples from the lower strata. ‘Buddha sometimes castigated as an out caste, because of his regular contact without castes’11. The theory of Incarnation of Hinduism was adopted by later Buddhists and make use of various incarnations of Buddha for the proper

propagation of Buddhism. Later Buddhists concentrated on the character of Bodhisattva to establish the religious doctrines.

The proper use of the Bodhisattva concept is considered as a specific feature of Buddhist narratives. This concept helps much in the study of Buddhist narratives.

**Bodhisattva in Buddhist Literature**

Buddhist monastic system includes all kinds of enlightened beings. In spiritual sense they are classified into four- the perfectly awakened ones (saṃyaksambuddha), the individually awakened ones (pratyekabuddha), the worthy ones (arhata) and Bodhisattvas. In the times of Buddha the ideal of the arhant was well established and had taken a tremendous shape approved by Buddha himself. After the parinirvāṇa of Buddha there was great religious flavour and the concept of Bodhisattva gradually originated and later on well established. This process of rising up is reflected in the Buddhist literature. The term Bodhisattva refers to ‘someone on the path of awakening’. The Sanskrit word ‘Bodhisattva’ has been explained in different ways. ‘Bodhi’ means ‘enlightenment’ and the word ‘sattva’ had several interpretations; they are substance, a living being, creature,
spirit, mind, sense, and consciousness etc. Thus Bodhisattva is usually translated ‘one whose essence’, ‘own nature’, ‘svabhāva’ ‘one who is on the way to the attainment of perfect knowledge’ that means a future-Buddha.

**Bodhisattva in Piṭaka Literature**

*VinayaPiṭaka* advocates arhant ideal along with the earliest principles of Hinayana. *Cullavagga* and *Mahāvagga* discussed about the four noble truths, eight fold noble paths, karma etc. attached to the Bodhisattva. The Jātakas are the collection of Bodhisattva stories forming a separate part of the Pāli literature. In all these stories the hero is Bodhisattva, who performs pāramitas. These texts do not show any demarcation between arhant and Bodhisattva. Here the Bodhisattva appears as a mere future Buddha working along with the line of arhant. Bodhisattvahood is not looked upon as a special principle in this text.

In the second Buddhist council, a number of works emerged which discussed the concept of Bodhisattva elaborately. The third Buddhist council held in the second century B.C. caused for the valuable book entitled *Kathāvattu*, which discusses about Bodhisattva. This shows that by the
period of Aśoka, Buddhist community was well aware of concept of the Bodhisattva. Piṭakas discussed very briefly regarding the concept of Bodhisattva. Later the term had got much prominence in the literary world. Scholars like HarDayal\textsuperscript{12}, and Rhys Davids\textsuperscript{13} remarked that, the origin and development of the concept of Bodhisattva may be regarded as the final outcome of the tendencies that were occurred through a number of centuries.

**Origin of the Concept of Bodhisattva.**

The natural and inevitable tendency of Buddhism was to grow and develop in the changing circumstances of the age. It is a self – adjusting spiritual movement. The Bodhisattva doctrine was the necessary outcome of two movement of thought in early Buddhism the growth of bhakti and spiritualization of Buddha. Bhakti was at first directed towards Buddha. This deep rooted feeling found an outlet in the expansion and superiority of the Bodhisattvas. The ideal of bhakti arose and flourished among the Buddhists. Buddhists would have adopted the Hindu temple of gods and goddesses


for Tantric purpose. After the parinirvāṇa of Buddha, Buddhists accepted certain cults of selected devas and deities of Hinduism into their religion. Thus the theory of incarnation emerged. Bhakti movement and incarnation theory propagated the growth of the concept of Bodhisattva.

Persian religion and culture contributed much to the growth of Bodhisattva doctrine. Zoroastrianism, the religion of ancient Persia also had contributed to the rise of the Bodhisattva concept. It influenced the development of Buddhism more directly through the cult of sun-worship, and is referred in DīghaNikāya and Jātaka. The solar myth entered deep into every phase of Buddhism, and many Bodhisattvas were endowed with solar attributes. It certainly influenced the development of Mahayana Buddhism at a later period.

**Development of the Concept of Bodhisattva**

The term of Bodhisattva is very old and occurs in PāliNikāyas. Buddha speaks of himself as a Bodhisattva, before the attainment of enlightenment, in MajjhimaNikāya. The word also seems to be used only in connection with a Buddha’s last life in the MahāpādānaSutta and the

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14 *ibid.* p.39.  
15 *ibid.* p.40.  
16 *ibid.* p.43.
The concept of Bodhisattva had got new identity in the SaddhammaPuṇḍarīka. These treatises belong mainly to the first century B.C. In course of the second century B.C. to seventh century A.D., the Bodhisattva doctrine was modified in its essential features.

In the early Mahayana, the Bodhisattvas are inferior and subordinate to the Buddhas, but they acquire greater importance. They are to be worshipped like the Buddhas. The early Mahayana tradition possesses wisdom and mercy, which are equally important, and a Bodhisattva must possess the knowledge and merit. A Bodhisattva need not be in a hurry to achieve ‘Bodhi’ and become a Buddha. With the emerging of Vajrayana, the concept of Bodhisattva had flourished all over the world. The worship of these deities was similar to that of Hindus. Symbol worship and Tantric ceremonies were also a part of Vajrayana tradition. It had got wide prominence outside the India.

**Bodhisattva Concept in Buddhist Narratives.**

The Nidānakathā, is said to have written in between the first century B.C. and the first century A.D. The formation of a concrete shape to the concept of Bodhisattva had taken place
at this period. An important portion of this book named ‘Durenidāna’ exhibits the growth of Bodhisattva ideal. The twenty four Buddhas mentioned in all these books were Bodhisattvas in their former lives, which were on the way to Buddha hood. Thus knowingly or unknowingly this concept was finding firm ground. In this period three types of Bodhi were recognized, they are-Śravaka, Pratyeka and Saṃyaka. To these three kinds of yānas were developed. Śravakayāna, Pratyekayāna and Saṃyakayāna. The first two are known as Hinayana and the other one imbied in Mahayana. The arhant ideal was heading towards the rise of the Bodhisattva. In this process, pratyekaBuddha and samyakBuddha were introduced. PratyekaBuddha was Buddha for himself and Saṃyaka was not only for himself but also for mankind. The saṃyaka ideal grew fast and ultimately culminated in the Bodhisattva ideal, and arhantavādins did not accept pratyekaBuddhas. Therīgāthā very reverentially refers to pratyekaBuddhas. Therīs like Citta, Dantika, Bhaddakapilani, and Mahāprajāpati Gotami give all the credit of their personally detached life to pratyekaBuddha.
MilindaPanha refers the theory of Bodhisattva. In this text pratyekabhumī is compared with samyakabhumī and later is considered superior. On the basis of this text the arhant’s mind is more receptive; it quickly grasps and acts with ease\textsuperscript{17}.

On the other hand pratyekaBuddha performs it with difficulty and acts slowly. PratyekaBuddhas are dependent on themselves alone. The references of Milindapanha are important for they reveal strong inclination towards the arhant ideal and not on pratyekaBuddha. Mahayana texts like Mahāvastu consists a very favourite theme, the glorification of the exceeding self-denial and generosity of the Bodhisattva. The Khaḍgaviṣana sutra praises pratyekaBuddha as does the Suttanipāta of Pāli Canon.

In Lalitavistara also, one can notice the definite growth of Bodhisattva. Here the master is always described as surrounded by twelve thousand monks and thirty two thousand Bodhisattvas, all rejoicing the knowledge of a Bodhisattva. This tendency started growing strongly and rapidly

\textsuperscript{17}Rhys Davids (tr.) The Questions of king Milinda-II. New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers, 1990. p.56.
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Jātaka stories advise the doctrine of dharma to ordinary people along with Buddhist mendicants. Buddhist folk believed that after taking number of births Buddha incarnates as Bodhisattva. He passes through 547 births. Among these ascetic, emperor, religious reader, merchant and the like were more important human stages. Besides these he incarnates the forms of a deer, elephant, lion, ox etc. Each story from this text portrayed some dharma doctrine along with Buddhist perfections to the society.

From the above discussions it is clear that the Buddhist narratives are scattered in Piṭaka literature. Certain among them are the commentaries of Buddha’s speeches, advices and parables. The original versions of these are not available and the available are not fully trust worthy, that they have undergone a number of additions and omissions through ages. However these narrations had got much attention among the scholars. Hence there are editions and critical studies on these texts. To sort out these narratives in a single string is difficult. It is consisted of a variety of narrative types. The narrative styles in Buddhist literature are very prominent compared to other religious literature. Among these narratives Jātakas and
Avadānas had got much prominence all over the world. These two genres represent the vastness and the sharpness of Indian narratives. They are the treasure of narrative techniques prevailed in ancient Indian literary world.

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