THE PROMISE OF INTERPRETATION:

AN ANALYSIS OF THE VĀNARINDA JĀTAKA

by

VISHMA KUNU

(Under the Direction of Glenn Wallis)

ABSTRACT

My contention is that the *Vānarinda Jātaka* (*VJ*) is a specifically Buddhist narrative, being a strategic reworking of situations and characters common to Indian oral tradition. By way of a fluid, triple-layered construct that is experimental in nature, I support this claim by exploring the interpretive possibilities of the text. Chapter one functions as a philological groundwork, and is a translation of the Pāli text that highlights terminology with distinctive resonances in the Buddhist tradition. The second chapter reveals the ways in which the *VJ* is marked by generality, drawing out pan-Indian elements through an examination against excerpts from the *Pañcatantra*, considered *nīti* literature, and the *Sundarakāṇḍa in Vālmīki's Rāmāyaṇa*, a Hindu work, all having pre-literate roots. In the third chapter, I offer a creative explication of the *VJ*, bringing to light the abundance of Buddhist allusions, and doctrinal references embedded within the narrative.

INDEX WORDS: Jātaka, Pāli canon, Gāthā, Buddhist narratives, Indian oral tradition, Hanumān, Pañcatantra

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B.A., University at Albany, State University of New York, 2000

A Thesis Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of The University of Georgia in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

MASTER OF ARTS

ATHENS, GEORGIA

2004

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DEDICATION

For my grandmother, Jessodra Tiwary,

who never read a single word with her eyes.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Glenn Wallis has been a most thought provoking, and inspiring teacher, and a real friend. Our innumerable conversations have left a lasting impression on my perspective, regarding my intellectual pursuits and more importantly, life in general. His endless encouragement of creativity in the academic world, and his insightful approach to Indian religion, and particularly Buddhism, have transformed my ways of thinking about these subjects, and will undoubtedly benefit me far beyond this youthful stage of my endeavors. I would like to especially thank Carolyn Medine, who is always a joy to work with, for her guidance with this project, taking the time to read and comment on it, and for her continued encouragement during my studies at the University of Georgia. I am truly grateful for Dorothy Figueira's literary expertise and willingness to work with me, without which this thesis may not have taken the current form, and for her invaluable honesty -- enlightening, colorful, and sometimes painful -- every step of the way.

I have had the pleasure of studying with three budding Buddhologists who greatly contributed to this study: Sonam Kachru, Sharon Roy, and Elizabeth Tanner. These knowledgeable individuals kept my wheels turning by participating in numerous monkey-talks, listening, and offering valuable suggestions, opening my eyes to aspects of the *VJ* that I was blind to. I can only hope that we end up on similar paths, and have the opportunity to work closely in the future. Also, I would like to thank AIshea Clyde for helping to keep me focussed, Paras Shah for being supportive in countless ways, and Kai Riedl for Zen, and potent responses to my ideas.

I am indebted to my parents, Vishnu Kunu and Betty Tiwary, an abundant source of love and support ever since we first met, for relentlessly seeking a brighter future for their children; generously, and selflessly giving to us the fruits of their labor. From them I have learned the value of pursuing an education. I cannot sufficiently express my gratitude to my siblings, Lisa, Tricia, and Gary, for their refreshingly divergent perspectives on just about everything -- giving way to much needed comic-relief. They are a bottomless well of amusement, advice, and affection, and remain indispensable to my growth in all regards.

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INTRODUCTION

JĀTAKA AS GENRE

The *jātaka* tales, as they are commonly called, is a collection of narratives held by tradition to be a record of many of Siddhattha Gotama's past lives, and are well loved among Buddhists, young and old. In these tales, the *bodhisatta* is almost always the protagonist appearing as a human, animal, tree fairy or other supernatural being who exhibits a virtuous quality, or is witness to an admirable act that he praises.[1] They have been, and continue to serve as a valuable source of entertainment, as an inspiration for artistic endeavors,[2] and as a splendid vehicle for teaching, perhaps since the time of the Buddha.[3] Deemed the "oldest collection of folklore extant," by T.W. Rhys Davids, the *jātaka* narratives came into being in the textual form that we have them today, centuries after the time of the Buddha. In this brief sketch, I will place this collection in (and out of) the *Tripiṭaka* (Three Baskets), as well as in relation to similar bodies of Indian narrative literature.

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[1] These qualities the b*odhisatta* exhibits in the *jātaka* tales can sometimes be identified with the ten *pāramitās*, or perfections (giving, morality, renunciation, wisdom, effort, patience, truth-telling, resoluteness, loving-kindness and equanimity), but this is not always the case. According to John Strong, the *pāramitās* become "an explicit organizational principle in the Pāli canonical text known as the Basket of Conduct (*Cariyāpiṭaka*)" where one finds *jātakas* illustrating each perfection. *The Buddha: A Short Biography* (Oxford: One World, 2001), 27.

[2] Representations of *jātaka* stories abound in the bas-reliefs of Bharhut, Sāñchī and Amarāvatī, dating to the 3rd century BCE, indicative of their popularity by this time.

[3] Bimala Churn Law, *A History of Pāli Literature In Two Volumes* (Varanasi: Bhartiya Publishing House, 1974), 271. Law asserts, "It is, indeed, likely enough that Buddha himself made use of popular tales in preaching to the people." Thought to have gained insight into his former lives during the second watch of his awakening, the Buddha may very well have drawn on this knowledge for didactic purposes but there are problems associated with this view. For a brief treatment of some of these, see John Garrett Jones, *Tales and Teachings of the Buddha: The Jātaka Stories in Relation to the Pāli Canon* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1979), 5. This inquiry lies outside the scope of this study.

The Pāli tradition holds that the oldest Buddhist canonical writings were divided into nine categories (*navangabuddhasāsana)*[4] before their eventual evolution into the *Tripiṭaka*. With regard to these nine constituent parts, Lamotte states:

> This classification does not correspond to any real division of the canon, but lists the literary styles represented in the canonical writings. One and the same text can be classified in several of the styles depending on which of its characteristics is under consideration.[5]

Jātaka, being "birth-stories that narrate the former existences of the *bodhisatta*,"[6] is one of these styles that carried over to the *Tripiṭaka* under the same name, although "there is no certainty as to the scope and contents"[7] of this early classification.[8] Table 1 shows the division of the *Tripiṭaka*, also known as the Pāli canon.[9]

Verses (*gāthā*) of an "archaic"[10] style that were preserved more or less unchanged in Pāli, and prose in rare instances, make up the *jātaka* text belonging to the *Khuddaka Nikāya* or "Collection of Little Texts" in the *Sutta-piṭaka.* Winternitz notes:

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[4] "The nine-fold teaching of Buddha"

[5] Etienne Lamotte, *History of Indian Buddhism: From the Origins to the Śaka Era*; translated from the French by Sara Webb-Boin (Louvain: Institut Orientaliste de Louvain, 1988), 143-144. The nine Aṇgas are: 1) *sutta* 2) *geyya* 3) *veyyākaraṇa* 4) *gāthā* 5) *udāna* 6) *itivuttaka* 7) *jātaka* 8) *abbhutadhamma* 9) *vedalla.*

[6] In the Sanskrit classification, there are 12 *aṅgas* and here too *jātaka* is one of them. Interestingly, Asanga, founder of the Yogācāra or Consciousness-Only school of Mahāyāna Buddhism considers *jātaka* as belonging to the *Vinaya-piṭaka*, together with circumstance (*nidāna*), exploits (*avadāna*), and "thus was it said" (*itivṛttaka*). Asanga, *Abhidharmasamuccaya* = the compendium of the higher teaching; translated and annotated by Walpola Rahula; English version by Sara Boin-Webb (Fremont: Asian Humanities Press, 2001) 179-181.

[7] Jones, *TTB*, 3.

[8] Maurice Winternitz, *A History of Indian Literature, Volume II: Buddhist Literature and Jaina Literature* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1983), 111. "Indeed it is difficult to determine how much of the *Jātaka* book as we have it belongs to the canon, for we do not possess the original canonical *Jātaka*, but merely a commentary on it."

[9] This overview is taken from Richard Robinson and Willard L. Johnson*, The Buddhist Religion: A Historical Introduction* (Belmont: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 4th ed. 1997), 311-312.

[10] E. B. Cowell, ed. Translated from the Pāli by various hands in VI volumes, *The Jātaka or Stories of the Buddha's Former Births* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, Reprint 1990), xxiv. Regarding the *gāthās*, Cowell states that they are "much more archaic than that of the stories; and it certainly seems more probable to suppose that they are the older kernel of the work. It is quite true that they are generally unintelligible without the story, but such is continually the case with proverbial sayings."

> [B]oth prose and verse originally came down orally; but the prose naturally had a less stable form than the stanzas, so that when the canon was compiled, and later on, when it was written down, only the verses retained their original form.[11].

Containing popular literature such as the *Dhammapada* and *Cariyāpiṭaka,* this fifth *nikāya* appears especially accessible to laypeople; and perhaps this was an organizational consideration when the canon was taking shape. However, it is noteworthy that *jātaka*-like stories appear in the other *nikāyas* and in the *Vinaya* as well.[12]

Table 1 – Division of the Tripiṭaka

I *Vinaya-piṭaka* (Basket of Discipline)	II *Sutta-piṭaka* (Basket of Discourses)	III *Abhidhamma-piṭaka* (Basket of Scholasticism)
A) Sutta-vibhanga a. Mahāvibhanga b. Bhikkhuṇī-vibhanga B) Khandhaka a. Mahāvagga b. Cullavagga c. Parivāra	1. Dīgha-nikāya 2. Majjhima-nikāya 3. Saṃyutta-nikāya 4. Anguttara-nikāya 5. Khuddaka-nikāya a. Khuddaka-pāṭha b. Dhammapada c. Udāna d. Itivuttaka e. Sutta-nipāta f. Vimāna-vatthu g. Peta-vatthu h. Thera-gāthā i. Therī-gāthā j. Jātaka k. Niddesa l. Paṭisambhidā-magga m. Apadāna n. Buddhavaṃsa o. Cariyā-piṭaka	1. Dhamma-sangini 2. Vibhanga 3. Dhātu-kathā 4. Puggala-paññatti 5. Kathā-vatthu 6. Yamaka 7. Paṭṭhāna

[11] Winternitz, *HILBJ*, 113.

[12] See K.R. Norman, *A History of Indian Literature*, Volume VII (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1983), 77-84. Also, Jones, *TTB*, 4. "[I]n addition to the recognized Jātaka stories which occur also in Four Nikāyas, there are other passages in the Four Nikāyas which whilst clearly having the form of Jātakas are not represented in the official Jātaka collection….Other Jātaka material is found in the Vinaya."

The stories we know as the *jātaka* tales constitute an extra-canonical work exceeding 500 narratives[13] that give meaning to the otherwise obscure verses. Properly known as the *Jātakaṭṭhavaṇṇā*[14] (referred to hereafter as *jātaka*), it is traditionally attributed to Buddhaghosa, a 5th century CE systematizer, philosopher and Buddhist commentator, but scholars have expressed their doubts about this, giving credit to one of his contemporaries instead.[15] It should be emphasized that this lengthy work is thought to be a *compilation* rather than a *composition* since the tales themselves were orally existent long before being recorded in writing. Each tale is set in a five-part framework, placing the story in the mouth of Buddha during his final lifetime, being narrated to the *saṅgha* when a certain event calls for a *telling* of bygone days to make clear the current situation. Oskar von Hinüber explains each component.

> All Ja[taka] have a strict formal structure. The first quarter of the first verse serves as headline. The beginning of the Ja[taka] is called *paccuppannavatthu*, "story of the present," which refers to some event at the time of the Buddha, who then demonstrates the ultimate origin of that event by means of the *atītavatthu*, "story of the past." This really is the Ja[taka] that also contains the *gāthā* "verse(s)," which are accompanied by a word for word commentary called *veyyākaraṇa* At the end, the story of the past and the one of the present are connected in the *samodhāna*, "connection."[16]

Reflecting this distinct form throughout, the tales are organized into 22 books/sections (*nipātas),* roughly grouped according to the number of canonical verses present in each story.[17] The verses can be thought of as the sole organizational principle, for the narratives themselves

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[13] 547-550 stories are said to be in the *Jātakaṭṭhakathā*, but this is questionable since variations on the same story occur and in some cases, verses appear with no prose. Sometimes, in the latter instance, the reader is referred elsewhere for the story.

[14] Winternitz, *HILBJ*, 112. He states that this work is based on an earlier commentary on the *jātakas*, the *Jātakaṭṭhakathā.*

[15] E. W. Adikaram, *Early History of Buddhism in Ceylon* or "State of Buddhism in Ceylon as Revealed by the Pāli Commentaries of the 5th Century A.D" (Migoda: D.S. Puswella, 1946), 6. See also Jones, *TTB*, 6.

[16] Oskar von Hinüber, *A Handbook of Pāli Literature* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1996), 56.

are not in sequential or "chronological" order with regard to the *bodhisatta*'s advancement towards his final birth. Subsequently, each book possesses fewer stories containing a larger numbers of verses; so towards the end of the collection, one finds stories containing hundreds of verses.[18] Another extra-canonical work, the *Nidānakathā*, although it may well stand on its own, serves as an introduction to the *jātakas,* providing a biographical layout divided into three "epochs," the distant, intermediate and recent. This text treats events in Gotama's life from his birth as Sumedha when he vowed to become a Buddha and fulfill the perfections, to his descent from Tusita heaven being born as Siddhattha, up until his early days of teaching after gaining awakening.[19]

Aside from this consideration of the *jātaka* narratives within the context of Buddhist literature, they can be generally characterized as folktales, having roots in preliterate culture. As will be discussed in detail below, constituents of stories (verses, themes, settings, characters, etc.) in such societies have communal status, circulating among the folk in no set form until being committed to writing. Highly malleable and belonging to everyone and no one, it is not unusual to find overt similarities between the "*jātaka* proper" *(atītavatthu),* being the meaty prose portion, and other stories with oral origins like those in the *Pañcatantra, Hitopadeśa* and even *Aesop's Fables*.[20] In an Indian context, such narratives are generally regarded as *nīti*[21] or

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[17] Winternitz, *HILBJ*, 121. "This division was in existence already in the canonical *Jātaka* stanza collection and is not the work of a commentator."

[18] For example, the *Vessantara Jātaka,* belongs to the "Maha" Nipāta (Book 22), is the final narrative in the collection and contains about 800 *gāthās*.

[19] N. A. Jayawickrama, *The Story of Gotama Buddha: The Nidāna-kathā of the Jātakaṭṭhakathā* (Oxford: Pali Text Society, 1990), vii-viii.

[20] For parallels between these and the *jātakas*, see Laura Gibbs, trans. *Aesop's Fables* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002). See also Jean W. Sedlar, *India and the Greek World: A Study in the Transmission of Culture* (New Jersey: Rowman and Littlefield, 1980) for a closer look at the interaction between these two regions, including the possible exchange of folktales and fables.

[21] *Nīti*- leading or bringing, guidance, management; right or wise or moral conduct or behavior. All Sanskrit definitions taken from Monier Monier-Williams, *A Sanskrit- English Dictionary* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1999).

worldly wisdom literature, aiming to teach something about the world, and how one should act in it, based on what has been understood by the folk over time and through lived experience.

Walter Ong, who argues that writing restructures our thought processes, points out that oral cultures are incapable of generating highly abstract categories, so they use stories that involve human action, remaining close to the "living human lifeworld" to "store, organize, and communicate much of what they know."[22] *What they know* certainly includes the ethical; and what better receptacle, and medium, exists for such teachings in oral culture than a "situational" story world where there is immeasurable space for issues to arise, choices to be made, and actions to be performed? Although the characters in *nīti* stories are not always *human*, dispositions, behavior patterns and moral tendencies *of humans* are ascribed to them, be it jackal, mongoose or ogre. The functional dimensions of folklore, as storehouse and didactic device perhaps supersedes our use for them today, but the moralistic "stuff" of these lived-life tales possesses something of a timeless dimension. Whether at the market place in Banaras during the 5th century, or the used-car dealership two weeks ago in Normaltown, have we not all been victims of the crocodile trying to dupe us into getting what he desires?

So where do the *jātakas* abide in this vast ocean of *nīti* literature? We find in the *jātakas* a variegated sampling of narratives, strikingly diverse in content[23] but generally thought to be of neither Buddhist character nor origin, except in rare instances. In addition to the distinctive five-

[22] Walter Ong, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word* (London: Methuen & Co., 1982), 49,137.

[23] Winternitz, *HILBJ*, 121. "[W]e find in the *Jātakas*: 1.Fables, most of which, like the Indian fable in general, have the object of teaching *nītī*…and only very few are genuine Buddhistic in character. 2.Fairy tales, including four with animal figures in them, mostly quite in the nature of European popular fairy tales without any relation to Buddhism. Only in some cases they have been provided with a Buddhistic tendency, they have been so to say "Buddhisised" and a few may also be purely Buddhistic invention. 3.Short anecdotes and witty tales which do not at all have anything Buddhistic about them. 4. Short stories and full fledged novels with many adventures and sometimes with a large or small number of stories inserted in them. In these there is nothing Buddhist except that the hero is Bodhisatta. 5.Moral stories. 6.Sayings. 7.Pious legends, all of which are only in part of Buddhist origin."

part design of each tale, the identification of the protagonist with the *bodhisatta*[24] is often treated as a superficial attempt by Buddhists to incorporate preexisting stories into their tradition, but even if this is the case, there are some significant implications. The *jātakas* are already differentiated from other *nīti* literature when the *bodhisatta* appears on the imaginary scene as performer of, or witness to actions, permeating the ethical quality that runs throughout the tales with a particularly Buddhist flavor. Lynn Tirrell, in her inquiry into the necessity of storytelling for moral agency asserts,

> [I]n listening to a story, one confronts a perspective, a character and a set of judgements…Sympathy and imagination help the listener to try that perspective on for size, while reason and comparison allow the listener to differentiate himself or herself from both the portrayer and the portrayed in the story.[25]

What is it to try the *bodhisatta*'s "perspective on for size," a being destined for awakening who is involved in the process of cultivating specific skills, including ethical ones? No longer is a generic, moral lesson communicated, but instead, *Buddhist* ideas about *kamma*, being something of how one should act, or refrain from acting in accordance with Buddha's teachings, by way of his character in a previous life. Also, one existential notion central to the Buddhist tradition is conveyed when 500+ narratives are linked by the *bodhisatta*, namely, rebirth.

It seems neglectful to accord no special value to the *jātakas* when similarities with other *nīti* stories are noted, discount their overt differences as being superficial, and not investigate any further to gain insight into the ways in which they are possibly Buddhist. In addition to this, the *jātakas* and like stories created by preliterate people are frequently cast off today as simplistic

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[24] Gokuldas De, *Significance and Importance of the Jātakas [With Special Reference to Bhārhut]* (Calcutta: Calcutta University Press, 1951), xii-xx. Tracing the Bodhisatta idea from the commentaries of the 5th cent CE to the earliest *Nikāyas*, found that, "the earlier the work, the lesser the scope and influence of the idea until in the earliest stage [the inscriptions of Bhārhut] it completely disappears." There is no doubt that his study will prove useful to those interested in the historical development of the *jātaka* tales.

stories suitable only for children. This attitude, held by scholars and practitioners alike, materializes in juvenile sections of libraries and bookstores where versions of such tales can be found in comic and storybook form. Perhaps it is necessary to reassess this view, as Albert Lord comments,

> One thinks of the simple peasant with his "quaint ideas, his fairy stories, and children's tales. The use of folk stories as entertainment for young children has its ironic aspects; we are beginning to realize the serious symbolism and meaning of folk tales, which, if rightly understood, would be far from proper fare for children.[26]

Limiting my scope to the *Vānarinda Jātaka* (#57), this work is an exercise in doing just this. This can serve as a gateway into thinking about others, contending that it is not a trivial tale that can be dismissed as unsophisticated. I presuppose that Buddhists of those days were sensible individuals who creatively employed such stories because they recognized them to be useful devices to convey Buddhist ideas, thereby being worthy of the considerable material, physical, and emotional effort that preservation required. Treating the *VJ* as a narrative deserving of close attention, I allow the work to disclose its world of meaning that extends far beyond the historical bounds of the 5th century CE. The *VJ* belongs to the *Eka Nipāta*, possessing only one canonical verse, involving a well-known encounter between the bodhisatta taking birth as a monkey, and one of his adversaries in the form of a crocodile. Quite possibly, a marvelous Buddhist universe lies dormant within this popular rendezvous.

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[25] Lynn Tirrell, "Storytelling and Moral Agency," *Journal of Aesthetics and Art* 48, no. 2 (1990): 115-126.
[26] Albert Lord, *The Singer of Tales* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1960), 6.

PRE-LITERACY AND TEXTUALITY

When an often-told oral story is not actually being told,
all that exists of it is the potential in certain human beings to tell it.[27]

Steven Collins notes, "[T]here is universal scholarly consensus that the earliest phase of Buddhist textual tradition was oral."[28] It is thought that after the Buddha's *parinibbāna*, his followers gathered in order to preserve the teaching through organization and memorization, since Buddha wrote not a single word throughout his career. An educated person in those days was referred to as *bahuśruta,* meaning "well heard, or having heard much." According to Walpola Rahula, "It is believed that not a single book was found in India at the time of Buddha…knowledge was acquired chiefly through the ear…the pupil had to listen to and commit to memory the instruction imparted orally by the teacher."[29] Not until the first century BCE was the *Tripiṭaka* and its commentary written down for the first time.[30]

The canonical *gāthās* of the *jātaka* collection were perhaps recorded then, but the *narratives* surrounding the verses were compiled and documented about eight centuries later. Most if not all *jātaka* narratives have oral origins in the form of folktales, and for this reason alone, any attempt to ascribe a date to them would be like drawing lines in water. Even the *gāthās* are shrouded in mystery, as they have no single, identifiable composer or source.[31] The *Vānarinda Jātaka,* with which this study is concerned, bears the fluid and imaginative marks of a folktale, settling in multiple forms with variations of the story appearing in the *jātaka* collection,

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[27] Ong, *OL*, 11.
[28] Steven Collins, "Notes on Some Oral Aspects of Pāli Literature," *Indo-Iranian Journal* 35.2-3 (1992): 121-135 In this article, Collins argues that Buddhist tradition remained also an oral/aural one, even after there were written records of the teachings. Even today, this is very much the case.
[29] Walpola Rahula, *History of Buddhism in Ceylon* (Colombo: M. D. Gunasena & Co. Ltd., 1956), 287-288.
[30] This is according to the *Dīpavaṃsa*, an early historical account of Buddhism in Sri Lanka.
[31] Winternitz, *HILBJ*, 118. "Not only…every single story, but also every simple *gāthā* will have to be examined in itself with regard to its age. Some of the gāthās may possibly date back to the Vedic period, others should be regarded as a preliminary stage of epic poetry…"

and also in the *Pañcatantra*.[32] However, prior to approaching this narrative as a *text,* that is, an historical document that we can assume has not changed in literary content since coming into being, it is necessary to address some features of preliterate works, and implications of the commitment to writing of such literature.

In his treatment of the *nikāyas* as oral literature, L. S. Cousins points to the usage of mnemonic "formulae" in oral epic poetry, as researched by Milman Parry and Albert Lord, asserting that this feature is "certainly present in [Buddhist] *sutta* literature."[33] Parry defines formula as "a group of words which is regularly employed under the same metrical conditions to express a given essential idea."[34] Cousins notes that they are used, "both as an aid to actual performance and to maintain the continuity and form of the epic tradition," and contends that, "if we compare the Pāli recension of the *nikāyas* with other surviving versions, the differences we find are exactly those we might expect to discover between different performances of oral works."[35] It is beyond the scope of this thesis to investigate, as Cousins suggests, how these "formulae" function in *sutta* literature in general, but for purposes of this study, it may be useful to draw a parallel between them, and the *gāthās* that appear in the *jātaka* narratives.

The *gāthā* can be thought of as the seed, or "essential idea" that the story is built around, serving as the backbone to the tale that exists in a "constant flux." [36] Ratilal Mehta offers a succinct overview of the life of the folktale and the role of verse that can be applied to the *jātakas*.

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[32] See *jātakas* 57, 208, 342 and frame story of Book IV of *Pañcatantra.*
[33] L.S. Cousins, "Pāli Oral Literature" in P. Denwood and A. Piatigorsky (eds.) *Buddhist Studies Ancient and Modern* (London: Curzon Press, 1983), 1-11.
[34] Lord, *ST*, 4.
[35] Cousins, *POL*, 2.
[36] Stephen Benson, *Cycles of Influence: Fiction Folktale Theory* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2003), 20.

> Authors of folklore have always remained anonymous: the story originates in the mind of one man: he composes the verses and puts them afloat among the folk: in the course of time the verses become the common possession of the whole folk: the verses are thus preserved, with very rare modifications: the prose which is only a commentary on these verses changes from mouth to mouth, until it settles in the form in which it is finally committed to writing.[37]

Indeed, modifications of the *gāthā* are far less frequent than that of the tale, but one should not slip into the misunderstanding that formulas are rigid building blocks that remain fixed. Lord holds that they are "not the ossified clichés which they have the reputation of being, but are capable of change and are indeed frequently highly productive of other formulas."[38] The story constructed around the verse *certainly* has no fixed text or form, but its core ingredients (themes, characters, etc.) are also drawn from existent material circulating among the people. With each subsequent telling, details are entirely up to storyteller who has the freedom to be inventive, and to exercise his imagination, as each telling is a *retelling*, with no one version being authoritative. This process allows the narrator to be creative -- engaging and amusing his audience -- and to preserve the folk-tradition at the same time. The tale, and the formula are living organisms that can be shaped, molded, adjusted, expanded or contracted to meet the needs of the narrator and the audience at any given time or place.[39] Chandra Rajan says of these revisions of oral texts, "The narrator or storyteller has a relationship with his audience and establishes a rapport with it that are denied the storywriter. He can improvise on the spur of the moment, adding something, leaving out something else because he has an instant feedback."[40]

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[37] Ratilal Mehta, *Pre-Buddhist India: A Political, Administrative, Economic, Social and Geographical Survey of Ancient India Based Mainly on the Jātaka Stories* (Bombay: Examiner Press, 1939), xxii.
[38] Lord, *ST*, 4.
[39] Ong, *OL*, 48. "[S]killed oral narrators deliberately vary their traditional narratives because part of their skill is their ability to adjust to new audiences and new situations or simple to be coquettish."
[40] Viṣṇu Śarma, *The Pañcatantra*; translated from the Sanskrit with an introduction by Chandra Rajan (London: Penguin Classics,1993), xxi.

Even though the story may be different at each telling, the narrator may insist that he has told *the same story* each time. Cousins argues that this viewpoint is "reasonable and in many ways defensible,"[41] likening it to recounting an incident to different persons in various settings. Concerning the *Purāṇas*, a set of Indian religious narratives also stemming from oral tradition, Ludo Rocher states that they are, "in real life the property of the Indian bards, storytellers, the tellers of ancient stories, the *Paurāṇikas*…who travel from village to village all over India…. [B]asically they tell the same story but in their own way."[42] Considering the popular status of both narrative and formula, it comes as no surprise that verses similar to, or identical with those in the *jataka* narratives appear in non-Buddhist literature such as *Vālmīki's Rāmāyaṇa*, and the *Mahābhārata*.[43] Winternitz notes, "It appears…that the authors of ancient Buddhist texts…had as yet no knowledge of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, but that they knew ballads utilized by Vālmīki for his Rāma epic."[44]

Interestingly, Ong, explains the "formulaic constitution of thought" as an invaluable means of storing knowledge in preliterate societies on the whole, serving a crucial role that extends even outside of poets and storytellers.

> In an oral culture, knowledge, once acquired had to be constantly repeated or it would be lost; fixed, formulaic thought patterns were essential for wisdom and effective administration.[45]

Illustrating the usefulness, and moreover, the necessity of formulaic thought as a method of preservation, he offers as an example a situation in which a person had arrived at a complex solution to a difficult question, in a society where writing was not an option. Ong asks,

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[41] Cousins, *POL*, 1.
[42] Ludo Rocher, "Orality and Textuality in the Indian Context," *Sino-Platonic Papers* 49, 1994. AMES, University of Pennsylvania, 20.
[43] This will be dealt with in greater detail in Chapter 2 where a similar *gāthā* appears in the *VJ* and *Vālmīki's Rāmāyaṇa*.
[44] Maurice Winternitz, *A History of Indian Literature, Volume I, Part II: Epics and Purāṇas* (Calcutta: University of Calcutta, 1963), 448.

> How could you ever call to mind what you had so laboriously worked out? The only answer is: Think memorable thoughts…[T]o solve effectively the problem of retaining and retrieving carefully articulated thought, you have to do your thinking in mnemonic patterns, shaped for ready oral recurrence. Your thought must come into being in heavily rhythmic, balanced patterns, in repetitions or antithesis, in alliterations and assonances, in epithetic and other formulary expressions, in standard thematic settings…in proverbs which are constantly heard by everyone so that they come to mind readily and which themselves are patterned for retention and recall, or in other mnemonic form.[46]

Given the importance of patterned thought in preserving knowledge, and the structural significance of these formulas to the ever-changing folktale, it is quite sensible that *gāthās* were included in the *Tripiṭaka*, if they could be used to serve a Buddhist end. Having no concrete text, popular stories could be fashioned around the verses to teach or propagate Buddhist ideas to the community at large. The question of whether or not the *gāthās* were actually uttered, or employed by the Buddha in his teachings, to warrant canonical status, is really irrelevant. As Cousins says, "Authenticity lies not in historical truth although this is not doubted, but rather in whether something can accord with the essential structure of *dhamma* as a whole."[47] By adding or subtracting elements, a storyteller could certainly imbue an existent folktale with a Buddhist flavor, thereby making such ideas more appealing to laypeople. Although he is dealing with written works, John Strong addresses some religious concerns of the authors of Buddhist Sanskrit texts like the *Aśokāvadāna* that are relevant here.

> [T]he authors of these texts…were not so much composers of original works as reworkers of old legends and oral traditions…[O]ne of the purposes of these authors in retelling and embellishing popular stories, was to preach and to proselytize…[using] their literary skills actively to promote

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[45] Ong, *OL*, 23.
[46] *Ibid*, 34.
[47] Cousins, *POL*, 3.

> and to reinforce the spread of Buddhism…Their works tended not to be heavily doctrinal but were designed to attract potential converts or maintain the faith of previous converts. They address the situation of the layman more than that of the monk or meditator.[48]

Stories were an indispensable medium through which Buddha's teachings were communicated to the masses. In Buddhist oral tradition, there were specialists or reciters (*bhāṇakas*) of particular branches of doctrine, entrusted with the preservation of canonical corpus. The *Jātakabhāṇakas* were responsible for learning "the whole of the *jātaka* text with its commentary- not less than that."[49] That the narratives were eventually recorded, forming an immense compendium of story literature sometimes bearing explicit Buddhist resonance aside from notions of *kamma* and rebirth, betrays the significance of such material within the Buddhist tradition.

But, what happens when fluid, oral works are set in writing? This transition from orality to textuality is a crucial moment in the life of a folktale, as it becomes locked into one form, and it is fixed, closed. Regarding the text of the *Purāṇas*, Rocher notes that when one version of a story is inserted into a manuscript, it "hardly justif[ies] the view that this is THE text of the story…a lot is lost when an immensely varied oral tradition is reduced to just a few or one textual tradition."[50] This loss can be seen as the price we pay to preserve works that have been creatively passed on orally for centuries. Without a doubt, these works transformed and changed shape along the way, and such is the nature of a living organism. The text, in its written form, only captures *one* telling of innumerable tellings and the living tradition, in a sense, fades away into the margins. Details of setting, characters, actions performed, dialogue etc. may have been

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[48] John Strong, *The Legend of King Aśoka: A Study and Translation of the Aśokāvadāna* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), 32-33.
[49] Rahula, *HBC*, 294.
[50] Rocher, *OTIC*, 21.

different at the very next telling, but printed word encapsulates only one of the possible story worlds created from these constituents.

A seemingly obvious, but noteworthy implication of textuality is the loss of the dynamism that characterizes spoken words in real life, particularly in the case of narrating a tale. The vigorous interchange between the teller and his audience slips into the crevices as the verbal text of the story become words on a page or palm leaf. As Ong points out, "The word in its natural, oral habitat is a part of a real existential present…Spoken words are always modifications of a total situation which is more than verbal. They never occur alone, in a context simply of words… Yet words are alone in a text."[51] This difference is remarkable, considering intonations and inflections in the voice of a living speaker that immediately convey meaning and evoke a response (for instance, shock or terror) among hearers.[52] Of course, this is possible in writing as well, especially in cultures where literary skills are highly developed, but we can probably assume that this was not a concern of the recorders of the *jātaka* narratives.

Ong highlights some general characteristics of works with preliterate roots and the attitude of what he calls "print culture" to these, asserting that there are different mindsets at work. Being firmly embedded in the latter, it is useful for our purposes to draw attention to these, as it may alert us to dispositions or expectations we have of literary works that we are perhaps unaware of. Ong points to the "intertextual" approach of manuscript composers who were still very much grounded in the practices of the "old oral world." It was a regular practice to refer to other texts and records, freely borrowing from them to create their own document. Print culture, on the other hand,

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[51] Ong, *OL*, 100.

[52] To further explore the differences between spoken and written words and that between hearers and readers, particularly in terms of folklore, would be an interesting project, but here it will have to suffice to simply note it.

> [T]ends to feel a work as 'closed', set off from other works, a unit in itself. [It] gave birth to the romantic notions of 'originality' and 'creativity', which set apart an individual work from other works even more, seeing its origins and meaning as independent of outside influence, at least ideally.[53]

These concepts are certainly absent in preliterate cultures as we have seen in the case of folktales. Every tale draws from the barrel of common stock verses, formulas, themes and other story material, neither existing as an *independent* entity, nor considered the "first" of its kind. Encountering variations of the same story then does not discount its value in any way, as Lord asserts, "In oral tradition the idea of an original is illogical."[54] However, the literate eye may ascribe a lower status[55] to a work that obviously has parallels in other texts, being ignorant of the kind of "spur of the moment' originality, in the case of storytelling, preliterate people are capable of. The adjustments and innovations the narrator makes constitute his creative skill that the reader may be blind to.

One mark of oral works, perhaps distasteful to print culture is what Ong characterizes as its "aggregative" quality, which he attributes to the dependence on formulas as a mnemonic device.

> The elements of orally based thought and expression tend to be not so much simple integers as clusters of integers, such as…phrases or clauses, epithets. Oral folk prefer…not the soldier but, the brave soldier; not the princess, but the beautiful princess…Oral expression thus carries a load of epithets and other formulary baggage which high literacy rejects as cumbersome and tiresomely redundant because of its aggregative weight. [56]

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[53] *Ibid*, 131.
[54] Lord, *ST*, 101.
[55] *Ibid*, 134. "One of the difficulties in comprehending the change from oral to written style lies in the fact that we think of the written always in terms of quality, and that of the highest. We assume with out thinking that written style is always superior to oral style, even from the very beginning."
[56] Ong, *OL*, 38.

A fully developed written tradition certainly has no use for this type of language and when encountered in text, it may seem quite awkward or maybe even laughably simplistic. As we have seen, this feature is vital to the survival of an oral tradition's lore, so when it becomes documented, the thought would not occur to exclude it. How could one know of the possibilities that writing held, which we effortlessly wield, at such an early stage? Lord expresses this transition quite nicely by explaining, "When a tradition or an individual goes from oral to written, he, or it, goes from an adult, mature style of one kind to a faltering and embryonic style of another sort."[57] Although it has not been mentioned because we are primarily concerned with story literature, the abundance of *repetitions* in recordings of other oral works, certainly in sections of the *Tripiṭaka*, should also be pointed out here. Repetition is another mechanism that was employed to implement memory so it too was set in writing and can quickly become dull or monotonous to a reader.

Perhaps most pertinent to this study is the overall tendency of literates to look down upon works produced in oral cultures, taking their thinking to be somewhat less-developed or puerile. A literate inhabitant of a technologically advanced and highly "civilized" society would probably see a story engendered in a pre-modern one as being primitive or unreflective of any significant understanding of the world, or of humanity. Challenging this attitude, Ong asserts of narrators of Navaho folkloric animal stories,

> [They] can provide elaborate explanations of the various implications of the stories for an understanding of complex matters in human life from the physiological to the psychological and moral, and are perfectly aware of such things as physical inconsistencies…and the need to interpret elements in the stories symbolically.[58]

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[57] Lord, *ST*, 134.
[58] Ong, *OL*, 56.

I suggest that we assume the same of the narrators of *jātakas,* as the other option would be that a talking, leaping monkey is just a talking, leaping monkey, and a desire-ridden, pregnant wife of a crocodile is just a desire-ridden, pregnant wife of a crocodile. The biased view that pre-literate thinking is unsophisticated can only act as a hindrance to seeing what's really there, blinding the reader at the very outset to the possible treasures within their stories and other creative expressions of human experience.

This overview of the changeable quality of narratives in oral cultures and some implications of the transition to written word is intended to shed some light on the dim surroundings of the *text* of the *VJ* as it exists today in print culture. Bringing attention to a few aspects of the literary mindset hopefully helps to guard against reading the *jātaka* through an unfair lens, as the task of *interpreting* the work must come by way of engagement with the *text*. To begin lifting it out of its verbal and historical confines, perhaps we can practice reading with our ears and listening with our eyes.

SCHOLARSHIP

As a window into pre-, and early Buddhist India the *jātaka* narratives have been profitably utilized by some for the purpose of constructing historical pictures, as they contain an abundance of information regarding various sociological dimensions of Ancient India.[59] Others have engaged in far more thought provoking investigations, namely those of Charles Hallisey and Anne Hansen, David C. Pierce, Martin Wickramasinghe, and Richard Gombrich, which will be briefly highlighted here as they provide some impetus for this project by carving new pathways into thinking about the *jātakas* themselves. They battle against such common

condescensions as, "the introductory tales known as the Story of the Present are very silly inventions of the commentators,"[60] the teachings of the *jātakas* "do not go far below the surface. They are chiefly to inculcate obvious lower truths,"[61] and, "there is nothing particularly Buddhist about them…[T]he ethic is of course, of a very simple kind. It is milk for babes."[62]

Charles Hallisey and Anne Hansen in an article exploring the "worklike" dimension of narratives, draw on Buddhist story literature to illustrate the ability of such works to transform the moral life. They offer an intriguing reason for the dismissal of *jātakas* as non-reflective of significant Buddhist thought.

> As it is well known, many of the Jātakas have animals as their protagonists. We suspect that this particular aspect of Buddhist story literature has been a crucial catalyst in the modern tendency to discount the Jātakas as mere folktales. It is one thing, however, to identify the reason for neglect; it is another thing to suggest a different, more productive way to interpret and explain such stories.[63]

They begin doing just that by asserting that using animals as characters is actually a "sophisticated imaginative practice" allowing for the discussion of moral qualities without listeners or readers associating them with people of any particular social standing, ethnicity, or location. Stories involving animals require the audience to "stand outside the conventions and prejudices" of their societies, as qualities attributed to an animal can usually only be interpreted as being those of people in general, not any one specific group, in any one place.

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[59] See R. Mehta, *PBI*, and Benoychandra Sen, *Studies in Buddhist Jātaka: Tradition and Polity* (Calcutta: Saraswat Library, 1974).
[60] Martin Wickramasinghe, *The Buddhist Jātaka Stories and The Russian Novel* (Columbo: The Associated Newspapers of Ceyon Ltd., 1956), ix, quoting Winternitz.
[61] David C. Pierce, "The Middle Way of the Jātaka Tales," *Journal of American Folklore*, 82:245-254, quoting E. Washburn Hopkins.
[62] Thomas W. Rhys Davids, *Buddhist India* (New York: Books for Libraries Press, 1903), 197.
[63] Charles Hallisey and Anne Hansen, "Narrative, Sub-Ethics and the Moral Life: Some Evidence from Theravāda Buddhism," *Journal of Religious Ethics* 24, no. 2 (1996): 305-328.

This reading of non-human characters is certainly an appealing one, since we *are* dealing with a culture whose understanding of the world and each other is perfumed by attitudes like caste distinctions. It should be noted that while employing animals is an excellent way around these issues, they are still capable of betraying larger divisions in society that can be directly correlated to the worldview or religious perspective at work behind the narrative. In terms of the *VJ*, a listener or reader may not be able to identify the monkey or crocodile with a particular ethnic group, but through details of their livelihood, actions, etc., parallels can easily be drawn between the monkey and the ascetic, the crocodile and the householder. This surely has ethical implications of a different sort.

David C. Pierce approaches the *jātaka* tales from a noteworthy angle by seeking to identify a pattern in the body of the narratives taken together, suggesting that they may very well be a vehicle of Buddhist doctrine although we find in them stories of all shapes, forms and sizes. Addressing the relegation of the teachings of the *jātakas* to an inferior status, he states,

> [T]o judge the instruction of the *jātakas* to be "lower" would be to assume that we have a firm understanding of essential "high" Buddhist doctrine during the life of the early community and this is an assumption to which we may not be entitled.[64]

His structural strategy aims at defeating such claims about the tales being just lightweight lessons of morality, especially when a random few are taken as the object of examination. What he finds in the collection of narratives is a "dialectical tension" between the order of the everyday world of the householder and that of worldly renunciation of the mendicant. These two seemingly contrary claims are discernable in the *jātakas* by the profusion of instructions for those living life in the world, alongside the notion of "the ascetic ideal" that is never questioned. He argues that the central concern of the *jātaka* material lies in the way it gives shape to this

tension, with "a middle way ethic of compassion" being the most important of ways in which it is reconciled. He holds that such mediation is the "expression of a faith that could not remain "sectarian," separated from the world, but was compelled to relate itself to its world in some meaningful manner."[65] This tension he identifies is pertinent to this study since we find it expressed in the *VJ* by a householder crocodile and a forest dweller monkey involved in a conflict of interests. Since we have not yet laid out the details of the narrative, we will return to this in Chapter 3.

Martin Wickramasinghe's pioneering work turns our attention to the *literary* aspects of both the *paccuppannavatthu,* being the story of the present, and the *atītavatthu* or *jātaka* proper that we have been concerned with thus far. The first is generally thought to be based on incidents in the lives of men and women, at times involving events from the life of the Buddha, and reading these, it seems obvious that there was no real attempt by the writer to be artistic. However, Wickramasinghe contends that "In realism, brevity and the absence of pedantry and sentimental romanticism, some of these introductory anecdotes are closer to the European novel than to the old-world romances or folk-tale." He asserts the same of the *atītavatthu,* for although some tales do reflect a conscious artistic effort by Buddhist composers, at the core of the narratives is the "real raw material of life,"[66] free of embellishments and emotional overkill that move away from actual experiences of people. He compares the character types found in the *jātakas* with those in Dostoevsky's novels, recognizing similarities in their conflicts at the very basic psychological level. Realizing it might yield a startling response, Wickramasinghe presses further and attempts to show how certain tales *unintentionally* reveal "the working of the

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[64] Pierce, *MWJT*, 246.
[65] *Ibid*, 253.
[66] Wickramasinghe, *BJSRN*, 4-5.

subconscious mind" with the *bodhisatta* playing the role of psychoanalyst. This study is overall, refreshingly out of the ordinary, but especially so in its concern with the *jātakas* as literature that is akin, although at its bare bones, to remarkable productions of print culture.

Since we will be looking at the *VJ* in relation to an excerpt from the *Sundarakāṇḍa* in *Vālmīki's Rāmāyaṇa,* Richard Gombrich's comparison of parts of the *Vessantara Jātaka* and the *Ayodhyākāṇḍa*[67] is relevant to this project in some ways. He notes that they are very similar in content, but not enough to suggest that they "borrow directly from each other or that they depend on a common source," proposing instead that they have "a mutual influence." Both stories involve a prince who is exiled from the kingdom which he is heir to, and going off into the forest he faces numerous challenges. In dealing with these, Gombrich holds that "the virtues displayed are completely different," exemplifying Buddhist or Hindu ideals. Vessantara, our *jātaka* hero, is the poster-guy of generosity, giving away even his children at a brahmin's request, while Rāma is the perfect example of doing one's duty at whatever cost. He then contrasts the *Dasaratha Jātaka* (*DJ*) with these two works, as it combines motifs from the *Vessantara Jātaka* with a version of Rāma's exile. Gombrich concludes that the author is critiquing Hindu values with Rāma in the *DJ* being in control of his feelings at the news of his father's death, a Buddhist virtue, whereas in the *Rāmāyaṇa,* he grieves to a great extent at the loss. In closing, he briefly compares Hindu and Buddhist ethics, pointing out that the notion of *svadharma*/*sadhamma* or acting in accordance with one's individual place or role, is non-existent in Buddhism, for, "Their values are universalistic: what is right for one must be right for all."

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[67] Richard Gombrich, "The Vessantara Jātaka, the Rāmāyaṇa and the Dasaratha Jātaka," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 105, no. 3 (1985): 427-437.

These scholarly endeavors, though varied, apply pressure and in their own way penetrate the deceptive boundaries that the *jātakas* have been confined to, and this amateur one recklessly follows their lead.

METHODOLOGY

> [T]he discovery of the true meaning of a text or a work of art is never finished; it is in fact an infinite process. Not only are fresh sources of error constantly excluded, so that the true meaning has filtered out of it all kinds of things that obscure it, but there emerge continually new sources of understanding, which reveal unsuspected elements of meaning.[68]

This study aims at contributing to the small, but hopefully expanding body of scholarship that views the *Jātakas* as deserving of serious attention, by working to reveal the distinctly Buddhist character of the *VJ* through an experimental, triple-layered analysis of the text. This project stands in direct opposition to the dismissive attitude held by many that no such quality can be discerned in the tales beyond the identification of the protagonist with the bodhisatta, and other superficial, "Buddhistic" elements added to preexisting stories. Although the *VJ* emerges from the creative imagining of oral tradition during the early centuries of this era, I begin with concerning myself only with the *printed text* of the *VJ* as it exits here today, treating it in a manner that is appropriate to our time, as *literature*. Concerning reading a text in this way, even if it were an account of an actual event, Todorov says,

> Nothing in its composition needs to be changed; we need only say that we are not interested in its truth value but are reading it "as" literature. A "literary" reading can be imposed on any text: the question of truthfulness will not arise because the text is literary.[69]

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[68] Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method* (New York: Crossroad Publishing Co., 1975), 265-266.
[69] Tzvetan Todorov, *Genres in Discourse* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 3.

Doing just this, I presuppose that the *VJ* is a weighty, literary piece[70] that demands a closer look. I am aware that this approach to the *jātaka* is suggestive of hermeneutical problems, because of the indeterminate nature of texts in general, and perhaps more so for a work with no particular author or clearly identifiable origin. However, I would like to hold them at bay, and go about unlocking the Buddhist dimensions of the narrative by inquiring into the text in three ways -- a philological analysis, an Indological reading, and a Buddhist explication -- based on my knowledge of India, and Buddhism, all the while heeding the advice of Umberto Eco.

> [A]ny act of interpretation is a dialectic between openness and form, initiative on the part of the interpreter and contextual pressure. Medieval interpreters were wrong in taking the world as a univocal text; modern interpreters are wrong in taking every text as an unshaped world.[71]

The avoidance of these two faulty interpretive extremes will help to steer my reading of the *VJ* towards a middle course between looseness and rigidity, being open to the multi-vocal possibilities of the text but seeking, at the same time to remain grounded in the context of the work.

Chapter one is an annotated translation of the Pāli text and functions as a philological groundwork for the two subsequent readings. This first layer draws attention to technical terminology, or words having a range of meaning that may influence how the story is understood, or what is being communicated. Some of these clearly have resonances in the Buddhist tradition (dealt with in greater detail in Chapter 3), and in my judgement, should not be passed over as mere coincidence. By no means is this an exhaustive treatment of the language of the text, or of their interpretive implications in a Buddhist context, but the reader may return to this first stratum to wander through these semantic fields on his/her own as our analysis of the

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[70] I am, of course, not claiming that any part of the *VJ* was *composed* in writing.
[71] Umberto Eco, *The Limits of Interpretation* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), 21.

work progresses. Where useful, I include Sanskrit derivations and definitions in addition to the Pāli.

The second and third layers of this construct is modeled on an interpretive approach suggested by Glenn Wallis in his insightful work on the *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa* (*MMK*), paying attention to the interplay between the *general* and *specific*.[72] I read the *VJ* firstly as an *Indian* work in support of my claim that it is a strategic reworking of elements common to Indian oral tradition to reveal the ways in which the narrative is characterized by generality. To elucidate some of these pan- Indian features, I employ his tactic of *throwing light from the outside* by examining it in relation to excerpts from Book IV of the *Pañcatantra,*[73] considered *nīti* literature, and the *Sundarakāṇḍa* in *Vālmīki's Rāmāyaṇa*,[74] a Hindu work, all having preliterate roots. I will not take up the task of determining which came first, which borrows from the other; nor will I make any claims about the relationship between the *Pañcatantra* and the *Rāmāyaṇa*. For purposes of clarification, the *VJ* can be seen as lying between these two works as it shares common threads with both, like monkeys, settings involving water, obstacles, and uneasy female creatures.

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[72] Glenn Wallis, *Mediating the Power of Buddhas: Ritual in the Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002), 168. "[I] hope to signal to students of Buddhist literature the need of a hermeneutical strategy in our field that more fully acknowledges the interplay of the two dimensions of the general and the specific**.** Long before the MMK can be recognized as a Buddhist text, it must be seen as an Indian one**.** The seeming opaqueness concerning its date, language, tone, structure, rhetoric, and content could be pierced only by the light thrown onto it from outside. That is, the nature of the MMK began to become apparent to me only when placed in relation to Vaiṣṇava and Śaiva ritual manuals. Because it employed the same common devices as these- devices spanning the history of India-the MMK is heavily marked by generality. When this general aspect is recognized, the reader begins to gain some insight into the basic thrust of the text."

[73] Patrick Olivelle, *Pañcatantra: The Book of India's Folk Wisdom* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 146-151. See Appendix A. I have not referred to the Sanskrit text of this narrative, so this study suffers a disadvantage in that I have not compared the language used in the *VJ* and *On Losing What You Have Gained,* to mark any similarities that would be of interest

[74] Irma Schotsman, *Hanumān in Vālmiki's Rāmāyaṇā* (Delhi: Nag Publishers, 2002), 185-220. I use this for the Sanskrit text. See Appendix B for verses 130-190 of *Sarga* 1 of the *Sundarakāṇḍa* taken from Robert P. Goldman and Sally J. Sutherland Goldman, *The Rāmāyaṇa of Vālmīki: An Epic of Ancient India, Volume V Sunndarakāṇḍa* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 110-114.

This Indological reading, constituting chapter two, allows us to look at the *jātaka* against the backdrop of the world in which it was devised, one that it cannot sensibly be separated from, enabling us to identify its conformities and peculiarities at the same time. The conformities, being elements clearly discernable in these other Indian works, explain only part of the content of the jātaka narrative, so what of the stuff that is unique to it? Wallis notes,

> The thrust of the general is marked by a simultaneous resistance to this thrust. Herein lies the uniqueness of the community that has adopted the general features of Indian religious culture in order to fashion its specific rituals, literature, and so forth. It is in this tension between the general and specific that improvisation and experimentation occur.

Peering into this *tension* we start seeing how the *VJ* can be distinguished from the generic folk wisdom of the *Pañcatantra* as well as the Hindu values advocated in the *Rāmāyaṇa,* by way of its peculiarities taking an intriguing turn towards something specifically Buddhist.

The third and final layer of this study endeavors to illustrate that this is the case through an explication of the abundance of Buddhist allusions and symbols embedded in the narrative, that are frequently glanced over. To provide steady grounds for my interpretation of text, I draw on pertinent canonical and scholarly material, demonstrating that the *VJ* is indeed Buddhist in more ways than scholars and practitioners have recognized.

CHAPTER 1

ANNOTATED TRANSLATION OF THE VĀNARINDA JĀTAKA[75]

Monkey King Jātaka

A) "To whom belong these four qualities." Just this, the teacher spoke, while dwelling in the Bamboo-grove, about Devadatta's undertaking to kill [him]. At this time, the teacher heard, "Devadatta is undertaking to kill [you]," and having said, "Not just only now, O Bhikkhus, is Devadatta going about to kill me, even formerly he undertook [to do so], but was unable to do his destruction," told of the past.

B) When Brahmadatta was reigning in Banaras, the *bodhisatta* was born of a monkey's womb. Growing to be the size of a horse's young, he was endowed with strength, and lived alone on a riverbank. In the middle of the river was a single island abounding in mango, breadfruit, and various other fruit trees. Being as strong as an elephant and perfect in vigor, the *bodhisatta* jumped up from the near shore of the river – there was a flat rock in the middle of the river on this side of the island – and descended onto this. Leaping from this, [he] alighted onto the island. Having eaten all kinds of fruits there, and returning at evening by only this way, stayed in his dwelling place and did just this on the following day. In this manner, he created a habitation there.

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[75] Original Pāli text taken from V. Fausbøll, *The Jātaka Together with its Commentary Being Tales of the Anterior Births of Gotama Buddha, Vol. 1* (London: Luzac, for Pali Text Society, 1962), 278-280. I have excluded the *veyyākaraṇa,* commentary on specific words in the *gāthā,* as it is not pertinent to this study. It appears directly after the *gāthā* throughout Fausbøll's edition, but is absent from the translations under the editorship of E.B Cowell.

At that time, one crocodile and his wife made their home in that river. This wife of his was pregnant, and seeing the *bodhisatta* going to and fro gave rise to an intense longing for the *bodhisatta's* heart-flesh. She said to the crocodile, "For me now, sir, appetite has arisen for this monkey king's heart-flesh." "So be it!" he replied, "It will be obtained! This evening I will grasp him just when returning from the island," and having gone, [he] lay down on the flat rock.

After moving about all day, the *bodhisatta* stood on the island at evening-time and, looking over to the rock, thought, "This rock now appears to be higher. For what reason?" It is said of him that he [always] precisely determined the height of the water and the size of the rock, and by just this, he thought, "Today, the water of this river has neither dwindled nor increased and it is known that this rock has become great. Perhaps a crocodile is lying in this place in order to grasp me. Surely, I should investigate." Having stood right there, he said as if in company with the rock, "Hi! Rock!" Not receiving a reply, he said, "Rock!" up to three times. Why does the rock not give a response? Again, just so the monkey said to that one, "Why friend rock, do you not answer me today?" The crocodile thought, "Certainly, on other days this rock responds to the monkey king. Now, I will give a reply to him." He said, "What is it monkey king?" "Who are you?" "I am a crocodile." "For what purpose are you lying there?" "I wish for your heart's flesh." The *bodhisatta* thought, "There is no other way of going for me. Now, this crocodile is to be deluded by me." Thus, he said, "Hey crocodile! I will abandon myself to you. You, having opened your mouth [face] may grasp me when I come in your presence." Indeed, crocodiles close their eyes when their mouths open. The crocodile, not noting this, opened his mouth, and then his eyes shut. Having opened his mouth, and closed his eyes, he lay down.

The *bodhisatta*, knowing this being so, sprung up from the island and tread upon the head of the crocodile. Leaping from this -- shining like a streak of lightening -- he stood on the farther

shore. The crocodile, having seen this marvel, thought, “What an extraordinary act performed by this monkey king!” He said, “Monkey king! The person in this world endowed with four qualities goes above his enemies, and I think they are entirely in you.” Then he spoke this verse:

C) To whom belong these four qualities like you, O monkey king,
truth, principle, resolve, and abandon, goes beyond his view/enemy.

In this way, the crocodile praised the *bodhisatta* and went to his own dwelling place.

D) The teacher, after this Dhamma discourse, said, “Bhikkhus, not only now is Devadatta undertaking to kill me, in a former time also he undertook [to do so],” and showed the connection with the birth story: “Then, Devadatta was the crocodile, his wife was Ciñcamānavikā, and I was the monkey king.”

Vānarinda Jātaka: **The Pāli text**

A) Yassete caturo dhammā ‘ti. Idaṃ Satthā Veḷuvane viharanto Devadattassa vadhāya parisakkanaṃ ārabbha kathesi. Tasmiṃ hi samaye Satthā ,,Devadatto vadhāya parisakkatīti“ sutvā ,,na bhikkhave idān’ eva Devadatto mayhaṃ vadhāya parisakkati, pubbe pi parisakkhati yeva, nāsamattam pi pana kātuṃ na sakkhīti“ vatvā atītaṃ āhari:

B) Atīta Bārāṇasiyaṃ Brahmadatte rajjaṃ kārente Bodhisatto kapiyoniyaṃ nibbattitvā vuddhim anvāya assapotappamāṇo thāmasampanno ekacaro hutvā nadītīre[76] viharati. Tassā pana nadiyā vemajjhe[77] eko dīpako[78] nānappakārehi ambapanasādīhi phalarukkhehi sampanno. Bodhisatto nāgabalo thāmasampanno nadiyā orimatīrato uppatitvā – dīpakassa orato nadīmajjhe eko piṭṭhipāsāṇo[79] atthi – tasmiṃ nipatati. Tato uppatitvā tasmiṃ dīpake patati. Tattha nānappakārāni phalāni[80] khāditvā sāyaṃ ten' eva upāyena[81] paccāgantvā[82] attano vasanaṭṭhāne

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[76] *nadī* - river, flowing water + *tīra* – shore, bank. River, flood, ocean etc. are usual references to *saṃsāra*, the cycle of rebirth, and one is liberated by crossing over to the farther shore (a metaphor for *nibbāna/nirvāṇa*) by way of the Buddha's teachings. According to the Buddha;

"Few are those among humankind
Who go beyond to the far shore
The rest of the people merely run
Up and down along the bank."

Bhikkhu Bodhi, *The Connected Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Saṃyutta Nikāya* (Boston: Widsom Publications, 2000), *Maggasaṃyutta,* 45.34(4), 1539. This verse also appears in the *Dhammapada*, verse 85. All Pāli definitions are from T.W. Rhys Davids and William Stede, eds. *The Pāli Text Society's Pāli-English Dictionary* (London: Pāli Text Society, 1986).

[77] *vi* – two, as connotation of duality or separation + *majjha* - middle. a) in the present, or central interval of *saṃsāra.* b) in two, asunder. This calls to mind the middle path as prescribed by the Buddha, who says, "There are…these two extremes which should not be cultivated..: the pursuit of sensual happiness in sensual pleasures, which is low, vulgar, the way of worldlings, ignoble, unbeneficial; and the pursuit of self-mortification, which is painful, ignoble, unbeneficial. Without veering towards either of these two extremes, the Tathāgata has awakened to the middle way, which gives rise to vision, which gives rise to knowledge, which leads to peace, to direct knowledge, to enlightenment, to Nibbāna." *SN, Gāmaṇisaṃyutta*, 42.12(I), 1350.

[78] *dīpaka/dīpa* – a (little) island. Lit. "double-watered," between (two) waters; solid foundation resting place, shelter, refuge. In the *Mahāparinibbāna Sutta,* the Buddha tells Ānanda, "[Y]ou should live as islands unto yourselves, being your own refuge, with no one else as your refuge, with the Dhamma as your refuge, with no other refuge." Maurice Walshe, *The Long Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Dīgha Nikāya* (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 1995), 2.26, 245.

[79] *piṭṭhipāsāṇa* – a flat stone or rock, plateau, ridge. This rock is noteworthy because of its location in the middle of the riverbank and the island, perhaps indicative of a second "middle" being posited (the first being the island between the two riverbanks). It is the middle *way* (*upāya* –see note 81) by which the *bodhisatta* goes each day, and is clearly fundamental to his practice.

[80] *phala* – Lit. "bursting," ripe fruit. "[A] noble disciple considers thus: 'Sensual pleasures have been compared to fruits on a tree by the Blessed One; they provide much suffering and much despair, while the danger in them is great.'" Bhikkhu Nāṇamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi*, The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Majjhima Nikāya*, (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2001, Second Edition), *Potaliya Sutta*, 54.21, 472.

[81] *upāya* - Skt. coming near, approach, arrival, that by which one reaches one's aim, a means or expedient way, (esp.) a means of success against an enemy.

[82] *paccāgacchati* – [*pati* + *ā* + √*gam*] - to fall back on, return again, to go back to, withdraw, slide back from.

vasitvā[83] punadivase pi tath' eva karoti. Iminā niyāmena tattha vāsaṃ kappeti. Tasmiṃ pana kāle eko kumbhīlo sapajāpatiko tassā nadiyā vasati. Tassa sā bhariyā Bodhisattaṃ aparāparaṃ gacchantaṃ disvā Bodhisattassa hadayamaṃse[84] dohaḷaṃ[85] uppādetvā[86] kumbhīlaṃ āha: „mayhaṃ kho ayya imassa vānarindassa hadayamaṃse dohaḷo uppanno" ti. Kumbhīlo „sādhu hoti, lacchasīti" vatvā „ajja taṃ sāyaṃ dīpakato āgacchantam eva gahissāmīti"[87] gantvā piṭṭhipāsāṇe nipajji.[88] Bodhisatto divasaṃ caritvā[89] sāyaṇhasamaya dīpake ṭhito va pāsāṇaṃ oloketvā[90] „ayaṃ pāsāṇo idāni uccataro khāyati,[91] kin nu kāraṇan" ti cintesi. Tassa kira udakappamāṇañ ca pāsāṇappamāṇañ[92] ca suvavatthāpitam[93] eva, ten' assa etad ahosi: „ajja imissā nadiyā udakaṃ n'eva hāyati na vaḍḍhati, atha ca panāyaṃ pāsāṇo mahā hutvā paññāyati,[94] kacci nu kho ettha mayhaṃ gahaṇatthāya kumbhīlo nipanno" ti so „vīmaṃsāmi[95] tāva nan" ti tatth' eva ṭhatvā pāsāṇena saddhiṃ kathento viya „bho pāsāṇā" 'ti vatvā paṭivacanaṃ alabhanto yāvatatiyaṃ[96] „pāsāṇṇā " 'ti āha. Pāsāṇo kiṃ paṭivacanaṃ na dassati.

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[83] *vasana* – dwelling, abode, residence +*ṭṭhāna* – from √*sthā* – to stand, stand firmly, station one's self, stand upon get upon, take up a position on.

[84] *hadaya* –heart , a) the physical organ, b) seat of thought and feeling + *maṃsa* – flesh, meat.

[85] *dohaḷa* – Skt. *dohada* & *daurhṛda* – sickness of heart, nausea, the longing of a pregnant woman for particular objects, any morbid desire or wish.

[86] *uppādeti*- Causative of *uppajjati*, [*ud* + √*pad*] - to give rise to, to produce, put forth, show, evince.

[87] *gaṇhati/gaṇhāti* – to take, take hold of, grasp, sieze. Interestingly, another word used to refer to a crocodile is *gaha*, which also comes from *gaṇhāti* meaning "seizer" or any being or object having a hold on man. See *Itivuttaka*, 69,109.

[88] *nipajjati* – [*ni* + √*pad*] - lie down (to sleep)

[89] *carati* – [√*car*] – to move one's self, go, walk, move, stir, roam about, wander.

[90] *oloketi* – to look at, look down or over to, examine, contemplate, inspect, consider.

[91] *khāyati* –to seem to be, to appear like. Skt. *khyāyate* from *khyā* – to be named, be known.

[92] *pamāṇa* – Skt. *pramāṇa* – measure, scale, standard; measure of any kind (as size, extent, circumference, length, distance, weight, multitude, quantity, duration).

[93] *su* - well, thorough +*vavatthāpita* [*vi* + *ava* + √*sthā*] – to settle, arrange, establish, determine, prove to be (logically) tenable.

[94] *paññāyati* – to be (well) known, clear or evident, perceived, seen or taken for, appear.

[95] *vīmaṃsati* – to consider, examine, find out, investigate, test, trace, think over.

[96] *yāvatatiyaṃ* - up to three times. Asking or stating something three times is typical of Buddhism. "The Buddha addressed the monks, saying: 'It may be, monks, that some monk or another has doubts or uncertainty about the Buddha, the Dhamma, the Saṇgha, or about the path or the practice. Ask, monks! Do not afterwards feel remorse, thinking: "The Teacher was here before us, and we failed to ask the Lord face to face!'" At these words the monks were silent. The Lord repeated his words a second and a third time, and still the monks were silent." *DN*, *Mahāparinibbāna Sutta,* 2.154-155, 270

Puna pi naṃ vānaro ,,kiṃ bho pāsāṇa ajja mayhaṃ paṭivacanaṃ na desīti“ āha. Kumbhīlo ,,addhā aññesu divasesu ayaṃ pāsāṇo vānarindassa paṭivacanaṃ adāsi, dassāmi dāni ‘ssa paṭivacanan “ ti cintetvā ,,kiṃ bho vānarindā “ ’ti āha. ,,Ko si tvan“ ti. ,,Ahaṃ kumbhīlo“ ti. ,,Kimatthaṃ ettha nipanno sīti“. ,,Tava hadayamaṃsaṃ patthayamāno“[97] ti. Bodhisatto cintesi: ,,añño me gamanamaggo[98] n’ atthi, ajja mayā esa kumbhīlo vañcetabbo“[99] ti. Atha naṃ evam āha: ,,samma kumbhīla, ahaṃ attānaṃ tuyhaṃ pariccajissāmi,[100] tvaṃ mukhaṃ vivaritvā maṃ tava santikaṃ āgatakāle gaṇhāhīti.“ Kumbhīlānaṃ hi mukhavivaṭe akkhīni nimīlanti. So taṃ kāraṇaṃ asallakkhetvā[101] mukhaṃ vivari. Ath’ assa akkhīni pithīyiṃsu. So mukhaṃ vivaritvā akkhīni nimīletvā nipajji. Bodhisatto tathābhāvaṃ ñatvā[102] dīpakā uppatito gantvā kumbhīlassa matthakaṃ akkamitvā tato uppatito vijjullatā[103] viya vijjotamāno[104] paratīre[105] aṭṭhāsi.[106] Kumbhīlo taṃ accariyaṃ[107] disvā[108] ,,iminā vānarindena atiaccherakaṃ katan“ ti cintetvā ,,bho vānarinda, imasmiṃ loke catuhi dhammehi samannāgato puggalo[109] paccāmitte[110] abhibhavati,[111] te sabbe pi tuyhaṃ abbhantare atthi, mañño“ ti vatvā imaṃ gāthaṃ āha:

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[97] *pattheti* – [*pa* + √*arth*] –to strive to obtain, desire, wish, request, ask for.
[98] *gamana* – the state of going, movement, journey, walk + *magga* – a road, way, foot-path.
[99] *vañcati* – a) to walk about b) to cheat, deceive, delude, elude.
[100] *pariccajati* – [*pari* + √*tyaj*] to leave, abandon, to leave a place, go away from; to let go, dismiss, discharge; to give up, surrender, resign, part from, renounce.
[101] *a* (negating particle) + *saṇ* - “together” (intensifies verb) +*lakkheti* – to mark, distinguish, characterize.
[102] *jānāti* – to know, to have or gain knowledge, to be experienced, be aware, find out.
[103] *vijjullatā* – a flash or streak or lightening
[104] *vijjotati* – to shine, illuminate.
[105] *para* – beyond, the farther side of + *tīra* – bank, shore.
[106] *tiṭṭhati* – [√*sthā*] - There may be a correlation between this usage of √*sthā* in reference to his gaining the bank on which he dwells, and *vasanaṭṭhāna* earlier in story, translated simply as ‘dwelling place.’ However, there seems to be a stronger connotation of his ‘standing firmly’ there with a derivative of √*sthā* attached to it. See note 83.
[107] *accariya* – Skt. *āścarya* – appearing rarely, curious, marvelous, astonishing, wonderful, extraordinary.
[108] *dassati* – [√*darś*/√*dṛś*] – to see, view, look; know, discern. Since the crocodile’s eyes are closed, I find it curious that this verb, but it the sense of seeing is not limited to the eye organ. It could also mean seeing with the ‘mental’ or ‘mind’s eye.’
[109] *puggala* – an individual, person. Skt. *pudgala* – the body; the soul, personal identity.
[110] *paccāmitta* – Lit. “back friend,” adversary, enemy. See note 116 for comparison with *diṭṭha.*
[111] *abhi* – a) towards, against b) over, along, on top of + *bhavati* – [√*bhū*] - to become, to be, exist. Something other than overcoming, or conquering, as given in the dictionary seems to be conveyed here; possibly a sense of “existing above.” See note 117 for comparison with *ativattati.*

C) *Yass' ete caturo dhammā vānarinda yathā tava*

saccaṃ[112] *dhammo*[113] *dhitī*[114] *cāgo*[115] *diṭṭhaṃ*[116] *so ativattatīti.*[117]

Evaṃ kumbhīlo Bodhisattaṃ pasaṃsitvā attano vasanaṭṭhānaṃ gato.

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[112] *sacca* – true, real, actual, genuine, sincere, honest, truthful, faithful, pure, virtuous. In Buddhism, there are two levels of truth. According to Walshe, "Very often the Buddha talks in the Suttas in terms of conventional or relative truth (*sammuti* or *vohāra sacca*), according to which people and things exist just as they appear to the naïve understanding. Elsewhere, however, when addressing an audience capable of appreciating his meaning, he speaks in terms of ultimate truth (*paramattha sacca*), according to which existence is a mere process of physical and mental phenomena with which, or beyond which, no real ego-entity nor any abiding substance can be found." Introduction to the *DN,* 31. The crocodile praising the monkey, as being endowed with truth appears to contradict the story, for the monkey seemingly uses false speech to achieve his end. Regarding variations of the monkey/crocodile story and misplacement of this verse in the *VJ*, Winternitz says, "In *jātaka* no. 208 we are told (as in the Pañcatantra) how the crocodile whose wife covets a monkey's heart, lies in wait for the monkey, lures him in order to kill him and is outwitted by the monkey who says he does not carry his heart with himself but left it hanging on a tree on the bank. Somewhat less witty is the version of the same fable in *jātaka* no. 57 [*VJ*]. But every trace of wit is destroyed in *Cariyāpiṭaka* III, 7, where Buddha says: "When I was a monkey who lived on the bank of a river in a cave, then once threatened by a crocodile I could not tread my usual path. At exactly the same point where I used to stand in order o jump to the other bank, sat the murderous enemy, the crocodile, terrible to look at. He said to me, "Come." I said to him: "I am coming" and standing on his head I reached the other bank. I told him no lie, acted as per my word. In the love of truth I have no equal. Such was my complete perfection of truthfulness." The fable has shrunk down here to an empty skeleton without content and the main point is the moral which (as in jātaka no. 57 where also we find it is most ill-suited)." *HILBJ*, 157-158. Clearly in the *Cariyāpiṭaka*, the issue of truthfulness is resolved in a conventional sense, and all ambiguity is stripped away to illustrate the perfection of truth. This shows that Buddhists used the same stories in different ways, but it does not prove that the verse in the *VJ* disagrees with the narrative, or that it is misplaced. Although I cannot enter into a discussion here to explain this seeming contradiction, that the monkey plays on the crocodile's follies to achieve his end, I suggest there may be a clue lying in the difference between what it is to "delude" (*vañcati*), and to not speak truthfully. Also, how can we be sure that the crocodile is referring to his speech?

[113] *dhamma* – [√*dhṛ*] - This is one of those terms in the Buddhist tradition that is extremely difficult to translate and a list of definitions will not do justice to its range of meaning. In addition to referring to the collective 'teachings' of the Buddha, among the possible interpretations of the word are: a) support; that which forms a foundation and upholds b) moral quality or action c) mentality; as the constitutive element of cognition & its substratum, the world of phenomena d) rationality; anything that is as it should be according to its reason and logicality e) tenets, practices. I translate it as 'principle' in the narrative.

[114] *dhitī* - energy, courage, steadfastness, firm character, resolution. Skt. *dhṛti* – holding, seizing, keeping, supporting, constancy, will, command.

[115] *cāga* – [√*tyaj*] – See note 100.

[116] *diṭṭha* – There are two possible interpretations of this word that are applicable here. a) From *dassati* [√dṛś] – view, vision, seen, determined by sight b) From Skt. *dviṣta* [√*dviṣ*] – to hate, show hatred against, be hostile or unfriendly; to be a rival or a match.for, enemy.

[117] *ati* – on to, up to, towards + *vattat*i [√*vṛt*] – to turn, turn round, revolve; to move or go on, get along, advance, proceed, take place, occur, be performed =To pass beyond, surpass, cross; to get over, overcome; to transgress, violate, offend; to pass away; to delay.

D) Satthā ,,na bhikkhave Devadatto idān' eva mayhaṃ vadhāya parisakkati, pubbe pi parisakki yevā " 'ti imaṃ dhammadesanaṃ[118] āharitvā anusandhiṃ ghaṭetvā jātakaṃ samodhānesi: ,,Tadā kumbhīlo Devadatto ahosi, bhariyāssa Ciñcamānavikā, vānarindo pana aham evā " 'ti. Vānarindajātakaṃ.

[118] *dhamma* + *desanā* – discourse, instruction, lesson = Moral instruction, exposition of the Dhamma, preaching, sermon.

CHAPTER 2

AN INDOLOGICAL READING

Once upon a time there was an extraordinary conglomerate of five *skandhas*[119] who later became known as the Buddha. He dwelled in another galaxy, where there were no abiding substances, there was no one to be found anywhere, and, becoming really bored, he realized he was suffering the whole time. It did not take him too long to find a way out of it, and wanting to share his insight with others, got in his impermanent spaceship and flew to the Deer Park in Sarnath, India. Bringing with his non-self an entirely new vocabulary, and a fresh collection of empty stories to tell, he set the wheel of *dhamma* in motion just as he landed. The end.

This is not exactly how the story goes. The Buddhist tradition comes about in an Indian setting, and cannot sensibly be separated from the religious culture of India. What the Buddha awakened to found expression in relation, or in contrast to ideologies, philosophies, practices etc. existent in India during the time that he lived. Furthermore, the appropriation of extant features, as well as innovation was fundamental to the establishment and spread of the Buddhist tradition long after the Buddha's *parinibbāna*, and story literature is certainly no exception. Clearly discernible in the *VJ* are threads belonging to the vivid tapestry of Indian oral tradition, and drawing these pan-Indian elements to the surface serves to reveal the ways in which the narrative is firstly an Indian text, being heavily marked by generality, or conformity. A *Pañcatantra* narrative involving an exiled monkey and a gullible crocodile, and an excerpt from the *Sundarakāṇḍa* in *Vālmīki's Rāmāyaṇa* concerning Hanumān's journey across the ocean to

Lankā, form the backdrop to this Indological analysis of the *VJ*. Looming above this reading all the while, are the peculiarities of the *jātaka* that emerge as it resists the thrust of the general, fashioning an intricate Buddhist work.

Patrick Olivelle states,

> The Indian tradition regards the *Pañcatantra* as a *śāstra*, that is, a technical or scientific treatise, and more specifically as a *nītiśāstra*, a treatise on government or political science…The literary sources of the *Pañcatantra* are twofold: the expert tradition of political science and the folk and literary traditions of storytelling.[120]

Noting that there are similarities between these stories and the *jātakas,* and also the *Mahābhārata*, he attributes this to either the author borrowing from these works or "tapping into the common treasure of tales" as discussed above. The *Pañcatantra* has an unusual structural setup, but is not unique to this work, as it has been traced to ancient Vedic literature. It consists of five Books each containing sub-stories, a feature he calls 'emboxment,' where stories are placed within others. The main narrative opening each book, or any one emboxing another, is referred to as a 'frame story,' and a character in a frame story is normally the narrator of the subsequent tale. In the prelude to the *Pañcatantra*, an old Brahmin named Viṣṇuśarman is entrusted with the task of teaching the ways of skillful government to three wayward sons of one King Amaraśakti, and he does so through the stories we find in Books I-V.

The narrative which concerns us is the frame story of Book IV, titled*, On Losing What You Have Gained (LG)* where we find the same combination of characters as the *VJ*, and a few extra troublemakers who happen to be female. The setting is similar in both tales, with the monkey living on the seashore which the crocodile makes his way to. They strike up a

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[119] The five *skandhas,* or aggregates are form, consciousness, mental formations, perception and sensation. This combination of impermanent, insubstantial states, is what we consider to be an individual, a self, or "I."
[120] Olivelle, *PT*, x-xv.

relationship founded on their mutual enjoyment of the delicious fruit of a fig tree; the monkey derives pleasure from the sound of dropping them in water, and the crocodile delights in eating them. Friendship is a very striking feature in this narrative, and interestingly, the monkey and crocodile develop a very intimate one. Olivelle tells us that this text is "by and for men," and it is evident from this tale that a tremendous amount of value was placed on male friendship in Indian culture at the time of its composition.

> The friendship between males promoted by the *Pañcatantra* is neither a light-hearted 'drinking buddy' type nor a macho type. The friends of the *Pañcatantra* are sensitive, cultured, and refined people who like nothing better than to sit under the shade of a tree and converse with each other on moral philosophy and tell each other proverbial verses.[121]

While the amity between the monkey and the crocodile is esteemed as a virtue, the friends of the crocodile's wife, on the other hand, plant ideas in her mind that her husband is having a *heterosexual* affair, and it should be ended. Hearing this, the wife turns into a drama-queen almost instantaneously, and writhes in distress. Upon his tardy arrival home (as he was "delayed by his affection"), her friends, without much difficulty, convince her husband that her ailment is incurable, but a monkey's heart will save her life; a secret known only to women. Obviously, female friendship is not being advocated. According to Olivelle,

> A pattern emerges from these animal stories: wife-mother is the only positive role for a female, while other females, even wives, who do not play maternal roles always pose a threat to the males, either as sexual objects or nefarious activity.[122]

This may be the case in the *LG*, but we find in the *VJ* the crocodile's wife in a maternal role, and without the encouragement of friends, moves her husband to act amorally. She is pregnant in this narrative, in fact, emphasizing the maternal role, and informs her husband of her

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[121] *Ibid*, xxxix.

longing for the *bodhisatta's* heart. This craving is identified by Bloomfield, and explained by N. M. Penzer as a distinct motif in Indian folklore, called *dohada*, or two-heartedness, referring to the drives of both the woman and the unborn, from which unexpected situations arise.[123] Penzer notes, "[A] tale may be quite devoid of incidents until the *dohada* gives it a sudden jerk by creating a demand for the husband's entrails, or some equally disturbing request."[124] While there are multiple ways in which the motif is employed, in the *VJ* it "impels some act" on the crocodile's part, which involves danger, and intended harm to a third party. In both the *LG* and *VJ*, although expressed in different ways, there are misogynous overtones in that the desires and provocation of women cause the subsequent conflictive encounter between the two males.

It is immediately apparent that the relationship between the monkey and the crocodile in the *LG* and *VJ* differ greatly, but we will return to this later. First, we should look at these pan-Indian characters individually as they appear in the two stories. At the very bare bones, the monkeys in the *LG* and the *VJ* are the same figure, both being referred to as a king of monkeys, living alone near a body of water, taken with fruit as monkeys usually are, and both enter into a sticky situation with a crocodile. Most noteworthy is that these two monkeys manage to escape from the crocodile by quick thinking and playing on his ignorance, a quality we find even in Hanumān in the *Rāmāyaṇa* as he encounters obstacles. However, this is where the commonalties end. When we look at the flesh on the bones of the *LG* monkey, he stands in sharp distinction to the *VJ* character. He is old and weak, for which reason he is exiled from his herd, but he is not living a life of solitude and in fact, he even forgets about his exile after befriending the crocodile. When sitting on the back of the crocodile under the pretense of going to his home, as a friend

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[122] *Ibid*, xxvi.
[123] This is surely very provocative if considered from a Buddhist standpoint, dealt with in Chapter 3.
[124] See Appendix III in N. M. Penzer, ed. *The Ocean of Story Being C. H. Tawney's Translation of Somadeva's Kathā Sarit Sāgara, Vol. I* (London: Chas. J. Sawyer Ltd., 1924), 221.

should, the monkey is very trustworthy and does not become suspicious until he hears the crocodile mumbling to himself. After "using his brains to find out what he is trying to hide," an organ the crocodile seems to lack, the monkey finds out the real reason for this journey into the water, and here we catch a glimpse into his concerns, which can be characterized as religious. Making specific reference to the ascetic and domestic life, he says, "Alas, I am dead! In spite of my old age, I have not been able to subdue my senses, and I am now paying the price for it. What's more, even in the forest, vices wax strong for passionate men; even at home curbing the five senses is austerity." This is a reference to a yogic practice linked to liberation from the cycle of rebirth, indicating that he feels he should have perfected this in his elderly years while living in the forest. His speech seems colored by remorse, which can be interpreted as him seeing his relationship with the crocodile as a vice, and possibly having karmic implications. The monkey, following this near-death, mental outburst, manages to collect himself and trick the crocodile into taking him back to the shore.

The crocodiles in the *LG* and the *VJ* are not the smartest reptiles in story-world. Olivelle informs us that the crocodile represents "hidden danger lurking beneath the inviting waters…It is vicious, with a face and body to match its character."[125] This may be the case, but aside from their fearful form, there is not much that poses a threat in both stories, certainly not their mental aptitude. In the *LG*, his wife's friends have their way with him, and the monkey outwits him without difficulty. There is one mark of the dimwitted *LG* crocodile, however, that is missing from the *VJ*. He has an ethical dilemma on the way to his beloved friend, as well as while he has him on his back, concerning the murderous act he must commit in order to save his wife. Feeling miserable about his predicament, he struggles with having to kill his friend. Deciding that the

[125] Olivelle, *PT*, xxiii.

wife is more important, "for through her you win the three goals of life,"[126] he goes through an elaborate process of convincing the monkey of coming to his house.

In contrast to this, in the *VJ* the wife requests the heart, and the crocodile confidently goes out to obtain it, without giving a thought to the deadly deed it implies. This may be directly in line with the *dohada* motif where the husband feels it is his duty to fulfill his wife's needs -- all questions aside. However, his conviction that the heart will be procured can be attributed to the absence of friendship between the monkey and crocodile in the *VJ*, which also lends to, or helps to create the dichotomy between the ascetic and the householder. What we are told of their lives add to this tension; the crocodile and his wife have offspring on the way, clearly illustrating a familial structure, and the monkey is described as *ekocaro,* literally, an alone-goer, and unlike the *LG* monkey, he actually lives a life of solitude.

Lastly, it is noteworthy that there is mention of an island in the middle of the ocean in the *LG*, supposedly where the crocodile's house is located, and this is actually what lures the monkey to embark on this disastrous ride after putting up a fight the whole time. Hearing of the fruit trees on the island greatly excites the monkey and, eager to get there, he climbs onto the crocodile's back without reserve. In this sense, the island is very significant in that it serves as a potent catalyst to the subsequent events, although the monkey never gets to it, and it was probably was not there to begin with. In the *VJ,* however, the island, which the *bodhisatta* takes *himself* to everyday, is symbolic of a place of refuge from a Buddhist standpoint,[127] and bears significance because of its location mid-way between two banks. It is evident that the

[126] This is a reference to three goals of human life identified in ancient Indian thought; *dharma* (rituals, religion, ethics), *artha* (the economic and political), and *kāma* (the aesthetic and sensual, especially the sexual). *Mokṣa* or release from *saṃsāra,* is a fourth aim that was added "under the influence of later theologies that posited human life as one of bondage…in [this] unending series of births and deaths." Olivelle, *PT*, x. Olivelle says that this fourth sphere does not play an important role in the *Pañcatantra*, but it is notable that the monkey's reference to not subduing his senses in his old age is a possible allusion to his concern with *mokṣa*.

Indological threads we have considered running through the *Pañcatantra* narrative and the *jātaka* figure differently in the latter, being the peculiarities which give shape to a specifically Buddhist work.

Now we turn to *Vālmīki's Rāmāyaṇa*, one of the most popular works in the storytelling and theatrical traditions of India and other South Asian countries to this day, centering around Rāma, who becomes identified with Viṣṇu as his seventh incarnation. Sītā, his dutiful wife, and Hanumān, his courageous devotee and emissary in the form of a monkey, who is of particular importance here, also figure prominently in this Hindu epic. This lengthy work in seven books is composed entirely of ś*lokas,* or verses, but only a short excerpt from *sarga* 1 of Book V, the *Sundarakāṇḍa* is pertinent to this study. This comparatively minute segment of the epic is an account of Hanumān's journey across "the unconquerable ocean"[128] to Lankā. This powerful primate is considered the only being capable of traversing this vast body of water in order to locate Sītā, who has been abducted by the *rākṣasa*[129] Rāvaṇa, inform her that Rāma is on his way, and to scope out the city of the adversary. Along the way, he encounters various hindrances which he manages to overcome by employing his intellect and strength, and my contention is that the *bodhisatta*'s disposition, traits, and actions in the *VJ* bear a remarkable resemblance to Hanumān's as he goes about this mission. There are instances where vocabulary overlaps in the narratives, (noted in parentheses in the text below) including the first half of the canonical *gāthā* in the *jātaka*, spoken in praise of Hanumān after he triumphs over the final obstacle, just before reaching the shore of Lankā. While the general cast of characters and

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[127] See note 78.

[128] Verse 157, *sarga* 1, *Sundarakāṇḍa* in *Vālmīki's Rāmāyaṇa*. In Chapter 2, this applies in every instance where a verse and number are given.

[129] *rākṣasa* – [usually] a malignant being, or demon. Monier-Williams tells us they are distinguishable into three classes; 1) semi-divine and benevolent nature[d] and ranking with the *yakṣas*, 2) relentless enemies of the gods, 3)

setting of the *VJ* may be more in tune with the *Pañcatantra* story, the *VJ* presents us with a character who mirrors Hanumān in many ways, appropriated to represent a Buddhist ideal, whereas in the Hindu epic, Hanumān symbolizes the model-devotee of Rāma. According to Winternitz, "It is striking, too, that in the whole of the *jātaka*, which tells so many tales of demons and fabulous animals, we hear not a word of…. Hanumān and the monkeys."[130] We may not hear of him by this name, but I propose we are dealing with variations of one pan-Indian monkey who is endowed with the ability to perform spectacular leaping stunts and is in possession of a keen intellect.

Although it is not directly relevant to this Indological reading, I would like to touch on a few aspects of the historical development, and on the role of Hanumān in Indian religious culture, as it may also contribute to our understanding of the *bodhisatta*'s character in the *VJ*. A case can be made that Hanumān is very much understudied in comparison to other gods in the Hindu pantheon, and a rare and especially interesting study by Joginder Narula[131] is the source of much of the following information dealing with Hanumān's figure. He offers a compelling reason for the lack of interest in Hanumān among scholars, stating that "he is too mundane…[and] is regarded as an earthy god. For scholars concerned with mysticism and spirituality he is of little interest, for he does not seem to embody other worldliness… At a mundane level, he is an ideal human, an upright man, trusted friend, brave warrior." If this is indeed the case, it makes sense that such a character would seep into the *jātaka* as the *bodhisatta,* serving as a Buddhist model, since Buddhism is neither concerned with unseen other-

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nocturnal demons, imps, fiends, goblins, going about at night, haunting cemeteries, disturbing sacrifices and even devouring human beings. He says that this last class is the one most commonly mentioned.

[130] Winternitz, *HILEP,* 447.

[131] Joginder Narula, *Hanumān God and Epic Hero: The Origin and Growth of Hanumān in Indian Literary and Folk Tradition* (New Delhi: Manohar Publications, 1991).

worldliness, nor interested in presenting the *bodhisatta* as embodying powers or capabilities of god-like figures.[132]

Narula tells us that Hanumān's zoomorphic form is suggestive of a possibly non-Aryan origin, perhaps originally a god of the lower classes, Dravidian or aboriginal communities that was later incorporated into the Brahminic tradition.[133] There is mention of one Vṛṣakapi (male/bull monkey) in the *Rg Veda* who F. E. Pargitar suggests was the central figure of a non-Aryan monkey cult that had to be assimilated by the Vedic Aryans, as he was held in higher favor than Indra in certain places. This reference certainly alludes to the importance given to the monkey god in Vedic times, and by the time the *Brahma Purāṇa* was composed (between the fourth and ninth centuries CE), Hanumān and Vṛṣkapi are inextricably linked.[134] There is also good reason to think that Hanumān was a *yakṣa,* a member of a race of supernatural beings usually worshipped as folk gods and spirits frequenting forests and local villages, before being established as a devotee of Rāma in the *Rāmāyaṇa*, and the Hindu pantheon of major gods overall. Nowhere is he explicitly identified as a *yakṣa*, but they can assume any form and are thought to be able to perform feats such as jumping and flying, qualities he certainly possesses as is evident in the *Rāmāyaṇa*.[135] In support of this claim, Narula informs us,

> The *yakṣas* are associated with fertility cults. Women worship Hanumān in North India to have children. The *yakṣas* are called immortal. Hanumān, having received a boon of immortality is also called immortal. The epithet Vīra is used to refer to the *yakṣas*. One of Hanumān's titles in Mahāvīra [the great, brave one]. The *yakṣas* are keepers of wealth, guardians, protectors and wardens of villages and towns.[136]

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[132] At least not in the early stage of Buddhism, this is the case.
[133] *Ibid*, 11.
[134] *Ibid*, 20-21.
[135] *Ibid*, 13.
[136] *Ibid*, 22

Even today Hanumān is called on for protection from malevolent influences and to ward off harm, and interestingly, he even *looks* like a *yakṣa*, being stout, mighty, etc. V. S. Aggarwala further points out,

> [L]ike the *yakṣas* he is smeared with sindur which is often linked with the worship of true godlings…Hanumān's 'destroyer of calamities' role is similar to *yakṣas'* worship. His names Maruti, Mahāvīra and Bajrangabali resemble *yakṣas'* names. Hanumān is one of the five local godlings whose worship, like that of the *yakṣas*, brings immediate results.

Considering the ways in which Hanumān is worshipped, and the qualities attributed to him, it can be said with certainty that he was an integral part of local folk culture from very early on. According to Narula, Vālmīki perhaps chose the local monkey god to enrich the epic by making him subservient to Rāma. Even further, in consideration of the rich storytelling tradition in preliterate India, it is more than likely that here were numerous stories floating among the people surrounding the monkey figure before Vālmīki absorbed him into his epic. Surely the details of his character and exploits were not the sole invention of Vāmīki; and if he was popular enough to be incorporated into an epic propounding Hindu values, surely he was not unknown to Buddhists. It is quite plausible that the *VJ* is a strategic reworking of a folk-story by Buddhists to communicate *Buddhist* ideas, centering on the character that appears in the *Rāmāyaṇa* in a highly adorned and developed fashion.

We are told in the *Rāmāyaṇa* that Hanumān is born of the wind god, Vāyu, and a cursed *apsara*[137] taking birth as a *vānari* or female monkey. Able to take on any form, she was strolling one day as a beautiful woman when Vāyu caught hold of her. Promising her a son as brave, swift and intelligent as he, she succumbed to his wishes.[138] Narula states that there is a scholarly debate concerning whether Hanumān is a monkey or human, but points out that *Vālmīki's*

Rāmāyaṇa presents him as "a monkey with human, superhuman and godly" qualities.[139] Courageous acts are his forte, he is a brave warrior, and we see his perceptive mind at work while noting places and events in Lankā, gathering information for the coming battle. He is portrayed in the epic as an intellectual being with an analytical mind, possessed of great wisdom and insight, and he is even a Sanskrit grammarian and scholar. In images, he is depicted as having huge muscles and unshakable legs, this impressively sturdy form being expressive of his unmatched virility and strength. It is ironic that he is such a symbol of masculine prowess, and he is a lifelong *brahmacārya* or celibate. Concerning this somewhat ascetic streak, Wendy O'Flaherty observes, "the drawing up of seed is directly linked to the concentration of great force." Lawrence Babb, too, explains that Hanumān's sexual abstinence can be attributed to his chastity in devotion to Rāma.[140] That he is entrusted with the task of finding Sītā, it is probably not an accident that the emissary is celibate.

Sarga 1 of the *Sundarakāṇḍa* consists of 190 verses describing in incredible detail, Hanumān's giant leap from Mount Mahendra across the ocean, called "the abode of sea monsters,"[141] to Lankā. About 37 verses are devoted to his initial leap, the tremendous force of which crushes the mountain and shakes everything on it. This jump is mirrored by his return in *sarga* 55, "enclosing his crucial exploits in Lankā." According to R. P. Goldman and S. J. Goldman,

> [T]hese leaps are not mere devices to bring the monkey hero to Lankā. It is clear that they, especially the first, are of special importance to the poet and his audiences in focusing attention on the newly foregrounded figure of Hanumān, who has had only a peripheral role in the epic until

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[137] *apsarases* – celestial maidens or nymphs, known for their beauty.
[138] Narula, *HGEH,* 13.
[139] *Ibid*, 11.
[140] *Ibid*, 25.
[141] Verse 27.

> the moment, at the end of the preceding *kāṇḍa*, when it becomes clear [that no one else] can match the mighty son on the wind god in speed and power.[142]

Although the *VJ* is a short work in comparison to even this portion of the epic, the *bodhisatta's* ability to jump,[143] his bodily stature, and his strength, are emphasized in the very beginning of the narrative, and it can be argued that it is intended to serve the same purpose in a Buddhist context; to draw attention to the figure of the *bodhisatta*. A remarkable ability that Hanumān possesses that is lacking in the *bodhisatta*, is his ability to change size at will.[144] This supernatural quality assists Hanumān in conquering his foes, and I attribute the absence of it in the *bodhisatta* to his "worldliness," for aside from his leaping, he employs very practical skills to overcome his obstacle. However, there are overt similarities between Hanumān and the *bodhisatta*, expressed in other ways the epic monkey goes about dealing with hindrances to his goal.

Hanumān's first encounter while in flight is fairly uneventful. Because he is acting in service of Rāma, gods and other benevolent being are eager to render their assistance, so one Mount Maināka rises from the ocean to offer him a place to rest. Hanumān at first takes his sudden presence as a threat, and pushes him out of the way. A friendly conversation ensues where Hanumān tells him that he has a task to accomplish, time is critical and, not being tired, he proceeds. The next encounter according to Goldman and Goldman, is

> [T]he motif of the gods and other celestial beings urging one of their number to test Hanumān's power and valor, a motif familiar from, and widely exploited in, sectarian passages of the epics and *purāṇas* where the gods and/or seers stage tests of Viṣṇu and Śiva.[145]

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[142] Goldman and Goldman, *RV* V, 11.
[143] The Sanskrit √*pat* – to fly, soar, rush on, to fall down or off, alight, descend -- is utilized in both works to describe this conspicuous action of the monkey figures.
[144] Later treatment of the bodhisatta however, in the Mahāyāna tradition, includes this ability.
[145] Goldman and Goldman, *RV* V, 43.

The gods summon Surasā, the mother of serpents and also a deity, to take on a terrible form and place herself in the *middle* (*madhya*) of the ocean.[146] The gods ask, "Will he foil you through some stratagem (*upāya)* or will he give way to despair?"[147] Having obstructed the monkey, Surasā informs him that he has been appointed as her food, and that he should enter her mouth. Interestingly, Hanumān greets her with reverence, and a joyous demeanor. This can be seen as an example of how a devotee of Rāma should behave, even in the face of danger. He goes on to explain his mission in service of Rāma, and asks that she assist Rāma by not coming in his way, and if she would not do so, he promises to let her eat him after his duty has been fulfilled. Surasā says it is a boon given to her and she will not let him pass. Hanumān, becoming angry, tells her to open her mouth so that he can fit in it. A series of expansions of Hanumān's body and Surasā's mouth follow, and suddenly, Hanumān contracts to the size of a thumb, enters her mouth and flies out. He says, "Homage to you Dākṣāyaṇī. I have entered your mouth. Now I shall go to where Vaidehī [Sītā] is. May your words ever prove true."[148] The deity then reverts to her original form, speaks in support of his mission, all the celestial beings praise his extraordinary act, and the tireless monkey continues on his way. This obstacle, appearing in the middle of the ocean and involving an issue of truth, (*satya/sacca*) is reminiscent of the *bodhisatta's* encounter with the crocodile. The crocodile is in, or rather, *on* the *bodhisatta's* way, in the middle of the river, and he uses a similar tactic to triumph over the obstacle, speaking as though he is giving himself to the crocodile. However, in the *Rāmāyaṇa*, the truthfulness of Hanumān's speech is less ambiguous, seeming directly related to the fulfillment of a boon, a prominent feature in Indian religious culture. As mentioned above, there is some similarity

[146] Verse 134.
[147] Verse 133.
[148] Verse 153.

between the *gāthā* in the *VJ* and a verse in this section of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, and with a specific reference to *satya*, one would expect to find it here, but not so.

It is noteworthy that Hanumān's final hindrance is also female, a monstrous sea-creature named Siṃhikā. Goldman and Goldman state that Surasā and Siṃhikā "both center around the projection of the female as the nightmarish, gargantuan, and all-devouring form that recurs frequently in traditional Indian literature."[149] Hence, the pan-Indian theme of misogyny. Siṃhikā is of a caliber among malicious beings, which supersedes any encountered by the primates under scrutiny. Unlike Surasā, she was not sent by the gods to test Hanumān's strength, but is an actual *rākṣasī* who grasps the shadows of her prey. Having seen (*dṛṣṭvā/disvā*)[150] Hanumān leaping over the ocean, just like the crocodile's wife in the *VJ*, she is moved to capture and eat him to satisfy her appetite. She takes hold of his shadow, and unable to move, the monkey, described as clever[151] and possessing mental vigor or intelligence,[152] quickly recognizes who she is and starts expanding. In an instant he notes the details of her mouth, body and vital parts, and contracting himself, enters her mouth and kills her. In this encounter, Hanumān's acumen and resolve enable him to deal with an unexpected, life-threatening situation. The qualities the *bodhisatta* displays in discerning what is actually the case with the rock appearing higher, and his ability to think and act quickly, wisely, and resolutely in order to achieve his end is certainly similar to Hanumān's behavior in this episode. After this great accomplishment, the beings dwelling in the sky extol Hanumān, wishing him a journey devoid of further hindrance, and they speak this verse, the first line of which is identical to the *VJ gāthā*:

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[149] Goldman and Goldman, *RV* V, 52.
[150] Verse 166.
[151] *matimat* – clever, intelligent, wise. Verse 172.
[152] *medhāvat* – possessing wisdom, intelligent. Verse 174.

yasya tvetāni catvāri vānarendra yathā tava

dhṛtir[153]*dṛṣṭir*[154]*matir*[155]*dākśyam*[156] *sa karmasu na sidati*[157]

To whom belong these four qualities, like you, O monkey king,

firmness, foresight, intelligence and skill does not despair in his acts.

Hanumān, then, "by his own power," crosses the perilous ocean and lands heavily on the other shore.

Considering the *VJ* in relation to Hanumān's flight, it is evident that we are dealing with variations of a narrative about a courageous figure who is adept at overcoming obstacles, referred to as a monkey king. Different tellings would perhaps emphasize different qualities of this pan-Indian monkey, so it is no surprise that we have a similar, but not identical verse appearing in the epic and the *VJ*. Although, the character we find in the *Rāmāyaṇa* comes to be identified as a god, in comparison to the monkey in the *LG*, it is clear that the *bodhisatta* is closer in behavior and attributes to Hanumān. If only in a very rough sense, aspects of the *VJ* resemble Hanumān's encounters with Surasā and Siṃhikā, both in detail of the incidents, and how Hanumān's deals with them. However, we must not neglect the fact that in the epic, a specifically Hindu ethic is being propounded. Hanumān is always acting in service of Rāma, is presented as an ideal devotee, and becomes an emblem of *bhaktī* because of his intense love and devotion to this god incarnate. In the *jātaka* narrative, there is no such thing -- and sensibly so --

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[153] Verse 180.
[154] *dhriti* - holding, seizing, keeping, firmness, constancy, resolution, will, command.
[155] *drstir*-seeing, viewing, beholding, the faculty of seeing, wisdom, intelligence.
[156] *mati*- devotion, prayer, thought, design, intention, resolution, determination.
[157] *dākśa* -cleverness, skill, fitness, capability.

for in the Buddhist tradition, there is no such theological entity to be found. Who *is* this monkey king in the *VJ* then, possessive of great skill and acumen, who gains the further shore, but is bereft of subservience to a god?

CHAPTER 3

A BUDDHIST READING

The *VJ* is a well-built vehicle of Buddhist expression, extremely rich in content, and abundant in Buddhist allusions and symbols. Through a literary explication, I bring these specifically Buddhist features to light, supporting my reading of the narrative with doctrinal and scholarly references. It is necessary to preface this interpretation of the *jātaka* by explaining my approach with regard to the arising of various sects in the history of the Buddhist tradition, which directly impacts our understanding of the *bodhisatta's* character,[158] as well as the geography of the world embedded in the *VJ*. The Pāli canon is generally associated with the Theravādin tradition, but it is important to bear in mind, as Peter Harvey states that, "Most of its teachings are in fact common property of all Buddhist schools, being simply the teachings which the Theravādins preserved from the early common stock."[159] While the *jātaka gāthās* were considered canonical from very early on, the fluid narratives surrounding these verses, which played a large role in the propagation of Buddhism, were compiled only in the 5th century CE.

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[158] According to Warder, "In principle…the theory of the [*bodhisatta*] on his way to Buddhahood [is] nothing new. The conception is found in the earliest stratum of the Tripiṭaka texts as referring to the Buddha before his [awakening]." *IB*, 355. From a Theravādin perspective, a *bodhisatta* is thought of as a future *buddha*, or awakened one, in the process of fulfilling the ten perfections (see note 1) over numerous lifetimes. The ideal practitioner in this tradition is the *arhat*, who by way of the eight-fold path is free from all bindings and rebirth. The Mahāyānist ideal is the *bodhisatta,* which begins with the arising of *bodhicitta*, or the though of awakening for the sake of alleviating the suffering of all sentient beings, hence the name "great vehicle." The *bodhisatta* then progresses through ten *bhūmis* or stages, and fulfills six perfections; generosity, virtue, tolerance, energy, meditation, understanding. Warder points out, "For the Mahāyāna the training of [*bodhisattas*] is prescriptive: the way of the [bodhisatta] is substituted for or at least is superior to, the old eightfold way. The monk should not aim at [*nibbāna/*] *nirvāṇa* directly, but at first becoming a *buddha*, the highest possible attainment and for which there is the greatest need in the universe, for the worlds are innumerable and tie is endless so that the demand for *buddhas* to start the doctrine in different worlds, or restart it when it has been lost, can never be fully satisfied. Evidently, it is a superior aim to 'delay' one's extinction until one has been a *buddha* and made this supreme contribution to the happiness of living beings." *IB*, 355-356.

By this time there were numerous evolutions and developments in Buddhism, including the teachings distinctive to the Mahāyāna tradition, whose ideas can also be found in the earliest *suttas*. It is now widely accepted that Mahāyānist ideas were floating around monastic settings considered Theravādin, with Mahāyānist thinkers living side by side with these Therāvadins, long before the historical emergence of a school of Buddhism called Mahāyāna. The Pāli text of the *jātaka* stories can easily be mistaken as belonging exclusively to the Theravādins because if their relationship to the Pāli canon, but given the malleable nature of the *jātakas*, it is highly probable that they do not reflect the views of any one school and may have played a part in the arising of the Mahāyana movement. Surely they were shaped by many influences over time and it would not be far fetched to assume that they were receptacles for some ideas considered Mahāyānist, if even in the developmental stages. Also, it should be noted that Mādhyamika thinkers, appearing on the scene as early as the first century CE, were very concerned about staying close to that literature of the schools already in existence. Perhaps a tension between the 'great' and 'small' vehicles found expression in some of these narratives, and I suggest this to be the case with the *VJ*. This work can indeed be read in different ways, but it seems to correspond more closely to Mahāyāna as elements of the narrative can clearly be interpreted as such. Thus, this reading of the *VJ* liberates the narrative from a strictly Theravādin construct and remains open to what can be found within the text.

The monkey in the *VJ* is no ordinary monkey. He is called a king, like Hanumān in the *Rāmāyaṇa* and our old, exiled primate in the *LG*, but we are told he lives alone, indicating that he is an ascetic, so he cannot be ruler to *anyone but himself*. If only because of the admirable skills he exhibits, it does not seem sensible to interpret his animal birth as just that, an animal birth.

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[159] Peter Harvey, *An Introduction to Buddhism: Teachings, History and Practices* (Cambridge: Cambridge

According to the Buddhist model of possible realms in which one can be reborn, the animal world lies directly beneath the human one, both belonging to the world of sense-desires, or *kāma-loka.* According to the Buddha, "I declare that wrong view leads to one of two destinies – hell or an animal rebirth."[160] Walse explains,

> The statement that those who hold 'wrong views' are liable to hell or an animal rebirth is off-putting to modern readers. It is doubtful whether either term originally meant what it was later taken to mean. A painful or beast-like rebirth might express the meaning better. It should be realized, too, that the 'wrong view' referred to means one according to which there are no rewards and punishments for good and evil deeds – hence no operation of a moral law. This kind of view the Buddha always declared to be particularly reprehensible.[161]

This being the case, we should not attach to an understanding of either the monkey or the crocodiles in this narrative as abiding in an animal realm per se; but instead we should seek to interpret their forms symbolically in relation to their actions. Although we will return to the issue of 'view' later, it is important to point out that the crocodile's actions betray 'wrong view' in the sense stated by Walshe. In contrast to the crocodile in the *LG* who had an ethical dilemma on the way to kill his friend, this one simply goes and lies down on the rock with the intent to seize the *bodhisatta*. No question of morality arises. Beyond having 'wrong view' he can even be characterized, as *blind,* marking no signs, making no observations, not even realize that his eyes close when his mouth opens! He is blind even with his eyes open. Until the bodhisatta treads on his head to gains the other bank, he is oblivious to just about everything, and then he praises the bodhisatta as being possessive of the qualities that overcomes view/enemy. Just before speaking the *gāthā* the crocodile makes almost the exact statement, but uses a specific

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University Press, 1990), 3.
[160] *DN*, *Lohicca Sutta*, 12.10, 182.
[161] *DN*, note 244, 558.

word for enemy and the verb, *abhibhavati.* This translates as "becomes higher" or "exists above" his enemy, which could be a reference to rebirth in a higher realm.

In the *VJ*, the *bodhisatta*'s form as a monkey can be understood as a symbolic representation of a tamed, or disciplined mind. The monkey king, is indeed, no ordinary monkey. In the Buddhist tradition, the mind is often likened to the fickle nature of a monkey.

> Just as a monkey roaming through a forest grabs hold of one branch, lets that go and grabs another, then lets that go and still grabs another, so too that which is called 'mind' and 'mentality' and 'consciousness' arises by one thing and ceases by another by day and by night.[162]

The description of his robust stature, (being the size of a horse's young, endowed with the strength of an elephant and perfect in vigor[163]) along with the repeated usage of *√sthā*[164] in reference to him, conveys a steady character, and nothing of this flightiness of average monkeys. Just as a bird sometimes walks or runs and does not always fly as commonly assumed, a monkey does not always jump from branch to branch in a fickle manner. In this regard, the *bodhisatta* in the VJ, is also expressive of the potential of the mind to be trained to behave differently, thereby breaking old habit patterns that keep us locked into unskillful ways of living.

Crocodiles, aside from having a fearful form, are a symbol of "the decay and death that follows a life of lust and indulgence."[165] In the *Itivuttaka*, there is an allegory depicting human life, about a man in a boat rowing down a river. Someone calls to him from the shore and tells him to stop rowing so merrily - an injunction to curb one's passions - down the swift current, meaning a life of lust, for there are rapids ahead, being the ensuing suffering and pain, a

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[162] *SN*, *Nidānasaṃyutta,* 12.61 (1), 595
[163] Vigor is my translation of the Pāli word *thāma* but perhaps something even stronger than this is being conveyed, as it also means, "standing power," power of resistance, steadfastness, strength, firmness.
[164] See note 83.
[165] Bukkyo Dendo Kyokai, *The Teaching of Buddha* (Tokyo: Kosaido Printing Co., Ltd., 1996), 90. *Itivuttaka,* 100.

whirlpool, referring to pleasure, and crocodiles and demons lying in wait. The Buddha is the one on the shore who tells the man he will perish if he continues.[166]

As noted above, rivers or other bodies of water are usually references to *saṃsāra*, the cycle of rebirth, which is inextricably linked with craving and sensual pleasures. According to Steven Collins,

> In general, life-in-*saṃsāra* is seen as drowning in a river, or ocean while attaining *nibbāna* is 'crossing over' to the 'further shore' by means of a ship or a raft. (Buddhist teaching is likewise an island by which one can escape drowning in the sea). The image is so common that the epithets *pāraga*, *pāragato*, and *pāragū*, 'crossing' or 'crossed over' come to be used in these same meanings without any explicitly marked simile.[167]

The geography embedded within the *VJ* becomes very interesting in light of this, where we find the *bodhisatta* living on the bank a river, in the middle of which is an island. If the island is a metaphor for Buddhist teachings, its position in the river immediately calls to mind the middle way awakened to by the Buddha, by which the practitioner gains the further shore. Among other dyads, this middle way most commonly refers to the avoidance of the two extremes of self-mortification and indulgence in sensual pleasures, and also eternalism of self and the world, and annihilationism. However, a second middle is posited in the form of a rock, between the bank the *bodhisatta* dwells on, and the island, being the *way* by which he goes to, and returns from the island each day. With this, the further shore, if identified with the other side of the river, fades away into the background, as there is no indication that the *bodhisatta* is even concerned with it, a bold and impressive indication of Mahāyānist notion of the *bodhisatta* who remains in the world.

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[166] *Ibid.*

[167] Steven Collins, *Selfless Persons: Imagery and Thought in Theravāda Buddhism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 250.

The island abounds in fruit trees and the bodhisatta leaps from the bank onto the rock, then from the rock, leaps to the island. Spending his day there, eating all kinds of fruits, he returns at evening by just the way he went, and stays in his dwelling. We are told that he does the same thing the following day, and by this method he made fit a habitation. Going by the middle way is fundamental to this patterned activity he engages in everyday, which can itself be understood as a "dwelling" in a broader sense, that is not necessarily geographical. For the *bodhisatta*, his routine *is* his *dwelling*. Such regularity is necessary for any practice and the cultivation of skills, and it is interesting to note that in monastic settings, daily life is also heavily ritualized, and marked by routine. The monkey's trip to the island to eat fruits everyday, however, can yield different interpretations. Appetite seems to be implied in any understanding of this activity, but perhaps it is a gluttonous endeavor, and being driven by his appetite, he leaps to the fruit-filled island each day to indulge in the sensual pleasures found there. The *Majjhima Nikāya* (*MN*) states, "Sensual pleasures have been compared to fruits on a tree by [the Buddha]; they provide much suffering and much despair, while the danger in them is great."[168] If it were the case that he goes there to soothe his appetite by partaking in these fruits, why would he not just stay there? Why bother returning each evening? Could part of his practice be developing the discipline to *leave* the island, abundant in sensuality? In view of the fact that he does not live where the fruits are, but is committed to returning to the bank each day, is a significant factor in making sense of this repetitious action.

Another way of reading his habitual endeavor is that he needs to eat to survive. The body needing nourishment to endure, so he leaps daily to the island for this reason. According to Nāṇamoli and Bodhi, "Nutriment (*āhāra*) is to be understood…as a prominent condition for the

[168] *MN*, *Potaliya Sutta*, 54.21, 472.

individual life-continuity. Physical food (*kabalinkāra āhāra*) is an important condition for the physical body."[169] Monks too, go out of the monastery each day to obtain food but do so by begging, whereas the monkey exerts effort to feed himself, which in my view, is quite commendable.

Also, monks do not live where they obtain alms; they need to return to the monastery and would even go through difficult situations, if need be, to get there. Such is their habitual lifestyle, or practice, and this seems to be just what the *bodhisatta* is doing.

It is typical of the *jātakas*, in the *samodhāna* section, for the characters in the narrative to be identified with the Buddha, and other people living during that time. The crocodile in the *VJ* is identified as Devadatta, the Buddha's cousin who made multiple attempts on his life,[170] and was known for creating schisms in the community of the Buddha's followers. The crocodile's wife is identified as Ciñcamānavikā, a beautiful female ascetic, who at the instigation of Devadatta and company, falsely accused the Buddha of getting her pregnant to harm his integrity, but the truth of the matter came to light, and she was unsuccessful in her malicious undertaking.[171] It is no surprise that we find them *dwelling in the river,* as husband and wife, an ideal match. She is pregnant, which the Buddha identifies as "a kind of suffering peculiar to women,"[172] and seeing the *bodhisatta* going back and forth, craves his heart's flesh. Here we find the *dohada* motif as discussed earlier. In this context however, it has more profound implications, as the unborn child can be seen as a symbol of further becoming in the river of

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[169] *MN*, note 120, 1186.
[170] An account of Devadatta's attempts on the Buddha's life is given in the *Cullavagga* of the *Vinaya-piṭaka* in the section on Dissentions in the Order. See T. W. Rhys Davids and Hermann Oldenberg, trans. *Vinaya Texts, Part III, The Kullavagga, IV-XII* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, Reprint, 1965), 242-250.
[171] The details of this event can be found in Book XIII, story 9 of the *Dhammapada* Commentary titled, "Ciñca Falsely Accuses the Buddha." See Eugene Watson Burlingham, trans. *Buddhist Legends*, Harvard Oriental Series, Vol. 30 (Pāli Text Society, Reprint, 1990), 19.
[172] *SN, Mātugāmasaṃyutta*, 37.3 (3), 1287.

saṃsāra, and while still inside the mother's womb, is partly the impetus for the ensuing encounter with between the monkey and the crocodile. The female crocodile is certainly not innocent in this matter, as she is wallowing in thirst for sensual pleasure.

The Buddha identifies five hindrances to awakening,[173] which can be fed, or nourished, thereby sustaining them like food enables the body to persist, or they can be de-nourished, causing them to diminish. The female crocodile feeds the hindrance of sensual desire by watching the *bodhisatta* as he goes back and forth each day. The Buddha says,

> And what, bhikkhus, is the nutriment for the arising of unarisen sensual desire and for the increase or expansion of arisen sensual desire? There is, bhikkhus, the sign of the beautiful: frequently giving careless attention to it is the nutriment for the arising of unarisen sensual desire and for the increase and expansion of arisen sensual desire.

Bhikkhu Bodhi explains that "the sign of the beautiful (*subhanimitta*) is a sensually attractive object, but particularly one that arouses sexual desire."[174] Surely, the *bodhisatta*'s form is pleasing to her senses, but it is interesting to explore whether her craving may indeed be sexual. Such a desire would go directly in line with the way women are portrayed in Indian literature. Olivelle states with regard to this, "Women are sexual creatures without the strength to control their passions. They are said to be like a vine, clinging to whatever is nearby."[175] Given the virile presence of the *bodhisatta*, perhaps this yearning for the flesh of his heart is a symbol of a more deep-rooted hunger than can be discerned on the surface, spanning possible lifetimes. In more than one *jātaka* narratives we find the character identified as Ciñcā trying to engage in sexual activity with the *bodhisatta*, whoever he may during that lifetime.[176]

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[173] *SN, Bojjhaṇgasaṃyutta*, 46.2(2), 1568. These five are sensual desire, ill-will, sloth and torpor, restlessness and remorse, and doubt.
[174] *SN*, note 54, 1900.
[175] Olivelle, *PT*, xxviii.
[176] For example, see *jātaka* #120, #472.

In the *Mahā-Paduma Jātaka* (#472) Ciñcā is consort of the king, identified as Devadatta, and her step-son is the *bodhisatta*, well-educated, with an appearance like a lotus in full bloom, hence his name, Lotus Prince. The king has to leave for battle, he tells her to stay and leaving the Prince behind in charge of all that she needs. As in the VJ, the queen "observes the beauty of his appearance" and becomes desirous of the *bodhisatta*. The following conversation ensues upon him hearing of his father's return to the city, and wanting to leave to go greet him.

> "Can I do anything for you, mother?" "Mother, do you call me?" [she said]. She rose up and seized his hands, saying, "Lie, on the couch!" "Why?" he asked. "Just until the king comes," she said, "let us both enjoy the bliss of love!" "Mother, my mother you are, and you have a husband living. Such a thing was never heard of before, that a woman, a matron, should break the oral law in the way of fleshy lust. How can I do such a deed of pollution with you?" Twice and thrice she besought him, and when he would not, [she said], "Then you refuse to do as I ask?" – "Indeed, I refuse." – "Then I will speak to the king and cause you to be beheaded."[177]

Ciñcā's lust certainly runs deep, and although the *jātakas* are not in sequential order, her longing for the *bodhisatta* obviously still abides in the *VJ*. She serves as an excellent illustration of the Buddhist notion that unskillful actions, and the perpetuation of them by nourishing sensual desires, instead of working to eliminate such a hindrance to an awakened existence, is inextricably linked to a 'lower' birth, given her form as a crocodile. According to the Buddha, one of the qualities when possessed by a woman, "leads to rebirth in a state of misery, is dwelling at home with her heart obsessed by sensual lust."[178]

Interstingly, there seems to be another correlation between the *Mahā-Paduma Jātaka* and the *VJ*, with the wife reporting to her husband, being Devadatta, in order to harm the *bodhisatta*. In the former, the king, being told by the queen that his son had abused her in his absence, orders

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[177] This is taken from the translation of the *jātakas* under the editorship of E. B. Cowell, #472 translated by W. H. D. Rouse. 116-121

the *bodhisatta* to be thrown off a cliff. Later, he realizes the truth of his son's virtue after meeting him in the Himalayas, and has the queen thrown off a cliff and goes on to rule righteously. In the *VJ*, the female crocodile directly tells her husband about her longing, but being the not-so-perceptive type, he would not take note of a lustful motive anyway. Much like the *Mahā-Paduma Jātaka*, however, we find the crocodile at the end of the *VJ* rising out of his dullness if only for an instant, in awe of the *bodhisatta* and praising him, surely to the disappointment of his wife upon his return home, having not procured the heart-meat she craves.

The crocodile in the *VJ* is portrayed as moving through existence in a lethargic stupor. He too, nourishes a hindrance to awakening identified by the Buddha, namely, sloth and torpor. In the *Vinaya*, we find an almost comical account involving Devadatta, who after causing a schism in the Buddhist community, behaves much like the crocodile, connecting them in different lives by the feeding of this very hindrance. Devadatta manages to lure away five hundred newcomers to the *saṇgha*, and hearing this, the Buddha sends Sāriputta and Moggallāna, out of their kindness towards these bhikkhus, to where Devadatta has taken them. Seeing the two coming, Devadatta is overjoyed, telling the five hundred that his teaching is so good, that even these two chief followers of the Buddha are coming to join his community. Upon their arrival, he "instructed and incited and aroused and gladdened the bhikkhus far into the night with religious discourse," and then he got tired. He said to Sāriputta, "The assembly, friend Sāriputta, is still alert and sleepless. Will you…be so good as to think of some religious discourse to address to the bhikkhus? My back is tired, and I would [like to] stretch myself a little."

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[178] *SN, Mātugāmasaṃyutta,* 37.4(4), 1287.

Following this, Devadatta laid down on his right side and we are told, "In a moment even sleep overcame him…[and he] lost his presence of mind."[179]

The Buddha says,

> [B]hikkhus, discontent, lethargy, lazy stretching, drowsiness after meals, sluggishness of mind: frequently giving careless attention to them is the nutriment for the arising of unarisen sloth and torpor and for the increase and expansion of arisen sloth and torpor."

In the *VJ*, after proclaiming to his wife that he will obtain the monkey king's heart, the crocodile goes off and lies down on the rock. It is noteworthy that the prefix *ni* + *√pad* used to describe his bodily action here, and in three other instances, could also mean lying down to sleep. Interestingly, there narrative portrays the crocodile and the monkey, as exact opposites in many regards. The usage of *√sthā* to describe the *bodhisatta*'s actions, for example, directly contrasts the crocodile's tendency towards a horizontal posture. Immediately following the crocodile planting his inert body on the rock, the verb *√car*[180] with reference to the monkey's doings on the island all day long. The *bodhisatta* is obviously exerting energy by moving about the environment, while his adversary waits like a lump on the rock to grasp him, which itself is conditioned by craving, and leads to further suffering and misery.

These distinctions can be extended to the mindsets of the two characters; while the crocodile loses 'presence of mind' in his lazy position, the *bodhisatta* maintains 'mindfulness' in his upright stance. The Buddha stresses the importance of being mindful when going out for food as the *bodhisatta* is doing, telling a story about a cat, which grabbed a mouse and not chewing when he swallowed it, ended up dying in his haste. He says to the bhikkhus,

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[179] Rhys Davids and Oldenberg, *KV*, *VII*, 4,1-4,3, 257-259.
[180] See note 89.

> [Y]ou should train yourselves thus, 'We will enter a village or town for alms with body, speech and mind guarded, with mindfulness set up, restrained in out sense faculties.' Thus should you train yourselves.[181]

The Buddha identifies seven factors of awakening, "when developed and cultivated, lead to going beyond from the near shore to the far shore."[182] Among these, in contrast to the crocodile, the *bodhisatta* cultivates, and nourishes by giving careful attention to them, are the factors of mindfulness, and energy.[183] Other observable differences between these two characters, as D. C. Pierce notes in "The Middle Way of the Jātaka Tales," as being a tension running throughout the narratives, is the depiction of the crocodile as a householder, and the monkey as an ascetic. With regard to *saṃsāra*, it is noteworthy that while the crocodile makes his home in it, we never hear of the *bodhisatta,* who dwells on the shore, even touching these waters; he leaps over it from a land mass, to a rock, to an island, and back again.

Furthermore, the importance and benefits of developing and being committed to *a practice* even though it may be difficult*,* like meditation for some of us today, is expressed in the characters of the monkey and the crocodile. The latter, involved in no ritualized activity, acts on his whims without giving a thought to his behavior, and seems indifferent to everything around him. One might assume that living alone and doing the same thing each day would become monotonous, leading to not taking note of changes in one's surroundings and boredom, but not so for the *bodhisatta*. He is the only figure in the narrative that engages in a practice, is remarkably adept at relating to the world in which he dwells, and skillfully deals with a life-

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[181] *SN, Opammasaṃyutta*, 20.10, 711-712.
[182] *SN, Bojjhaṇgasaṃyutta*, 46.17(7), 1582. These seven are mindfulness, discrimination of states, energy, rapture, tranquility, concentration, and equanimity.
[183] *Ibid*. See 46.51(ii), 1598-1599 for the nutriments for the awakening factors. "And what bhikkhus, is the nutriment for the arising of the unarisen enlightenment factor of energy and for the fulfillment by the development of the arisen enlightenment factor of energy? There are bhikkhus the element of arousal, the element of endeavor,

threatening situation that arises, which is perhaps not an everyday thing. His practice involves a middle way and we are told that for him, it is the only way of going, a clear indication of his firm commitment to this path. This has a striking resonance in a Buddhist context, being the way the Buddha awakened to that liberates all beings from suffering. Surely the *bodhisatta* is striving toward the same end by building his practice around this steady, and unshakable means. The middle path, the Buddha says, "leads to insight, which leads to wisdom, which conduces to calm, to knowledge, to *nibbāna*."[184] The wisdom, insight, and knowledge refers to understanding *the way things really are*, which is not identical to the way things appear to the average person. According to Buddhism, all things in the world, including what we consider to be our 'selves' are devoid of an inherent nature that remains unchanging or permanent. They are, in essence, non-substantial (*anatta*). All things come into existence, and go out of existence based on conditions which are themselves insubstantial, and this being the case, there is nothing to cling to or attach to, including the ideas of me, myself, or I. This is not to say that all things do not exist, or that all things exist. The Buddha says,

> [F]or one who sees the origin of the world as it really is with correct wisdom, there is no notion of nonexistence in regard to the world. And for one who sees the cessation of the world as it really is with correct wisdom, there is no notion of existence in regard to the world. …'All exists,' this is one extreme. 'All does not exist,' this is the second extreme. Without veering towards either of these extremes, the Tathāgata teaches the Dhamma by the middle.[185]

The *bodhisatta*, through his practice, is cultivating insight into the non-substantial nature of reality and self, enabling him to determine the facts without merely guessing at them, and to

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the element of exertion: frequently giving careful attention to them is the nutriment for the arising of the unarisen enlightenment factor of energy and for the fulfillment by development of the arisen enlightenment factor of energy."

[184] T. W. Rhys Davids and Hermann Oldenberg, trans. *Vinaya Texts, Part I, The Mahāvagga, I-IV,* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, Reprint, 1965), I, 6.17, 94.

[185] *SN, Nidānasaṃyutta,* 12.15(5), 544.

overcome with ease, the obstacle that arises on his *way*. Standing firmly and looking out towards the rock, he observes that the rock *appears* to be higher, and suspects that a crocodile is lying there to seize him. The *bodhisatta*, like a detective at a crime scene, examines, measures, and investigates to establish what is actually the case. He then employs a skillful method to get to the bottom of things, by speaking in company with the rock as if a reply is usually given.

Meanwhile, the reptile without a practice dozing on the rock, is unaware that his pending murderous attempt has already taken an unexpected turn. The *bodhisatta* calls to him up to three times, and he does not respond, until the *bodhisatta* causes him to think that the rock answers him on every other day, so the crocodile decides to give this reply. Upon receiving his response, the *bodhisatta* asks two straightforward and simple questions that unravel the crocodile's plan; who are you and what do you want? In answering the first question, the crocodile does not bear in mind that he is speaking for the rock, and reveals that he is a crocodile. Not only this, he betrays his wrong view with regard to the nature of reality and self by stating, "I am a crocodile." Characteristic of him, he grasps at a notion of self. In response to the second question, he spills the beans about wanting the monkey's heart. The *bodhisatta* uses this wealth of information to quickly devise a strategy to accomplish his goal of gaining the further bank, and as there is no other way of going for him, he resolves to "walk about" or delude the crocodile. Contrary to popular belief, honesty is not always the best policy.

The *bodhisatta*, identifying that the crocodile is shrouded in an incorrect view of reality, and discerning the crocodile's laziness, uses this to his advantage by making it easy for the crocodile, saying he will abandon himself to him, telling the crocodile to open his mouth, and grasp him when he comes in his presence. Unlike the crocodile, he knows that the crocodile's eyes will close if he opens his mouth. The crocodile does just this, but not without lying down

again, and without realizing the implications of his action - typical of him - and now he is officially blind. With regard to this condition, the Buddha says, the "five hindrances are makers of blindness, causing lack of vision, causing lack of knowledge, detrimental to wisdom, tending to vexation, leading away from *nibbāna*."[186] Accordingly, the seven factors of awakening are the makers of vision, which the crocodile is still clueless about.

The *bodhisatta*'s speech of abandoning himself is particularly noteworthy, being expressive of his own correct view of self, placed in apposition to the crocodile's flawed perspective. Regarding an *arhat*, the Theravādin ideal practitioner, Peter Harvey states,

> He is an independent 'man of nothing' who does not identify with anything as 'I', but who surveys everything, internal and external as not-Self. He is thus…completely 'alone', with 'self' as an island: he does not…'lean' on anything for support, is not influenced by anything, as nothing can excite attachment, repugnance or fear in him.[187]

Here we find the *bodhisatta* standing on an island without an 'I' as agent, and he is fearless in his endeavor to gain the other bank. His insight into the way things really are enables him to employ a skillful method of 'walking about' the crocodile's head, who *becomes the way.* For him, there is in reality no hindrance, which dissolves in its insubstantiality. The monkey king leaps up from the island, treads on the unknowing crocodile's head, and stands firmly (√*sthā*) on the further bank.

The characteristics noted above are marks of an *arhat,* which the *bodhisatta* certainly bears, and he too gains a further shore, but which shore is it? The further shore is not the further shore, or is it? Given his understanding of reality, by what criteria does he measure *nibbāna*? The *bodhisatta* in the *VJ*, being unconcerned with the bank on the far side of the river, not even

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[186] *SN, Bojjjhaṇgasaṃyutta*, 46.40(10),1593.
[187] Peter Harvey, *The Selfless Mind: Personality, Consciousness and Nirvāṇa in Early Buddhism* (Richmond: Curzon Press, 1995), 63.

casting a glance towards it, seems to depart from the Thervādin ideal of the *arhat* who aims at that one, thereby leaving the world. One must ask, what understanding of the Buddhist way, and ideal practitioner is being communicated? It is no secret that the monkey king in the *VJ* corresponds more closely (but not exclusively) with the Mahāyānist notion of the *bodhisatta*, than the Theravādin concept, and his commitment to returning to the shore he started from, is a striking indication of just this. The *bodhisatta's* practice involves returning to the world each day, and as we have seen, he *must* go back, and he employs skillful means if need be, in order to do so.

Returning to the tension running through the *jātaka* narratives between the householder and the renunciate identified by David C. Pierce, at first it appears as though there is no reconciliation between the *bodhisatta* and the crocodile in the *VJ*. Here, the renunciate ideal certainly seems to be advocated, but a closer look reveals something quite intriguing that is also in accord with Mahāyānist ideas. By successfully overcoming an obstacle he encounters by continuously exerting himself, and not losing sight of his goal, the monkey king appears to be at an advantage. The householder is portrayed as a total numbskull, speaking the canonical *gātha* in praise of the ascetic's qualities after being outwitted by him. The Buddha says, "It is monks, for elementary inferior matters of moral practice that the worldling would praise the Tathāgata,"[188] and it seems that we have a situation here where the householder is in awe at the forest-dweller's actions, thereby extolling him. However, with the *bodhisatta* returning to the very riverbank from which he started, and the householder too, going to his own dwelling place, it can be argued that the tension between these two is mediated by both returning to where they abide, illustrating *samatā*, the Buddhist notion of the ultimate sameness of beings. This teaching

[188] *DN*, *Brahmajāla Sutta*, 1.7, 68.

of non-difference between "self" and "other" is also associated with the *bodhisatta* path according to the Mahāyānists.

In the entire narrative, perhaps most captivating and thought provoking is the description of the *bodhisatta's* final leap from the crocodile's head onto the bank, and the crocodile's response to it. In performing this feat, the *bodhisatta* is said to be "shining like a streak of lightening," and the crocodile, witnessing this marvel (although his eyes are closed), is moved to speak a verse in praise him. In the *Bodhicaryāvatāra* of Śāntideva, passionately expressive of the Mahāyānist vision of the *bodhisatta*, there is a verse that sheds light on this seemingly mysterious interchange.

> At night in darkness thick with clouds a lightening flash gives a moment's brightness. So, sometime, by the power of the Buddha, the mind of the world might for a moment turn to acts of merit.[189]

This brightness is a reference to *bodhicitta* or the mind of awakening, a prerequisite to the *bodhisatta* path, characterized by wisdom, and compassion for all sentient beings. From a Mahāyāna standpoint, the mind is never totally separate from an awakened state, but given our patterned thinking and behavior it is not easy for this mind of awakening to arise. W. Fletcher explains,

> Indeed, given the habitual orientation of the mind, fixed as it is upon the supposed reality of ego and phenomena, rooted in the duality of subject and object, wandering in *saṃsāra* from beginningless time – that an impulse toward perfect altruism and self-forgetting can arise at all seems nothing short of miraculous…[B]*odhicitta* is itself so extraordinary that its first impulses appear to come from outside.[190]

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[189] Kate Crosby and Andrew Skilton, trans. *Śāntideva -The Bodhicaryāvarāra* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 5.
[190] Padmakara Translation Group, *Śāntideva - The Way of the Bodhisatt*va (Boston: Shambala Publications, 1997), 4.

The *bodhisatta*'s luminous leap is this apparent outside cause of a momentary impulse of *bodhicitta* in the crocodile's mind. His eyes are not necessary to perceive this treasure, and in that instant he is not immersed in blind existence, identifying four qualities of the bodhisatta that he was unable to see before. This momentary insight causes him to realize something about the unskillfulness of his own views, commending the *bodhisatta* of his ability to overcome his own. The crocodile turns from his murderous and doltish ways, "as the mind of the world might turn for a moment to acts of merit," but only to return to return to his own dwelling afterwards. We too have realizations and insights like this, but like the crocodile, we do not make efforts to guard them, and they slip away into the dungeons of our old habits.

The *VJ*, in this reading, asks its hearers and readers to consider how *they* dwell. Although we can perhaps identify with all three characters, that of the *bodhisatta* is perhaps most alien to us. Here, I have only begun to unravel the intricacies of the narrative; one so rich in content that all of Buddhism could potentially unfold from it. Reading the story a second and a third time reveals even more depth, and seemingly harmless terms and activities resound with greater meaning. Perhaps scholars and practitioners of Buddhism should revisit these seemingly trivial accounts involving talking animals, to find out what they can teach us about the way we live.

AFTERTHOUGHTS

I have only scratched the surface in this project, of revealing the wealth of Buddhist expression woven into the *Vānarinda Jātaka*. Many issues arose in the course of this study that I was unable to deal with, which I hope to address in the future. Among them is the theme of *dwelling*, *feeding*, and *starving*,[191] discernable in the *VJ,* with regard to the seven factors of awakening, and the five hindrances. By no means have I treated this to the extent possible. Also, the imagery of the *VJ* seems to correspond closely to the Wheel of Life, which vividly depicts the twelve links of causation. Examining the narrative in relation to this iconographic representation would be a fruitful and intriguing study. Looking closer at the usage of the *jātaka* narratives in the Buddhist tradition, perhaps as an object of concentration, is very much of interest to me.

One of the Buddha's most remarkable skills was his ability to effectively communicate his teachings[192] to people with variegated capacities of understanding, and as is evident from the earliest records of his discourses, stories were frequently utilized as a medium to do just this. Why, then, should *jātakas* be discounted as insignificant tales? It can be argued, based on this reading of the *VJ*, that these narratives are a valuable receptacle of Buddhist teachings, even if

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[191] Thanissaro Bhikkhu uses the metaphor "feeding and starving" in his discussion of the factors of awakening, and considering this in relation to the habitations of the crocodile-couple, and the *bodhisatta* in the *VJ*, "dwelling" seems to be an appropriate addition. See *The Wings to Awakening: An Anthology from the Pāli Cano*n (Massachusetts: Dhamma Dana Publications, 1996), 158.

[192] John W. Schroeder states, "In the Mahāyāna Buddhist tradition…the Buddha's wisdom is not contained in a series of prepositions or declarative statements about the world, but is expressed through a unique style of teaching, communicating, and responding to others. There is…something about the way he speaks and the way he listens that reveals the depth of his enlightenment. For some, he simply offers words of advice or consolation, for others he gives long philosophical discourses on the nature of reality, and for others still, harsh reprimands…[A]ll these forms of communication are effective: they all lead to enlightenment even though they differ in so many ways." *Skillful Means: The Heart of Buddhist Compassion* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2001), 9-10.

they are not in the form of complex philosophical treatises, overtly doctrinal texts, or elaborate compositions of great Buddhist thinkers. Such works, seemingly profound and possessive of "deeper meaning" do not establish the standard for conveyance of Buddhist teachings, and further, they are in most cases, inaccessible to ordinary people -- unlike the *jātakas*. They too, are expressive of specifically Buddhist ideas and can be effective in the lives of people with the willingness to hear, or read the Buddha's teachings embedded within them. The *VJ* is only one of hundreds in the fertile soil of the *jātaka* collection, a body of rich narratives deserving of closer attention to unearth its ignored treasures. This experimental study can serve as a tool to start digging.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Frame Story of Book IV of the *Pañcatantra*

On Losing What You Have Gained

'We begin here the Fourth Book, named "On Losing What You Have Gained". This is its opening verse:

> When someone gives up something he has gained,
> fooled by soothing words,
> That fool id deceived just the same way as
> The foolish crocodile by the monkey.'

The princes asked: 'How did that happen?'

Viṣṇuśarman narrated this story:

Once upon a time on a certain seashore there lived a king of monkeys named Valīnadanaka, the Wrinkle-face. He had become weak because of old age. This prompted another monkey in the full flush of youth, his heart burning with jealousy and impatient to replace Valīvadanaka, to start a quarrel and to drive him out of his herd. So now Valīvadanaka was spending his time in exile. On that same shore there was a fig tree named Madhugarbha, the Honey-filled. Valīvadanaka sustained himself by eating its fruits.

One day as he was eating the fruits one fig fell in the water, and as it fell it made a pleasant sound. When he heard that sound, the monkey, who was childish in nature, began to pick other figs and throw them repeatedly into the water, thinking, 'I love the sound they make.' It so happened that one day a crocodile named Kṛśaka, the Scrawny, was passing under that tree. He began to catch those figs and to eat them to his heart's content. From that time onwards the

crocodile remained in that spot so as to obtain the sweet food. Valīvadanaka struck up a close friendship with the crocodile, so much so that he even forgot about his exile from the herd. The crocodile also, his heart moved deeply by his intense love for the monkey, delayed his return to his own home.

Meanwhile, his wife, her heart aching because of his absence, lamented in the midst of her woman friends: 'Where has my darling gone? What is he doing away from home? Is it because he has fallen in love with someone else? And look at the time; it's very late. He is neglecting himself by abandoning the triple goal of life.'

Then one of her friends said to her: 'How can that husband of yours provide you with house and money when you don't even know what he is up to? I saw him with my very own eyes carrying on in secret with a monkey girl at a secluded spot along the seashore. He was showing great affection to her. Now that you know about it, do what you have to do without delay.'

When the crocodile's wife heard that, her heart was completely broken. She gave up all her housework, put on dirty clothes, smeared oil all over her body, lay down on her bed, and remained there tossing and turning restlessly while her friends stood around.

The crocodile then returned home extremely late, delayed by his affection for Valīvadanaka, and when he saw his wife in that condition he was greatly alarmed and asked: 'What has caused this sickness of hers?' Her female friends played dumb, and not one of them said a word. He continued to ask them persistently over and over again. Finally, one of the female friends who was like a second self to the crocodile's wife said with a display of deepest sadness: 'Sir, this sickness of hers is incurable. We expect her to die this very day. There is no cure for her.'

Hearing that, the crocodile was overwhelmed with grief and because of his great love for his wife said: 'If she can be cured with even my own life, then here is my life; use it to save her.'

His wife's friend said to him; 'There is only one remedy, my dear, for her sickness. If she can have the heart of a monkey, then she will live. Otherwise, we are sure to lose her. This is a secret known only to women.'

Then the crocodile thought to himself: 'Why did this awful thing have to happen to me? How will I be able to obtain a monkey's heart except from Valīvadanaka? But that would be a dastardly and immoral act. On the other hand:

Who is more important?
A wife or friend with the noblest virtues?
Between a wife and friend,
the wife comes first of course.
Through her you win the three goals completely,
Through her you win friends, through her you win fame;
who will not honor her,
who contains all the worlds?'

Perplexed as to what he should do, the crocodile reflected again:

'What an awful thing has happened to me!
For a woman's sake I am forced to kill
My one dear friend with noble qualities,
who has done so much for me!'

Reflecting in this manner, he made his way very slowly and with great reluctance into the presence of Valīvadanaka. Seeing him come so slowly, the monkey said: 'Why are you late today, my friend?'

The crocodile: 'My friend, I'll tell you what's bothering me. I am unable to be completely bonded with you. And here's the reason. All this time you have done nothing but shower favors on me. And yet I have not been able to return you any favor. Furthermore,

People win friends for their own selfish ends;
You, noble monkey, give unselfish love.

'On the other hand, this saying fits you well:

To help someone who has never helped you;
To do kind things, to raise up those who fall;
To remember favors you have received-
That is the way noble men should behave.'

The monkey: 'But here I am spending my time happily without distress even though I have been exiled from my people and my native land, all because I found you and became friends with you. Isn't that a favor beyond compare? And what this says is clearly true:

MITRA-
These two syllables of the word for "friend",
Who is it that has created this gem?
A shelter against sorrow, grief, and fear,
A vessel of love and trust.'

The crocodile:

'To meet your wife, to eat in your own house
With no misgivings, to share your secrets,
Is there any friendship greater than that?

'But I have not taken you to my home, I have not introduced you to my wife, and I have not given you to eat from my plate.'

The monkey: 'Don't worry about that. That is the type of friendship that exists among common people. Besides,

Showing their wives like actors on a stage,
Feeding-that's futile, don't you feed the cows
That's what base people do.
By their very nature, without effort,
Good people do what is good for their friends.'

The crocodile:

'If good men honor wise and virtuous men,
is that a surprise?
If, however, a low-born man does that,

it's a miracle,
Like the orb of the sun becoming cool!

'Nevertheless,

A friend or kin one should not overwhelm
With excessive demonstrations of love;
A cow with her horns drives away her calf
That wants to drink too much.

'So, my friend, there is a small favor I want to do for you in return. My house is located on the most beautiful island right in the middle of the ocean. On that island grow trees with fruits that taste like nectar, trees that are incomparable to the celestial trees that grant every wish. So climb on my back, and let's go to my place.'

The monkey was overjoyed to hear that and said: 'That's great, my friend. I'd love to do that. Take me there quickly.'

Then the crocodile, as he was swimming with the monkey- full of trust and courting disaster- on his back, thought to himself: 'What a terrible thing!

What one does for a woman in this world
Is both the worst and most essentia!
Here I am, committing and condemning
For a woman's sake this horrible deed.

However,

You test gold by rubbing on a touchstone;
In trade, they say, men are put to the test;
An ox is tested by placing the yoke;
For women, however, there is no test.

So, here I am, having to kill a friend for the sake of a woman.'

As he was muttering in this way, the monkey asked the crocodile: 'What are you saying?'

The crocodile replied: ‘Nothing.

The monkey then became suspicious by his reluctance to speak and thought to himself: ‘The crocodile did not say anything when I asked him. What could be the reason for that? I will use my brains and pry out what he is trying to hide.’ After reflecting in this manner, he pressed him once more.

Then the crocodile said: ‘My wife is suffering from an incurable sickness. That is why I am disturbed.’

The monkey: ‘Can’t anything be done to cure her either through a doctor or through the prayers of an exorcist?’

The crocodile: ‘I did consult them and their reply was that she would not live unless she gets a monkey’s heart.’

When he heard that, the monkey thought that he was as good as dead, and he reflected: ‘Alas, I am dead! In spite of my old age, I have not been able to subdue my senses, and I am now paying the price for it. What’s more-

Even in the forest vices wax strong
for passionate men;
Even at home curbing the five senses
is austerity;
For a man who has controlled his passions
And engages in no blameworthy acts,
his home is his penance grove.

Having reflected in this manner, he said to the crocodile: ‘My friend, you have done something very silly, If that was the case, why didn’t you tell me so before we started? I left my heart behind when I came along. The right thing would have been for me to bring it along. For it is said:

Righteousness, pleasure, and prosperity;

A man who pursues these three goals in life,
Should never come empty-handed to see
Brahmin, woman, or king.'

The crocodile: 'Where is your heart?'

The monkey: "On that same fig tree. Surely everyone knows that monkeys always keep their hearts on fig trees. If you have any use for it, then let us return and come back with my heart.'

Hearing that, the crocodile joyfully turned around and returned to the shore. Then the monkey jumped off in great delight, climbed onto a branch of the fig tree, and remained there thinking: Thank God! I have saved my life.'

The crocodile addressed him from below: 'Pick up your heart, my friend, and come back quickly.'

The monkey laughed and said: 'I won't come back again. I know everything. I said what I did on purpose. Go away, you fool. How can a heart remain outside the body?

You planned to kill me by a cunning plot;
But I have answered with a counterplot;
I have tricked you and saved myself from death.'

When the crocodile found out what the monkey was up to, he said to him: 'Come my friend; come back, even if you don't have the heart. I will find a remedy for her sickness using some other medicine.'

The monkey: 'You villain! I am not an ass.

He came and went back, he went and came back;
Then that fool without an ear or a heart
was killed on the spot.'

The crocodile asked: 'How did that happen?'

The monkey narrated this story…

APPENDIX B

Verses 130-190 of *Sarga* 1, *Sundarakāṇḍa* in *Vālmīki's Rāmāyaṇa*

130. Then the gods along with the *gandharvas*, perfected beings, and great seers addressed Surasā, mother of great serpents, who was as resplendent as the sun:

131-132. "The wind god's majestic son, whose name is Hanumān, is leaping over the ocean. Take on the dreadful form of a female *rākṣasa*, huge as a mountain, with yellow eyes and a pair of jaws fanged and gaping so that they touch the very heavens. Please create a momentary obstacle for him.

133. "For we wish to ascertain his strength and his valor. Will he foil you through some stratagem or will he give way to despair?'

134-135. When the goddess Surasā had been addressed in this fashion and treated with such respect by the gods, she stood in the middle of the ocean taking on the deformed and hideous appearance of a *rākṣasa*, terrifying to all. Obstructing Hanumān as he flew onward, she said this:

136. "The gods have ordained you as my food, bull among monkeys. I am going to eat you, so get into my mouth."

137. When that majestic bull among monkeys had been addressed by Surasā, he cupped his hands in reverence, and with his delight evident in his face he said these words:

138. "Rāma, who is known as Dāśarathi, entered the Daṇḍaka forest with his brother Lakṣmaṇa and his wife Vaidehī.

139. “The *rākṣasas* have an implacable hatred for him, and while he was engaged in some activity, Rāvaṇa abducted his illustrious wife, Sītā.

140. “At Rāma’s command, I am on my way to her side as his messenger. You should render assistance to Rāma, for you dwell in his kingdom.

141. “Or else, once I have seen Maithilī and tireless Rāma, I shall return and enter your mouth, I promise you this faithfully.”

142. When Surasā, who could change her form at will, had been addressed in this fashion by Hanumān, she replied, “No one can escape me, for such is my boon.”

143. Addressed in this fashion by Surasā, the bull among monkeys became angry and replied, “Then make your mouth big enough to hold me.”

144. Having spoken these words in anger to Surasā, Hanumān grew to a height of ten leagues.

145. When Surasā saw that he had expanded himself to a distance of ten leagues so that he resembled a huge cloud, she opened her mouth to a distance of twenty leagues.

146. Hanumān, however, in a rage, extended himself to thirty leagues, and Surasā then stretched her jaws to a height of forty leagues.

147. Then heroic Hanumān extended himself to the height of fifty leagues, and Surasā then stretched her jaws to a distance of sixty leagues.

148. Heroic Hanumān grew to a height of seventy leagues, while Surasā stretched her jaws to a distance of eighty.

149. Then Hanumān, who now resembled a mountain, extended himself to the height of ninety leagues, and Surasā stretched her jaws to a distance of one hundred leagues.

150-51. But when Māruti, the wise son of the wind god, who resembled a great cloud, saw the gaping mouth of Surasā with its long tongue, looking like hell itself, he contracted his body so that in an instant he was no bigger than a thunb.

152. He entered her mouth and flew out. Then that swift and majestic monkey hovered in the sky and said these words:

153. “Homage to you, Dāṣāyaṇī. I have entered your mouth. Now I shall go to where Vaidehī is. May your words ever prove true.”

154. When the goddess Surasā saw that the monkey had escaped from her jaws, as the moon is freed from Rāhu, demon of the eclipse, she resumed her true form and addressed him:

155. Go as you please, gentle friend, in order to accomplish your quest. Best among monkeys, you must reunite Vaidehī with great Rāghava.

156. When they witnessed this third, nearly impossible feat on the part of Hanumān, all the great beings praised that monkey, crying, “Wonderful! Wonderful!”

157. But he who was as swift as Garuḍa, lord of the birds, flew up into the sky and proceeded on his way, across the unconquerable ocean, the abode of the sea god Varuṇa.

158-64. Drawn along in the monkey’s wake, great clouds shone brightly in the auspicious path of the sun and the moon. That path was sprinkled by showers of rain and thronged with birds, frequented by masters of the Kaiśika style of dramatic performance, and made lovely by rainbows. It was adorned with shining chariots that flew along, drawn by lions, elephants, tigers, birds, and serpents. It was beautified by fires as intense in force as the thunderbolt of Indra, and it was graced by great persons who had won the heavenly world through the performance of meritorious deeds. It was frequently marked by the blazing sacrificial fires that bore offerings; and it was adorned with planets, constellations, the moon, the sun, and all the hosts of stars. It

was thronged with hosts of great seers, *gandharvas*, great serpents, and *yakṣas.* It was pure and spotless, limitless, and frequented by Viśvāvasu, the king of the *gandharvas*. The auspicious path of the sun and moon, it was trodden by the elephant of the king of the gods. Indeed, it was a canopy fashioned by Brahmā and spread out above the world of living beings. It was frequented by many heroes and the foremost hosts of vidyādharas.

165. Plunging into the clouds, then emerging again and again, he resembled the moon as it enters and emerged from the clouds in the rainy season.

166. Seeing him flying along, a huge rākśasa woman named Siṃhikā, who could take on any form at will, had the following thought:

167. “Now at long last, I shall get something to eat! For after so long, this great creature has come within my grasp.”

168. And thinking thus to herself, she caught hold of his shadow. When his shadow had been seized, the monkey thought:

169. “I have been caught; for suddenly, like a great ship on the ocean checked by unfavorable winds, I am unable to move forward.”

170. Looking up and down and all around him, the monkey spied a huge creature rising from the salt sea.

171. “Without a doubt this is that mighty, extraordinary-looking creature, the shadow catcher mentioned by the monkey king.”

172. Recognizing her as Siṃhikā from the nature of his situation, the clever monkey grew to enormous size, like a cloud in the rainy season.

173. When she saw the body of the great monkey expanding, she stretched her jaws as wide apart as heaven and hell.

174. The great and clever monkey noted her huge and hideous jaws, the full extent of her body, and her vital spots.

175. But, once inside her open mouth, the powerful monkey instantly contracted his adamantine body and flew out.

176. Perfected beings and celestial bards saw him vanish in her mouth, like the moon on a night when it is full, swallowed up by Rāhu, demon of the eclipse.

177. With his sharp claws the monkey slashed her vital organs and flew up swiftly, moving with the speed of thought.

178. When all the beings who roamed the heavens saw Siṃhikā fallen, quickly slain by the monkey, they addressed that bull among leaping monkeys:

179. “In killing this mighty creature today, you have accomplished a formidable feat. Now you must accomplish you chosen quest without hindrance.

180. For he who, like you, possesses the four virtues of firmness, foresight, intelligence, and skill never fails in his undertakings.

181. Thus honored by them, that honorable monkey, his goal practically accomplished, flew on through the sky like Garuḍa, devourer of serpents.

182. Having almost reached the father shore, he looked around and saw there, at the end of the hundred leagues, a line of trees.

183. As he flew along, that foremost among monkeys spied an island adorned with all kinds of trees, and he saw the groves on the Malaya mountains.

184. He saw the ocean, and the marshes of the ocean, and the trees growing in the ocean’s marshes. And he saw the mouths of the rivers, the ocean’s wives.

185. As the wise and self-controlled monkey surveyed his own body, which resembled a vast cloud that seemed to block out the sky, he came to a decision.

186. The great monkey thought, " If the *rākṣasas* should see the size of my body and my speed, they will become curious about me. "

187. So, contracting his body, which was like a mountain, he resumed his natural form, as might a self-controlled person when all worldly delusions have vanished.

188. Having reached the farther shore of the sea and having examined his body, he took on a form unobtainable by any other. And in that lovely and variegated form, he considered how to proceed.

189. Then the great monkey, who resembled a great mountain peak, alighted on a lofty peak of Mount Lamba, which with its *ketaka* shrubs, *uddālaka* trees, and coconut palms, resembled a mass of beautiful things.

190. And so having thus through sheer strength crossed over the sea- filled with *dānavas* and pannagas and garlanded with towering waves- he landed on the shore of the mighty ocean and gazed upon Lankā, which was like Amarāvatī, the city of Indra.