

## A STUDY OF THE ACT OF TRUTH (SACCAKIRIYA) UTILIZED IN SINHALA *JĀTAKA* STORIES AS A SPECIFIC WRITING TECHNIQUE

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The Buddha's preachings on the former births of him can be described as *Jātaka-s*. As *Jātaka-s* are found in the *Navāṅgasatthusāsana*, which is part of the early preaching of the Buddha it seems that *Jātaka* tales had existed even during the time of the Buddha. The *Sāratthadīpani Vinayatīkā*, expounding the meaning of '*Jātaka*' says that the former lives of the Buddha that reveals and tells the birth story of the Buddha is the *Jātaka-s*. ("*Jātaṃ bhūtaṃ purāvutthaṃ bhagavato pubbacaritaṃ kāyati katheti pakāsetīti jātakaṃ*", *Sāratthadīpanī-ṭīkā-paṭhamo bhāgo*, Chaṭṭha saṃgāyanā CD-Rom, Vipassanā Research Institute, India, 1999) In regard to this, by the terms '*jātaṃ*' *bhūtaṃ*, *purāvutthaṃ*' the reality of the *Jātaka* tales has been authenticated. *Jātaṃ* means born, *bhūtaṃ* means happened and '*purāvutthaṃ*' lived in the past. In the '*Saddanītipparāṇa*', it has been explained that '*Jātaka*' contain previous life of the Buddha and it is a sermon by the Buddha. ("*Jātaṃ bhūtaṃ atītaṃ bhagavato cariyaṃ, taṃ kāyati kathīyati etenāti jātakaṃ. Jātakapāḷi hi idha 'jātaka'nti vuttā. Aññatra pana jātaṃ eva jātakanti gahetabbaṃ. Tathā hi jātakasaddo desanāyampi vattati, itivuttakaṃ jātakaṃ abbhutadhamma'*" *ntiādīsu. Jātiyampi vattati 'jātakaṃ samodhānesī'tiādīsu.*", *Saddanītipparāṇaṃ*, Chaṭṭha saṃgāyanā CD-Rom, Vipassanā Research Institute, India, 1999) Accordingly it is stated that *Jātaka* is a doctrine that has been preached by the Buddha with perfect arrangement of incidents. Ven. Buddhadasa, the commentator, in his explanation of the *Navāṅgasatthusāsana*, says that the five hundred sermons starting with the *Apaṇṇaka* are *Jātaka-s*. ("*Apaṇṇakajātakādīni paññāsādhikāni pañcajātakasatāni 'jātaka'nti veditabbaṃ.*", Davids, T.W.Rhys and Carpenter J.E. *Sumaṅgalavilāsini*. 1968: 24) However, either in the Pali or Sinhala versions *Jātaka-s* exactly 550 stories are not found. In the *Jātakapāḷi* and the *Jātakaṭṭhakathā*, only 547 *Jātaka-s* are to be found. In the Sinhala version '*Pansiyapaṇas Jātaka Pota*' also there are only 547 stories. In the Sinhala *Jātaka Aṭṭvā Gātapada*, commentaries have been provided only to 535 *Jātaka-s*. In this paper, my attention will be only on a particular feature in *Jātaka-s* known as the '*Saccakiriya*' or the 'Act of Truth'. Therefore I think it is not necessary to provide a long account of the *Jātaka* literature.

There are a lot of *Jātaka*-s in which the term ‘*Saccakiriya/satyakriyā*’ is found which are used for the purpose of augmenting the literary value of the tales. Prof. Ananda Kulasooriya can be named as one of prominent scholars who studied this feature mainly focusing on the Sinhala version of the *Jātaka*. In his book of Sinhala literature Vol. IV, describing the feature ‘*satyakriyā*’ as a writing technique, he quotes further from E.W Burlingam who translated the Dhammapadaṭṭhakathā into English about a century ago, says that it was this scholar who pointed out first that ‘*satyakriyā*’ has been used as the writing technique. (Kulasooriya, Ananda. 1999: 295) In ancient literature, folk tale and folk societies, the ‘*satyakriyā*’ has existed as a form of ritual. This can be recognized easily. In the Indian as well as Sri Lankan literature, this kind of events has been presented with enthusiasm as a technique generating pleasure. Similarly, these creations appear to be a genre of narrative belonging to the devotional literature.

As all the *Jātaka* stories seem to have occurred within human society, the incidents of performing Acts of Truth have been used as a strategy that operated in the folk consciousness. Although it is useless to examine whether these stories are true or false, it is necessary to discuss the literary and ethical value of them. The Sinhala term ‘*satyakriyā*’ appears as ‘*sacca kiriya*’ in Pali. With this, terms such as ‘*adhiṭṭhāna*’ and ‘*pāṭihārīya*’ too have been used. (“*Bodhisatto pana “imaṃ pokkharaniṃ parivāretvā jātā sabbepi naḷā ekacchiddā hontū”ti adhiṭṭhāsi. Bodhisattānañhi hitūpacārassa mahantatāya adhiṭṭhānaṃ samijjhati.*”, Fausboll, V. *Jātaka with Commentary Vol. I, 1990: 171*) These two terms imply the ‘*satyakriyā*’ is trustworthy and ‘wonderful’. In the commentary on the *Aṅgulimālasutta* in the *Majjhimanikāya* subcommentary ‘*saccakiriya*’ has been explained as an act that is done by reminiscing one’s ‘*sīla*’(morality). (“*Saccakiriya nāma buddhāsayaṃ attano sīlaṃ paccavekkhitvā katā, tasmā saccakiriya vejjakammaṃ na hotīti daṭṭhabbaṃ.*”, *Majjhimaṇṇāsaṭṭikā, Chatṭha saṃgāyanā CD-Rom, Vipassanā Research Institute, India, 1999*) Further, the commentary stresses that act of truth is not a medical treatment. In the *Cariyapitaka*, in describing the ‘*Sacca Pāramitā*’, six of the major *Jātaka*-s have been identified and among them, in the *Jātaka*-s of Vaṭṭapotaka, Maccharāja and Kaṇhadīpāyana, there are incidents of ‘act of truth’ based on the Perfection of Truth. In the life of the Bodhisattva, the acts of truth seem to be mainly related to the perfections of ‘*Sīla*’ and ‘*Sacca*’ (morality and truth). In the ‘*Haritacajātakavaṇṇanā*’ comes a special statement on the Character of Bodhisattva and ‘truth’. According to that story, although some sinful acts like killing of living beings, stealing, sexual misconduct, and taking alcohol etc have

occurred, he had never committed the sin of lying so as to ruin his own or others' welfare. (“...*Bodhisattassa hi ekaccesu thānesu pāṇātipātopi adinnādānampi kāmesumicchācāropi surāmerayamajjapānampi hotiyeva, atthabhedakavisamvādanam purakkhatvā musāvādo nāma na hoti.*”, Fausboll, V. *Jātaka with Commentary Vol. III. 1990: 475*). Accordingly in the character of Bodhisattva, the virtue of truthfulness has been portrayed as the greatest virtue. The determination or swearing on the acts, performed for the purpose of realizing one's objectives based on genuine acts or statements made are considered as acts of truth. Such incidents portrayed in the *Jātaka*-s are not limited only to the Bodhisattva. The act of truth can be identified as a prominent feature in the *Jātaka* literature and there are some special features in them:

- Human or animal character upholding truth
- The unfavorable incident that is bound to happen to oneself or others
- The verbal or mental act of truth or resolve performed to avert it
- The good outcome of a natural or amazing power

In regard to this, in the *Jātaka* tales, the act of Truth has been depicted as verbal and mental process through an honest character or by means of a truthful character is an act of truth. From the realization of the result, either a natural power or an influence of a super human being is depicted secondly. Among the virtues that prompt acts of truth are virtue, loving kindness, nonviolence, celibacy, speaking truth and truthful acts are prominent. It seems that the main purpose of these is the transferring ‘universal power’ for these virtues. It is implied through these that the characters endowed with these virtues are unconquered and they are indestructible. Further,

- The value of human virtue
- The fact that no power could do any harm to them
- The results of good deeds

In the expression, the incidents known as acts of truth and making use of them as a technique is carried out by the author. Through wonderful incidents, the value of human ethics and extent of their strength is manifested. The *Milindapañha* has explained a problem rising from an incident of an act of Truth and amazing results.

King Milinda, in his debate with Venerable Nāgasena questions how the divine eyes could be born in the empty eye socket of King Sivi after he had given away his eyes by extracting them. At a moment King Sivi was eagerly waiting for a recipient for his eyes, God King Sakra appeared as a blind beggar and asked for his eyes. The king who had been so keen in giving his eyes, extracts them and gives the beggar. Śakra (the king of God), reverting to his real form, tells that he could not give back the eye already donated by the King Sivi. But he advised that the king could try to get it back by the power of his 'dāna' (donation). Then the king saying 'I gave away the eyes and in return I became very happy' etc. Then he performed an act of truth and received the divine eye. ("Bhiyyo maṃ āvisī pīti, somanassañānappakaṃ; Etena saccavajjena, dutiyaṃ me upapajjathā'ti.", Fausboll, V. *Jātaka with Commentary Vol. IV.* 1990: 410). According to King Milinda, this incident like the acrid taste of to the taste word, it is of acrid taste. As its beginning and end contradictory in meaning. I felt it as a fault because it is faulty. For removing its doubt, Nāgasena questions King Milinda on the results one could receive from the Act of Truth.

'What is it King, the truthful people in the world, do they perform acts of truth on their acts of truth? Is there anything true like that? Venerable Nagasena, the truthful people, having done acts of truth by truth, they make rain, extinguish fire, remove poison, and they perform diverse other feats.' (*Kim pana, mahārāja, atthi loke saccaṃ nāma, yena saccavādino saccakiriyaṃ karontī'ti?* "Āma, bhante, atthi loke saccaṃ nāma, saccena, bhante nāgasena, saccavādino saccakiriyaṃ katvā devaṃ vassāpentī, aggiṃ nibbāpentī, visaṃ paṭihananti, aññampi vividhaṃ kattabbaṃ karontī'ti.", Jaini P.S. and Trenckner, V. *Milindapañha & Milinda-ṭīkā.* 1986: 120)

From this debate, a few incidents touching the mass consciousness of India on the belief certain things could be performed through acts of truth. Venerable Nāgasena in order to remove the doubts of King Milinda explains that the miracles of the Acts of Truth as not unreasonable, that the truth itself becomes the reason. Following are some of the more famous and well-known incidents of acts of Truth found in the *Jātaka* literature. In *Jātaka*-s, incidents of acts of truth related to above mentioned statement.

- Rain making
- Extinguishing fire
- Removing poison

- Healing diseases
- Changing natural phenomena

They fluctuate between such incidents. In some cases the results of the ‘acts of truth are presented as real. The devotees do not like to verify whether they are true or not. Similarly, like the reply of Venerable Nāgasena, the authors of the Jātaka tales also in accordance with the dependent co-origination (*paṭiccasamuppāda*), justify the act of truth on the basis of ‘truth’. In the *Nalapānājātaka* there is a special incident relevant to this. Once the Bodhisattva born as a monkey, and acting as the team leader, arriving at a pond in the forest to quench thirst, but finding that there was a water spirit in the pond which could eat everyone who got into the pond, thought of a strategy to cheat the ogre and to drink. Then he ordered his troop, to pick a (cane) bamboo reed, and blowing on one end of them to remove the knots inside, but after a while feeling too tired to blow into so many thousands of canes, the monkey king made an act of Truth wishing all the canes around the pond to be hollow and with no knots. (“Evañca pana vatvā bodhisatto ekaṃ naḷadaṇḍakaṃ āharāpetvā pāramiyo āvajjetvā saccakiriyaṃ katvā mukhena dhami, naḷo anto kiñci gaṇṭhiṃ asetvā sabbatthakameva susiro ahosi. Iminā niyāmena aparampi aparampi āharāpetvā mukhena dhamitvā adāsi. Evaṃ santepi na sakkā niṭṭhāpetuṃ, tasmā evaṃ na gahetabbaṃ.”, Fausboll, V. *Jātaka with Commentary Vol. I.* 1990: 171). It worked and all the monkeys could easily drink from that pond without falling prey to the demon. The *Jātakaṭṭhakathā* and the Sinhala ‘*Pansiyapaṇas Jātaka Pota*, after narrating this story has mentioned four miracles which will last till end of the aeon.

“මේ කල්පයේ කල්පස්ථායීක වූ ප්‍රාතිහාර්ය සතරක් වන්නේය. ඒ කවරේද යත්? වන්දයාගේ ශශලාඤ්ජනය මේ කල්පය මුළුල්ලෙහි සිටින්නේය. වට්ටක ජාතකයෙහි ගිනි නිවී ගියනැත් මේ කප මුළුල්ලෙහි ගින්නෙන් නොදවන්නේය. සරිකාර නම් කුම්භකාරයාගේ ගෙයපිහිට තැන සියලු මේ කප නොනෙමී තිබෙන්නේය. මේ පොකුණ පිරිවරා සිටි සියලු බටදඹු මේ කප මුළුල්ලෙහි එකරන්ධුව තිබෙන්නේය ‘යි මෙසේ කල්පස්ථායී වූ ප්‍රාතිහාර්ය සතරෙක් වන්නේය.” (Amaramoli thero, Veragoda. 1961: 59)

( There are four miracles which will remain till end of the aeon. What are those four? The image of rabbit on the moon will remain till end of the aeon. The spots that the fire extinguished in the *Vaṭṭakajātaka* will not catch fire through this aeon.

The spot where *Ghaṭikāra* the potter was located will not get wet in the rain. All the bamboo reeds (canes) around this pond will be hollow throughout this aeon.)

Thus the Book of *Jātaka*-s, presents these stories related to miracle of Acts of Truth as results lasting the aeon. It is fair to suppose all of them may have been included in the *Jātaka* collection for the purpose of portraying the miraculous powers of the Bodhisattva. The nature of such acts of Truth sometimes appears as a therapeutic system, sometimes as ‘*mantra*’ and sometimes as magic. However, the narrators of the *Jātaka*-s, have not tried to present them as actual acts of therapy, ‘*mantra*’ or ‘*magic*’, but as effects of ‘*sīla*’ and other virtues and ethical conduct.

In the collection of *Jātaka*, a large number of stories can be identified as containing elements of ‘act of truth’. The compilers of the Sinhala *Jātaka* Book, too have used these stories for improving the faith and virtues of the readers by narrating them making use of the information provided by the commentaries. As an attempt to transform the religious faith through the emotions of wonder, to turn this into a truthful and righteous conduct. Without confining only to the life of Bodhisattva, for depicting characters who speak the truth, and performing acts of truth and enjoying their good results, to realize that by means of human characters and animal characters, and the common characteristics of the results from the good deeds practiced even by common persons, and also the equality. It is perhaps for this purpose, the acts of animals have been praised over the human acts. There are several stories in the *Jātaka* collection which belong to this category. The fame of such *Jātaka* stories which address the folk consciousness may have happened mainly due to the technique of using the miracles of acts of Truth.

Among the six stories quoted in the *Cariyāpiṭaka* as examples of the perfection of truth, we find the *Vaṭṭaka*, *Kaṇhadīpāyana* and the *Maccha Jātaka*-s. All these three *Jātaka* stories contain elements of ‘acts of truth’. The Bodhisattva born as a ‘*Vaṭṭu*’ (snipe), when there was a forest fire, remembering the virtues of the former Buddha-s, quenched that fire that was spreading over an area of sixteen miles and saves its life. (Amaramoli thero, Veragoda. 1961: 92) In the *Kaṇhadīpāyanajātaka* there is an incident of reviving the life of a boy named Yaññadatta lay unconscious being stung by a poisonous snake. In the *Jātaka*-s *Sambulā*, *Sutasoma* and *Sāma*, remembering one’s own good qualities and virtues to make an act of truth and receiving solace from that has been depicted. However, in *Kaṇhadīpāyanajātaka*, to revive one’s son, only the evil qualities in the heart are contemplated upon standing on the Truth. The ascetic, the devotee

and his wife, all three, confessing the evil thoughts they had been hiding in their hearts on that moment for saving the life of the young man made an Act of Truth. Practicing as ascetic reluctantly for fifty years, giving ‘*dāna*’ reluctantly without a pleasant mind and living with husband unattached to him without any love, these three aspects have been stated as proof for doing the act of Truth. (Amaramoli thero, Veragoda. 1961: 840-843) In the ‘*Macchajātaka*’ the Bodhisattva born as a fish, in a drought through an act of truth causing rain to rain, saves his relatives from death.

“...පින්වත් වූ වස්සවලාහක මම නැයන් නිසා දුකට පැමිණියෙමි, සිල්වත් වූ මා දුක් විඳිමින් සිටියදී තෝ කවර කාරණයකින් වැසි නොවස්වන්නෙහි ද? මා විසින් ස්වභාවිකම සහකාර වූ මත්ස්‍ය යෝනියෙහි ඉපිද සාලටක් සා පමණවූත් මත්ස්‍යයෙක් කැවීරු නැත්තේය, මා විසින් අන් ප්‍රාණියෙකුත් ජීවිතයෙන් තොරකළවීරුත් නැත්තේය, මේ සත්‍යයෙන් වැසි වස්වා මාගේ ඤාතිසමූහයා දුකින් මුදවායි කියා පරිවාරික කෙල්ලෙකුට විධාන කරන්නාක්භූ මෙන් ...” (Amaramoli thero, Veragoda. 1961: 185)

(Kindly god of rain, I am sad because of the suffering of my relatives. When I am suffering like this what is the reason for you not to send rain? Although I am born as a fish eating the flesh of their own kind, I have not so far eaten even a sprat, nor have I taken the life of any other living being. May you make rain by the power of this Truth’ he ordered as if commanding a servant girl.)

This Act of Truth was made in a dried pond for the purpose of saving the life of his relatives who were being picked by crows with their beaks. There the Bodhisattva prays to the god of rain to make crows burn with the fire of sorrow and to save his relatives from the fear of death. In most cases the character of a tree spirit or king of God (śakra) is brought in relation to an Act of Truth. Some the miraculous happenings related to the Act of Truth:

- Operating by means of divine power
- Acting on instruction of a god
- Obligation of nature

The above means have functioned as supporting factors. God Śakra comes to help Queen Sambulā who had been captured by a Demon, because of her ‘*Sīla*’ and the virtue of celibacy. Further, God Sakra advises her to practice the virtue of celibacy. (Amaramoli thero, Veragoda.

1961: 1093) As is own in the *Jātaka* tale, King Sotthisena’s skin rash is cured by the power of the act of Truth the Queen performed by thinking of her virtue of celibacy. The *Suvaṇṇasāmaṇṇaṇā* describes how the parents together with the deities in the forest did an act of truth wishing for prince Sāma’s recovery when he was shot with an arrow. (“*Evam pitari saccakiriyaṃ karonte mahāsatto parivattitvā itarena passena nipajji. Athassa tatiyaṃ saccakiriyaṃ devatā akāsi.*”, Fausboll, V. *Jātaka with Commentary Vol. VI.* 1990: 92). Thus it becomes clear that on some occasions for realizing the fruit of an Act of Truth divine intervention was needed. In *Jātaka*-s like *Temiya* or *Mughapakkha* and *Kusa*, for the purpose of getting conceived for a child, the support of God Śakra was needed in addition to the Act of Truth; The *Jātaka* tales depict how women doing Acts of Truth remembering their ‘*sīla*’ and other virtues wishing for a child. At the present time also there are some women who observe such practices and praying to gods asking for a child.

“එකල්හි ඒ වන්දුදෙව් නොම පෞරුණම් දිනයෙහි පෙනෙවස් සමාදන්ව මිටි ආසනයක සැතපෙන්හි තමාගේ සීලය පරීක්ෂා කොට මී නොමෝ සත්‍යක්‍රියා කරන්නී මම අබණ්ඩ කොට රක්ෂා කළ සිල් ඇත්තෙමි ද මේ සත්‍ය වචනය හේතු කොට ගෙන මට දරුවෝ ඇතිවෙන්නයි මෙසේ සත්‍යක්‍රියා කළහ” (Amaramoli thero, Veragoda. 1961: 1314)

(Queen Candrā, on a Full Moon day, observing *sīla* [precepts (virtue)] and lying on a low bed, observing her ‘*sīla*’, doing an Act of Truth, as I have practiced my virtue without violating it, by the power of this word of truth, may I conceive a child)

Another episode of wishing for a child is reported in the *Suruci Jātaka*. This *Jātaka* story tells us about King Suruci and Queen Sumedha; when they were worrying about not having a son, and then the Queen doing an Act of truth and wishing for a son, at the request of God Śakra, a deity named Nālākāra, was born as Prince Mahāpanāda. (Amaramoli thero, Veragoda. 1961: 933-939) In the *Kaṭṭhahārī Jātaka* too we find another act of Truth of a woman who tried it to find the real father of her son. That woman, goes to the Royal Palace to claim the rights of her son from the King as father, but when the king did not admit that he was the father of the child, she tossed the child up in the sky doing the Act of Truth. On that occasion, the Bodhisattva child remains in the sky, seated in in Lots posture preaching Dharma to his father; gains the position of Viceroy to himself and the position of Chief Queen to his mother. (“*Deva, idāni ṭhapetvā*



*saccakiriyaṃ añño mama sakkhi natthi, sacāyaṃ dārako tumhe paṭicca jāto, ākāse tiṭṭhatu, no ce, bhūmiyaṃ pativā maratū’*’ti bodhisattassa pāde gahetvā ākāse khiṇi. Bodhisatto ākāse pallaṅkamābhujitvā nisinno madhurassarena pitu dhammaṃ kathento...”, Fausboll, V. Jātaka with Commentary Vol. I. 1990: 135). The *Suppāraka Jātaka* contains the incident of Bodhisattva doing an Act of Truth, when the ship he was on board was about wreck in a storm; he did the Act of Truth by placing a bowl of water on the bow of the ship. An episode of doing an Act of Truth to take revenge in the *Paṇḍaranāga Jātaka*, an episode of an Act of Truth for saving from false accusation in the *MahāJanaka Jātaka*, and in addition to these, in the *Mahā Mora Jātaka*, *Khaṇḍhāla Jātaka*, *Mahā Nārada Kassapa Jātaka*, *Jayaddiya Jātaka*, and *Candakumāra Jātaka* also contain episodes of Acts of Truth. *Andhabhūta* (*Anḍabhūta Jātaka*) contains numerous episodes related to an Act of Truth. In gambling with his Counselor Brahmin, the king uttering the truthful words cast the dice and wins. When the Brahmin inquired for the truth the King said that he was playing the dice thinking of the unfaithfulness of women. The second stage is the Act of Truth done by the Brahmin’s wife. As she was about to jump into a fire, to show her purity, as she had been tempted to adultery as a result of King’s conspiracy, states that never in a her life a man had not touched her even her hand. Thus in a tactful way she avoided that risky situation.

“ඒ මානවිකා බමුණා වංචා කරණු කැමැතිව මහජනයා මධ්‍යයෙහි කියන්නී ‘බමුණාණෙනි, තොප හැර අන් පුරුෂයෙකුගේ මා අත ඇල්ලීම් පමණකුත් නොදනිමි යි මේ සත්‍යක්‍රියාවෙන් මේ ගිනි මා නොදව’ යි කියා ගිනි වදිනට ගත. එකණෙහි ධුර්වයා කියන්නේ ‘පින්වත්නි පුරෝහිත බ්‍රහ්මණයන්ගේ කටයුතු දැන් බලව, මෙබඳු වූ ස්ත්‍රියක් ගිනිවැද මරවනි’ යි කියා ගොස් මානවිකාව අත ඇල්වා ගත්තේය. ඒ තොමෝ ධුර්වයාගේ අත අරවා පියා පුරෝහිතයාට කියන්නී ‘ස්වාමිනි, මා සත්‍යක්‍රියාව බිඳී ගියේය. එසේ හෙයින් මා ගිනිවදිනට නිර්භීතව නො පිළිවෙතැ’ යි කීව. ‘කවර කාරණයකින්දැ’ යි බමුණා කී කල්හි ‘අද මා විසින් අන් පුරුෂයෙකු මා අත ඇල්ලීම් පමණකුත් නොදනිමි යි මෙසේ සත්‍යගකර්මයා කරණලද, දැන් වූකලී මේ පුරුෂයා අවුත් මාගේ අත ඇල්වාගත, එසේ හෙයින් මා ගිනිවදිනට නොපිළිවෙත’ යි කීව.” (Amaramoli thero, Veragoda. 1961: 154)

(Then she thinking of cheating the Brahmin, ‘Brahmin, except for you no other man has touched me even on my hand’, by the power of this Truth may this fire not burn me’, having said so she pretended to jump into the fire. The paramour said,

‘Friends, look, at the evil deeds of this Counselor, isn’t he going to kill a woman like this by burning? So saying, he rushed in and took the girl by hand. Then she holding his hand said. ‘Lord, now my act of truth is violated. Therefore I cannot jump into the fire without fear. When the Brahmin asked, ‘why is that?, she said I did an act of Truth saying that no other man has even touched me by hand. But now this man came and took my hand. Therefore I cannot enter the fire’.)

In this *Jātaka* story we find evidence of a woman trying to avoid the test by fire to show her fidelity towards husband. This story which is based on the woman’s fidelity to save the life of her husband by fire ordeal generates humor. Thus the events in the *Jātaka* centered on the Acts of Truth can be seen as an arrangement to prove the value of human virtues and morality. In the *Jātaka* tradition, the character of King Brahmadata, the Preceptor Disāpāṃok at the City of Taxila, and God Śakra’s intervention, statements by tree spirits have become standard techniques together with Acts of Truth in the plot.

In Ananda Kulasoorya’s view the Act of Truth is a ritualistic feature as well as a common practice of the storytellers. They help improve the quality of the stories as well as maintain suspense in the story. The collection of *Jātaka*-s in the beginning was added to society with narrative medium as its main feature. In regard to that, the authors of *Jātaka*-s may have used the Act of Truth for developing faithfulness. In the *Jātakapāli*, only the ‘gāthā’ or verses exist. In the composition of commentaries to the texts, venerable Buddhaghosa may have added or created these stories. In this process although the old Sinhala commentaries may have served as the source, venerable Buddhaghosa may have improved on them as he wished. As various fictional elements have been added like a writer of short stories in compiling the commentaries to Nikāya-s and to the Vinaya, in preparing the commentary to the *Jātaka*-s, he may have added various techniques of storytelling for making them more interesting and appealing.

In the incidents related to the Act of Truth in the *Jātaka*-s tales has a human and ethical basis. In that process assessment of the human or animal behavior and giving a value to them happens indirectly. Through these, the security for life and realization of aspirations a person could wish for is implied. This is accomplished through ‘*sīla*’ (morals), faith, compassion, truthful speech and fidelity/chastity. Further this offers an understanding of the wonder of the role of a Bodhisattva and its strength as well as it generates trust on the life of a Bodhisattva. The

narrator has obviously attempted by focusing on acts of truth to address folk consciousness for obtaining support of natural and divine forces by means of such dharma and stressing the importance of observing principles such as truthfulness and ethical conduct.

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