

Access, Attitude And Attainment: Reviewing Gender Relations In The Jatakas

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Abstract

Any attempt to reconstruct varied relations in any given society of the past or the present needs to be analysed through a range of inter-related variables like class, race, gender, caste, ethnicity etc. Often, roles and representations of gender categories have been evaluated through religious texts and prevailing practices (which in turn are reflections of sanctioned norms and religious ideas). Attempts toward evaluating the position of women in early India were made from both orientalist and nationalist perspectives but in recent times recognition of the importance of gender as an analytical category has aided and enabled refreshing and suitable understandings towards power relations between men and women. Buddhism was the first religious institution in the world that provided women an alternative, that of aspiring for soteriological goals and spiritual aspirations. Canonical literature testifies this stance but what has remained intriguing is the vicissitudes of institutional structures, spiritual practices, relations with the laity and inherent patriarchal hierarchies remained components that had to be factored in. This paper examines the path of soteriological aspirations of Buddhist Women by evaluating three aspects of this spiritual journey, i.e. initiation into the Buddhist sangha, sexual attitudes of the inmates and finally the aspect of attainment or reaching arhatship. Each of these are reflective of societal prescriptions and peculiarities but yet of possibilities. This has been envisaged through an analysis of the layered and dually timed structures of the Jatakas, a voluminous collection of Buddhist stories which are largely considered popular but are distinctly canonical.

Keywords: Soteriological Aspirations, Gender Inclusiveness, Early Buddhism, Sexuality, Misogyny, Attainment

Introduction:

The advent of Sramanic traditions including Buddhism around the sixth century BCE was a part of a complex web of historical developments that spoke of and catered to a sharply differentiated society than before. Emergent states, urban centers, stratified society, new religious ideas brought in socio-political complexity. Lower varna orders, women and non-Vedic populations were given certain standing and new prospects in a changing society. *Bhikkhuni-sangha* that opened the doors of spiritual and soteriological goals for women can be viewed as a part of this. The Buddhist tradition through the

words of the master (*sutta*) clearly voiced its opinion on the potential of women as stream attainers and achievers though inhibitions on the impact of their initiation also finds mention alongside.

The status of women and its implications for their access to spiritual life is one of the most interesting and intriguing areas of study of Buddhist culture and society. In any given society, roles and religious attitudes are interrelated and religions significantly reflect on gender roles, soteriological aspirations and sexual practices. There is common intertwining of religion, cultural values and practices. Each of these aspects and more is surrounded by debates and positions which ought to be explored through the prism of a range of sources including theoretical treatise and mundane practices. Pertinently what becomes worth inquiring is whether Buddhist women are able to, in terms of degree, the same sort of renunciatory commitment and spiritual progress as their male counterparts?

The paper examines the spiritual quest of Buddhist women especially within the category of monastics or *Bhikkhunis*. This is worked through an analysis of their religious path through three stages that comprised, first,, their attempts at initiation into the Buddhist *sangha*, second, the attitudinal context of the *sangha* vis-à-vis sexuality and third, the extent to which women were able to achieve higher goals in the *sangha* primarily arhatship. This will be primarily investigated through the narratives of the stories of Buddha's former birth, i.e. the *Jatakas* which are a rich reservoir of information on vivid aspects of life, everyday activities, vocations, animal world, trees, water spirits, ogres, demi-gods, forests etc. along with Buddhist precepts and practices.

Gender and Buddhist Historiography

Very early in orientalist historiography Caroline Augusta Foley Rhys Davids,ⁱ and Mabel Haynes Bodeⁱⁱ contributed towards an assessment of the role and position of *Bhikkhunis* in Early Buddhism. Within Buddhist writings scholars have often debated on the foundation of the *Bhikkhuni sangha* and its implications for the tradition. I. B. Horner (1930) posits that the order for the nuns had started five years after the monk's order being formed.ⁱⁱⁱ This view was reiterated by Nalinaksha Dutt (1941)^{iv} According to Arvind Sharma (1977) both the *Bhikkhu* and *Bhikkhuni Saṅgha* were founded by the Buddha in the course of his missionary career in the 6th century BCE.^v Blackstone (1998) offers a comprehensive study of the two texts of *Khuddaka Nikāya*, i.e. the *Therīgāthā* and *Theragāthā* and attributes the gender differences perceived and analysed through them to the social world of ancient India.^{vi} Kate Blackstone (1999) referring to the recorded narratives of the *Vinaya* reveals that, since Mahāpajāpati Gotamī posed a direct challenge to the Buddha's authority, while making repeated requests, she and the women she represented in a way challenged and threatened each of the elements of the *Vinaya*'s tripartite conceptual foundation.^{vii} As per Harvey (2000), the foundation of the *Bhikkhu-Saṅgha* and Buddha enlightenment's year is the same, and for him it was after five years of his enlightenment at the request of Mahāpajāpati Gotamī, that the *Bhikkhuni-Saṅgha* was instituted.^{viii}

Contrary to this, according to Hinüber (2008), the Buddha did not institute any *Saṅgha* for the *Bhikkhūnī*-s during his lifetime.^{ix} Hinüber envisages the possibility that the *Bhikkhūnī*-*Saṅgha* appears to have emerged after the death of Buddha. However, Liz Williams (2000) argues for a different dimension to the contested stands that there may have been the existence of *Bhikkhūnī*-s within the tradition before Mahāpajāpati Gotamī went forth.^x According to Jan Nattier (2004), the account of the foundation of the nuns' order was devised only after the division between the *Sthavira* and *Mahāsāṃghika* schools which in most probability took place approximately one hundred years after *Maha Parinibbanaxi*. One has to keep in mind that concerns with constructing and reconstructing women's history stems from a variety of agendas which are not necessarily women centred, as a result of which women identities in a secular or religious domain are woven through processes which are complex and varied.

Concerns and academic writing around the position of women in Buddhism and attitude towards the female renunciants too began early. B.C. Law (1927) in his work which he calls 'first of its kind'^{xii} felt that women had advanced within Buddhism which in turn was due to women's own efforts.^{xiii} Horner explores forms of self-expression and experiences in the *sangha*^{xiv}. She displays that women within Buddhism acquired a higher position than in the pre-Buddhist days and on matter of capabilities she states that the Buddha, saw in women the potential good, the potential spiritual, as he saw it in men^{xv}. In her opinion the demeaning remarks on women's sexuality and potential were due to later interpolations and monkish eliminations.

In the post- Independence phase, Chakravarti (1981) examines the relationship of Buddhism to its locus and incorporates the agency of women in the larger socio-economic milieu of the time^{xvi}. She too, points out towards a more ascribed status in Buddhism as against Brahmanism^{xvii}. Works on Buddhism in particular have in recent times moved beyond Horner's analysis and also focussed on specific forms of Buddhism. Paul (1985) in her analysis of *Mahāyāna* texts argues that women of both lay and alms categories played an active role in Buddhist religious practices and delimiting views on them reflect male attitudes and sees women capable in their journey on the soteriological path^{xviii}. Shaw (1991) focussed on the tantric school of Buddhism and highlights a greater role for women in it^{xix}. Sponberg (1992) in his evocative and enduring essay^{xx} highlights the underlying stress which he sieves through Buddhist literature and enlists four distinct attitudes^{xxi} in a chronological framework. He draws attention to the Buddhists themselves that there is an ideal in the religion which offers much more than what has been so far realised.^{xxii} Richman (1992) accounts for the trajectory of a Buddhist nun, *Manimekala* and displays the role gender can play in the process by which individuals renounce the world and commit themselves to religious discipline.^{xxiii} Further, Meena Talim^{xxiv} draws an insightful perspective on women in the *sangha* as she argues against bias towards female nuns on account of the disciplinary rules by examining the nature and circumstantial origin of them.^{xxv}

In recent times epigraphic data from several Buddhist sites across India has added new dimensions to the agency of women in Buddhism as active donors and participants in religious patronage and economic transactions. These included both the *Bhikkhunis* and *Upāsikas* along with their male counterparts. Roy (1988) analysed women donors at Sāñcī and discussed their access to material resources and their forms and methods of self-identification^{xxvi}. Singh's (1996) analysis of epigraphic data over a wide chronological span (3rd century B.C.E. to the 12th century C.E.) of Sāñcī highlighted aspects of the social and economic basis of patronage.^{xxvii} In a way, gender concerns get reflected as a part of a larger matrix of social participation in a religion and its patronage. Shah's work (2002) probes into the issues of identification of women in early India and posits variance in evidence with regional variance^{xxviii}. These works juxtaposed epigraphic evidence with textual, archaeological and visual data to provide a larger and vivid understanding of gender relations in religious establishments which were profoundly Buddhist. Peter Skilling (2001) in his essay^{xxix}, reflects on the significance of gender pairing^{xxx} in monastic lineages that percolated in literary compositions of the Buddhist Corpus.^{xxxi} He addresses that these pairings were not to be simply understood as divisions on the basis of sex but should be used to showcase that the Buddha and his teachings were for all sentient beings alike. Apart from arguing for a flourishing order of nuns in India, he also garners evidence from texts, sites and inscriptions to display the skills, intellect and roles of nuns, lay-women and even goddesses in early Buddhism.

If we were to come specifically to the *Jātakas*, Chakravarti, (1993)^{xxxii} raised the concern over visibility of evidence for men and women alike. She also draws attention to the lower order of the society, labouring poor, slaves, exhibiting their everyday activities, experiences and aspirations. Roy (1996, 2015, 2017) in a whole range of writings^{xxxiii} has brought about various nuanced ways of understanding dimensions of gender relations, through explorations of the organizational structures and roles within, the issue of jurisprudence, lay-monastic interdependence, friendship and so on through the use of *Jātakas*. Thapar (2018) has recently nuanced the perspective on the category of women in early India as reflected through the sources. She bases her findings firstly, from the positioning and avenues available for different categories of women within the *Sramanic* tradition (renunciants, householders, courtesans etc.) and then moving on to other traditions (which is clearly the reverse of the trends in scholarly writing on women)^{xxxiv}.

Jatakas, which are a great source, contain more popular strands of Buddhist teachings as they were meant to be recited to the laity to enhance their religious quotient, as stories with morals. Through their dually timed narratives they intersect with a variety of structures, settings, locales and characters. This diversity and complexities of characters make any construction of gender relations from the stories an exciting and engaging endeavor. Though a cursory reading of the stories reflects misogynistic overtones, a careful examination of either a number of stories or in fact a single story

clearly lays evidence for a multiplicity of meanings which is essential to highlight any understanding on gender relations and societal structures.

Ways of the ‘Way’: Women and their quest for Salvation

Buddha is said to have imparted his teachings to both men and women alike irrespective of their birth in a particular caste or a specific gender category. He recognised that the women were equal to their male counterparts in their quest of aspiring for fruition of stream attainment (*sotāpanna*), once returning (*sakadāgāmi*), non-returning (*Anāgāmi*), and also achieving the highest goal (*arahant*)^{xxxv}. *Therīgāthā* and *Theragāthā* as separate texts of the *Khuddaka Nikāya* of the *Pāli* canon elucidate the narratives of the lives of *bhikkhus* and *bhikkhunis* who realised their spiritual goals during and after the lifetime of the Buddha.

Any analysis on the issue of admission or initiation of women in the *sangha*, begins with the eight weighty rules referred to as *aṭṭha garudhammā*^{xxxvi}, that are highlighted below. Buddha asks Ānanda, if the great Prajapati, accepts the eight chief rules, it may signify ordination for her.

The Eight Chief Rules are^{xxxvii}

1. A *bhikkhuni* even of a hundred years of age, shall make salutations (to a *bhikkhu*), shall rise up in the presence (of a *bhikkhu*), bow down even if he is newly initiated.
2. A *bhikkhuni* is not to spend the rainy season in a district in which there is no *bhikkhu*.
3. Every half a month a *bhikkhuni* is to await from *bhikkhu-sangha*, two things, the fixing (as to the date) of the *Uposathā* ceremony, and the time (when the *bhikkhu* will come), to give exhortation.
4. After keeping the rainy season, the *bhikkhuni* is to hold *paravarana* before both the *sanghas*.^{xxxviii}
5. A *bhikkhuni*, who has been guilty of a serious offence is to undergo a *manatta* discipline, in respect of both the *sanghas*.
6. When a *bhikkhuni*, a novice, has been trained for two years in the six rules, she is to ask to leave for the *upasampada* initiation from both the *sanghas*.
7. A *bhikkhuni* under no pretext, is to revile or abuse a *Bhikkhu*.
8. From henceforth, official admonition by the *Bhikkhunis* of the *Bhikkhu* is forbidden, but not allowed vice versa.

Each rule thereafter is followed by an oath taking statement: “This rule is to be honored, respected, revered, venerated and never to be transgressed”.^{xxxix}

As per the Buddhist tradition, Mahāpajāpati Gotamī was ordained as the first *bhikkhuni*, who worked her way towards soteriological aspirations and attained *arhat*-hood and became “the buddha for

women.”^{xl}Her religious trajectory is projected as being equal to that of male counterparts. *Garudhammās* are considered to be the earliest and foremost ground for subservience or discrimination of women in the Buddhist tradition. Opening the *sangha* for Prajāpati needn’t necessarily be considered as sufficiently egalitarian, as *bhikkhuni* ordination was dependent on the *Bhikkhus* and not vice versa. They systematically subordinated the *bhikkhunis* which marked their institutional subservience by adding extra rules for them^{xi} signaling fear of female sexuality particularly as a hindrance to their paths of spiritual upliftment. Therefore, at one end, women are considered being equal in the path to spiritual attainment, but only after their submission to the male authority i.e., the *Bhikkhu sangha*. A completely inclusive and indiscriminate access seems tough to postulate. Neither pure soteriological inclusiveness nor overt institutional androcentrism emerges. Ambivalence is what comes forth and with this background the chapter ventures to analyse the *Jātakas*. Though, the eight weighty rules (*aṭṭha Garudhammā*) are noteworthy, binding and prescriptive yet, it would be actually intriguing to look into the evidences that we find in the *Jātaka* stories as to what transpired and what were the circumstances that led or made certain women join the *sangha*. References on matters relating to the admission of women in the renunciatory tradition are rather scarce but a few are to be found in the *Jātaka* that need to be rightly highlighted to make for a debate on access multifold if not per se normative.

The story of the present in the *Nigrodhamiga Jātakaxlii* puts across a case of admission and near expulsion of a female novice, that gets discussed and debated at the order of Devadatta, where the novice gets ordained initially (*Devadatta-pakhiyānam bhikkhunīnam santike pabbājesi*), the order of the Buddha, where she seeks justice and then finally it gets discussed at the court of the king Pasenadi of Kosala (*rājānam pasenadikosalam*) where members of the fourfold community of the faith are present to witness the nun’s case (*catuparrisamajjhe imissā daharabhikkhuniyā kammaṃ sodhehīti*). A notable lay woman Vishākhā and the Elder Upāli among others were summoned to gauge the duration of pregnancy of the nun (*gabbhinī*) and estimate the time of the conception of the fetus she carried. In the story, we learn about the strong desire of the daughter of a merchant of Rājagaha (*seṭṭhino dhitā ahoṣi*), who yearned for attaining *arhat*-ship in the Buddhist order (*arahattūpanissayo jalati*). After being refused by her parents to take up a religious path, gathers the courage to undertake religious life through her husband who by his reluctant consent gets her ordained in the Buddhist order. Lack of knowledge of her carried over pregnancy from her marriage, when she was a lay-woman (*gihikāle gabbhassa*) makes her fall prey to trials in the order vis a vis her expulsion. At the end not only is her position in the order retained but even her son, named Kassapa is taken care of by the king himself and is then initiated in the *sangha*. He gets ordained at the young age of seven (*sattavasikakāle satthu santike pabbajitvā*) and later through the virtue of *Vammika suttaxliii* attains *arhat*-ship (*So pacchā vammīkasutte arahattam pāpunī*). The mother also receives the supreme fruit (*mātāpi ssa’ bhikkhunī vipassitvā aggaphalam pattā*). Hence, two lives that were to follow a path of

the Buddha get saved from expulsion and other fears, with following the rules and requirements of the *sangha* in a just and timely manner. The intervention of the ruler, a noted *bhikkhu* who was the master of rules of discipline (*vinaya*) and a renowned laywoman reflects on the social dimension of the *sangha* and also on the equal importance of the fourfold community (*catuparrisamajjhe*) to imbibe the rules and moral for a righteous religious life. Finally, access to the *sangha* and initiation seems to be a tough terrain to be taken up for women.

In *Cullakālīṅga Jātaka*^{xliv} the Buddha tells a story about the admission of four female ascetics to Buddhist religious life (*catunnaṃ paribbājikānaṃ pabbajjāṃ*). The story starts with the royal family of Licchavi residing at Vesālī, where as per the evidence in the story both men and women engaged in debates and discussions (*te sabbe pi paṭipucchāvitakkā ahesuṃ*). Then came upon a male and female Jaina (*nigaṇṭho*) follower, who were individually skilled in five hundred treatise (*pañcāsu vādasatesu vyatto*) and the royal family welcomed both and got them in an arena of disputation (*Rajāno dve pi jane vādam kāresuṃ*). Each of the two Jains were capable enough and ably withstood the theoretical confrontations of the other. The royal family of Licchavi did match making for the two in an assumption that the off springs of such a union would be no less than a powerhouse of knowledge. Post- marriage, they were blessed with five children, four girls and a son (*catasso dārikā eko ca dārako jayī*). Each of the five children were educated in five hundred different treatise both by the father and the mother making the grand number to a thousand (*te pañca janā viññutaṃ patvā mātito pañcasatāni pitito pañcasatāni vadāsahassam uggaṇhimsu*). When the parents became old, they clearly stated to the four daughters that if a layman is able to refute your knowledge, then you should marry him but if you get refuted by an elder or priest, you should obey his commands (*sace kosi gihī tumhākaṃ vādam bhindati tassā santike padāparicārikā bhareyyātho sace pabbajito bhindati tassā santike pabbajayāthā*). As time passed after the demise of their parents the son called Saccaka stayed at Vesali but the four daughters named Saccā, Lolā, Avavadakā and Patacarā carried with them a branch of a rose-apple tree wandering with their intellectual capabilities finally arrived at Sāvatti. They planted the branch of the tree (*jambushākhā nikhaṇitvo*) that they had carried at the gate of the city and invited all or any for a debate with them and thereafter went about in the city for alms. Sāriputta who was on his regular rituals of watering empty jars, tending the ill and other charitable chores gained sight of the bough and inquired. On hearing about the challenge of the four Jaina novices, he ordered the branch to be uprooted and summoned them. Sāriputta with his wisdom refutes and humbles the theoretical know-how of the four female Jaina followers. Remembering the orders of their deceased parents they submit to Sāriputta for obedience and he initiates them in the *Bhikkhuni Sangha* of *Uppalavaṇṇā*. As the story proceeds, we learn that Sāriputta not only provided refuge to the four sisters but also counselled them to attain sisterhood and even achieve the status of *arhat*-hood (*āvuso Sāriputtathero catunnaṃ paribbājikānaṃ avassayo hutvā sabbā arahattaṃ pāpesīti*).

The story proves to be significant at many levels. Firstly, the story of the present opens with the catch line of the *gātha* (as in all the *Jātaka* stories) with the words “open the doors...”^{xlvi} which is relevant as it makes the case for women renunciants in the Buddhist order and the story woven around the verse to suit the concern for the women on matters of their entry, access or admission. Secondly, the mention of the name of the *Bhikkhuni saṅgha* is both striking and rare. Thirdly, the story supports the idea of theoretical contests in early India and that men and women were considered equal in terms of their intellectual capabilities. The story is a rare case of knowledge being disseminated to all children alike by their parents who themselves have been placed as equals in intellect and ideological know-how. Fourthly, uprooting of the branch by Sāriputta and his subsequent edge over the treatise of the four female Jains marks a symbolic break of tradition passed on by their parents and making way for their entry into the Buddhist *saṅgha*. Undoubtedly the placement of Sāriputta in the narrative adds to the enhancement of base and scope of Buddhist philosophy vis a vis its contemporary Jaina thought as it comes from a popular yet canonical text of Buddhism itself.

Kulavaka Jātaka^{xlvi} is a story where several layers of multiple narratives are woven together into one. The first half of the story is what we focus on here. Bodhisatta was born as a young noble and was fondly called prince *Māgha* (*Māghakumāro*). His parents settle him in marriage and thereafter the prince with a family of sons and daughters excels in charity (*puttadhūttahī vaḍḍhamāno dānapatī ahoṣi*) and keeps the five precepts (*pañca sīlam rakkhati*). The story is as follows. In the village that the Bodhisatta lived was inhabited by only thirty families (*timsa kulamanussā*). Bodhisatta sets himself to modify the surroundings in an attempt to put up a pavilion and a hall with benches and jars of water. Men of other families also began to help in his acts of building and charity making. Due to their good works, immoral activities were curtailed in their village like indulgence in drinking or murders. But due to some badmouthing to the king these men are summoned and ordered to be punished. They are able to evade the punishment due to their good acts.^{xlvi} They are rewarded by the king in return and they resume to the tasks of making charity and seeking knowledge (*tato paṭṭhāya yathāruciya puñṇāni karontā*) to set up a hall at the meeting of the four highways (*caturmahāpathe mahantaṃ sīlam karessāmā*). But as they had lost their desire for womenfolk, they would not let any woman share in good work. As the story goes, they are in need of a pinnacle (*kaṇṇikkam*) for their hall and a woman called *Sudhamma* from his household (*bodhisattasa gehe*) offers a pinnacle. She says “if you will make me a partner in the good work, I will give it to you for nothing.”^{xlvi} To this the Bodhisatta curtly refuses saying “we do not let women have a share in the good work”. Then the carpenter (*vaḍḍhika*) intervenes to remark “My master, what is this you say? Save the realm of Brahma, there is no place from which women are excluded. Take the pinnacle and are work will be completed.”^{xlix} The Bodhisatta consented to this and their work was completed. The story then unfolds with addition of another narrative and nowhere does the entry of women in good work make way for dooms falling at anyone who is in the path of spiritual attainment. But what need to

highlighted here is the instance that is cited above has a strong semblance with the popular narrative of the pursuance of Mahāpajāpati Gotami to enter the *saṅgha* and the initial denial of the Buddha but later granting his consent with his chief disciple playing role of a mediator. This instance is a good example for resurveying on the issue on the foundation of the *Bhikkhuni Saṅgha* and a fragment of a narrative present in the middle of a part of a *Jātaka* story like this also spreads the message to the laity (men and women alike) on the potential of all sentient beings to contribute to the Buddhist order. The stories send mixed signals while at some places their capabilities are recognized and valued while at several others places the story writers innumerate their failings.

Mahāsāra Jātaka offers a case of quest for knowledge in Buddhist precepts by the women in the royal house of the king of Kosala (*kosalaranñño iṭṭhiyo*). The women in his household complain to be living a life as though being stuck in a box but are enamoured by the Buddha and his teachings and express to be taught by someone who is well versed in Buddhist teachings (*amhākaṃ dhammaṃ desutum*). Not only this but they endeavor to keep up charitable work and desire to gain maximum from the moment that they live in. Or simply to be contemporary to the Buddha himself. The king of Kosala frequented the *Jetavana* for meeting the Buddha and was impressed by a layman of his knowledge. On asking him to teach the women of his household the layman Chattapāni refused on grounds that only the elders (*theras*) or ones ordained in the *saṅgha* had the prerogative to do so. Hence on consulting his wives asked them for their preference among eighty chief disciples as their instructor of the faith. They unanimously chose the Elder Ānanda (*Ānandatthero*). On requesting the same to the Buddha, he willingly agreed and the women of his household began their quest for knowledge. The story opens up a number of possibilities for analyses at several quarters. Firstly, women in the royalty express their limitations and bondage which otherwise does not get easily reflected, they yearn for and workout ways to seek soteriological gains which is different from the image otherwise reflected by the *Jātakas* about women in the royalty being lazy and gadding about. The story also reflects on privileges that the women in the upper strata enjoyed which ordinary women or men may not have had the opportunity for. It also (points out a hierarchy in the Buddhist community which the layman brings forth to the king himself. The choice of Ānanda among eighty chief disciples, in this context may have to do with his role towards the establishment of the *Bhikkhuni saṅgha* and in a way it gets linked to the audience as receptors of the *Jātakas* who must have played an equally integral role in the strategies of their making and transmission. Not to forget the king, a layman himself, who makes the arrangement a possibility.

Abbhantara-Jātakali narrates the tale of Rāhula's mother (*rāhulamātā*) Buddha's wife, referred with the name Bimbādevi in the story, who desires initiation in hope to be in the presence of his family which she relentlessly missed. She is in knowledge of the establishment of the *Bhikkhuni saṅgha* with five hundred sākya women getting initiation and full orders at Vesali. When the Buddha began to reside in Sāvatti she expressed her feeling by saying "My husband, on embracing the religious life

has become omniscient; my son too has become religious, and lives with him. What am I to do in the midst of the house?”^{liii} She thereupon, entered the Buddhist fold by getting ordained in a *bhikkhuni sangha* and begins to live in a cell in Sāvatti. One day she develops a digestive disorder (*udaravato kuppito*) and when her son inquires about what would treat her, she responds for being granted mango juice flavoured with sugar (*sakkarāyojita ambarase*). The novice Rāhula (*Rāhulasāmenero*), in spite of the presence of a number of chief disciples’ chooses the elder Sāriputta for this specific task for which he readily agrees. Sāriputta goes to no other than the king of Kosala who readily got it available for him. Obtaining the sugar flavoured mango juice (*sakkarāyojita ambarase*) he set straight to the monastery to hand it over to Rāhula who fed it to his mother who got cured instantly. The king on the other hand suspected as to why Sāriputta did not consume the juice himself and for whom he carried for? On gaining knowledge of the presence of Rahul’s mother, Rahula and the Buddha himself in his proximity makes him attend them in person. Thereafter he maintained regular supply of flavoured mango juice to Bimbādevi. Similar to this is story of **Supatta Jātaka**liv where Bimbādevi demands a meal of rice mixed with new ghee with red fish sauce to flavour it (*rohitamaccharasam navasappimissakam sālibhataṃ*) and is duly supplied by Sāriputta on being informed by Rāhula. The first story narrates that the wife of Buddha enters the *sangha* at a later stage than the first initiation of women led by Prajāpati Gotami. But at the other both the stories highlight the issue of privileges on account of being Rāhula’s mother and specifically the Buddha’s wife in the earlier stage of his life. The involvement of the king and the elder Sāriputta attests to the argument of privileges being referred to.

Suvaṇṇamiga Jātakalv gives us valuable evidence of the initiation of a woman and her husband together. The story is about a young woman who was born in a family of Sāvatti where it was said that her father, was an attendant to the two important Buddhist disciples^{lvi}. A marriage proposal came for the girl from a family of equal repute (*samānajaṭikam*)but who were non-Buddhist in faith (probably followers of the Brahmanical tradition). The father of the girl initially refused on grounds that his daughter will not be allowed to conduct duties towards her faith i.e., believe in the three gems (*tini ratnāni mamāyati*), give alms (*dānā dipuññābhirata*), hear the truth (*dhammaṃ vā sotum*), visit the monastery (*viḥāram vā gantum*), keep the moral law (*sīlam vā rakkītum*), observe holy days (*uposatham vā kātum*) as she pleased. But having been offered to follow her faith as she pleased by the other family, her father wed her off. After dutifully performing all her matrimonial responsibilities and following her faith she asked her husband to join her in meetings when the Buddhist elders (*thero*) came for dining in their house. The husband too gained insights in their teachings and they both received initiation in the first path (*sotāpattiphale*). Soon, she expressed her desire to renounce the role of a householder and adopt a religious life (*me gharavase na icchām, ahaṃ pabbajitum*). Not only did her husband allow her to do so but for himself too, he chose a path to be an ascetic. Displaying pomp, he got his wife admitted as a novice and himself went to the Buddha to ask for

refuge. He was first initiated in the order of the Devadatta and then to the Buddha's. Hence, they both received spiritual knowledge and eventually both attained arhatship. The story clearly displays rightful perseverance on the part of a young woman to follow the Buddha's path. Also, through her perseverance she is not only able to make a way towards spiritual enlightenment for herself but also for her husband. The story instantiates inter-faith marriages which seems a possibility in those days. Further, change of faith for the husband certainly adds strength and weightage to the Buddhist teachings and practice among other faiths that were followed at that time. ***Kuṇḍaka-Kucchi-Sindhava-Jātaka***^{vii} narrates a tale of a feeble old woman (*duggatomahallikā*) in the city of Savatthi who desired to feed a monk from the order of the Buddha for merit making. But as she reached late in the day, all monks except for the elder Sāriputta had already been deported to the houses of the laity on the list of requests made to an in-charge at the order. The said in-charge (*dhammaghosakassabhikkhum*) when talked about the old woman to Sāriputta, he readily agrees to visit her for alms. She carried his bowl herself on the way to her house. Somehow this gets known across and a number of lay-followers sent presents in kind (*balānurūpena*) and cash (*kaḥāpane*) to her house (including the king Pasenadi of Kosala, Anātha Piṇḍika and his sister Vishākhā and several others). His presence in her house enriched her of a single thousand pieces of money in a single day (*mahallikāṃ sataśaḥ samattāṃ labhi*). Her upliftment was not just economic, Sāriputta consumed what she had prepared and indoctrinated her to be admitted in the order. Through a reputed disciple she is edified and enters the first stage (*sotāpattiphale paṭiṭṭhapetvā*). This story has semblance with the case of Kisā-gotamī of *Therīgāthā*, where she becomes a *bhikkhuni* after personal losses and suffering (*atidukkha*)^{lviii}.

Kumbha-Jātaka^{lix} narrates about five hundred female friends of the renowned Vishākhā, who drank intoxicating drink (*Surā-payike pañcasālā iṭṭhiyo*). The story, further informs us about a festival of drinks organised at the city of Sāvattthi (*Sāvattthiyāṃ Kira Surāchane gutṭhe*), which they all attended barring the renowned *upāsika* Vishākhā. They then mark presence of the Buddha, to listen to his preachings of the *Dhamma*. Though Vishākhā sat in a seat near the Buddha, the others engaged in several kinds of improper conduct (dancing, singing, making displeasing gestures with hands and some quarreling). The laity were to conduct themselves as per the five precepts, which included refraining from consuming intoxicants leading to heedlessness. To set these women on a righteous path, the Buddha, resorts to supernatural displays, ending in taming of the five hundred female lay followers who are then initiated into the *sangha* by the Buddha (*pañcasatāpi sotāpattiphale paṭiṭṭhahimsu*). By making these women take on monastic life, the Buddha humbles or rather disciplines them.

If we broadly sum up, as opposed to references of admission for men in the order, instances for women are minuscule. But both in the stories of the past (or in their fragments) and present we are able to draw out feeble evidence, if not absence of initiation of women and their subsequent life in the *Bhikkhuni sangha*. Young women who desired to join the *sangha* met resistance from their families and were thought to have failed from their essential duties to look after the household and bear children. The eight chief rules (*Garudhamma*), though mark subservience of *Bhikkhunis* over their male counterparts, but references suggest possibilities and recognition for their potential. Within the overarching male-dominated monastic fold, gaining knowledge, receiving ordination and recognition for their roles are discernible from the stories, though mediated by chief disciples like Ānanda, Sāriputta and unnamed ones as well (for instance in the *Kulavaka Jātaka*, *Suvaṇṇamiga Jātaka*, *Mahāsāra Jātaka*, *Culla-Kalinga Jātaka*, *Kuṇḍaka-Kucchi-Sindhava-Jātaka*) or the Buddha himself (for instance *Kumbha Jātaka*). Lack of any such mediation in the story reflecting on Buddha's wife (*Abbhantara Jātaka*) maintains the larger stance of the Buddhist tradition of dotting elements of obscurity on her presence, though her stay is comforted due to her background. Also, the social background of the women highlighted above, lack the kind of variety displayed by the stories of the present, for the male initiators or the Bodhisatta himself, as the chief protagonist towards Buddhahood in each of the stories of the past. Apart from *Kuṇḍaka-Kucchi-Sindhava-Jātaka*, where an old and poor woman is edified from succumbing to impoverishment, the others have higher status (for instance, *Abbhantara Jātaka*, *Mahāsāra Jātaka*, *Kumbha Jātaka*, *Kulavaka Jātaka*) or an intellectual or devoted religious background of their families (for instance, *Culla-Kalinga Jātaka*, *Nigrodhamiga Jātaka* and *Suvaṇṇamiga Jātaka* respectively) that they belonged to.

Sexuality and the *Sangha*'s Stance: A Search in the Stories

It is rather easy to trace pronounced bias especially on aspects of sexuality from innumerable stories and there seems to be a rather distinct and clear preference for celibacy especially on one's path to salvation. The stories are replete with references to withdraw from or simply to stay away from the category of 'women' and even to refrain from the emotions of love, desire etc. For instance, ***Kaṇḍina Jātaka***^{lx} is a story of a mountain stag of a forest who became attached to a doe from the neighboring village (*arraññāvāsipabbateyyamigo ekaya gāmantavasiniyā migopotikāyā sadhim santhevaṃ katvā*). Despite her warning not to come with her due to the hidden danger of being attacked by hunters (*luddako*), he would come with her herd. The young doe to save herself from the peril that she foresaw, lets the stag go first who was hit by a single arrow of the hunter and died. The Bodhisatta who was a fairy dwelling in the woods (*rukkha devata*) remarked that "it was not father, or mother but simply passion that destroyed the foolish deer."^{lxi} To put it simply one should restrict from being in the company of women else is bound to be doomed. Women are seen as a hindrance to soteriological aspirations as directing oneself for Buddhahood seems to be at the forefront for the protagonists and

other characters in the stories. Also, a territorial division between the spiritual and the worldly is reflected in the male dwelling in the woods of the mountains and the female in the village.

There are several stories that resonate similar (only to differ in degree and shades) tone and tenor that are symptomatic of bias towards women in early Indian society and the Buddhist order. In the story of *Nanda Jātaka*^{lxii}, a *kutumbiṇ* (land owner) who is an old man distrusts his young wife and lament to his friend (*sahāyako*), the Bodhisatta that after his death his young wife will marry someone else and may not pass over the wealth to his son (*imam dhanam paṭhavigatam kareyyan puttassa me na dadeyya*), the heir. In the company of his trustful slave (*dāsā*) buries his treasure in the forest and passes away. Though the story unfolds in ways more than just distrust for women. One clearly notices deep entrenched distrust of womenfolk in general even if she is mother to his child (as in the story).

In the *Asātamanta Jātaka*^{lxiii} the Buddha himself says to a lust struck brother in the order that “Women, Brother are lustful, profligate, vile and degraded.”^{lxiv} To explain the matter the Buddha tells the story of the past. Which is as follows. Bodhisatta was born as a brahmin in Gandhāra and left for his education to Takkaṣila. His parents were keen that he should take up a life of a mendicant in the forest and hence when the son returned home his mother precisely raised the question on him being versed in the teachings on women (*asātamantāpi ugganhita*).^{lxv} On expressing his lack of knowledge for the same he is resent to his learned teacher by his mother to gain knowledge of the same. On finding his teacher in the woods taking care of his aged mother, the pupil (Bodhisatta) queries him for not haven’t been taught the matter on fallibility of women (*asātamanta nāma ugganḥāpito ti*) The teacher right at the outset understood that his mother wanted him to gain knowledge on the wickedness of women (*iṭṭhidosa*). The teacher (*ācariyo*) thereafter plots a plan for him to gain knowledge of the same. He instructs his pupil to nurture his aged mother and in the due course praise of her beauty in her heydays. As the pupil did as instruct the old mother of the teacher exclaimed “Is your desire towards me”^{lxvi}, after hearing a consent from the pupil she remarked; “If u desire me kill my son”^{lxvii}.

Women are quoted to be lustful, vile, and degraded, that giving reins to lust, even as old as she was, thirsted of blood of her dutiful son. On having received due knowledge on the account of the true nature of women, renounces the world and his conviction is vented through the following stanza;

“In lust unbridled, like devouring fire, Are women frantic in their rage.

The sex renouncing, fain I would retire, to find peace in the hermitage.”^{lxviii}

The story exemplified above is rather a strong case for making realization towards unwantedness of worldly desire for a path towards Buddhahood. The use of an aged mother to lay stress on the same is in fact an extreme measure at the hands of the storywriters. What is interesting is that in the story,

there are two mothers that have been woven in a fashion to make the Bodhisatta realise his true path. One is the mother of the Bodhisatta, being a woman, herself desires that her son learns the ways of women and the other is the mother of the teacher who in spite of her age showcases her ingratitude towards her dutiful son and is lustful and vile. Both are part of the patriarchal structure and are placed to make a strong case for realisation in the story.

In the *Andabhūta Jātaka*,^{lxix} an extreme situation of proving treacherous and lust driven nature of women being innate is portrayed through a web of plots in the story of a brahmin (*purohita*) and the son of king Brahmadatta of Benares, the Bodhisatta. As the Bodhisatta played a game of dice with the *purohita* he uttered a catch for luck while he flung the dice; ‘Tis nature’s law that rivers wind; Trees grow of wood by law of kind; And given opportunity all women work iniquity’^{lxx}. This made the king always win the game of dice and fearing to lose all his worth the *purohita* devised a means to safeguard his fortune. He took a newborn baby girl under his surveillance so nobody could come near her and would be true to one man i.e., the *purohita* himself. No man was allowed to set eyes on her apart from he himself. The *purohita* and the King again indulged in the game of dice and just as the king flung the dice and uttered his charm (as highlighted above) the former added to it “always excepting my girl”^{lxxi} resulting in his win over the king. The king at once understood the situation and plotted to plant a man into the strictly guarded house of the *purohita* through the help of an old woman the king was able to smuggle a man into the house who succeeded in wrecking the girl’s virtue. Then in the next game of dice even though the *purohita* uttered the same words after the king’s utterance “always excepting my girl”^{lxxii} he lost nonetheless. Thereafter the king (Bodhisatta) expounded the truth to the *purohita* by repeating the following stanza;

*“Blindfold, a-luting, by his wife beguiled, The Brahmin sits, -who tried to rear A
paragon of virtue undefiled! Learn hence to hold sex in fear”^{lxxiii}*

The wickedness of the young girl does not stop here; she acts upon her husband for her innocence and truthfulness and offers an ordeal of fire which too she averts at the exact moment by tricking him. Hence the master exclaims that it is impossible to ward women. The story clearly highlights the inbuilt fears of the feminine and through a whole range of preventive measures, tests and trials, plots and ploys go on to exhibit the innate fallibility of womenfolk (*iṭṭhidosa*) on grounds of their sexuality.

Takka Jātaka^{lxxiv} yet again is a story pressing on ungratefulness and treachery of women (*iṭṭhikuttam iṭṭhiliham*). In the story a haughty girl, merchant’s daughter (*setṭhino dhitā*) named *Duṭṭakumari* who ill-treats her servants and slaves (*dāsākammakare akkosati paharati*) is thrown into flowing water stream of a river by them to be rescued by the Bodhisatta who lived in a hermitage near the bank of the river (*Gangatīre*). She dwells in the hermitage of the Bodhisatta until he falls for her and together, they move into a border village (*paccantagāmakam*) where he sold dates for a living (*takkam vikkīṇitvā jīvati*). The village is often attacked by robbers (*Cora*) and in one of their raids she is taken

captive. Bodhisatta placed full trust on her love for him. The woman in return plans a trick on him by inviting him in, to be beaten and killed by the chief robber (*Corajeṭṭhaka*). As the *Corajeṭṭhaka* goes on to hit the Bodhisatta, he does not cry out loud. In return the *Corajeṭṭhaka* is moved by the Bodhisatta's patience and asks him to explain his murmurs of "Cruel ingrates! Slandering traitors!"^{lxxv} On hearing the truth from him beats and kills the woman in public and joins the Bodhisatta in his pursuit of higher knowledge and attainment. The Buddha in the *Samodhāna* draws the necessary connection and recites the following:

"Wrathful are women, Slanders ingrates, the sowers of Dissension and fell strife!

Then brother, tread the path of holiness, and bliss therein thou shalt fail to find."^{lxxvi}

The two next stories of *Durājāna Jātaka*^{lxxvii} and *Anabhirati Jātaka*^{lxxviii} clearly lay out similar concerns and fears on the part of male lay followers' vis a vis the category of women as well. These fears are duly expressed in both the story of the present and the story of the past. In the former story a pupil of the Bodhisatta, who is a renowned teacher (*disāpāmoḥkko ācariyo*) on gaining knowledge of his wife's misconduct and unfaithful behaviour (*bhāriya dusīlā pāpadhamma*) loses focus in his lessons and then the Bodhisatta explains to him and all his pupils about the frailty of women (*anācāram, dusīlā*). He repeats the following for his pupil's edification:

"Like Highways, rivers, courtyards and hostelryes, or taverns, which to all alike extend, one universal hospitality, - Is womankind; and wise men never stoop, to wrath at frailty in a sex so frail."^{lxxix}

And in *Mudulakhaṇa-Jātaka*^{lxxx} there is preaching to the followers about women's insatiable desires and concupiscence. In the story the Bodhisatta is born in a rich brahmin family and after receiving his education decides to follow a path of enlightenment and retreats to the Himalayas. Somehow, search of salt and vinegar (*loṇambilasevanathāya*) brought him to the city of Benares where he took his quarters in the king's pleasure grove (*rājyūyāne*). In the absence of the king the Bodhisatta is corrupted by the chief queen (*aggamahesi*) and falls from his ascetic vows. The king on making his statement to give whoever he desires has to part away with his dear wife. The queen leaves the palace with the ascetic and as the story unfolds the Bodhisatta is to soon realise his folly and thereafter he returns back to his spiritual path. The text goes on to state "Thus the hindrance of lust and longing are called evils because they spring from ignorance. Brethren, that which springs from ignorance creates darkness."^{lxxxi}

Paṇṇika Jātaka^{lxxxii} and *Seggu-Jātaka*^{lxxxiii} are virtually identical stories that make for an extreme situation to emphasise on the essentiality of virtuousness of women as a pre-requisite for marriage. In both of the *Jātaka* stories (stories of the past and present) the Bodhisatta is *arañṇe rukkhā-devatā* and

the father who has a young daughter worry for her as she has approached marriageable age. In order to test her virtue resorts to an extreme measure by beholding his daughter in the forest and uttering words of love for her. The girl cried out as such an act would have been monstrous as fire rising out of water. Thereupon, proving their innocence, the fathers console them and makes feast on returning home and marries them off (*gharam netva mamgalam katvā parakulam pesesi*). The stories hint towards the virginity of women to be maintained until marriage, as it seemed valued and an essential norm of the Buddhist society of early India at large. Whether the two stories garner enough evidence that can make a case for incest is doubtful, but an attempt towards it can be inferred.

In the *Udañcani Jātaka*,^{lxxxiv} a son of the Bodhisatta, who along with his father resides in a hermitage in the forest gets lured by a woman. He wishes to leave for the country to be with her but only after taking leave from his father. The father grants him his consent but warns him that if the woman makes him run around on her errands, he must duly return back. This is precisely how he feels in her company as he gets subjected to a range of works to be done and things to be fetched. The boy repents and returns to his father who commends him and exhorts him to kindness and mercy. He then gets trained in the four forms of right feeling towards men and modes of ensuring insight to follow the path of Buddhahood. The consecutive stories from *Jātaka* no.61 to *Jātaka* no.66 and a couple of more that are exemplified and analysed above draw direct attention on aspects of attitude towards women and the feminine in the stories. Whether the placement of characters make for an extreme case or a straight forward portrayal of anxiety making way for Buddhahood, the undercurrent of the stories overtly harps on the negativities of women (*iṭṭhidosa*) in general on grounds of lechery, lust, carnality, ingenuity licentiousness and opportunism. What is in fact more noteworthy is that whether a mass of content that is drawn from the folklore (as it is supposed to have been in the case of the *Jātakas*) or the *gāthās* that were used for the transmission of Buddhist teachings, both ways the stories are a reflection of the prevailing society. In what the Buddhist take from the existing mass of knowledge and to what they then cloak into a Buddhist fold are receivers, carriers and reiterators of social norms, thoughts and practices.

In the story of the present of *Mora Jātaka*,^{lxxxv} the Buddha gains knowledge that a novice wishes to return to lay life (*ekam ukkaṇṭhitabhikkum*) due to his desire for his former wife (*alamkaṭapātiyattasarīram mātuḡāmaṃ oloketvā*). In response to him the following words are said by the master himself at the *Jetavana* “What wonder that womenkind should trouble the wits of a man like you! Even wise men, who are seven hundred years have done no sin, on hearing a woman’s voice have transgressed in a moment; even the holy becomes impure; even they who have attained the highest honor have thus come to disgrace-how much more the unholy!”^{lxxxvi} The moral in the story of the past is to draw attention to the monks that it is only *nibbāna* which is everlasting and everything else being composite in their nature are insubstantial, transient and subject to living and death and hence non-lasting. The use of womenfolk as a category that hinders in the way of religious gain for

monks in the story of the present is no doubt a pervasive and recurrent narrative strategy of the writers of Buddhist literature which goes well with unchallenged means of well attained soteriological aspirations of the monks of the *sangha*. The fact that the idea on notions of womenkind is propagated through the words of the master in the story of the present, no doubt owes to monkish interpolations and later placements by commentary writers. It also adds weightage for following of set path towards strict rules for attaining Buddhahood for the monks of the order as for them was aforesaid by the Buddha himself, who constitutes one of the three gems (*triratna*) of Buddhism^{xxxvii}. The Presence of the Buddha in the story (in this context and all others) himself ensures righteous moral making through and for the other two gems respectively. Hence interrelatedness of all the three gems (*triratna*) of Buddhism gets woven through the *Jātaka* stories which also adds to the fruitfulness of the *Jātakas* for the reconstruction of Buddhist past and culture.

Samgāmāvacara Jātaka^{xxxviii} is a story about an elder Nanda (*Nandathero*), in the story of the present^{xxxix} who is pursued by the Buddha to take up the path of an *arhat* and follow it with discipline. But the persuasion on the part of the Buddha himself unfolds in interesting ways. Prince Nanda of Sāvatti was married to Janapadakalyāni and loved her enough to cease all ties and embrace a life of renunciation. When the Buddha is visiting Sāvatti he teaches Nanda and asks him to come along with him. But Nanda's wife on hearing of this news voices her discontentment. The Buddha then enters the cell of the Nanda and asks him "Are you content with my teachings?" (*imasmiṃ sāsane abhiramasiti*) to which Nanda replies by saying "I am in love with Janapadakalyāni, and I am not content." (*Janapadakalyāṇiyā paṭibaddhacitto hutvā nabbiramāmīti*) On seeing him dither, the Buddha, asks him if he had been on a pilgrimage to the Himalayas and hearing his reluctance on account of not possessing magical powers carries him in the air. On their way they come across a burnt field (*jhāmakhettam*) and a female monkey (*makkaṭṭin*) in burnt state, sitting on a charred stump (*jhamakhāṇuke*) of a burnt tree.

The Buddha asks Nanda to look at her in particular and take him to the mountains and make him sit on the throne of Sakka. Sakka, along with his heavenly splendors and retinue came to greet him. The Buddha entices him by asking him to take up asceticism if he was to win the company of 'dove footed nymphs. To which Nanda replies "If the blessed one pledges his word that an ascetic life win these nymphs, an ascetic life I will lead." Henceforth, the master brings him back to *Jetavana*. The Buddha tells his chief disciples including Sāriputta, Māmalama, Aniruddha, Ānanda and other eighty thousand novices (*asītiyā mahāsāvakānaṃ*) about his pledge. Then the *Thera* Sāriputta confronts Nanda on his pledge from the and puts him to shame on account of being a holy/religious person. Similarly, all the eighty chief disciples and other monks made him feel shameful and he relieved the Buddha of his pledge. How a single word of advice shook Nanda to shame and he was praised for being docile is to be noted. In the story of the past too at a single intervention of the Bodhisatta the elephant (*hathim*) gets on track for his assigned task after having wavered from the same.

No doubt the story of the present, stresses on the right conduct of the monks in the order and rightful actions to pursue them and even if one wavers from the path towards Buddhahood, means are laid for setting oneself back on the righteous path. To corroborate, the story of the past with reference to an elephant (*hathim*) is told. The story showcases that the Buddha laid emphasis on the docility and conformity in his members. In a way, the story yearns our attention towards compliant, amenable and unresisting behavior for the monks in the *sangha* as desirable. Asexual conformity being chief among them which is reiterated by chief disciples and all other *bhikkhus* in the *Jetavana* for the Buddha in this context. The Buddha makes Nanda forget his wife by making him grow fond of the heavenly nymphs and by making a pledge and the elders in the order and others make him realise his folly. The writers do not employ behavioral and psychological characteristic of a wickedness of women (*itthidosa*) which is noted in a large number of stories (of which some are highlighted above) as a narrative strategy but other tactics. Hence the rhetoric of persuasion which lies at the core of the story and the account of realization exemplified above make for a sophisticated and complex understanding of gender.

Alas! Apprises on the Aspect of Attainment

Achieving spiritual attainment i.e., acquiring arhat-ship and becoming a Buddha are not the same. An arhat is understood to be ‘a worthy one’, someone who has removed afflictions (*kilesa*) and attained a spiritual awakening. Buddha is the ‘the awakened one’, the supreme being often referred to as unparalleled, or without any counterpart. One becomes an *arahant* by observing the Buddha path but one becomes the Buddha by finding the truth oneself.

To delve into the aspect of attainment would be to explore the issue of capabilities of women renunciants. This could be useful to gauge on the aspect of the position of women in early India at large and also from the way they are perceived in the specific context of Buddhism. In the Buddhist imagination which is reflected in textual accounts the image of ‘the awakened one’ is profoundly male which may be largely the case in the *Jātaka* stories too. *Aṅguttara Nikāya* highlights and enumerates preeminent women disciples. Evidence of this kind questions the paradigm skillfully constructed on the innate and fallible qualities of women. These nuns challenge the prevailing notion that women lack intelligence and dispelled the notion that women are incapable of full realization.^{xi} The *bhikkhuni Saṃyutta* of the third *Nikāya* contains ten short suttas on eminent *bhikkhunis*.^{xii} The Fourth *Nikāya* of the *pāli canon* contains *Etadagga-vagga*, which lists the foremost female followers, who were known in early Buddhism for their special skills. The ten foremost *upāsikā*-s named are Sujātā (daughter of Senānī), Visākhā Migāramātā, Khujjuttarā, Sāmāvatī, Uttarā Nandamātā, Suppavāsā (the Koliyan daughter), Suppiyā, Kātiyānī, Nakulamātā and Kālī of Kuraraghara. The thirteen *bhikkhuni*-s enumerated are: Mahāpajāpati Gotamī, Khemā, Uppalavaṇṇa, Paṭācārā,

Dhammadinnā, Nandā, Sonā, Sakulā Bhaddā Kuṇḍalakesā, Bhaddā Kāpilānī, Bhaddā Kāccanā, Kisāgotamī and Sigālamātā.^{xciii} The fifth *Nikāya* contains the *Therīgāthā*, containing 522 verses recorded by the nuns which notifies their successful attainment of *arhat*-ship.^{xciv} Another text of *Khuddaka Nikāya*, *Apadāna* contains the *therī-Apadāna*, which refers to forty elderly nuns to have attained *arhat*-ship. *Vinaya Piṭaka* iterates that both the sexes are equally recognised to be able to attain *arhat*-ship.^{xcv} The state of *nibbāna* should then be for both alike. But *Bahudhātuka sutta*, of the *Majjhima Nikāya* on the contrary states “It is impossible, it cannot come to pass that a woman who is a perfected one could be a fully awakened one”^{xcvi} Though some have highlighted that women could attain *nibbāna* or could become a Buddha only after being reborn as a man.^{xcvii} Hence one can perceive ambivalence in Buddhist views on women, especially with the supreme goal of realising *nibbāna*.

One has broadly surveyed access and attitudinal oriented evidence in the *Jātakas*, but what remains pertinent in any inquiry on the position of women in a religious sphere is whether they were at par with the men on grounds of achieving the highest status. Some stray evidence does occur in the *Jātaka* stories which are being highlighted here. A few stories that were highlighted in the context of initiation in the beginning of the chapter may be readdressed here on the account of the evidence that they provide for the matter under concern. Also, I wish to make it clear that ‘attainment’ is not be understood as sheer connotation for *nibbāna* but for upward progression in the Buddhist order as well which in itself must have been tough on grounds of marked subservience by acceptance of the eight weighty/chief rules (*Garudhammā*).

Abbhantara Jātakaxcviii, Suvāṇṇamiga Jātakaxcix and Cullakālīṅga Jātakac which have been discussed earlier throw light on equal capabilities and extent of achievement of women. In the first, when the mother of Rahul (or the Buddha’s wife), Bimbādevī gears herself to take the plunge in the background it has been mentioned that at first, when the Buddha was living in a cell (*kūṭāgarasālāyam viharanta*) at Vesālī, five hundred women under Prajapati were initiated and given full orders (*pabbajjān c’ eva upasampadañ ca labhi*). Thereafter, on hearing the preachings of Nandaka, they attained *arhat*-ship (*nandovādam sutvā arahattaṃ papuṇimsu*).^{ci} This no doubt draws attention to the fact that from the beginning of their induction, women renunciants were worthy of equality in terms of spiritual achievements. In the ***Suvāṇṇamiga Jātaka*** a girl born in the family of merchants in Sāvattthi who dutifully lives a life of a laity not in her house of her birth but also of matrimony. With her influence her husband also gains interest in the faith and they both undertake initiation. The story proceeds with highlighting that they both received clear spiritual vision and shortly attained to *arhat*-ship. As the matter is discussed among brethren they said;

“Sirs, a certain woman by reason of her own faith and that of her husband became a novice. And both of them having adopted the religious life, and gained clear spiritual vision, attained to sainthood.”^{cii}

In *Cullakālīṅga Jātaka* as highlighted earlier all four Jaina sisters not only get initiated in the Buddhist order but also attain *arhat*-ship (*cattunam paribbājikānam avassayo hutvā sabbā arahattam pāpesīti*). Apart from these, reference to *arhat*-ship for women occurs in the famed *Chaddanta Jātakaciii* where in the story of the present a nun (*daharabhikhunnim*) visits to hear the sermons of the Buddha (*dasabala*) recollects her past life and is filled with remorse, where she is the queen who orders for the killing of the Bodhisatta, the mighty lord of elephant (*mahāgaḥissaram*) who she sees in her dream, by a hunter. Buddha in the end then co-relates the characters of the story of the past and the present to specify that the story had such impact that people that large numbers embraced buddhism (*bahū sotapannādayo ahesum*) and the particular nun, thereafter by the aid of spiritual insights attained *arhat*-ship (*pachā vipassitvā arahattam pattā*).^{civ} The story clearly highlights attaining omniscience by the Bodhisatta but also signifies that through rightful conduct a *bhikkhunī* can also attain *arhat*-ship even if one had committed sin in one's previous life.

In the *Mahājanaka Jātaka*,^{cv} the chief queen (*aggamaheśī*) Sivali, after making utmost efforts to curtail her husband the Bodhisatta, from renouncing his rule and worldly bonds, takes on the path for spiritual gains herself. She is referred to have erected topes on the chief spots of significance of change in attitude in the Bodhisatta life and offered worship. After coronating her son to the throne, she adopts a path of ascetism. She dwells in a garden and practiced the preparatory rites for producing mystic meditation until at last she attained absorption and became destined to birth in the Brahma world ^{cvi}. Building of topes as mentioned makes this story belonging to the early historic period.^{cvi} But Sivali's attainment or to be born in the Brahma's world does point to a rare example of achieving equal footing as her husband.

The stories that are mentioned above do attest to capabilities and potential of womenfolk being recognised but are scant in relation to the voluminous body of stories and a great number of references to all categories of women represented in them. Few or scanty evidence on the account of attainment of spiritual attainment by women in a popular tradition placed in *Khuddaka Nikāya* of the *pāli Tipiṭaka* reflect on paucity of possibility if not absence, for women, in the order. The Buddhist order, that itself functioned under the exigencies of the socio-political set up of the times and was dependent for its economic and material needs of its institutions from outside needed to be akin if not in complete break from everything surrounding it, institutional or ephemeral. But absence of any evidence from *Ekanipāta* (considered oldest in the collection as discussed above in the chapter) and rare but evident possibilities for attainment of higher soteriological goals from other sections of the

compilation attest to steady and gradual progression of women within the Buddhist order from its inception onwards.

Conclusion

Buddhism as an ideology and an institutionalized religion has been recognised for upholding the ideal of egalitarianism both at the time of its inception and in the recent past. The *Jātakas* being a different genre altogether within the canonical literature, provides representation for a great variety of groups. This enables in evaluating historical interfaces over time and contexts. Women as a category, finds greater visibility unlike other religious texts. So is the case for men, of all orders of the society. Hence, the stories depict a vast view of life along vivid locales, making a case for diversity in gender relations, within the underlying Buddhist ideals. What we are able to gather is a whole range of possibilities and not a single image. Evidences have been culled out from all strands of the *Jātakas*, stories of the present (*Paccupannavattthu*), past (*Aītavattthu*), *gāthā* the verse sections and the *Samodhāna* to discern and display, aspects of access to the *saṅgha*, attitudes towards the women to move away from homogenized views and understandings. Finally, I have dealt with instances on the level of achievements within the *saṅgha* especially for women to assess both institutional challenges and opportunities.

Endnotes:

ⁱ Davids, Caroline Augusta Foley Rhys. (1893). The Women Leaders of the Buddhist Reformation: As Illustrated by Dharmapāla's Commentary on the *Therīgāthā*. In *Transactions of the Ninth International Congress of Orientalists (Held in London, 5th to 12th September 1892) Vol. 1*, E. Delmar Morgan (ed.), 343-361. London: Printed for the Committee of the Congress.

ⁱⁱ Bode, Mabel Haynes, 1893, 'Women Leaders of the Buddhist Reformation', The Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland, journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland, 25(3), 517-566.

ⁱⁱⁱ Horner, I.B., 1930, *Women Under Primitive Buddhism: Almswomen and Laywomen*, Munshiram Manoharlal, New Delhi.

^{iv} Dutt, Nalinaksha, 1941, *Early monastic Buddhism, Vol. 1*, Calcutta Oriental Book Agency, Calcutta, pp. 274-297.

^v Sharma, Arvind. (1977). 'How and Why did the Women in Ancient India Become Buddhist Nuns?', *Sociological Analysis*, 38(3), pp.239-251.

^{vi} Blackstone, K., 1998, *Women in the Footsteps of the Buddha: Struggle for Liberation in the Therīgāthā*, Curzon Press, London.

- vii Blackstone, K. 1999, 'Damming the Dhamma: Problems with Bhikkhunīs in the *Pāli Vinaya*'. *Journal of Buddhist Ethics*, 6, 292-312.
- viii Harvey, Peter, 2000, *An Introduction to Buddhist Ethics: Foundations, Value, Issues*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- ix Hinüber, Oskar Von, 2008, 'The Foundation of the Bhikkhunīsamgha – A Contribution to the Earliest History of Buddhism', *Annual Report of The International Research Institute for Advanced Buddhology at Soka University for the Academic Year 2007*, 11, 3-29.
- x Williams, Liz, 2000, 'A Whisper in the Silence: Nuns before Mahāpajāpati' *Buddhist Studies Review*, 17(2), pp.167-173.
- xi Nattier, Jan., 2004, Decline of the Dharma, In R.E. Buswell (ed.) *Encyclopedia of Buddhism*, vol. 1, 210-213. Macmillan, New York.
- xii Law, B.C., 1927, *Women in Buddhist Literature*, Indological Publishing House, New Delhi, preface. On an interesting note, this work is published a decade earlier than the famed work of Altekar, A.S., 1956 edn., *The Position of Women in Hindu Civilisation: From Prehistoric Times to the Present Day*, Motilal Benarsidas, Delhi.
- xiii He equates the slave girls with the roman category as property of their master (ibid. pp.23) and he referred to dancing girls belonging to that section of the 'fair sex' which had no by the domestic fireside of the common householder (ibid. pp.46).
- xiv Horner, I.B., 1930, op. cit. pp. 104-105.
- xv Ibid, pp.3
- xvi Chakravarti, Uma, 1981, *Social Dimensions of Early Buddhism*, Munshiram Manoharlal and Sons, Delhi.
- xvii Ibid. pp.106
- xviii Paul, Diana, 1985, *Women in Buddhism, Images of the Feminine in the Mahāyāna Tradition*, Berkeley.
- xix Shaw, Miranda, 1991, *Passionate Enlightenment: Women in Tantric Buddhism*, Princeton University Press, New York.
- xx 1992, 'Attitude towards the Women and Feminine in Early Buddhism', in Cabezon Ignacio ed, *Buddhism, sexuality and Gender*, Sat guru Publishers, New Delhi.

^{xxi} 1). Soteriological Inclusiveness, which refers to the distinctive Buddhist views that one's sex is no barrier to attaining the Buddhist goal of liberation from suffering; 2). Institutional androcentrism, which posits that women could pursue a full-fledged religious career but within carefully regulated institutional structures; 3). Ascetic misogyny, where women are referred to as uncontrolled and weak in wisdom; 4). Soteriological androgyny, which was developed under *Mahāyāna* and later in the *Vajrayāna* tradition degrading the potential of women.

^{xxii} Ibid. pp.29

^{xxiii} Richman, 1992, in Cabezon ed. Op.cit. pp.74-83

^{xxiv} Talim, Meena, 1972, *Woman in Buddhist Literature*, People's publishing, Bombay.

^{xxv} Ibid. pp. 52.

^{xxvi} Roy, Kumkum, 1988, 'Women and Men Donors at Sanchi: A Study of Inscriptional Evidence' reprinted in the power of *Gender and the Gender of Power*, Sage, Delhi.

^{xxvii} Singh, Upinder, 1996, 'Sanchi: The History of the Patronage of an Ancient Buddhist Establishment', *The Indian Economic and Social History Review*, vol 33(1).

^{xxviii} Shah, Kirit, 2002, *The Problem of Identity: Women in Early Indian Inscriptions*, New Delhi.

^{xxix} Skilling, Peter, 2001, 'Aspects of Role of Female in Early Buddhism from the time of Buddha up till early centuries C.E', *Journal of International Association of Buddhist Studies*, Vol 24, No. 2.

^{xxx} *Upāsaka- Upāsika; Bhikkhu-Bhikkhuni; śrāvaka-śrāvika; śramana-śramani; therā-therī, gihi-gihinī* etc.

^{xxxi} *Bhikkhu-vibhaṅga Bhikkhuni-vibhaṅga; Thera-gāthā Theri-gāthā; Bhikkhu Pātimokkha Bhikkhuni Pātimokkha; Bhikkhu Kammavāca Bhikkhuni Kammavāca* etc.

^{xxxii} Chakravarti, Uma, 1993, 'Women, Men and Beasts: The Jātakas as popular tradition', Vol 9, no.1, *Everyday Lives, Everyday Histories: Beyond the Kings and Brahmanas of Ancient India*, Tulika Books, New Delhi, pp. 43-70.

^{xxxiii} Roy, Kumkum 1996, 'Justice in the Jātakas', *The Power of Gender and the Gender of Power: Explorations in Early Indian History*, OUP, Delhi, Social Scientist, Vol. 24, No.4. pp.23-40; Roy, Kumkum, 2014, 'Contextualising Caste: Co-option, Circumvention and

Contestation as Exemplified in the *Jātakas*’, *Studies in People’s History*, 1.1, 7-20; Roy, Kumkum, 2015, ‘Society at the time Of Buddha’, In Nathan and French ed. *Buddhism and Law: An Introduction*’, Cambridge University Press, pp.31-45; Roy, Kumkum, 2015, ‘Worlds within and World’s Without: Representations of the Sangha in Popular Tradition’, in Roy and Sahai ed. *Looking Within, Looking Without: Exploring Households in the subcontinent Through Time*, Essays in Memory of Nandita Prasad Sahai, Primus, New Delhi.

xxxiv Thapar, Romila, 2018, *Indian Cultures as Heritage: Contemporary pasts*, Aleph, New Delhi, pp- 81-101

xxxv *Sotāpanna* is the first stage of attaining spiritual fulfilment. Any person who has committed himself to three jewels of the faith i.e., the Buddha, *Dhamma* and *Sangha* and possesses the qualities of righteousness such as *abiding* by the eight-fold path and has virtuous behaviour towards noble ones is referred to as stream enterer. *Sakadāgāmi* are the ones who engage in practices to curtail emotions that results in *lobha*, *dosa* and *moha*. *Anāgāmi* is the penultimate stage whereby one becomes a non-returner to the worldly realm of desires. They are to engage in practices to relinquish five fetters (1) *sakkāya diṭṭhi*, belief in permanent self-identification views (2) *Vicikicchā*, skeptical doubt or uncertainty (3) *sīlabhata-parāmāsa*, obsession with rules and rituals (4) *kāma-rāga*, sensuous desires (5) *vyāpada*, resistance. The last stage that of attaining or being *arhat*, can be achieved by following the eightfold path and giving up ten fetters. The other five from above mentioned are (6) *rūpa-rāga*, passion for form (7) *arūpa-rāga*, passion for formless phenomena (8) *māna*, conceit (9) *uddhacca*, restlessness (10) *avijjā*, ignorance. Complete abstinence from them would lead to cessation from all suffering. Horner, *The Book of Discipline*, vol. V, pp. 356.

xxxvi There is ambiguity around the term ‘*Garudhammā*’, “*garu*” is meant to imply heavy, weighty or grave. ‘*garukaapatti*’ means ‘a grave offence’, ‘*garumkarotti*’ signifies to respect, ‘*garukata*’ simply means ‘respected’. ‘*aṭṭhagarudhammā*’ hence probably mean eight heavy rules to be respected or eight principles of respect. Thus, they are considered to be principles to be treated with respect by the *bhikkhunis* who are to accept them, Bodhi, Bhikkhu, *The Numerical discourses of the Buddha*, 2012, pp.127.

xxxvii Oldenberg, *Vinaya Pitaka*, Vol.II, pp.322-323; Horner, I.B., *The book of Discipline*, 1938-66, Vol. V, pp.354

xxxviii In the *Mahāsāṃghika* version, the fourth *Vinaya* rule is different from the one enumerated in the *pāli* one highlighted above (unlike others which are similar but in a different order)., Roth, Gustav, *Bhiksuni – Vinaya*, 1970, K.P. Jaiswal Institute (reprint), Patna.

xxxix

Horner, I.B., *The Book of Discipline*, 1938-66, Vol. V, pp.354-355

- xl Walters, A. Jonathan, 'A Voice from the Silence: The Buddha's Mother's Story', *History of Religions*, 33,4, pp.358-379
- xli As per the *Sutta Vibhanga* of the *Vinaya*, containing both the *Bhikkhu- Vibhanga* (regulations for monks) and the *Bhikkhuni Vibhanga* (regulations for nuns) there are rules under eight categories namely *Pārājika*, *Sanghātisesa*, *Aniyāta*, *Nissaggiya*, *Pāccittiya*, *Patidesanā*, *Sekhia* and *Adhikaraṇa*. These include 227 rules for the *Bhikkhus* and 311 rules for the *Bhikkhunis*. *Pātimokkha* is the core of the *Vibhanga* and the pattern usually is that it begins with a story leading to the formation of the rule, sub-rules followed by a commentary (*pada-bhajania*) and finally may or may not have stories to end with. It is these 84 more rules for women which has led to great amount of disputation among scholars on the subservience of the nuns in the Buddhist *sangha*.
- xlii *Jātaka* 1, no.12, story of the present
- xliii *Majjhima Nikāya*, 23, pp.78
- xliv *Jātaka* III, no 301, story of the present
- xlvi *Vivaraṭṭha imāsaṃ dvāraṇ ti*
- xlvii *Jātaka* 1, no. 31, story of the past
- xlviii These included not to destroy life, not to take that which is not given, refrain from engaging in misconducts or lies, to drink no strong drink, abound in loving kindness, shew charity, level roads, dig tanks, build a public hall.
- xlviii "sace maṃ sālāya pattikaṃ karoṭha, dassāmiti vutte pana mayaṃ mātugāmānaṃ pattiṃ na damhā" Ibid. pp.310
- xlix "ayyā tumhe kiṃ kathetha, ṭhapetvā brahmalokaṃ aṇṇaṃ mātugāmarahitaṭṭhānaṃ nāma natthi, gaṇhatha kaṇṇikaṃ, evaṃ sante, amhākaṃ kammaṃ niṭṭhaṃ gamissatiti." Ibid.
- l *Jātaka* 1, no.92, story of the present
- li For instance, in *Mahāsupina Jātaka* no.77, story of the past.
- lii *Jātaka* II, no. 281, story of the present.
- liii "sāmiko me pabbajitvā sabbaññūtaṃ patto, putto pi pabbajitvā tass' eva santika vasati ahaṃ agāramajjhe kiṃ karissāmi" Ibid, pp.268

- liv *Jātaka* II, no. 292, story of the present
- lv *Jātaka* III, no. 359, story of the present
- lvi “*Sā Kira Sāvattthiyam dvinnam aggasāvakaṇam upatṭhakulassa dhitā.*”
- lvii *Jātaka* II, no. 254, story of the present
- lviii Davids, Rhys, 1895, *Psalm of the sisters*, Pāli text society, London, pp. 215-220
- lix *Jātaka* V, no. 512, story of the present
- lx *Jātaka* 1, no.13, story of the past
- lxi “*so tam kāraṇam disvā imassa bālamigassa maraṇam n’ eva mātaram nissāya na pitaram nissāya atha kho kāmam nissāya*” Ibid, pp.43
- lxii *Jātaka* 1, no.39, story of the past
- lxiii *Jātaka* 1, no. 61, story of the past
- lxiv “*bhikkhu itthiyo nāma āsā asatiyo lāmikā pacchimikā*” Ibid, pp.61
- lxv In her desire to send him to the forests she wanted him to be aware of the wickedness of women
- lxvi “*ahaṃ tāva iccheyyam*”
- lxvii “*Sace mam icchasi puttam me mārehiti*”
- lxviii “*Āsālokitthiyo nāma, velā tāsam na vijjati, sārattā ca pagabbhā ca sikhī sabbaghaso yathā, tā hitvā pabbajissāmi vivekam anubrūhayan ti*” Ibid.
- lxix *Jātaka* 1, No.62, story of the past
- lxx Ibid, pp.151
- lxxi Ibid. pp.152
- lxxii Ibid, pp.154
- lxxiii “*Yaṃ brāhmaṇo avādesi vīṇam sammukhaveṭhito, aṇḍabhūtā bhatā, tāsu ko jātu vissase ti*” Ibid, pp.154
- lxxiv *Jātaka* 1, No.63, story of the past
- lxxv Ibid, pp.157

- lxxvi “*Kodhanā akataññū ca piṣuṇā ca vibhedikā, brahmacariyaṃ cara bhikkhu so sukhaṃ na vihāhisīti*” Ibid, pp.158
- lxxvii *Jātaka* 1, No.64, story of the past
- lxxviii *Jātaka* 1, No.65, story of the past
- lxxix *Jātaka* 1, no. 65. “*Yathā nadī ca pantho ca pānāgāraṃ sabhā papa evaṃ lokitthiyo nāma, nāsaṃ kujjhanti i paṇḍitā tī*” pp. 161
- lxxx *Jātaka* I, no.66, story of the past
- lxxxi *Jātaka* 1, no 66, pp.164
- lxxxii *Jātaka* 1, no. 102, story of the past
- lxxxiii *Jātaka* 11, no. 217, story of the past
- lxxxiv *Jātaka* I, no.106, story of the past
- lxxxv *Jātaka* II, No. 159, story of the past
- lxxxvi “*Bhikkhu, mātugāno nāma tumhādisānaṃ yeva kasmā cittaṃ nāluḥessati porāṇakapaṇḍita nam pi hi mātugāmaṃ saddaṃ sutvā satta vassasatāni asamudāciṇṇakilesā okāsaṃ labhitvā khaṇen eva samudācarīṃsu visuddhāpi sattā saṅkilissanti uttamayasasamaṅgino pi āyasakyaṃ pāpuṇanti pag eva aparisuddhā*” Ibid, pp.23
- lxxxvii The other two being the *dhamma* (incorporating teachings and principles) and the *sangha* (the Buddhist monastic order for monks and nuns)
- lxxxviii *Jātaka* II, no. 182, story of the present
- lxxxix He is identified by an elephant trained by the Bodhisatta, in the story of the past.
- xc Gross, M. Rita, 2014, ‘The Suffering of Sexism: Buddhist perspective and Experiences’, *Buddhist Christian Studies*, Vol 34, pp. 69-81
- xcī Krey, Gisela, 2010, ‘On Women as teachers in Early Buddhism: Dhammadina and Khema’, *Buddhist Studies review* 27(1),18.
- xcii Bodhi, Bhikkhu, 2012, *The numerical Discourse of the Buddha*, New Translation of the *Saṃyutta Nikāya*, Wisdom Publications, Boston, pp. 221-230.
- xciii *Anguttara Nikāya* I. pp. 25-26.

^{xciv} Davids, Rhys, 1895, *Psalms of the sisters*, Pali text society, London

^{xcv} Horner, I.B., *The Book of Discipline*, London, 1938-66, vol.2, pp.255

^{xcvi} *Majjhima Nikāya*, vol 3, pp. 109

^{xcvii} Appleton Naomi, 2011, 'In the Footsteps of the Buddha: Women and the Bodhisatta Path in Theravada Buddhism', *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion*, 27,1, pp.33-51; Sharma, Arvind, 1978, 'Can there be a female Buddha in the Theravada Buddhism', *Bucknell Review: Women, Literature and Criticism*, 24,1, pp.72-79

^{xcviii} *Jātaka* II, no. 281, story of the present

^{xcix} *Jātaka* III, no. 359, story of the present

^c *Jātaka* III, no. 301, story of the present

^{ci} Ibid, pp.260

^{cii} *Jātaka* III, no. 359, pp. 121, “*āvuso asukā nāma daharabhikkunī attano c’ eva paccayā jātā sāmikassa ca, ubho pi pabbajitvā vipassitvā arahattam pāpuṇimsū*” ti.

^{ciii} *Jātaka* V, no. 515, *Samodhāna*

^{civ} Ibid, pp. 31

^{cv} *Jātaka* VI, no. 539. story of the past,

^{cvi} *pecetvā sayam isipabhajjham pabbajitvā tatth era myyāne vasantī kaalnaparikammam katvā jhānam nibbattetva brahma loka-parāyanā ahosi.* (pp. 137)

^{cvi} Though the idea of a stupa goes back to pre-Buddhist days and the term finds mention in Rg-Veda and other Vedic texts, but such references are unsubstantiated in number. Further, do they correspond to the exact meaning of the term unlike in the Buddhist tradition where it signifies a funerary or reliquary mound. (Singh 1996, op.cit, pp.2), it was actually the Mauryan king Ashoka who played a significant role in popularising the stupa as a monumental structure and undertook their construction on a grand scale. (Marshall, Foucher and Majumdar, 1940, *The Monuments of Sanchi*, Vol 1, Swati Publications, Calcutta, pp.20-22). The *Jātakas* as a collection are dated to the post Mauryan centuries. 2nd to the 3rd centuries C.E. (Singh, Upinder, 2008, *A History of Ancient and Early Medieval India: From Stone Age to the 12th Century*, Pearson, Delhi, pp. 369)

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