

**RESEARCH PAPER****The influence of Indian Buddhism on the Literary Myanmar: The Case Study of Jātaka****Ha Thi Dan**

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ABSTRACT

The Indian Buddhism was spread into the Southeast Asian nations in the early second century B.C. The Buddhist philosophy was carried on hereby many different missionary works avenues, including literary creations. In which, Jātaka are unique Indian Buddhist stories which were to be easily understandable folktale and were popular in Myanmar. The paper tries to find out how Jātaka impacted on literary Myanmar through academy and popular literature, especially in folk stories. Besides, the paper focuses on conducting survey relating to theme, story, texture and story form of Indian Jātaka and Myanmar Jātaka. Therefore, the paper assumes that Indian Jātaka was localized and created identity in Myanmar.

Key words: Indian Buddhism, Jātaka tales, Myanmar literature

INTRODUCTION

India is a country of great civilizations spreading around the world including Myanmar. Historically, Myanmar and India have had for tens of centuries trade, connection and interaction; so the Indian culture have left deeply vestiges on Myanmar culture, especially Buddhism. Buddhism in general, Indian Buddhist literature in particular has had a strong influence on the development of Myanmar literature. The acculturation of the Jātaka Indian old narrative is a concrete phenomenon of Indian-Myanmar cultural interaction that needs a thorough and specific explanation. By the method of analyzing, comparing and contrasting the texts of Jātaka narrative of India to Myanmar through several typical works, the author initially found similarities and differences in creation of Jātaka variants in Myanmar. Therefore, the selection of this study aims to give us an insight into the historical-cultural relation between India and Myanmar. On the other hand, the study also contributed to improving understanding of Myanmar culture- literature. Over the millennia of its existence and development, Myanmar has had a distinct literary tradition that has come from a cultural background: civilized rice cultivation. From this background, when contacting and interacting with large civilizations such as India, Myanmar have known how to absorb, select the appropriate cultural values. Furthermore, Burmese culture and literature become rich and varied and also retain their identity. This is the process of localizing Indian Buddhist literature in Myanmar. On the foundation of the indigenous culture, exogenous factors have gradually been nationalized and become the private property of the Burmese.

ABOUT THE JĀTAKA NARRATIVE OF INDIA

In India, Buddhism was born in the 6th century BC, the creator was Prince Siddhartha Gautama (Siddhartha). With the doctrine of equality among sentient beings, opening a way to liberate them from suffering misery, Buddhism has been widely spread among walks of life. Until the reign of King Asoka (273-232 BC), Buddhism flourished not only in the birthplace of this religion, but spread to many countries through various missionary paths as well. After the Buddhist Congress taking place in Pataliputra in 241 BC, Emperor Asoka expanded and indoctrinated Buddhism extensively in Asia. At that time the development of Buddhism influenced the multitude of life. An indispensable consequence is that Indian Buddhist literature was born, including prose and verse in order to build myths of the Buddha, to praise his great grace as well as to interpret his words of advice and sermon to sentient beings. One of the classic Buddhist works this period was Jātaka.

Jātaka also known as the Buddhist Birth Stories, which is a fully formed and incorporated collection of 547 stories that together depicts a theme that praises the Buddha with ten virtues. The ten paramitas are: Generosity (Dāna), Moral conduct (Sīla), Renunciation (Nekkhamma), Wisdom (Paññā), Energy (Viriya), Patience (Khanti), Truthfulness (Sacca), Determination (Adhittāna), Loving-kindness (Mettā), Equanimity (Upekkhā).

The exact time this work written is still controversial today, but according to many sources, it can be confirmed that the work was released around the 4th-3rd century BC by the disciples of the Buddha collected and polish after the his death.

In terms of structure, each Jātaka has four parts-

Part 1: It is the present story. It tells about the past lives of the Buddha while he have Dharma talks to his disciples at different places and in different lives.

Part 2: the Buddha is recalling a story in the past (in the form of a folktale) related to the content of his Dharma Talks at the present.

Part 3: the Buddha combines past tales with the life he has experienced to convey a truth.

Part 4: the poem

Each Jātaka with its four parts like that, is transmitted in the form of a folk tale, such as fable and fairy tales that make every story attractive. The flexible combination of religious elements and folk tales that makes Jātaka rich in literature, easy to spread into the outside world. In particular, for Myanmar, a country where the majority of people live on agriculture, Jātaka is a great value in shaping the noble and beautiful lifestyles.

However, the introduction of Jātaka India into the Myanmar literary treasure is an extremely complex process, and understanding how this process happening plays an important role in explaining the process of India literary acculturation in Myanmar.

THE PROCESS OF ENTERING JĀTAKA INTO MYANMAR

The birth, formation and development of the Jātaka in Burmese literature can not be separated from the exchange and cultural contacts between India and Myanmar.

Myanmar is a country in continent of Southeast Asia. On the world map, geographically, Myanmar lies adjacent to western India. This country is well-known not only by its glittering golden temples, but also by the rich cultural of more than one hundred different ethnic groups living together, in which the Mon are the most ancient inhabitants. They are also the first people in the history of Myanmar to have contact with India. Based on a number of records, in the 3rd century BC, the Mon people from the regions which near Thailand and Cambodia today have entered Myanmar, migrating to the Ayeyarwady delta, to form the kingdom of Thaton. Legend has it that Thaton then was a seaport- which welcomes economic and cultural exchanges flows from the outside world, including India. At this time, Indian merchants came to Thanton. Along with their trade demands, they brought new sources of knowledge, including Buddhism and the Mon, the first ethnic groups in Myanmar, touch Buddhism. Therefore, in our perspective, mission is the first way to introduce Jātaka (as the Buddhist scriptures, one of the cultural achievements of India) into Myanmar.

It can be said that Jātaka India introduced into Myanmar associated with the spread of Buddhism. However, initially, the work was written in Pali so that the number of people could access it, read it and understand it is not much, mostly monks. Derived from the fact that in order to spread Buddhism widely among themasses as well as help people understand the moralityof the Buddhist scriptures, these monks were forced to translate the Jātaka Indian into the native language. Along with this process, the monks also at the same time do the work of compilation and adaptation, etc. So Myanma also appeared a documentary adaptation from India's Jātaka which is called Panasa Jātaka with fewer stories (only 50 over 547 stories). Myanmar is the country develop in the civilized rice cultivation so it has a strong folklore. This folklore flow plays an important role in preserving the text and makes Jātaka always rebirth in a new form. In this country, it is telling and reciting in Jātaka yearly and the most appropriate time is from March to May when everyone has finished their crop. The stories in Jātaka in the form of recitation and telling gradually escapes religious life, reaching out from the four walls of the temple system, coming into the folklore, with the major content of reflecting the mind. love, desires and aspirations of thousands of Myanmar

people, etc. By these ways, the Jātaka of India has truly 'bathed' itself in the cultural space of Myanmar's native land. And depending on the psychology, character and historical background of them, Burmese people have separate ways to absorb this Buddhist Sutras and create new variants of Jātaka with similarities but many differences as well.

INFLUENCE OF JĀTAKA ON MYANMAR ACADEMIC LITERATURE

There is no accurate record about Myanmar's first written literary work at the moment but it can start in the eleventh century. And that is the religious literature- Buddhist literature.

During the Pagan dynasty, under the rule of King Alaung Sithu (1112-1167), in addition to epitaph, a genre of literature handed down extensively as the story of the Buddha was drawn from the Jātaka of India. The story is very attractive, and become popular. Burmese people compiled into series, a set can be up to 50 stories called Panasa Jātaka.

During the reign of Ava (1364-1555)- the prosperous period of Burmese literature, many new literary forms were born such as 'Pyo', 'Aye Chin', 'Mawgun' and 'Myittasa', etc. Among them 'Pyo' is the most popular literary genre of the Ava era with theme and inspiration from Jātaka. Later, this stage was called 'Pyo era'. Similar to Ava period, Nyaung Yan periods (1599-1752) produced four famous monks- poets, among them Shin Munindaghosa, the pagoda's head monk of TaungHpila, is a specialist in religious affairs but writing only one of the prose books is: MaBikun- dalawuthtu- version of Maha Thuta Thawma Jātaka (Mahāsutasoma-jātaka). With this masterpiece, he has brought up to 550 Jātaka stories. The work is considered a masterpiece of literature, making him a solid position in the history of Myanmar literature.

Jātaka with Buddhism from the 18th to 19th centuries, under the reign of Konbaung (1752-1819), became a source of inspiration for literary writing. Many writers view Jātaka as the 'source of inspiration' for his literary creation- as the monks U Obhasa wrote Jātaka in prose form. U Obhasa himself was the first person to translate 10 Jātaka stories from Pali into simple Burmese prose. He hopes everyone to understand and appreciate the Jātaka. However, he has only translated eight stories, including: Temi (Muga-pakkha)-jātaka (538), Mahā-janaka-jātaka (539), Nemi-jātaka (541), Mahosada-jātaka (542), Candakumāra-jātaka (544), Nārada-jātaka (545), Vidhūra-jātaka (546), Vessantara-jātaka (547). The two remaining Jātaka stories, Suvannasamma-jātaka (540) and Bhūridatta-jātaka (543), were also written in prose by two other monks, Shin Nandamedha and Shin Paggātikka.

To sum up, during the development process of Burmese writing literature, of Jātaka and Buddhism were the 'source of inspiration' of poets and writers. From literary writing, it came into the life of population and became an endless source of creativity among writers. They borrow topics, contents of stories, motifs, and images to create their own folk tales. In Myanmar, literary only plays a role in real life when they are transferred from writing to stories which are told from others to others. Because the ordinary people in here may not read the texts directly but they are heard by other people or are watched performances in the form of folk art, including folk tales.

THE IMPACTS OF JĀTAKA TO MYANMAR FOLKLORE

Indian Jātaka influenced not only on Burmese writing literature but also folk literature, especially folk tales, mainly at the plot level. According to the survey of stories of Myanmar, we find that the favorite plot has a repetition. Actually, before the influence of Jātaka, this country has a treasure of folk tales with the available plot, motif and characters. However, the available ones are 'sucked' into Jātaka, transforming into a myriad of stories with subtle source of literature. Some of the stories borrowed from the plot of Indian Jātaka such as the rich man and the Dog (the plot of Jātaka 22 in the Jubilee, Kukkura); 'The Story of Xactinho Glaisan' (from the story of Jātaka 291 in the Birthplace, the Bhadra- ghata); 'The Story of the Old Man on the Moon' (plot from Jātaka 316 in the Birthplace of the Buddha, Sasa); 'The Funky Rabbit' (from the story of Jātaka 322 in the Birthplace, Daddabha); 'The story of the wolf and the crane' (from the story of Jātaka 308 in the Birthplace, Javasakuna); 'The Four Puppets' (derived from Jātaka 547 in the Birth Meditation, Vessantara precursor) etc. It is capable of summarizing the similarities and differences in the development of Indian Jātaka in Myanmar in table 1:

Table 1: Similarities and Differences in the Development of Indian Jātaka in Myanmar

No. of Stories	The order of stories in Jātaka	Indian Version	Myanmar Version
1	Jātaka 22	Name of story: The story of the dog Plot: The story tells about the past live of the dominant dog of the Buddha. Meaning: Lecture on bhikkhus for the benefit of others (tell stories to teach).	Name of story: The filial girl Plot: The story tells about the mother's spiritual motherhood to parents. Meaning: Praise the filiality of a youngest child with her mother. Conveying the philosophy 'one good turn deserves another' of folk.
2		Name of story: The story of the magical bowl Plot: The story tells about one of Buddha's past lives when he was a wealthy Brahmin. Because of loving children, he gives The Magical Bowl children with the wish that his children can work hard. However, he is lazy, killing spree. One day, the bowl broke, he became poor, torn ragged begging, finally he fell to the wall and died. Meaning: Teach for the lazy Bhikus in the Buddhist Sangha.	Name of story: The Story of Xactinho Glaisan Plot: The story tells about the child was donated to the miraculous means Wished Bean by his father but not improve his mind becomes lazy, addictive, spoiled, dropped bean shattered, and fall into the starvation poor. Meaning: Reflecting the dream, the desire to change the lives of the poor in oppressed and exploited society.
3	Jātaka 316	Name of story: The story of the rabbit Plot: The story tells about one of the past lives of the Buddha being a rabbit Meaning: Lecture for thebhikus about alms	Name of story: The Story of the Old Man on the Moon Plot: Explain the cause of the image of the old man on the moon of the people of Myanmar. Meaning: explain the natural phenomenon
4	Jātaka 322	Name of story: the Strong voice Plot: The story tells about one of the past lives of the Buddha being a lion Meaning: The lecture on the lack of thinking of the pagan devotees.	Name of story: The Funky Rabbit Plot: The story tells about the rabbit, because too cowardly, lack of speculation that catastrophic for itself and others. Meaning: Borrow animals to criticize the timid, indecent manner of human beings have parable features.
5	Jātaka 308	Name of story: The story of the Woodpecker Plot: The story tells about one of the past lives of the Buddha being a woodpecker Meaning: Criticize the pagans in the Buddhist Sangha.	Name of story: Chuyện chó sói và sếu Plot: The story tells about two animals: Crane, Wolf and the ungrateful activities of the Wolf for the goodness of the Crane. Meaning: Criticize the human beings' ungrateful activities.
6	Jātaka 547	Name of story: The story of Vessantara Plot: The story tells about one of the past lives of the Buddha being the Vessantara prince who gave up the throne palace and high living standards to practice charity. Meaning: Praise of the Bodhisattva's charity	Name of story: Four puppets Plot: The story tells About Aung- who used his property to give others because of their happiness. Meaning: Sent the Buddhist philosophy. When people get rid of all their desires, they feel peace and happiness most.

From the this table, we can see that: Although many Jātaka versions appear in the Burmese folk tale, all of them have been simplified in both content and form to make it closer to worker life and spiritual folklore rather than Buddhist color. If the purpose of each of Jātaka s in the original Indian version is to preach, when it becomes the Jātaka of Myanmar, the content of predication becomes faint. The story which tells about Buddha's past lives is sometimes localized to become a story which explains a natural phenomenon or custom. For example, the story about the shape of rabbit on the moon; if in the original Jātaka India, the story emphasizes Buddha's charity, the Burmese people borrowed this plot simply to explain a natural phenomenon: Why today, when people look at the moon, they still see the rabbit? or in other stories like the Wolf and the Crane. This is a story that borrows the plot from Jātaka 308 (The Woodpecker, Javasakuna Precursor in the Indian Birthplace) but the message is not the same. In Jātaka 308, the story goes through the relationship between the woodpecker (a past live of Buddha) and the lion (one of the practitioners of the

Buddha) to criticize the infidels of Debatatda; meanwhile, in the story of Myanmar, the end of the story reflects the spirit of a folk tale: Curses (like chickens) come home to roost.

In another story, Burma's Xactinho Glaisan; It is a variant of Jātaka 291 (The story of the magical bowl - the forerunner of Bhadra - ghata). This Indian Jātaka story tells about one of the past lives of the Buddha as the son of a rich businessman. From the story of his previous life, the Buddha wanted to give the Sermon to the Buddhist Sangha about lazy people. Meanwhile, the story of Myanmar's Xactinho Glaisan said: The father lost. Because of loving his child, he brings his son to heaven to enjoy the rich life but his son feels bored and goes back his home, so this father gives his son a magical thing: a bean seed used to wish. He becomes lazy, addicted, spoiled and drops the bean seed shattered, so he fell into poverty. The story is close to the fairy tales. Orphans, the poor, who have changed their lives, are the aspirations and the subject of fairy tales.

Another difference between the version of Myanmar and the Jātaka is shown in miraculous means. If in the Jātaka is the 'magical bowl', the Myanmar version is replaced by 'bean seeds'. This shows the difference in the process of creating distortions of Jātaka in Burmese folklore. Actually, 'magical bowl' is a legend in the Buddhist scriptures. The formal system of Buddhist (Huayen Economics) refers to the image of the bowl through a conversation between two characters Thien Tai and Uuba di Cu Tuc. When Thien Tai come to the house of Uuba di Cu Tuc, she saw the bowl and asked about the origin of this bowl, she receives the answer as follows: 'In this small bowl, the appearance of the delicious food and drinks depending on the interests of all beings make all of them full...'. Therefore, the image of the magical bowl has the function of giving everyone the full range of the things that they need. Thus, the bowl symbolizes the spirit of Buddhism being charity. It is also the virtue of the Bodhisattva who wants to save sentient beings. Particularly for Buddhists, the bowl is the body of a Buddhist monk. Every bhikkhu usually has three objects, including: Clothes for Buddhists, bowl and water filter, and the bowl is bhikkhu 'carefully guarded as guarded their eyeballs.'

That bowl that goes into the folk tales of Myanmar is replaced by the 'bean seeds' that make the story carries the nuances of rural farmers growing rice with crop cultures. This culture has been added to the Myanmar folk tale, making the story has a cultural symbol of Southeast Asia.

CONCLUSION

What the author has mentioned above- the stories of the Buddha- although they are passed through centuries, they still have intense vitality and important impacts to the literary life of Myanmar. In many ways, the Burmese have been preserved and maintained Jātaka as preserving and maintaining their cultural heritage. In this sense, Jātaka, which is India's legacy of heritage, has become a treasure of the people of the Golden Temple. Studies about the influence of Indian Jātaka on Myanmar also suggests the study of the influence of this masterwork on Southeast Asian countries such as Laos, Thailand and Cambodia, these places have many similarities in culture and history with Myanmar.

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