

# A Critical Study through the Buddhist Perspective on “The Rime of the Ancient Mariner”

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සාහිත්‍යකරුවන් තම සාහිත්‍ය නිර්මාණයන් තුළින් ආදර්ශමත් පණිවිඩයක් සමාජගත කිරීමට දැඩි උත්සහයක් ගෙන ඇති බව එම නිර්මාණයන් අධ්‍යයනය තුළින් විද්‍යමාන වේ. මෙම ලිපිය තුළ මාගේ ආධ්‍යයාශය වනුයේ ඉංග්‍රීසි සාහිත්‍ය තුළ දක්නට ලැබෙන ඉතා ප්‍රසිද්ධ සාහිත්‍ය නිර්මාණයක් වන **Samuel Coleridge–Taylor (1997-1998)** විසින් රචිත **"The Ancient of The Mariner"** සාහිත්‍ය නිර්මාණය (Lyrical Ballads) තුළ සාකච්ඡා කෙරෙන සංකල්පයන්, බෞද්ධ දර්ශනය තුළ ඉගැන්වෙන යම් යම් සංකල්පයන් හා සංසන්දනාත්මක අධ්‍යයනයක් කිරීමය.

බෞද්ධ දර්ශනය තුළ විද්‍යමාන වන ජීවිතානුබද්ධ විවිධ ගැඹුරු සංකල්පයන්, Samuel Coleridge නම් සාහිත්‍යකරුවාද තම සාහිත්‍ය නිර්මාණය තුළ සාකච්ඡාවට බඳුන් කර ඇති බව එය අධ්‍යයනය තුළින් පෙන්වා දිය හැකිය. කර්ම සංකල්පය වනාහි බුදුන් වහන්සේගේ ප්‍රධානතම ඉගැන්වීම් අතර විශේෂ ස්ථානයක් ගනු ලබයි. උන්වහන්සේ දේශනා කර ඇත්තේ සිත පෙරටු කරගෙන සිදුකරන හොඳ හෝ නරක ක්‍රියාවන් සඳහා ප්‍රතිඵල නිසැක ලෙසම ලැබෙන බවය. "The Ancient of The Mariner" සාහිත්‍ය නිර්මාණය තුළද ඒ හා සමානව දිවෙන සංකල්පයන් පිළිබඳව Samuel Coleridge විසින් සාකච්ඡා කර ඇති බව විද්‍යමාන වේ. පුස්තකාලය හා අන්තර්ජාලය භාවිතය තුළින් ගුණාත්මක පර්යේෂණ ක්‍රමවේදයට අනුගතව ඉහත කරුණු කාරණා මෙම ලිපිය තුළින් සාකච්ඡා කිරීමට බලාපොරොත්තු වේ.

යතුරු පද:- කර්ම සංකල්පය, ධර්මපදය, ක්‍රියා සහ ප්‍රචිඵල, බුදුන් වහන්සේ, Samuel Coleridge.

## Introduction

Authors "in the field of literature" expect to convey a sound message to society in an attractive way; therefore they used to familiarize with their religious teachings. In the majority of religions similarities can be seen and those teachings have been affected without boundaries for their literary works too. However, English authors have used many teachings of the Christianity for their works and some teachings of Jesus have also been discussed in Buddhism. Because of this close relationship, we can study English works through the Buddhist perspective.

A ballad, "The Ancient of the Mariner", which was written by Samuel Taylor Coleridge has discussed about repentance of the protagonist in the story through the religious perspective. Samuel was born in October 21, 1772, and died in July 25, 1834. He is considered as an English lyrical poet, critic, and philosopher.

A ballad is a type of poem that tells a story and was traditionally set to music. English language ballads are typically composed of four-line stanzas that follow an ABCB rhyme scheme.

Buddha's teachings are called Buddhist canon has given many valuable lessons to practice for a life. The present research expects to critically study through the Buddhist Perspective on "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner"

## Research question

Have "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" by Samuel Taylor Coleridge in ballad and the selected Dhamma matters employed similar concepts in actions, repercussions and transience to present the same perspectives on life?

## **Objectives**

Find out the transience and bad results of actions metaphors related to life in both the sample works under concern.

Compare the imagery found in both works to understand their references.

To prove that there are very valuable concepts in English Ballad like in Buddhist literature.

## **Research methodology**

This research is based on a qualitative research and a library research.

Throughout the ballad “Ancient Mariner” where Samuel has used specific concepts from life in the form of actions, repercussions and transience were studied by comparing them with all the Dhammapada verses and selected sutras.

## **Literature review**

Many articles have been written about the “The Rime of the Ancient Mariner”, but I could not find many articles or published books on the above topic even in the internet. The article was only found by me is "The Buddhist Coleridge: creating space for the Rime of the Ancient Mariner within Buddhist romantic studies", published 2013, Katie Pacheco. This article has been depicted as a comparative study much about romantic features in Zen Buddhism. In my article I am going to examine how Theravada Buddhist teachings have depicted some ideas of the Ballad "The Ancient of the Mariner".

## Discussion.

"The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" by Samuel has narrated an advisable story by expecting to convey a good message to the reader. The protagonist of the story Mariner wants to tell his previous story to someone, because of an dreadful incident has been done by him when he was travelling through the sea. Specially, it is expected to discuss about Mariner's ego-based slaying of the albatross, and the suffering he encounters afterwards, which mirrored the Buddha's teachings on The Four Noble Truths; the environmental response following the death of the albatross highlighted the Buddhist doctrine of Conditioned Genesis; and the cognitive. If someone has done a bad thing he or she cannot hide it in their mind throughout life. They have to reveal it to someone otherwise; the incident is followed by a monster. The first stanza of the Dhmmapada also reveals this situation thus,

Manô pubbañgamã dhammã

manô settã manomayã

.....

thathonam dhukkhamn vêthi

chakkamva wahathô pada. (**Dhmmapada, Yamaka vagga**)

If with an impure mind a person speaks or acts, suffering follows him like the wheel that follows the foot of the ox. Ancient Mariner could not bear the thing that he has done earlier because it started to hurt his mind, therefore his eagerness is to find a suitable person to tell his story.

He holds him with his skinny hand

And I am next of kin

Hold off! Unhand me, grey beard loon!

Eftsoons his hand drop he (3<sup>rd</sup> stanza)

He holds him with his glittering eye

The Wedding-Guest stood still

And listens like a three years' child:

The Mariner hath his will. (4<sup>th</sup> stanza)

At the very beginning, he was unable to catch the person but after trying several times he was able to manage the wedding guest to tell his pathetic story. In Buddhism we can see, venerable Devadatta also wanted to release his mind by confessing to the Buddha but he couldn't.

Why is the Mariner suffered in his life? He killed the "Albatross" when he was voyaging and while he was killing the birds he did not feel uncomfortable environment. He himself says about the murder in the voyage thus.

With my cross-bow - I shot the ALBATROSS.

While we are doing some bad thing, we do not feel any uncomfortable emotions like Mariner. Dhammapada says this,

"Madhuwā maññathî bālo

Yāva papam nappachati"**(Bala wagga)**

So long as an evil deed has not ripened, the fool thinks it is as sweet as honey. Here, Mariner is able to understand

suddenly what he has done against the God and that is why he says in part 2,

"And I had done a hellish thing"

How did he realize that he has done a bad deed against to the God? Because suddenly he was felt that unconscious feelings are arising in his mind when looking around him and he feels that he is going to be attacked. According to Buddhism, when a person feels unconsciousness in his mind he thinks this is my previous Kamma done by myself "pubbe katha" and by thinking thus he tries to console his mind, but Mariner needs to mitigate his stress.

After this murder, his bad journey started from there.

I had killed the bird

That brought the fog and mist (**24 stanza**)

Because of his bad action, he is followed back by the bad results like a devil in the cemetery. There is a famous utterance in the world "Every action has a reaction", Buddha's idea is also the same here, he says, "Yadisam wapathe beejam - thadisam harathe palam", which means that what you cultivate in the paddy field the same cultivation can be taken as a harvest. In the story the Mariner kills the birds and it is a bad cultivation that can cause fog and mist. Buddhism, the results of actions have been categorized in to many sections and among them the first result is called "Ditta dhamma wedaniya kamma", (immediately effective Kamma) it means that we can have results of the bad or good deeds in this life.

28 and 29 verses show the very pathetic situation with beautiful imagery. The reader can imagine that Mariner's killing is affecting the environment too.

Day after day, Day after day

We stuck, no breath no motion (28)

Water, water, everywhere

And all the boards did shrink

Water, water, everywhere

No any drop to drink (29)

After changing the atmosphere around him, he began to feel something struggling inside of his body and he realizes that someone is going to attack him, because of these matters; he feels that he is going to die without water and other facilities. This is the most extreme repentance in his life ever. The poet portrays this incident in a flamboyant way. This is how the Mariner's repentance and pain are depicted by the author.

Ah! Well a-day! What evil looks?

Had I from old and young!

Instead of the cross, the albatross

About my neck was hung (34)

Now he feels that the bad repercussions are following him like scorpions in his mind. He cannot tolerate his pain, because his neck was hung therefore he tries to bite his arm and suck the blood. At this stage he is isolated in the sea and he is difficult to find a helper for preventing this pathetic period of time that is why he screams as "A sail a sail".

I bit my arm, I sucked the blood

And cried, A sail a sail! (39)

The same idea has been discussed in Dhammapada also. Here, Buddha vividly explains how bad results run after bad people thus.

Caranthi bala dummeda

Amitteneca attana

Karontha papaka kammam

Yam hothi katukappalam. (Dhammapada, Bala vagga)

Yadaca paccati papa,

Atha bala dhukkam nigaccati. (Dhammapada, Bala wagga)

The meaning of the first stanza and the second one is the same. Their meaning is, "with themselves as their own enemies, fools lacking in intelligence, move about doing evil deeds, which bear bitter fruits". If we study both works profoundly, we can identify similar ideas are used by both masterpieces.

Finally, Death has been personified by Coleridge by asking about the death like a question type.

Is that a DEATH?

Is DEATH that woman's mate?

The Christian religion also explicates the concept of death and it has influenced by English literature directly, as well as, death concept of Buddhism is very broadly described and it is taken as a person by name. Once, A Mara called "Dusi" has appeared through the monks' bodies when they meditate. Buddha himself has talked to death like Mariner did, "you cannot stop my journey". Thus, the same concepts in both fields differently and similarly can be recognized.



## Conclusion

In conclusion, it is possible to mention here that, some striking features were revealed which could be used for finding an answer to this research question. Especially in a comparative way of both pieces, we can easily comprehend it has provided enough evidences to succeed the research. The other main key point found by the researcher is that anybody can compare important ideas in English poetry with the Buddhist perspective. Because of this comparative study, anyone can disseminate Buddhism throughout the world specially, among English people.

Sometimes, we are difficult to find much information on one subject or phenomenon in one doctrine, because a specific matter has been depicted in the deepest. But, the Ballad has much information on life and reader can talk about it in many ways by comparing any other masterpieces.

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