

## Use of the Act of Truth (*Saccakiriya*) in the *Jātaka*-s: An Analytical Study with Respect to Sinhala *Jātaka* Stories

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### Introduction

*Jātaka* stories contain descriptions about the previous births of the Buddha. According to Saratthadīpanī sub-commentary, *Jātaka* can be termed as the stories, which describes the birth stories of the Buddha. Among *Jātaka* literature, the Sinhala *Jātaka* text written in Kurunegala period is considered important. The Sinhala *Jātaka* text contain 547 stories and they are based on *Jātakapāli* and *Jātakaṭṭhakathā*. Even though different techniques have been utilized in writing *Jātaka* stories, the present study bases its discussion mainly on the act of truth enrich the *Jātaka* literature, the manner in which it has been used as a technique and how it addresses the readers are the main concerns of the study. The main objectives of the study are to identify the meaning of the ‘*saccakiriya/satyakriyā*’ (the act of truth), the way how it has been depicted in Sinhala *Jātaka* literature, its usage as a writing technique, its function, literal and ethical importance.

### Literature Review

There are several collections of *Jātaka* stories which depict special incidents related to the act truth which has been used to arouse the interest of the readers. Mr. Ananda Kulasooriya can be regarded a study based on Sinhala who conducted a study based on the Sinhala *Jātaka* literature. According to his book ‘Sinhala Sāhityaya 4’ the act of truth has been utilized as a technique of writing. As he states, Mr. E. W. Burlingame who translate the *Dhammapadaṭṭhakathā* to English language is the one who examined the way in which the act of truth was used as a specific technique for the first time. It can be easily identified that the act of truth has been a habit of ancient literature, folk stories and among the community. In order of to induce the interest of the readers such supernatural incidents have been described in exaggeration both in Indian and Sri Lankan literature. Further, most

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of these stories are linked with religious ideologies and the faith of the people.

## Research Methodology

The present study is based on the Sinhala Jātaka text and Pāli commentary of Jātaka stories and these two books have been used as primary sources of data collection. The secondary sources include ‘Sinahala Sāhityaya 4’ by Ananda Kulasooriya and other texts related to Jātaka literature. Contextual analysis and textual analysis are the two main research methodologies used in the study. The Jātakaṭṭakathā and Sinhala Jātaka stories have been equalized and special attention was made on universal folk literature.

## Discussion and Results

The term act of truth used in Sinahala Jātaka-s have been identified as ‘Saccakiriya’ in Jātakaṭṭhakathā. Moreover, words such as determination and marvel can be identified as special terms used in relation to the above idea. The use of such words indicates the trustworthiness and wonderfulness of the act of truth. The Aṅgulimālasutta in the Majjhimanikāya, ‘saccakiriya’ is describes as a function made by recollecting one’s own virtue. According to the commentary, it is not a medical treatment. There are six main Jātaka-s in the Cariyāpiṭaka in describing perfection of truth. Among these stories marvel indicates in relation to the act of truth can be observed in stories of Vattakapotaka, Maccharāja and Kaṇhadīpāyana most related to the acts of truths in the character of Bodhisatta have been based on perfections of virtue (sīla) and truth(sacca). There is a special statement about the character of Bodhisatta and truth in the Haritacajātakavaṇṇanā. Every through there were situations where the Bodhisatta was unable to prevent himself from killing, stealing, sexual misconduct and intoxicate drinking, he has never lied in order to harm himself or others. Therefore, truthfulness is shown as one of the great characteristic of the Bodhisatta. Thus, the act of truth can be described as determinations made based on truthful statements in order to fulfill one’s purposes. The situations depicted in Jātaka-s have not been merely limited to the character of bodhisattva. There are several common features in Stories related to the act of truth.

- Human animal characters related to truthfulness
- Harmful incidents that might come across oneself others
- The mental or verbal aptitude made in order to avoid it
- Favorable results received through natural of supernatural phenomena

Search depictions are made to provide on importance to human values and qualities. It emphasizes that human who protect values cannot be defeated easily.

Moreover,

- The importance of human values
- No force can harm others
- Favorable results of good deeds

Have been highlighted as means of using the technique of the act of Truth by most writers. Receive the Supernatural incidents illustrates the value of human qualities and their strength. In some occasions, the results related to them at surface truth have been described as of having an eternal nature. The loyal believers hesitate to judge its truthfulness. The four marvels were described in the Nalapānajātaka is an example for the above idea. Such as Sambulā, Sutasoma, Sāma Jātaka-s depicted that how to recover from different illnesses, one may at one's own good qualities and the act of truth. But, Kaṅhadīpajātaka states that in order to remove the snake poison the act of truth is made by accepting the evil qualities. In many situations, the character of a tree God of the God Śakra has been represented among the act of truth. The Supernatural incidents related to the active Street happen according to the following situations.

- Operate with the help of a divine Force
- Happen under the instructions of God
- Obey the nature

Therefore the act of truth which can be commonly observed as a technique of writing in Jātaka stories are mainly used to highlight the importance of human qualities.

### **Conclusion**

Ananda Kulasooriya has introduced the act of truth as an ancient habit as well as a command technique of many writers. It helps to improve the interest of Jātaka-s as well as to attract the attention of the readers. Jātakapota was earlier based on verbal media. It can be easily believed exaggerated descriptions on the act of truth in order to improved faith of readers. The incidents related to the act of truth used in Jātaka stories have a human and ethical Foundation. It indirectly assesses the qualities of human and animal behavior and provide some value to such qualities. The benefits and assurance a person can gain through virtue, faith, loving kindness, truthful speech and chastity are been highlighted by these descriptions. The wonders in the character of Bodhisatta have been emphasized through the descriptions to make people believed in the behavior of Bodhisatta. Thus, the Jātaka story fighters have made attempts to show the importance of being truthful in day to day life and protecting human values as policies in life as

it would help people receive the blessings of Gods and nature.

**Keywords:** Act of Truth (Sattyakriyā), Jātaka, Literature, Writing Technique

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