

Jātaka Aṭṭhakathā: A Guide during COVID-19

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Today the entire world is fighting against the infectious disease of Coronavirus – COVID-19. The only solution to fight against this deadly virus is maintaining isolation and social distancing which can be achieved only through the lockdown. People have accepted the fact that the change is necessary and shifting towards the online modes. More than half of the population is working from home. Thus, the entire family is living together in one house sharing the common space. If we see the statistics of income groups of people in India it can be seen that more than half of the population belongs to a low and medium-income group, living in small houses sharing a very small space and are living together for almost four months in this pandemic. People are going through so many new challenges physically and mentally both and are trying to cope with this new normal in their own way.

This research paper tries to show how the stories from the ancient text of *Jātaka Aṭṭhakathā* in Pali language in the form of case studies can help cope with this new normal of social distancing.

The *Jātaka Aṭṭhakathās* are the stories of previous births of the Buddha, in various forms sometimes human and sometimes animal form which he took to complete ten perfections¹ which would enable him to become a Buddha. The *jātaka* appears to be very old, for the term *jātaka* is included in an ancient categorization of Buddhist literary styles, and depictions of *jātaka* tales appear in Indian Buddhist art as early as the second century B.C.E² and thus the text of

Jātaka tales can be dated between second-century B.C.E and fourth century C.E. As per *Theravāda* tradition *Jātaka* comprise of 547 poems arranged roughly by an increasing number of verses. The *Aṭṭhakathā* (commentary) gives stories in prose that provides the context for the verses, and it is these stories that are of interest to folklorists, and each story is unique, the hero of the story is our Bodhisatta, who comes out as a winner because of his virtues, wisdom and other qualities.

Jātaka Aṭṭhakathās of Pali literature consists of beautiful narratives. Every story is divided into five parts, it starts with the present life story called “*paccuppannavatthu*”, followed with a story of the past life called ‘*atitavatthu*’, then followed with the verse ‘*gāthā*’, explanation called as ‘*veyyākaraṇa*’ and each story ends with the identification, called as ‘*samodhāna*’.

Storytelling is the best way to convey a message and to connect with the audience, *jātakas*³ are the best examples for the wonderful stories where each story is full of wisdom, knowledge, etc. If we start reading it once we cannot stop it in between because the narrative is so rich with a lot of emotions (*rasa*) as said in *navarasa* (*nine emotions*). In *jātaka* stories, we can find *srungārarasa* (love or romance), *vīrarasa* (heroism), *hāsyarasa* (laughter), *bhayānakarasa* (Horror, terror), *karuṇārasa* (compassion, mercy), *adbhūtarasa* (wonder, amazement) and *sāntarasa* (peace or tranquility)⁴. All these emotions make the reading so interesting that it feels as if we are watching the story in front of us. The hero, other characters, events, incidents, the climax of the story, verses, and a lot of learning till we reach the end of the story makes it more appealing to the reader.

This research paper has taken into consideration a few such interesting *jātaka* stories to address a few issues encountered while living together with the family. It should be noted that though the stories under study may not be directly connected with the situation, but one should understand the core message given from that story and should be able to grasp the learning from the same. The major points discussed in the paper are as below:

- I. **Lockdown and social distancing help in safeguarding self and others**
 - ❖ In guarding the self, a person guards other as well
 - ❖ One has to be mindful and aware in every little moment

II. Guidelines for the householders

- ❖ Mutual respect between husband and wife
- ❖ Inculcating human values in children
- ❖ Proper care of elders
- ❖ *Sīla* (virtues), *mettā* (loving-kindness) and *dāna* (donation) is our safeguard and our strength

I. Lockdown and social distancing help in safeguarding self and others

Lockdown means *a state of isolation or restricted access instituted as a security measure* or as per Cambridge English dictionary “*a situation in which people are not allowed to enter or leave a building or area freely because of an emergency*”. So, we are aware that the emergency is an epidemic of Coronavirus which is spreading at a faster rate and needs to be controlled. WHO has already declared it a pandemic so as a precautionary measure Government has initially announced complete lockdown and now after almost 3 months the lockdown is released partially taking into account that people will maintain social distance.

Case study 1 – In guarding self, the person guard other also

We safeguard our self when we follow the rules as announced by the government. In doing so, we are safeguarding others also which can be seen in असङ्कियजातकवण्णना (76) when a lay-brother asked to master this question⁵,

“भन्ते, अत्तानं रक्खमाना पररक्खका होन्ती”ति पुच्छि.”

"In guarding themselves, Sir, do men prove guardians of others?"

आम, उपासक, *Yes, lay-brother*

अत्तानं रक्खन्तो परम्पि रक्खति, परं रक्खन्तो अत्तानम्पि रक्खती”ति.

In guarding himself a man guards other; in guarding others, he guards himself."

While saying this, the master told the story of a lay brother journeying along on some business in the company of a leader of a caravan; because of his watchfulness and awareness of how he saved the entire troop from 500 robbers. The lay brother didn't sleep the entire night and was just walking to and fro, robbers kept waiting for the time he would go to sleep but he didn't sleep till the sunrise, and thus the robbers have to go empty-handed.

So here the robbers are none other than the coronavirus, if you will be ignorant and not aware of the virus, it can enter your house through you and will infect others also. So, protect yourself to protect others.

Case study 2 – One has to be mindful and aware in every little moment

One has to be mindful every time, as the quail in the story was mindful and thus protected himself from the falcon as seen in सकुणघिजातकवण्णना (168) when the quail left his feeding ground and flew to the edge of the forest, there the falcon tried to attack him. The quail somehow brought the falcon to his feeding ground and safeguarded himself and thus the bird rejoice on his victory and sings,

“सोहं नयेन सम्पन्नो, पेत्तिके गोचरे रतो. अपेतसत्तु मोदामि, सम्पस्सं अत्थमत्तनो”ति[□].

“Now I rejoice at my success: a clever plan I found

To rid me of my enemy by keeping my own ground

As said in हरितमण्डूकजातकवण्णना, विसये पदेसे गोचरभूमियं अबलवा नाम नत्थी[□] “In his own place, and district, and feeding ground no one is weak and कोसियजातकवण्णना (226) “अकाले, महाराज, अत्तनो वसनह्वाना निक्खमन्ता एवरूपं दुक्खं पटिलभन्तियेव, तस्मा अकाले अत्तनो वसनह्वाना निक्खमितुं न वट्ठती” “They that leave their dwelling before the right time, great king, fall into misery. Therefore, before the time one should not leave one’s dwelling place.”

As seen in the narratives above, it gives us a clear message of being mindful when going outside our house and safeguarding ourselves from the life threatening coronavirus by being mindful ⁶ i.e. while walking, talking, eating, touching any surface, sitting, spitting, etc. while doing all of the daily activities one has to be very aware and alert and should take all the precautionary measures as prescribed by WHO⁸ regarding mask, gloves, sanitizers, hand wash, keeping hands away from face, nose and mouth contact when outside of safe zone.

Also Bhikkhu Anālayo quotes in his research paper, that “Rhys Davids (1903/1997: 194) takes up a tale found in a discourse from the Saṃyutta-nikāya^{7,12} In agreement with its Saṃyukta-āgama counterpart 13, this discourse reports the Buddha narrating how a quail strays outside of its proper resort and is thereupon caught by a falcon. The moral of the story is that, just as the quail should have kept to its proper resort, so the monks should keep to the practice of mindfulness as their proper resort in order to withstand Māra⁹.

II. Guidelines for the householders

It is now more than three months that we all are in lockdown and spending time with our family. Some families are having a great time, enjoying and having fun but some families are having a difficult time because of frequent fights between husband and wife, father and son, brother and sister, etc. there are few *jātakas* which could guide us if we understand simple things in life and live in harmony with each other.

1. Mutual Respect between Husband and Wife:

“Are you facing Domestic Violence during Lockdown? Helpline numbers have been overwhelmed during the COVID-19 lockdown, as calls to domestic violence hotlines have increased significantly¹²”

The above is a statement from the webpage of *naaree.com* (domestic violence, helpline, and support in India). It is very sad to know that in this lockdown some people are fighting with both this life-threatening disease and domestic violence.

Let us understand what is domestic violence in India. Domestic violence is not only perpetrated by husbands against wives. It is domestic violence or domestic abuse even if it is by your parents, in-laws, and other family members too¹³.

What is the reason for domestic violence? As per the teachings of the Buddha, the reason for all unwholesome actions including violence is *rāga* (craving), *dosa* (hatred), and *moha* (ignorance). A detailed research study was carried out in Cambodia on “The Cultural Epigenesis of Gender-Based Violence in Cambodia: Local and Buddhist Perspectives” by Maurice Eisenbruch, Where the results show that the reason for the violence is greed, hatred, and ignorance. The author talks about *carita* (temperament) and how it affects individual behaviour. How a young boy with *dosa carita* grows up as an abuser which results in domestic violence in his later family life. The author also talks about *hiri* (moral shame) and *Otappa* (fear of blame). When a person is doing unwholesome action, he becomes morally blind and is incapable of noticing *hiri ottappa*¹⁴.

As can be seen in सुच्चजजातकवण्णना (320) when the Bodhisatta addresses the king regarding his wife, saying,

“अयं, महाराज, तुम्हाकं दुक्खितकाले अरञ्जे समानदुक्खा हुत्वा वसि, इमिस्सा सम्मानं कातुं
वट्ठी”ति

देविया गुणं कथेसि[□]."

This lady (king's wife), your majesty, in the time of your adversity, lived with you, and shared your sorrows in the forest. You ought to do her honor."

Mutual respect between husband and wife is very important to live peacefully. A man and a woman in a beautiful bond of husband and wife should cherish their relationship remembering how they tackle the tough time of their life together and came out of it and are still together. Such thoughts, respect, love towards each other nourish the relationship, and help in leading life peacefully.

If the relationship is not restoring and there is no mutual respect developed, rather it is getting worst there can be the physical, mental, spiritual, and emotional effect of domestic violence¹⁵, it is difficult to gather strength and rise again. If anybody is facing this situation and is not able to cope up with the present condition, the below gāthā from Dhammapada might help,

अत्ता हि अत्तनो नाथो, को हि नाथो परो सिया।
अत्तना हि सुदन्तेन, नाथं लभति दुल्लभं¹⁵।

One truly is the protector of oneself; who else could the protector be? With oneself fully controlled, one gains a mastery that is hard to gain¹⁶.

One may think there is no way out of an abusive relationship, but there is, and the dangers of staying can be far worse than those of leaving. Remaining in the toxic, dangerous environment of domestic violence can put one's life at risk. In this scenario, one should adopt the approach towards the life as stated in the gāthā of कच्छपजातक (178) and should move ahead in life leaving besides all the attachments and taking care of self and protecting self.

“गामे वा यदि वारञ्जे, सुखं यत्राधिगच्छति।
तं जनितं भवित्तञ्च, पुरिसस्स पजानतो।
यम्हि जीवे तम्हि गच्छे, न निकेतहतो सिया”ति॥

“Go where you can find happiness, wherever the place may be;
Forest or village, there the wise both home and birthplace see;
Go where there's life, nor stay at home for death to master thee.”

Roots of violence are built from childhood depending on the environment, the people we associate with and it grows as we age; and then it results in such a dangerous crime. So, to avoid all these circumstances, parents should inculcate human values in their children at a very early age.

2. Inculcating human values in children:

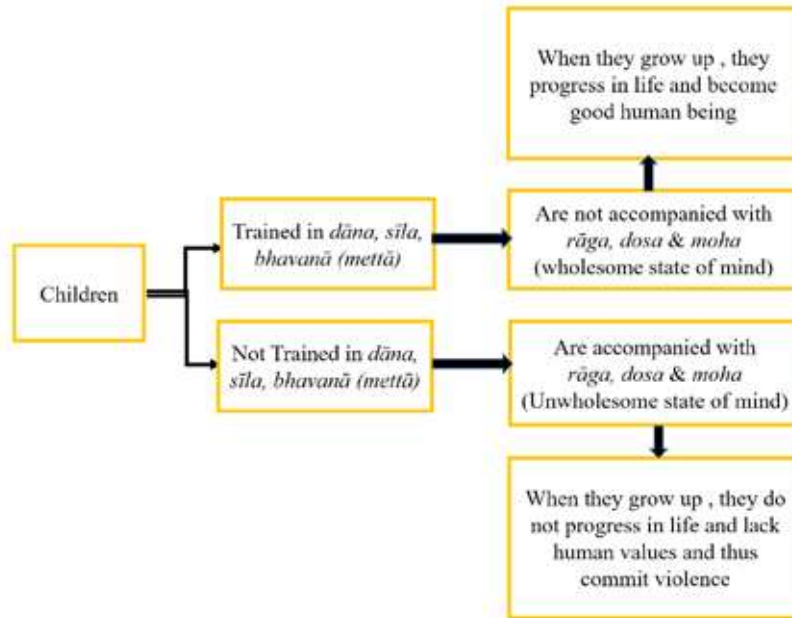
All the roots of unwholesome deeds i.e. *raga* (greed), *dosa* (hatred), and *moha* (ignorance) as we have seen in the earlier case of domestic violence, we understood that these evil tendencies grow from childhood itself, if the children are not trained properly. In this pandemic and lockdown period, parents can train their children and develop human values in them by making them aware and

teaching them the right way of life as can be seen in अत्थस्सद्वारजातकवण्णना (84) when one day the seven-year-old child comes to his father and asks, “what are the Paths leading to spiritual welfare?” and his father answered him by repeating this stanza,

“आरोग्यमिच्छे परमञ्च लाभं, सीलञ्च वुद्धानुमतं सुतञ्च.
धम्मानुवर्त्ती च अलीनता च, अत्थस्स द्वारा पमुखा छळेते”ति[□].

*Seek Health, the supreme good; be virtuous; Listen to the elders;
from the scriptures learn; Conform to Truth, and burst Attachment's bonds.
For chiefly these six Paths to Welfare lead.*

We all know the treatment of COVID-19 is nothing but strengthening the immunity system of the infected person, as because this virus is more dangerous for people with low immunity. As very well expounded in the gāthā that one should seek health, which is the supreme good, develop virtues, keep learning, and practice detachment. If one keeps on practice, one will reach the stage of *alobha* (no greed), *adosa* (no hatred), *amoha* (no ignorance) means *dāna*, *mettā*, and *paññā* will be developed which are nothing but the wholesome deeds and which will cut off the evil roots. A child that grows up having learnt such values grows and becomes a man or a woman who will become a good householder.



Such values can be inculcated in the kids so that they will understand the value of their life and will try to develop their virtues for their own welfare.

3. Proper care of elders:

As discussed above, coronavirus affects people with a low immunity system, so this is a very challenging period for the elderly as they are more prone to this infectious disease. So, in this pandemic, it is the responsibility of the family members to take care of their health and their personal needs. It's a great tragedy that from ancient times till today in many households' elders are been seen as an extra burden on the family. They are not treated well and their children keep them in the old age homes or just wait for their death. Many times it is seen that on wife's instigation the husband does ill-treat their parents as seen in तक्कलजातकवण्णना

(446) where a man on his wife's instigation decided to bury his father alive in the cemetery, but because of the wisdom of the grandson the man comes back to his senses when he saw that a young son of his is also digging the square hole in the cemetery for his father as a family tradition.

“मयापि तात पटिलच्छसे तुवं, एतादिसं कम्म जरूपनीतो.
तं कुल्लवत्तं अनुवत्तमानो, अहम्पि तं निखणिरस्सामि सोब्भे”ति²⁰.

*“I too, when thou art aged, father mine, Will treat my father as thou treatest
thine;*

Following the custom of the family, deep in a pit I too will bury thee.”

Seeing his son's action, he understood his mistake and he took his father back to his house with full respect, and thus on return, he kicked his wife out.

This *jātaka* story is included in this research paper just to make people aware of the fact that we all are going to age one day and we all will need our loved ones to take care of us. The elderly shouldn't die because of neglect. Hence, it is imperative that proper attention is given to their health, happiness, and wellbeing. This time of lockdown should be treated as an example for children to learn from when it comes to caring for the elderly at home. Thus, it is important that everyone prioritises this care work, with a view to continue it as a domestic way of life and ending the practices of elder abuse and neglect.

4. *Sīla* (virtues), *mettā* (loving-kindness) and *dāna* (donation) is our safeguard and our strength:

Virtues, loving-kindness, and selfless giving is a powerful shield to safeguard us in this pandemic as very well explained in कुलावकजातकवण्णना which narrates an incident where the thirty-pupil including Bodhisatta was arrested putting false accusation on them and hauled up as prisoners before the king. Without inquiry into their actions, the king commanded offhand that they should be trampled to death by the elephant. Forthwith they made them lie down in the king's courtyard and sent for the elephant. The Bodhisatta exhorted them, saying, **“Bear in mind the Commandments; love the slanderer, the king and the elephant as yourselves.”** And they did so. Elephant after the elephant was brought up, but none of the elephants could approach them and all fled away. So, the king inquired the reason of this, and on this Bodhisatta replied, “अज्जो अम्हाकं मन्तो नाम नत्थि, अम्हे पन तेत्तिंसमत्ता जना” (we don't have any other secret utterance, we just follow the commandments, this is our way of life, our safeguard, and our strength),”

- ❖ पाणं न हनाम (we don't destroy life),
- ❖ अदिन्नां नादियाम (we don't take what is not given),

- ❖ मिच्छाचारं न चराम (don't engage in sexual misconduct),
- ❖ मुसावादं न भणाम (don't tell lies),
- ❖ मज्जं न पिवाम (don't have strong drinks),
- ❖ मेत्तं भावेम (we bound in loving kindness),
- ❖ दानं देम²¹ (we do charity),

This story highlights the importance of following five commandments i.e. virtuous and performing a wholesome deed of *mettā* and *dāna*. This is nothing but the wholesome deeds as said in Abhidhamma as *dāna*, *sīla*, and *bhāvanā*. In today's scenario of Covid-19, this holds very true. One has to strengthen and safeguard themselves by their virtues, loving-kindness, and selfless giving. If you do wholesome deeds (*kusala kamma*), through body speech and mind it heals your mind because it is cutting off the evil roots of *rāga*, *dosa* and *moha*²², and it in turn heals your body and gives strength. These good deeds (*kusala kamma*) result in (*kusala vipāka*) good resultant, and keep our mind and body healthy which develops a positive attitude towards life which is crucial in the scenario of COVID-19.

In this period of lockdown, many people who survive on daily wages are sleeping on an empty stomach. In this situation, one can fulfill the perfection of generosity by donating food to the needy. As said in the below *gāthā* from *nidānakathā* on *dāna pāramitā* (perfection of giving),

“यथापि कुम्भो सम्पुण्णो, यस्स कस्सचि अधोकतो. वमतेवुदकं निस्सेसं, न तत्थ परिरक्खति.
“तथेव याचके दिस्वा, हीनमुक्कट्टमज्झिमे. ददाहि दानं निस्सेसं, कुम्भो विय अधोकतो”ति.

As a brimming jar overturned by anyone discharges entirely all the water and retains none within. Even so, when thou see any that ask, great, small, and middling, you do give away all in alms, as the water-jar was overthrown.

To know the effects of our *kusala kamma* (wholesome deeds), we can find a very good example of अम्बजातकवण्णना[□] (124) where the hermit arranges water for all animals in the forest and, every animal brings some fruits for him to eat and an entire wagon gets filled with the fruits and thus the hermits said,

“एकं नाम वत्तसम्पन्नं निस्साय एत्तकानं तापसानं फलाफलत्थाय अगन्त्वा यापनं उप्पन्नं,
वीरियं नाम कातब्बमेवा”ति”,

Thus, has one man's goodness been the means of supplying with food all these hermits. Truly, we should always be steadfast in right-doing."

This jataka is included to make the donor aware that even a small good deed bears great fruit. If you will help someone in need today, help will unexpectedly

come to you when you need it the most in future, as seen in the above jataka. So, in this pandemic, we all have to help each other and connect through the network of selfless giving (*dāna*), virtues (*sīla*), and loving-kindness (*mettā*) and defeat this Coronavirus. This is a circle which starts with us and comes back to us. Also, as per the *gāthā* given in *Pañcagatidīpanaṃ*, “*yaṃ kiñci diyateññassa yathā kālaṃ yathā vidhi, tena tena pakārena taṃ sabbam patitṭhati*”, that whatever is given to others at the proper time in a proper way remains stored in the same way to be received back next time. One should always remember though we are aware of the benefits of giving, one should not attach to the results of it and should not donate to receive anything in return as it will have the opposite effect on us i.e. our greed (*rāga*) instead of lowering it will again start to rise, so we have to be careful while giving and watchful about our own thoughts.

Jātaka Aṭṭhakathā ancient Pāli literature proves to be a very useful handbook for householders. In this challenging period of Covid-19 people can refer to this book and can implement many corrective actions like adding wholesome deeds (*kusala kamma*) of *dāna* (selfless giving), *sīla* (developing virtuous) and *mettā* (loving-kindness towards all beings) and subtracting *akusalāmula* (the root of an unwholesome deed) i.e. *rāga* (greed), *dosa* (hatred) and *moha* (ignorance) in our daily routine. Replacing three unwholesome actions with three wholesome actions will bring positive results that one can experience. This period of lockdown is a chance to restart, renew our life, relationships, to revisit our health. We should make good use of this time and rebuilt ourselves with all the positivity.

NOTES

- 1 *dāna* (generosity), *sīla* (virtue), *nekkhamma* (renunciation), *paññā* (wisdom), *virīya* (effort), *khanti* (patience), *sacca* (truthfulness), *adhiṭṭhāna* (determination), *mettā* (loving-kindness) and *upekkhā* (equanimity), (KUMAR 2015), to attain *nibbāna* i.e. for attaining complete emancipation. Tradition also perceives that the *jātakas* are the records of the Bodhisatta's experiences and struggles during his gradual acquisition of the qualities that would enable him to become a Buddha., (Analayo 2012)
- 2 (OHNUMA n.d.)
- 3 (Shrinivasan, 2020), In this lockdown, Shobha Tharoor Srinivasan Engages Kids with Online Storytelling which also included Jataka stories for all age groups
- 4 (Rasa (aesthetics), n.d.) *Śṛṅgāraḥ* (शृङ्गारः): Romance, Love, attractiveness. Colour: light green *Hāsyam* (हास्यं): Laughter, mirth, comedy. Colour: white, *Raudram* (रौद्रः): Fury. Colour: red *Kāruṇyam* (कारुण्यं): Compassion, mercy. Colour: grey, *Bībhatsam* (बीभत्सं): Disgust, aversion. Colour: blue, *Bhayānakam* (भयानकं): Horror, terror. Colour: black, *Veeram* (वीरं): Heroism. Colour: saffron, *Adbhutam* (अद्भुतं): Wonder, amazement. Colour: yellow (Chandananda)
- 5 खुदक निकाय, जातक-अट्ठकथा, (पठमो भागो), एककनिपातो, वरुणवग्गो, असङ्कियजातकवण्णना [76]
- 6 खुदक निकाय, जातक-अट्ठकथा, (दुतियो भागो), दुकनिपातो, सन्धवग्गो, सकुण्णिजातकवण्णना [168]
- 7 खुदक निकाय, जातक-अट्ठकथा, (दुतियो भागो), दुकनिपातो, उपाहनवग्गो, हरितमण्डूकजातकवण्णना [239]

- 8 “कथञ्च, महाराज, भिक्षु सतिसम्पज्ज्जेन समन्नागतो होति? इध, महाराज, भिक्षु अभिक्कन्ते पटिक्कन्ते सम्पज्जानकारी होति, आलोकिते विलोकिते सम्पज्जानकारी होति, समिज्जिते पसारिते सम्पज्जानकारी होति, सङ्घाटिपत्तचीवरधारणे सम्पज्जानकारी होति, असिते पीते खायिते सायिते सम्पज्जानकारी होति, उच्चारपस्सावकम्मे सम्पज्जानकारी होति, गते ठिते निसिन्ने सुत्ते जागरिते भासिते तुण्हीभावे सम्पज्जानकारी होति. एवं खो, महाराज, भिक्षु सतिसम्पज्ज्जेन समन्नागतो होति - दीघ निकाय, सीलक्खन्धवग्गपाळि, सामञ्जफलसुत्तं, सतिसम्पज्ज्जं

‘And how, Sire, is a monk accomplished in mindfulness and clear awareness? Here a monk acts with clear awareness in going forth and back, in looking ahead or behind him, in bending and stretching, in wearing his outer and inner robe and carrying his bowl, in eating, drinking, chewing and swallowing, in evacuating and urinating, in walking, standing, sitting, lying down, in waking, in speaking and in keeping silent he acts with clear awareness. In this way a monk is accomplished in mindfulness and clear awareness. (Translation – Access to insight

- 9 (Organization)

- 10 को च, भिक्षुवे, भिक्षुनो अगोचरो परविसयो? यदिदं – पञ्च कामगुणा कतमे पञ्च? चक्खुविज्जेय्या रूपा इद्वा कन्ता मनापा पियरूपा कामूपसंहिता रजनीया, सोतविज्जेय्या सद्दा... धानविज्जेय्या गन्धा... जिह्वाविज्जेय्या रसा... कायविज्जेय्या फोड्ड्वा इद्वा कन्ता मनापा पियरूपा कामूपसंहिता रजनीया – अयं, भिक्षुवे, भिक्षुनो अगोचरो परविसयो - Ref: Sakunagghi Sutta (SN 47.6)

And what, for a monk, is not his proper range and is the territory of others? The five strands of sensuality. Which five? Forms cognizable by the eye – agreeable, pleasing, charming, endearing, fostering desire, enticing. Sounds cognizable by the ear... Aromas cognizable by the nose. Flavors cognizable by the tongue. Tactile sensations cognizable by the body – agreeable, pleasing, charming, endearing, fostering desire, enticing. These, for a monk, are not his proper range and are the territory of others. Ref: Access to Insight

- 11 (Anālayo, 2012)

- 12 (Domestic Violence as a human rights violation, n.d.)

- 13 Ibid. Who can be victims of domestic violence? Before, Domestic violence was referred to as wife abuse because women were mostly the victims. As time passed, this term was abandoned when the definition of domestic violence was changed because wives are not the only people who can fall victim to domestic violence. The Domestic violence now recognizes the fact the victims can be: Children, Cohabitants, Dating, intimate or sexual partner, Family member, Spouses. This shows that anyone can become a victim of domestic violence. No matter how rich or prominent someone is in society, they too can become victims of domestic violence.

- 14 (Eisenbruch, 2018) Violence that was Fuelled by Lust or Greed, Anger and Ignorance-*lobha, dosa, mohā*: Excess of the Buddhist ‘Triple Poison’ was thought to lead to intimate partner violence. The monks elaborated on sexual violence as fuelled by craving and greed (*rāga* and *lobha*), physical violence by anger and aversion (*dosa*), and violence generally by moral stupidity and delusion (*mohā*). The Buddha taught that the three fires of greed, hatred, and delusion burn within us. *Doṣa* was the most prominent poison fuelling violence. Fire, poison, pus, and volcanic eruption were some of the metaphors used to describe the rage which, like oil in a frying pan, erupted when the flame was high and subsided when it was lowered. Some abusers felt ‘enraged to the point of vomiting blood’, as if they were wild animals devouring flesh. Some remorseful men realized their anger should not have been taken out on their wife, saying in Khmer, ‘Don’t melt lead in an earthen pot, only in an iron one’, suggesting that, if you pour your molten lava on your wife, you will ‘liquefy’ the marriage. Women, incensed by the violence, were eventually driven to murderous rage as if that rage were a pustule about to burst. The gradient of the intensity of the anger ran from ‘red’ to ‘black’ and, in a bodily gradient, from ‘blood’ to ‘liver’. Alcohol fuelled fury (*kreev kraot*), entering the man (*sraa cool*) and taking control of him, as in the expression ‘*trav sraa*’. He became ‘hot and irritated’ (*kḍav, hāl*), savage (*kaac*), not amenable to criticism (*ni?yiey min baan tʰaa min baan*, literally, ‘can’t speak, can’t tell’), *pah kʰəŋ pah kʰəŋ* (literally, ‘to hit or encounter anger’) and destructive and warlike (*kʰəŋ cralaot*). It burned like fire inside (*kAmraol*, derived from the root *roul*, which means ‘barbeque’), and he behaved as if possessed and made berserk by a ferocious spirit (*kAmraol cool*). Some said he had a blue-green face, a sign that the toxin in the blood had damaged the gall-bladder. He became *prəhəən kaŋ kaac*, initiating foolhardy acts (*prəhəən*, literally ‘over-reaching one’s limits’), and continued with *kaŋ*, literally being ‘warped’ and disdainful, until finally he became violent (*kaac*). The enraged man who beat his wife behaved as if infused with an evil spirit, or *kamraol*, and the healer, in a ritual intervention known as *baoh kamraol*, might ‘sweep out [as with a broom] and destroy by fire (*baoh*) the evil spirit (*kamraol*)’ and try to bring the abuse under control. *Mohā*, ignorance and delusion, is the third poison and, in Buddhist teachings, the abuser’s mind becomes deluded through ignorance (*avijjā*), causing perversions that take what is painful (*dukkha*) as pleasurable. That said, beating a wife would not trouble the perpetrator in a state of *mohā*. The gradient of impunity, of at the least, freedom from remorse or guilt, is shown here in body metaphors, such as men having ‘no heart’ or, worse, ‘no liver’ or, at the very worst, ‘no heart no liver’. Triple Poison: It is clear from Buddhist teaching how craving spills into anger and how each is a forerunner of violence. The Triple Poison, in Khmer the *tnam pul bəy yaan*, are the three unwholesome roots, in Pāli the *akusala-mūla*, the toxins of the mind. The Buddha taught that the three fires of greed, hatred and delusion burn within us (Wayman 1957) and push people to mental aberrations that could lead to abuse.

The Buddha said, 'Holding onto anger is like drinking poison and expecting the other person to die'. Legends paint the choleric person as a wild tiger, snake or demon, even a *tiracchāna*. The Buddhist post-canonical *Ghatva sutta* discourse, 'Having Killed', associates the poison with 'the sweet tip of anger' which drives people to hurt others, even their loved ones. The poison lodges in the abuser's heart and re-inflames him (Eisenbruch 2010). As Chuon Nath wrote, 'Anger is wrong, anger spoils, anger makes you suffer loss and ruin' (*k'əŋ k'oh, k'əŋ k'ooc, k'əŋ k'aa*) (Chuon Nath 1967). The *ghatva sutta* provides the recipe for cure, which rests on the slaying of anger itself. Nowadays, the concept of Triple Poison has even influenced activists in promoting peace in western settings (Madden 2010).

- 15 खुदक निकाय, जातक - अट्टकथा, (ततियो भागो), चतुक्कनिपातो, पुचिमन्दवग्गो, सुच्चजजातकवण्णना [320]
- 16 (Domestic Violence as a human rights violation, n.d.) **Physical effects** of domestic violence include Bruises, changes in sleeping and eating patterns, chronic fatigue, involuntary shaking, red and purple marks on the neck, sexual dysfunction, sprained or broken wrists. **Mental effects** of domestic violence include Alcohol and drug abuse, depression and prolonged sadness, post-traumatic stress disorder which can include flashbacks, severe anxiety, nightmares, and uncontrollable thoughts, Questioning sense of self and lowered self-esteem, suicidal thoughts and attempts **Spiritual and emotional effects** of domestic violence include: Discouraged feelings about the future, feeling unworthy, hopelessness, inability to trust, general lack of motivation. Barkha Bajaj – The domestic violence counselor, says on, How to Empower yourself against Domestic Violence, "My biggest life lessons have come from the realization that people treat you the way you allow yourself to be treated and that your relationship with others is a reflection of the relationship you have with yourself."
- 17 खुदक निकाय, धम्मपदपाळि, अत्तवग्गो
- 18 Translation (Buddharakkhita, 1996)
- 19 खुदक निकाय, जातक- अट्टकथा, (पठमो भागो), एककनिपातो, अपायिम्हवग्गो, अत्थस्सद्वारजातकवण्णना [84]
- 20 खुदक निकाय, जातक- अट्टकथा, (चतुत्थो भागो), दसकनिपातो, तक्कलजातकवण्णना [446]
- 21 खुदक निकाय, जातक - अट्टकथा, (पठमो भागो), एककनिपातो, कुलावकवग्गो, कुलावकजातकवण्णना [31]
- 22 rāgassa pahānāya asubha bhāvetabbā, dosassa pahānāya mettā bhāvetabbā, mohassa pahānāya pañña bhāvetabbā – Abhidhammapiṭaka, Dhammasaṅgini
- 23 खुदक निकाय, जातक - अट्टकथा, (पठमो भागो), एककनिपातो, कुसनाळिवग्गो, अम्बजातकवण्णना[124]

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