



## International Journal of Humanities & Social Science Studies (IJHSSS)

A Peer-Reviewed Bi-monthly Bi-lingual Research Journal

ISSN: 2349-6959 (Online), ISSN: 2349-6711 (Print)

Impact Factor: 6.8

Volume-XI, Issue-V, September 2025, Page No. 73-79

Published by Scholar Publications, Sribhumi, Assam, India, 788711

Website: <http://www.ijhsss.com>

DOI: 10.29032/ijhsss.vol.11.issue.05W.133



## Ethical Ecology in the Jatakamala of Aryasura: A Bird's Eye View

**Dr. Swapan Mal**

*Asst. Professor, Dept. of Sanskrit, Raiganj University, Uttar Dinajpur, West Bengal, India*

Received: 24.08.2025; Accepted: 16.09.2025; Available online: 30.09.2025

©2025 The Author(s). Published by Scholar Publication. This is an open access article under the CC BY license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>)

### **Abstract**

*The eternal history of India, which has been inherent in Indian culture, civilization and literature since ancient times, is based on Sanskrit literature. In the Vedic and post-Vedic periods, the perfect reflection of spiritual elements, philosophical elements and humanistic elements are observed. There is a gap in the origin and development of theism over time. Similarly, the spirit of the ten incarnations of Lord Vishnu is also seen in Indian literature, especially in the lyrical poem Gita Govinda by the poet Jayadeva. There is a mention of Lord Buddha as the incarnation of Kesava or Vishnu. It is said that: केशवधृतबुद्धशरीरं जय जगदीश हरे। In the Jataka literature or the Avadana literature based on Buddhist literature, 34 stories of the previous birth of that Buddha have been told from the mouth of Lord Buddha. These stories emerged from the great compassion of the Bodhisattva. Compassion is the most excellent thing in the morality of human hearts. There, compassion is at the root of the stories told by the Bodhisattvas. These stories are also known as Avadana because they are indicative of the generous character of the Bodhisattva. At the beginning of all the stories it is stated about the purpose of the Jataka: as it is heard, that is, these stories are heard. Various stories have been told simply and pleasantly for the salvation of all beings.*

**Keywords:** Ethics, Ecology, Buddha, Buddhism, Jataka.

### **Introduction:**

The basic doctrines of the Buddhist sect are the importance of wisdom and compassion, the impermanence of the world, the theory of transience, and the theory of perception and productivity. According to these doctrines, Buddhists accept that through the cycle of birth, beings assume bodies in the form of human beings from human to human or from non-human to human according to their repeated actions. But the basic theme of the Jataka is that if beings do their work through wisdom, compassion, friendship, love, charity, etc., then they will attain Buddhism.

The collection of the Jataka story is in the Khuddaka Nikaya of the Sutta Pitaka within Tripitaka. The collection edited by Acharya Paumbol contains 544 Jataka stories. The Chulla Niddesha, written in the second century BC, contains 500 stories. The Chinese tourist Mr. Fa-Hiyeen saw a Jataka story numbering 500 in Lanka in the fifth century AD. In Gupta period, the Buddhist text mentions the number of the Jataka story is 34. The Mahavastu mentions the story of the 80th Jataka. According to the Buddhist Theravada tradition, the number of births is 550. However, according to the term Panchajatakashatani

in the Chulla Niddesha Grantha and according to Buddhism, the number of Jatakas has Acharya-Aryashura edited a collection in Sanskrit called Jatakamala based on the account of the previous birth of Lord Buddha. According to the original Pali text, thirty-four stories are contained in this book by Aryashura. But he also made some changes to the original Jataka literature for his purposes. The Jatakas which are contained in this book are- व्याघ्रीजातकम्, शिबिजातकम्, कुल्माषपिण्डीजातकम्, श्रेष्ठिजातकम्, अविषह्य-श्रेष्ठिजातकम्, शशजातकम्, अगस्त्यजातकम्, मैत्रीबलजातकम्, विश्वन्तरजातकम्, यज्ञजातकम्, शक्रजातकम्, ब्राह्मणजातकम्, उन्मादयन्तीजातकम्, सुपारगजातकम्, मत्स्यजातकम्, वर्तकापोतकजातकम्, कुम्भजातकम्, अपुत्रजातकम्, बिसजातकम्, श्रेष्ठिजातकम्, चुडुबोधिजातकम्, हंसजातकम्, महाबोधिजातकम्, महाकपिजातकम्, शरभजातकम्, रुरुजातकम्, महाकपिजातकम्, क्षान्तिजातकम्, ब्रह्मजातकम्, हस्तिजातकम्, सुतसोमजातकम्, अयोगृहजातकम्, महिषजातकम्, शतपत्रजातकम्।

The Jatakamala in Sanskrit by Mr. Aryashura, based on Buddhism and philosophy, is very famous. The basic theme of this book is also love, friendship, compassion, charity and faith. The Jatakamala teaches that it is necessary to abandon pleasurable objects such as lover and gold, which are suffering, and to fix the mind on objects such as knowledge and compassion. This teaching is useless for the living beings of society because it reminds us of Lord Buddha and enlightens us with love, friendship, compassion, faith, charity and so on.

The Jatakamala composed by Aryashura contains a Jataka rich in composition distinctive in prose and verse. This Jatakamala was written by the poet Aryasura according to the Panchatantra of the famous poet Vishnu Sharma. Just as in the Panchatantra, there is a system of composition, subject matter and moral values, so it is seen here in the Jatakamala. The main characters in this Jatakamala are – a deity, yaksha, ghost, elephant, deer, monkey, tiger, lion, buffalo, swan, fish etc. The advice given in this Jatakamala is that violence should never be committed against all living beings and that one should show equality towards all living beings by relying on feelings of compassion, mercy, friendship, love and charity.

The word jataka is derived by the addition of the suffix kta in the sense of fidelity with the verb Jan followed by the suffix kta in the sense of self. That is, the Jataka means the story of past birth. When beings perform good deeds for many births, they attain liberation. Lord Buddha was also born many times. In that birth, when he developed good qualities in his conduct and practiced good deeds properly, he attained enlightenment, that is, he became known as a Bodhisattva. This is not possible in one birth; this is the fruit of the practice of good deeds in many births. The word Bodhisattva means Buddhahood and the word Sattva means being. Yet, there is disagreement over the definition of the word "sattva" in this regard. According to Mr. Moniar Williams, the word Sattva means intelligence, character, knowledge, and nature. Another meaning is creature, a living thing. The Bodhisattva is that which enlightens the beings, as staged by the author of the Samadhiraja Sutra. Mr. P. Ghosh says that Bodhi is Sattva because of the dependence on Sattva by the desire for great grace. Others say that the word Sattva means soul, mind, senses and consciousness. Mr. Prajnakaramati has said that there is Sattva in enlightenment, that is, the Bodhisattva is the intention. Another meaning is that the womb, the unknown, the unmanifest.<sup>ii</sup> This stage of enlightenment is liberating for beings. Another name for the Jatakamala is the Bodhisattvavadanamala. The word avadana means

good deeds. Therefore, the meaning of the Bodhisattva is the story of the gifts of the previous birth of Lord Buddha and the series of stories of good deeds.

Lord Buddha was omniscient and remembered his caste. In the stage of Bodhisattva, he had understood all the history of his previous birth. When the Bodhisattva was adorned as a king of Kosala, he once remembered that he had been a worker in his previous life. In that life, he provided food for the monks with a heart of faith. As a result of his pious deed called the arrangement of food, the Bodhisattva in his next life attained the rank of the ruler of Kosala. In the Kulmashapindijataka, the Bodhisattva said:

सुप्तप्रबुद्ध इव जातिमनुस्मरामि  
यस्यामिहैव नगरे भृतकोऽहमासम्।  
शीलान्वितोऽपि धनमात्रसमुच्छ्रितेभ्यः  
कर्माभिराधनसमर्जितदीनवृत्तिः॥  
सोऽहं भृतिं परिभवश्चमदैन्यशालां  
त्राणाशयात्स्वयमवृत्तिभयाद्विविक्षुः।  
भिक्षार्थिनश्च चतुरः श्रमणानपश्यं  
वश्येन्द्रियाननुगतानिव भिक्षुलक्ष्म्या॥  
तेभ्यः प्रसादमृदुना मनसा प्रणम्य  
कुल्माषमात्रकमदां प्रयतः स्वगेहे।  
तस्याङ्कुरोदय इवैष यदन्यराज-  
चूडाप्रभाश्चरणरेणुषु मे निषक्ताः॥<sup>iii</sup>

The wife of the king of Kosala in the form of a Bodhisattva also heard the story of his previous birth. In her previous life she served a sage with food while working as a maid. As a result of his pious deeds, she became the queen of the king of Kosala in her next life. It is stated therein:

बाल्येऽनुभूतमिव तत्समनुस्मरामि  
दासी सती यदहमुद्धृतभक्तमेकम्।  
क्षीणास्रवाय मुनये विनयेन दत्त्वा  
सुप्तेव तत्र समवापमिह प्रबोधम्॥  
एतत्स्मरामि कुशलं नरदेव ! येन  
त्वन्नाथतामुपगतास्मि समं पृथिव्या।  
क्षीणास्रवेषु न कृतं तनु नाम किञ्चि-  
दित्यक्तवानसि यथैव मुनिस्तथैव॥<sup>iv</sup>

In this way, in this Kulmashapindijataka, the Bodhisattva taught that all charity assumes the form of great deeds through pious actions, the lack of compassion, the absence of a peaceful mind, the absence of trust, the absence of love, compassion, and friendship. Charity is never lost by thieves, kings, fire, water, etc. Liberation from the enemies of lust, anger and greed is obtained by proper charity. Charity is the chief reliance to save from the world of suffering. Therefore, giving is enjoyable for everyone. Everything is possible by giving for pious deeds. A being who never gives charity is not worthy of sight. A miserable person is condemned in society. There are more painful things in this world. Therefore, if a thing is given without lust for the benefit of others, instead of a painful thing, that action is praise worthy in society. As stated in the Jatakamala

अल्पस्यापि शुभस्य विस्तरमिमं दृष्ट्वा विपाकश्रियः  
 स्यात्को नाम न दानशीलविधिना पुण्यक्रियातत्परः।  
 नैव द्रष्टुमपि क्षमः स पुरुषः पर्याप्तवित्तोऽपि सन्  
 यः कार्पण्यतमिस्रयावृतमतिर्नाप्नोति दानैर्यशः॥  
 त्यक्तव्यं विवशेन यन्न च तथा कस्मैचिदर्थाय यत्  
 तद्भयायेन धनं त्यजन्यदि गुणं कञ्चित्समुद्भावयेत्।  
 कोऽसौ तत्र भजेत मत्सरपथं जानन्गुणानां रसं  
 प्रीत्याद्या विविधाश्च कीर्त्यनुसृता दानप्रतिष्ठागुणाः॥  
 दानं नाम महानिधानमनुगं चौराद्यसाधारणं  
 दानं मत्सरलोभदोषरजसः प्रक्षालनं चेतसः।  
 संसाराध्वपरिश्रमापनयनं दानं सुखं वाहनं  
 दानं नैकसुखोपधानसुमुखं सन्मित्रमात्यन्तिकम्॥<sup>v</sup>

Lord Buddha in his previous life was devoted to affection for all living beings. In the stage of Bodhisattva, he was very dear to everyone for his holy conduct, restraint of the senses, contentment, and compassion and so on. As stated in the Jatakamala:

आचारशुद्ध्या निभृतेन्द्रियत्वात्सन्तोषयोगात्करुणागुणाञ्च।  
 असंस्तुतस्यापि जनस्य लोके सोऽभूत् प्रियस्तस्य यथैव लोकः॥<sup>vi</sup>

For this reason, even the violent animals of the forest do not show violence towards the Bodhisattva. Those animals abandon their violent behavior and roam the forest like ascetics. And it is said in the Jatakamala:

मैत्रीमयेन प्रशमेन तस्य विस्यन्दिनेवानुपरीतचित्ताः।  
 परस्परद्रोहनिवृत्तभावास्तपस्विवद् व्यालमृगा विचेरुः॥<sup>vii</sup>

As a result, the Bodhisattva Lord Buddha has demonstrated kindness, mercy, love, generosity, faith, etc. for all beings. That is the most important thing in our lives. As stated in the Jataka:

तदेवं सर्वसत्त्वेष्वकारणपरमवत्सलस्वभावः सर्वभूतात्मभूतः पूर्वजन्मस्वपि स भगवानिति  
 बुद्धे भगवति परः प्रसादः कार्यः। जातप्रसादैश्च बुद्धे भगवति परा  
 प्रीतिरुत्पादयितव्या।...एवं दुष्करशतसमुदानीतत्वात् करुणावर्णेपि वाच्यमेवं  
 स्वभावातिशयस्य निष्पादिका परानुग्रहप्रवृत्तिहेतुः करुणेति॥<sup>viii</sup>

Once in his previous life, Lord Buddha, in the stage of Bodhisattva, became king of the country of Shivi. He was then a very generous king. He was eager to give everything to the people. Because royal matters would not function properly without charity and humility develops out of generosity. The king of Shivi was pleased to see the satisfaction in the hearts of the beggars when the objects requested were given. There it is said in the Shivijataka:

उदारभावात्करुणागुणाञ्च वित्ताधिपत्याञ्च स राजवर्यः।  
 रेमेऽर्थिनामीप्सितसिद्धिहर्षादकिल्बिष्टशोभानि मुखानि पश्यन्॥<sup>ix</sup>

Later, one day, Lord Indra, disguised as an old Brahmin, asked for the two eyes of Shivrāja to consider his generosity. Then the ministers, soldiers, relatives and friends

gathered there repeatedly urged him to give them two eyes. But the charitable Shivrāja ignored that opinion and said:

यदेव याच्यते तदेव दद्यान्नानीप्सितं प्रीणयतीह दत्तम्।  
किमुह्यमानस्य जलेन तोयैः दास्याम्यतः प्रार्थितमर्थमस्मै॥<sup>x</sup>

The king of Shivi gave two eyes to Indra in disguise later, having received this, Indra, the king of the gods, thought:

अहो धृतिरहो सत्त्वमहो सत्त्वहितैषिता।  
प्रत्यक्षमपि कर्मदं करोतीव विचारणाम्॥<sup>xi</sup>

Then Indra went back to the king of Shivi with joy and returned him with two eyes distinguished by many powers. Then there the king spoke about the importance of charity and that there is no other way for living beings to prosper without charity. Charity is produced by humility and mercy. So, make money successful by giving it right and enjoying it right. This is the true means of attaining happiness and fame. Worldly wealth is fleeting and meaningless. Therefore, that money should be given to the benefit of the people. Giving money increases wealth and not giving money loses money:

परानुकम्पाविनयाभिजाताद्दानात्परः कोऽभ्युदयाभ्युपायः।  
यन्मानुषं चक्षुरिहैव दत्त्वा प्राप्तं मयाऽमानुषदिव्यचक्षुः॥  
एतद्विदित्वा शिबयः प्रदानैर्भोगेन चार्थान् सफलीकुरुध्वम्।  
लोके परस्मिन्निह चैष पन्थाः कीर्तिप्रधानस्य सुखोदयस्य॥  
धनस्य निःसारलघोः स सारो यद्दीयते लोकहितोन्मुखेन।  
निधानतां याति हि दीयमानमदीयमानं निधनैकनिष्ठम्॥<sup>xii</sup>

There is a strong significance of the generosity of the Supreme Bodhisattva in the unbearable Shresthijataka. There, at the beginning of the Shresthijataka, it is heard:

बोधिसत्त्वभूतः किलायं  
भगवान्भाग्यातिशयगुणादुत्थानसम्पदा  
चाधिगतविपुलधनसमृद्धिरविषमव्यवहारशीलत्वाल्लोके  
बहुमाननिकेतभूतउदाराभिजनवाननेकविद्याविकल्पाधिगमविमलतरमतिर्गुणमाहात्म्याद्रा  
जा  
समुपहृतसम्मानः प्रदानशीलत्वाल्लोकसाधारणविभवः श्रेष्ठी बभूव॥<sup>xiii</sup>

According to the Avishahyashreshthijataka, In a past life, Lord Bodhisattva was a wealthy best man who possessed the virtues of renunciation, character, family, knowledge, and humility. Being a man of great wealth, he was always engaged in hospitality and charity and he became known as Insufferable because he was free from the vices of miserliness and others. It is heard that:

बोधिसत्त्वभूतः किलायं भगवांस्त्यागशीलकुलविनयश्रुतज्ञानाविस्मयादिगुणसमुदितो  
धनदायमानो विभवसम्पदा सर्वातिथित्वादानुपरतदानसत्रो लोकहितार्थप्रवृत्तो दायकश्रेष्ठः  
श्रेष्ठी बभूव। मात्सर्यादिदोषाविषह्योऽविषह्य इति प्रकाशनामा॥<sup>xiv</sup>

In the Sasajataka, Benevolence is seen as before. There, in his previous life, the Supreme Buddha appeared in the form of a rabbit in a certain forest in the stage of Bodhisattva. The

character of that rabbit reflected the quality of Sattva, energy, contentment, and the quality of non-violence of body, verbal and mental. The rabbit also shows the quality of hospitality. In that birth, Indra, the king of the Gods, once went there in the guise of a poor Brahmin to test the hospitality of the rabbit. Then the rabbit gave up his body and accepted the hospitality. At that time the Brahmin was refused such hospitality by the rabbit because of his friendship was from the past. Then the rabbit said:

देयं च दित्साप्रवणं च चित्तं भवद्विधेनातिथिना च योगः।  
नावासुमेतद्धि सुखेन शक्यं तत्स्यादमोघं भवदाश्रयान्मे॥<sup>xv</sup>

Once, the Supreme Buddha manifested in the Tapovana forest as Agastya the sage while in the Bodhisattva stage. Then even in him, the characteristics of hospitality and generosity had appeared. For the welfare of the people, he became known as an equal of such character. If such charity, hospitality, greed, hatred and other dharma are soaked in the life of a sage, then it is necessary to awaken this dharma in the society of the world. It is also elevated in the rejoicing of charity, in the reproach of greed, hatred, delusion, childhood, in the virtue of contact with welfare friends, in the story of satisfaction, and the greatness of the Tathagata.

### **Conclusion:**

The Jatakas reflected in the Jatakamala contain many precepts for the welfare of the people, for the benefit of others and the education of all people. Everything that the Lord Buddha experienced in the stage of Bodhisattva in his previous births is heard in various Jatakas. What is found in this Jatakamala is of supreme purpose for human beings like a great herb. The nectar spoken by the Lord Buddha in the form of a thinker or transcending the last place of experience and thought is certainly regarded as the supreme medicine. For this reason, the Jatakamala is very important. What was the stage of mind, body, world, suffering, self-reliance, the pursuit of manhood, greed, jealousy, hatred, morality, etc. in the society of that time? What kind of legal system was there in society? What was the style of narrative in society at that time? How was the use of logic in the debate? How was addiction prevalent among men then? How was the crookedness of politics? What is the nature of hospitality? The correct answers to all such questions as to what was the importance of charity, humility, pious deeds, virtue and altruism in human society are found in the Jatakamala. This Jatakamala is said to be from the lips of the great man. Therefore, the words taught by the Jataka should be accepted and followed for the welfare of all.<sup>xvi</sup>

### **References:**

<sup>i</sup>Jayadevakritatagovindam-1/9

<sup>ii</sup> Jatakamala by Aryashura, Jagdish Chandra Mishra (Editor), Preface, pp. 5-6

<sup>iii</sup>Kulmashapindijatakam-10-12

<sup>iv</sup>Ibid-17-18

<sup>v</sup>Ibid-19-21

<sup>vi</sup>Vyaghrijatakam-9

<sup>vii</sup>Ibid-8

<sup>viii</sup> Right there, in the last part

ix Shivijatakam-3

x Ibid-25

xi Ibid-31

xii Ibid.-48-50

xiii Shrestha-jataka, in the early part

xiv The Avisahyasresthijatakam, in the opening part

xv Shashajatakam-32

xvi Agastyajataka, in the last part

### Selected Bibliography

1. Chaturvedi, Parshuram. *Cultural Glimpses of Buddhist Literature*. 1958 edition, Sahitya Bhavan, Allahabad
2. Choudhury, Suryanarayan. *Jatakamala (by Aryashura)*. Edition 1971, Motilal Banarsi Das, Patna
3. Das De, Gokul. *Significance of Jatakas*. Edition 1951, Calcutta University
4. Dev, Narendra. *Philosophy of Buddhism*. 1971 edition, Bihar Rashtrabhasha Parishad, Patna
5. Dharmarakshita, Bhikshu. *Precepts of Buddhism*. 1951 edition, Ajanta Press Ltd., Patna
6. Feer, M.L. *A Study of the Jatakas*. Edition 1963, Sushil Gupta Pvt. Ltd., Calcutta
7. Ghosh, Waridavarana. *Buddha o Bauddha*. 1942 edition, Karuna Prakashan, Calcutta
8. Kern, Hendrik. *The Jatakamala of Aryasura*. Edition 1943, Harvard University Press, Cambridge
9. Mahasthavira Mahabodhisabha. *Buddha-Vachanamrita*. 1956 edition, Sarnath, Varanasi
10. Mishra, Jagadish Chandra. *Jatakamala (by Aryashura)*. Edition 2017, Chaukhamba Surbharati Prakashan, Varanasi
11. Radhakrishnan, S. *Indian Philosophy (Vol.-I)*. Edition 1966, George Allen & Unwin Ltd., London
12. Sanskrit, Rahul. *Buddhist Culture*. 1952 edition, Modern Book Bhavan, Calcutta
13. Sharma, Mangesh. *Gitagovindakavyam (by Jayadeva)*. Edition 1899, Nirnaya Sagar Press, Bombay
14. Shastri, Chatursen. *Buddha and Buddhism*. 1947 edition, Hindi Sahitya Mandal, Bazar Sitaram, Delhi
15. Sinha, J.N. *History of Indian Philosophy (Vol.-I)*. Edition 1956, Sinha Publishing House, Calcutta
16. Vaidya, Parashuram. *Jatakamala (by Aryashura)*. Edition 1959, Mithila Vidyapeeth, Darbhanga, Bihar
17. Viyogi, Mohanlal Mahato. *Indian Culture during the Jataka period*. 1958 edition, Bihar Rashtrabhasha Parishad, Patna