

NARRATIVE CRITICISM AND A STUDY OF SETTING IN THE TEMIYA JĀTAKA

Me Me Khine

Assumption University, Thailand

Narrative criticism can be termed as critical hermeneutics in the sense that it interprets the text in the light of human existence. Although narrative criticism originated from the Biblical studies, it seems to me that it is appropriate for the study of any kinds of religious literature. This presentation is an attempt to apply narrative criticism to the study of Buddhist literature.

1. What is Narrative Criticism?

Narrative criticism is said to have developed within the field of biblical studies without an exact counterpart in secular world. If classified by secular critics, it might be viewed as a subspecies of a new rhetorical criticism or as a variety of the reader-response movement. Rhetorical criticism attempts to find the effect of a text by studying the way the work is created. Reader-response theory emphasizes on finding meaning in the consciousness of the one who reads the text. Biblical scholars, however, think of narrative criticism as an independent, parallel movement in its own right. (Powell, 1990, p. 19)

According to Powell, (1990, p. 23) narratives have two aspects: story and discourse. *Story* refers to the content of the narrative, i.e., what it is about. A story consists of such elements as events, characters, and settings, and the interactions of these elements comprise what we call plot. *Discourse* refers to the rhetoric of the narrative, how the story is told. Stories concerning the same basic events, characters, and settings can be told in ways that produce different narratives.

According to Flood, (1999, p. 120) narrative “as story” has a meaningful chronological sequence expressed through the genres of oral tradition, written text, conversation or personal narrative and music (songs and operas).

The elements of narrative include the five Ws that one might expect in the first paragraph of a news story: who (characters), where and when (settings), what and why (plot), to the extent that story and discourse can be separately analyzed. These three are elements of story. The fourth narrative element is the rhetoric, i.e., the how of the story-as-discoursed. Rhetoric refers to how the implied author persuades the implied readers to follow the story. Because narrative criticism (like literary criticism in general) asks “How does the text mean?”, it takes a keen interest in rhetoric. (Anderson & Moore, 1998, p.33)

Narrative theory involves the study of language and semiotics. It attempts to explain religion and generate new knowledge, culture, history, time, text, space (context), everything is interactive at one time. It is thus a comprehensive approach. It encourages cross-fertilization between different aspects of psychology, sociology, semiotics, and philosophy of language through narrative studies. Narrative approach helps us -

- i. learn, tell, and live stories (in multiple ways)
- ii. understand how reading of text is repeated to generations (from both insider /outsider points of view)
- iii. follow rational discourse. One narrative passes many contexts. For example the Adam and Eve story as understood by Jews, Christians and Muslims.
- iv. see overlapping of narratives (cross each other). For example, Biblical Mark, Matthew, Luke narrated the same event but was described in different ways. That is why they are called Synoptic Gospels.

According to Paul Ricoeur there are three dimensions of narrative approach. (Flood, 1999, p. 127)

- i. **Narrative realism:** which maintains that culture and history enact a live narrative pattern. Narrative realism claims that narrative structures exist in the human world itself and not just in the stories people tell about in the world. Human lives are already formed into stories before historians or biographers attempt to tell these stories. True stories are found, not constructed. (Fay, 1996, p. 179)

- ii. **Narrative constructionism:** that narrative is told or imposed upon culture and history. It claims that historians impose narrative structures on a formless flow of events. (Fay, 1996, p. 190)
- iii. **Narrativism:** that both lived and told narratives are true. It tries to be such a view, one that steers a middle course between narrative realism and narrative constructivism, hoping to capture what is worthwhile both. (Fay, 1996, p. 194)

1.2. How Would You Conduct Narrative Criticism?

There are three schools of narrative theology, the Chicago school, the Yale school and the California school. Both the Chicago and the Yale schools employ text-centered approach with the former having broader philosophical and cultural perspectives and the latter strictly focusing on the biblical materials alone. The Yale school sees the narratives of the Bible as “story like”, representing the familiar world or real people. It does not consider Biblical stories as narratives in the universal and anthropological sense. Instead it takes the stories as spiritually important, forming part of the stricter historical sense and as forming part and parcel of the scripture. The California school concentrates more on biography as a way of illuminating theology. The focus is on theological convictions which are rooted in the texture of a life; i.e., we discover a person’s convictions by discovering his or her story. Concepts such as grace and courage have meaning only when seen in the context of a biography. This approach recognizes that religious beliefs are living convictions which give shape to actual lives and actual communities. In this way, we open ourselves to the possibility that the only relevant critical examination of religious beliefs may be one which begins by attending to lived lives. Theology must be at least biography. (Striver, 1996, pp. 134-162)

Among the three schools of narrative theology I would prefer to adapt the Chicago school and the California school in my narrative criticism. The Chicago school of narrative theology has a wider perspective of not denying any methods such as historical criticism, literary criticism, form criticism, source criticism and redaction criticism. Instead it tries to synthesize all methods and comes up with an approach which is more

empirical (which has the text its foundation) and more reflective (because it does not stop at looking at the language) and more applicable to our lives. I believe that the Chicago school of narrative study, especially that of Ricoeur has a clear foundation and methodology for our analysis of any scriptures. At the first step, I can start my study of the scripture from semiotic level with the words, which can be metaphors. At the second phase, i.e. at the semantics level, the analysis will continue with the sentences that as a whole constitute the text, studying the different genres of narratives. At the final stage, I will choose the most appropriate meaning for our lives then to my life. The California school of narrative theology will guide me what to focus on while analyzing the *Temiya Jâtaka*. In one sense the *Tamiya Jâtaka* is one of the biographies of the Bodhisatta (the future Buddha) in his cultivation of perfections. By studying the convictions of Bodhisatta, I will understand the ideal practice of a true Buddhist.

Paul Ricoeur, in his article “*Towards a Narrative Theology: Its Necessity, Its Resources, Its Difficulties*” (Ricoeur, 1995, pp. 236-248), explains that we need narrative theology because the methods used before failed to serve their purposes.

Before 1940, the time of romantic criticism, secular critics paid a great deal of attention to establishing the identity, circumstances, and intentions of a work’s historical author. Any interpretation of a work by one of these masters would be expected to take into account the circumstances of the writing: the life and personality of the author at this point in his career, and perhaps the condition of English society at the time. It put a lot of emphasis on background information of a work of art.

Literary critics today prefer to speak of an implied author, who is reconstructed by the reader from the narrative. When a person reads a story, he or she will inevitably form some impression about that story’s author. The story itself conveys a sense of the author’s values and world view. The goal of such a definition, however, is not to arrive at a partial understanding of what the real author might have been like, but to elucidate the perspective from which the narrative must be interpreted. The implied author’s point of view can be determined without considering anything extrinsic to the narrative. Thus literary critics may speak of the intentions of the implied author without violating the basic principle that narratives should be interpreted on their own terms. When hermeneutical preference

is given to a work's implied author over its real, historical author, the narrative is allowed to speak for itself. The interpretive key no longer lies in background information, but within the text itself.

Identification of the implied author provides all that is needed in order to comprehend the literary meaning and impact of the narrative; thus it is possible to understand works that are anonymous. All narratives have an implied author, even if the real author is unknown. Even stories that have no real author – such as tales that have developed over a period of time by being passed down from generation to generation – can be studied according to the standards of narrative criticism. This is true because, regardless of the process through which a narrative comes into being, it will have a single implied author, which can be identified and described. (Powell, 1990, p.6)

Since the age of the Enlightenment, we are losing our ability to tell stories and listen to stories. We destroy the genuine sense of tradition and authority. We dominate, exploit and manipulate the natural environment of humankind and consequently human being themselves. These in turns make us forget the past sufferings of humankind, and causes us to lose our capacity for story telling. Therefore a rebirth of narrative is necessary for the rebirth of narrative in general and to give meaning to the Biblical narrative in particular.

In modernity, life has been partitioned into discrete segments and actions are not perceived to be within the context of larger wholes or parts of wider narratives. The modern self as a consequence does not have such a unified sense of identity because it does not have the unity of a narrative linking 'birth to life to death'. But even the modern self cannot be wholly stripped of narrative identity, for in the temporal nature of life, narrative is generated inevitably from the process of birth and death. Even at the mundane level, statements can only be understood through a narrative. (Flood, 1999, p.129)

Narrative is essential for establishing a moral identity for the self within communities, such as the family, city, neighborhood, or tribe, who is bound by their restrictions. Narrative is central to the development of both a sense of personal identity as well as historical or traditional identity and it is through narrative that ethics is linked to the unity or coherence of a particular life. (Flood, 1999, p. 129)

Paul Ricoeur believes that theology should be rebuilt on a narrative basis. He affirms that:

- i. Theology discourse can expand the horizon of meaning not clearly mentioned in the narratives and symbols in the Jewish and Christian traditions.
- ii. Stories can be understood through a person's individual and communal histories and stories.
- iii. A narrative theology takes into account the long period of history of several millennia.

According to Paul Ricoeur, (1995, pp. 236-248) the main resources of narrative theology are in the achievements in the field of narratology. These resources exist in the art of emplotment; in the understanding caused by the configurational act of emplotment, in the role of tradition, and in the "meaning" of narrative.

Firstly, in the art of emplotment, narratology inquires all the literary devices used by narrators. This is to draw an intelligible story from a variety of events or reciprocally, to take the events into a story. Emplotment brings together the diverse features such as circumstances, agents, interactions, ends, means and unintended results. Time and poetic composition of story are important in this area. Temporality connects the two types of time: the pure time itself and the story incidents. Configurational act of narrating gathers all the incidents of the story and creates a temporal whole by mediating between time as passage and time as duration.

Secondly, narratology inquires the understanding caused by configurational act of emplotment. Narrative intelligibility is more concerned with practical wisdom or moral judgement than with theoretical reason.

Thirdly, narratology investigates the role of tradition in the transmission, reception and interpretation of received stories. Traditionality is complex because it relies on the flexible dialectics between innovation and sedimentation. Sedimentation makes things stabilized whereas innovation encourages experimentation and new paradigms.

Fourthly, narratology inquires the "meaning" of a narrative. Such meaning is not confined to the so-called inside of the text. It occurs at the intersection between the world of the text and the world of the readers.

Only when reader's experience has been transfigured by the plot, then the meaning is actualized.

For literary criticism the world of action is the 'inside' of the text. Language establishes it as a self-containing" entities. The major problem a hermeneutics of poetic text exists in the three-fold mediation of referentiality (humankind and the world), of communicability (human being and human being), and of self understanding (human being and her or himself).

In order to have a better understanding of narrative criticism we should also have some ideas of interpreting the text we read. There are many ways of reading a text. According to M. H. Abrams (quoted in Powell, 1990, p. 11) there are four basic types of literary criticism and all of the various schools may be understood as representing one or more of these four types.

- i. *Expressive* types of criticism are author-centered and tend to evaluate a work in terms of the sincerity and adequacy with which it expresses the views and temperament of its writer.
- ii. *Pragmatic* types of criticism are reader-centered and view the work as something that is constructed in order to achieve a particular effect on its audience; the work is evaluated according to its success in achieving that aim.
- iii. *Objective* types of criticism are text-centered, viewing the literary product as a self-sufficient world in itself. The work must be analyzed according to intrinsic criteria, such as the interrelationship of its component elements.
- iv. *Mimetic* types of criticism view the literary work as a reflection of the outer world or of human life and evaluate it in terms of the truth or accuracy of its representation. (Powell, 1990, p.11)

2. The *Jâtaka* Stories in General

The *Jâtaka* stories are stories of the previous existences of Gotama Buddha, while he was as yet but a *bodhisatta*. A *Jâtaka* is an extensive work in verses containing five hundred and forty-seven stories of previous existences as recounted by the Buddha. *Jâtaka* tales offer abundant material for religious education. Central motifs in the biographies of the Buddha

elucidate moral principles, values, and ethics, and certain well-known *Jâtaka* tales serve a didactic purpose in teaching younger generations about the tradition. *Jâtaka* are salient across Buddhist communities and the themes they recount readily resonate with other aspects of religious knowledge and practices. As such, recounting certain *Jâtaka* stories in public sermons or even representing them in paintings can serve as commentary on current social and political issues. Stories about the Buddha's former lives are also a form of entertainment. In Burma, for example, these stories have traditionally been the subject of popular theatrical performances that continue through the night. (*Encyclopedia of Buddhism*, Vol. 1, 2004, p. 46)

2.1. The Temiya *Jâtaka* (synopsis)

The Temiya *Jâtaka* is *Jâtaka* No. 538 (in Cowell's collection) which depicts the story the Buddha-to-be in which he fulfills his perfection of resolute determination, *adhithana*. The Temiya *Jâtaka* or the *Mugapakkha Jâtaka* is a story about a former life of the Buddha, which has been extremely popular. In this bizarre story, the future Buddha was born as a king's long awaited heir apparent. When he is a month old he is taken to sit on the lap of his doting father while he is on his judgment seat sentencing criminals to violent punishments, including death. There is no suggestion that these sentences are improper: the king is only doing his duty. As a future Buddha is in full possession of his faculties from birth, the baby prince understands what is going on. It reminds him that in his former life that he too was a king and found it his duty to pronounce death sentences, and that as a consequence he had to undergo torment in hell for eighty thousand years. Determined to escape a repetition of that fate, he decides to pretend he is a cretinous deaf-mute, as the only way of avoiding the succession. He does not look like a defective child, so his father employs the most extravagant stratagems to make him react. His resolve remains such that no amount of pain or temptation to pleasure can provoke him into a response. Finally, when he has grown up, his father gives up and decides to have him destroyed; he orders a man to take him to the cemetery, kill him and bury him. While the man is digging the grave, the future Buddha speaks (for the first time in his life) and preaches to him.

The man then calls the future Buddha's parents and he preaches to them. The whole city comes out to hear him. All are converted and settle down to lead a religious life there in the wilderness. The state is abandoned; the only people left in the city are the drunks. (Gombrich, 1988, p. 70)

2.2. Buddhist Hermeneutics and the *Jâtaka* Stories

Buddhist philosophy cannot be said of lacking hermeneutics. Lord Buddha himself in the *Catuhpratisaranasutra*, provided rules of the interpretation of his teaching as: to rely on the teaching, not the teacher, to rely on the meaning, not the letter, to rely on the definitive meaning (*nitārtha*), not the interpretable meaning (*neyārtha*) and to rely on wisdom (*jnana*), not on [ordinary] consciousness (*vijñāna*). (Lopez, 1992, p. 3). Thus the four rules of textual interpretation will be (1) the *dharma* is the refuge and not the person; (2) the spirit is the refuge and not the letter; (3) the sutra of precise meaning is the refuge and not the sutra of provisional meaning; (4) (direct) knowledge is the refuge and not the (discursive) consciousness. Thus the Buddhist truths threefold wisdom, or *prajna* arise from listening (*śrutamayī*), reflecting (*cintamayī*) or meditation (*bhāvanamayī*). (ibid, p. 23) Then, how should we see *Jataka* stories in the light of Buddhist Hermeneutics?

Firstly, we must accept that *Jâtakas* are tales and thus it would be difficult to take them as reality. However, many scholars were of the opinion that the *Jâtakas* such as we have them give a picture of Indian life in the days of Buddha, that is, in the sixth and fifth century B.C. or at least at the time of the redaction of the canon in the third century B.C. Since then, however, it has become the almost general opinion of scholars that only the *Jâtaka-Gathas* can claim canonical authority, and be regarded as documents of the third, or even the fifth century B.C, while the *Jâtaka* commentary, as we have it, can claim no higher antiquity than the fifth or sixth century A.D., though in its prose parts also it contains old traditions which in many cases may go back to the same early period as *the Gathas*. (quoted in Winternitz, 1928, p. 2)

Then, we should take the *Jâtakas* as tales of “moral” teachings where myths are included for decorative purpose. Here the second rule of textual interpretation of Buddhist hermeneutics that “the spirit is the

refuge not the letter” should be applied. We need to see the core or the real message embedded in these stories. We must bear in mind, as pointed out by Reynolds, that “mythically constructed biography of the Buddha, has from the very beginning, played a fundamental role in the structure and dynamics of Theravada religion.” (in Schober, 1997, 19) Myths in *Jātakas* are to elaborate the doctrines, just as myths without doctrines will be meaningless.

3. Narrative Understanding of Setting

Mark Allan Powell (1990, p.69) likens the basic elements of a story, namely: events, characters and setting, to the grammatical components of English sentence structure. Events correspond roughly to verbs, for in them the story’s action is expressed. Characters are like nouns, for they perform these actions, or, perhaps, they describe the characters involved in the action. And settings are the adverbs of literary structure, they designate when, where, and how the action occurs.

3.1. Spatial Setting

According to Elizabeth Struthers Malbon (quoted in Powell, 1990, p. 76) there are three types of spatial settings:

- i. geopolitical settings (e.g. regions, cities, towns)
- ii. topographical settings (e.g. physical feature of the earth such as the mountains, the hills, the rivers, etc.) and
- iii. architectural settings (e.g. houses, synagogues).

3.2. Temporal Setting

Paul Ricoeur distinguishes between *mortal* time and *monumental* time. Mortal time is the time in which the characters of a story live out their lives, just as people do in the real world. Mortal time is measured by calendars, watches, clocks, and sundials. Monumental time, on the other hand, refers to the broad sweep of time that includes but also transcends history. It cannot be measured either by people in the real world or by

characters in a story. Nevertheless, people have some sense of what they think it is like.

3.3. Social Settings

Social settings concern social circumstances. These include the political institutions, class structures, economic systems, social customs, and general cultural context assumed to be operative in the work. (Powell, 1990, p. 74)

Identification of social settings is especially important in ancient literature, because so much of the context is not immediately accessible to the understanding of real readers today. In secular literary criticism, scholars recognize that literature is not comprehensible without some understanding of other cultural phenomena assumed by the text. In such works, the normally asked questions are what is the social environment portrayed in the work – the manners, mores, customs, rituals, codes of conduct of a society?; what does the author seem to think about them?; and how do they affect the characters? (Griffith, 1982, p.55)

4. Setting in the Temiya *Jâtaka*

The setting of Temiya helps to realize the fulfillment of perfection, the importance of renunciation, and the value of ascetic life. The following discussion will attempt to describe the places, time, and social circumstances within which events transpire in the Temiya *Jâtaka*. The interest will be in the metaphorical and connotative value that such settings receive within the narrative. It is hoped that the following analysis will bring a better understanding and appreciation of the *Jâtaka* story and finally grasp its theological value.

4.1. Soteriological Setting in the Temiya *Jâtaka*

Geopolitically, the story of Temiya is set in the palace of Benares, of Jambudipa. For topographical settings, the world is divided into the world of the thirty-three gods, the world of the higher gods and the world of men, the world of the Brahma, the six heavens of the gods and various

hells. Architectural settings include palace scene and forest scene. In the palace scene, the throne, the chamber, the sumptuous bed under a white umbrella, the royal pomp, etc are mentioned. In the forest scene, emphasis is on the forest-wild alone, a hut of leaves and a grove of trees.

What important message do these spatial settings bring to us, the readers? To me, the most important spatial setting is the contrast between the descriptions of the palace (the place for kingship) and that of the forest. The palace scene is always a reminder for the prince to be aware of hells (the place for punishment of wrongdoing). On the other hand, the forest (the place for asceticism) is depicted as the right place for attaining renunciation, which will be the only escape from hell. Various tests on the prince to make him respond, speak or show signs were always carried out in the palace. The palace itself symbolizes the ground for suffering, all kinds of woes, although it is outwardly very pleasant, grand and has all the physical comfort. In contrast, a hermitage, a hut of leaves, with the requisite articles for an ascetic, furnished with an apartment for the night and another for the day, a tank, a pit and fruit-trees is a blissful place which meets bare necessity is the ideal place for Temiya who attempts to escape from hell. A bed of leaves is pleasant for him because “he does not mourn over the past, does not weep for the future but must meet the present as it comes. Mourning about the hopeless past or some uncertain future need, dries a young man’s vigor up as when you cut a fresh green reed.”

The Great Being announcement of his homelessness at the request of his father, the king of Kasi to come back to his proper home:

“By parents I was left forlorn, by city and by town,
... - I have no home my own...Here in this forest-wild alone, ...

is also a description of the ideal condition of an ascetic life.

4.2. Temporal Setting in the Temiya *Jâtaka*

The story of Temiya told by the lord Buddha starts with “Once upon a time”. So it may be assumed that it is ahistorical. However, most of the birth stories start with once upon a time and ends with thus who is who in the story. So we must assume that temporal setting is important in

the understanding of the narrative. In this story the importance of time is the emphasis it pays on the contrast between twenty years of reign in Benares and eighty thousand years of suffering in hell. The fact that ruling a kingdom for twenty years is equivalent to eighty thousand years of suffering in the Ussada hell denotes the gravity of being a king.

The concept of monumental time in the Temiya is shown through cycles of life. First the king rules a kingdom for twenty years, then suffers in hell for eighty thousand years. After that he enjoys a long life in the world of gods and then comes back to the human world as a king and will head again to hell. Soteriologically, these rebirths throw lights to the Buddhist understanding of *samsara*. At the last moment of the story, all the residents of seven kingdoms enjoyed the ascetic lives in the forest and at the end of their lives become destined for the world of Brahma. Here the temporal setting reinforces the Buddhist teaching of escaping *samsara* and the way to do so is by renouncing the worldly life.

Temiya's hearing of the wheel of chariot striking against the threshold, "My desire has attained its end" denotes the right time: "Your sixteen years' labor has reached its end". This is the actualization of the beginning of an ascetic life, which will lead the prince to the ending of life, a satisfactory end.

As for mortal time, the temporal settings in Temiya are distinctive. Chronological time is measured annually; each year a different test is given since he is a baby prince until he comes of age. When the queen is claiming the boon the king has granted her at the birth of the prince in order to save her son, the mortal time starts with life-time, then is reduced to seven years to seven months... to seven days. The king at long last agrees to honor seven-day of reign to his son as the last test, if the prince responds to grandeur of kingship, he will enjoy it for his life time, if not it is only seven days to receive the praise or blame. In my opinion, there is an important connotative meaning in the time frame "seven days" because most Buddhist believe that only seven days after death, a being will eventually obtain a next life.

One might think that youth is a time of enjoying life, but in Temiya, this is not the case. According to the Temiya *Jâtaka*, youth or young age is the best time for renunciation: "the ascetic's life best suits the young, - thus counsel all the wise."

Old age and death is constantly wearing out human life is described: “The world is smitten by death, and surrounded by old age, the (days and) nights pass by unfailingly; ... Just as a full river runs on, never turning back, so the life of men runs on, never turning back. Just as a full river might carry away trees growing on its banks, so beings are carried away by old age and death.” (Collins, 1998, p. 432).

4.3. Social Setting in the Temiya *Jâtaka*

The prominent social setting that carries theological value is that of tests of determination of the Bodhisatta (the Great Being). The prince Temiya, for fear of *samsara*, pretends to be deaf, dumb, and cripple, bearing all tests of physical tortures. Yet, he is happy to be tortured than to suffer in hell. The tests administered to him show the social customs and cultural practices of the time of the story.

Here, in my opinion, the social setting of the story is not as much important as that of the soteriological teaching. In essence, the Bodhisatta’s tolerance and determination for non- actions for sixteen years depict his cultivation of perfections.

The political setting for Temiya story starts with a kingdom, which is facing a lack of heir apparent. This problem is solved by the act of truth of the virtuous chief queen. However, another crisis arises when the baby prince hears the harsh punishment of his father, the king, to his subjects, the four thieves. The crisis continues for sixteen years. The scene here denotes the notion that kingship is bad, it is the cause of hell, and there is no escape from *samsara*. The conflict between the fear of sin and the inheritance of the throne from his father, which everyone should have desired is the climax of the story. The conflict is resolved by the prince’s winning over not only the hearts of his parents but also the residents of seven kingdoms.

Some scholars believe that the emphasis on observing silence in Temiya’s political culture is to oppose the kingship (or government in modern time). The idea stems from the fact that the avoidance of wrongdoing (*adhamma-cariya*) is in fact the righteous thing, *dhamma*.

The political setting of Temiya ends with the scene of a righteous king, the king who keeps his promise, who gives chances to his citizens. At the end of the story, we see a three-league-long hermitage built by Sakkha and occupied by the citizens who are leading an ascetic life being taken care by the Great Being. This is followed by three kingdoms abandoned, with their houses open, the elephants and horses left to roam wild in the woods, and the money in the treasuries scattered about. These settings emphasize the difference between the worldly and the soteriological. Temiya *Jâtaka* envisions an ideal world populated with the residents who have rigorously practiced the eight Ecstatic Meditations, and at the end of their lives were destined for the world of Brahma. This is to affirm that the ascetic life is more desirable than a life of worldly pleasure.

5. Conclusion

In the Temiya *Jâtaka*, the narrative of the fulfillment of the perfection of determination (*adithana*) weaves its way through particularly social settings of physical tortures and ideal world and the ascetic values of renunciation, the refusal to enjoy worldly life and the difficulties of renunciation. It also shows that real human goods must, ultimately, be abandoned in the ascetic search for ultimate felicity.

My study here is like the first sketch in a painting of literary appreciation and theological understanding. Of course, the picture will become more vivid, colorful and meaningful when subtler strokes of brushes are added on. The analysis of characters, events and points of view will do so. However, the analysis limits itself to setting.

To sum up, the Temiya *Jâtaka* successfully mingles ascetic values and soteriological motifs in an ideal image of a Bodhisatta (the Great Being). Perfection and asceticism are the two elements of an ideal life for the Buddhists. The story can clearly convey this message.

When I first read the Temiya *Jâtaka* both in my native language and English, I find the story somewhat boring. The language is to some extent archaic, the story is simple and I have heard it so many times in my young age. However, when I read it again and again to analyze it, my understanding of the story has increased as I discover the underlying serious message of the story. Narrative criticism has helped me to reach a better

understanding of the story. As general reader and as a Buddhist I can enjoy the inner meaning of the text. It also helps me to look into the outside meaning, the history of the time this story was told. What is most striking is that it makes me see the moral values embedded in a story of Buddhist scripture.

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