A NOTE ON THE MOTIF OF *THE SERIVANIJA JATAKA*

When Theodor Benfey[1] observed the existence of fables reminiscent of the Greek in his study of the *Pancatantra* in 1859 and shrewdly suspected that they drew from a Buddhist source, he was not aware of the far greater number of such that were to be found in what proved to be that source, the *Jatakatthavannana*.

Some years before him, however, Rev. Spence Hardy[2], who had come across the Sinhala version of this compendium of the 13th century, the *Pansiya Panas Jataka Potha*, and had had it translated for him, had already lit upon this source, making him remark, (if with some sarcasm intermixed with his surprise) that not a few of the tales which had passed under the name of Aesop were here to be found and that the schoolboy of his native England "is little aware, as he reads of the wit of the fox and the cunning of the monkey, that these animals become, in the course of ages the teacher of the three worlds, Buddha"[3].

The original of this work was the voluminous Pali book, the *Jatakatthakatha* or *Jatakassa Vannana*, otherwise (and more popularly) the *Jatakatthavannana*, a complete manuscript of which was discovered by Viggo Fausboll[4] in the Royal Library of Copenhagen, written in Sinhalese characters on 806 large ola leaves, which he subsequently set about editing in six volumes.

The expectation was that Rhys Davids[5] would, then 1880, commence on an English translation of this, but other engagements obliged him to give up the work after the first volume, which included the *Nidānakatha* and 40 stories. But by then he had himself been struck by the similarity of some of these stories to the fables of Aesop and briefly commented on three of such parallels. These are the *Sihacamma Jataka* (No. 189) with Aesop's *The Ass in the Lion's Skin*, the *Kacchapa Jataka* (No. 215) with Aesop's *The Tortoise and the Eagle*, and the *Jambu-Khadaka Jataka* (No. 294) with Aesop's *The Crow and the Fox*[6].

The work of translating the *Jatakatthavanna* into English was soon taken up by a team of four eminent scholars, R. Chalmers, W.H.D. Rouse, H.T. Francis and R.A. Neil under the editorship of E.B. Cowell between 1895 and 1907[7], during the course of which Neil and Cowell died. But even as the work proceeded, already

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[1] *Pantschatantra* vol. I, Leipzig (1859) p. 192, also 72.

[2] *Manual of Buddhism – its Modern Development* London (1853) p. 100 – 101.

[3] *op. cit.* p. 100.

[4] See his *Five Jatakas* London (1861) preface p. 1. He first intended to publish from time to time some of the more interesting parts of it, though he ultimately brought out the whole of the Pali text in Roman lettering.

[5] *Buddhist Birth Stories* London (1880).

[6] *op. cit.* intro. p. ii – xii.

[7] *The Jataka* Cambridge. Neil died in 1901, Cowell in 1902.

other jataka stories with motifs reflecting motifs of Greek fable, myth and even historical anecdote began to surface, calling for an explanation of the phenomenon.

The Aesopic of these were in 1889 listed by J. Jacobs in his *History of the Aesopic Fables*[8], though, like E.J. Thomas[9], he too thought the number at the time too few to suggest a "borrowing" and took them to be either coincidences or, as Cowell[10] was to call them, "pieces of folk-lore which have floated about the world for ages as the stray waīfs of literature and are liable everywhere to be appropriated by any casual claimant".

Other parallels were observed and commented upon, both by Classicists like W.G. Rutherford and R.W. Macan and by Orientalists like Max Muller and A.B. Keith. But these again were evident enough, as for instance those which Rhys Davids first observed, and are included among such instances under "Parallels and folktale elements" in the General Index to the Cowell edition[11] or listed by Jacobs.

There are other motifs which have been drawn from Greek story, mostly from fable, for the composition of jatakas, which are not as easily identifiable due to the ingenuity of the authors who (maybe, well aware of their source of origin) made fresh story out of them, introducing a new locality (Indian) and characters, plot-inversion, transposition or substitution of detail, revaluation of moral, and so on – though all the while some feature or significant other evidence might remain as a clue to the original inspiration.

Apart from these, there exist several jatakas which have been compounded of the plots or significant details drawn from more than one such exotic motif. Notable among these are the *Kaka* (No. 140) and *Kapi* (404), *Sumsumara* (No. 208) and *Vanara* (No. 342), also the *Gutha Pana* (No. 227).

Sometimes a motif might appear as an item in a more complex jataka, like the seventh and eight dreams of king Pasenadi of the *Mahasupina Jataka* (No. 77)[12] or the twelfth *praśna* ("The Gem") of the *Maha Ummagga* (No. 546), of which the fifth, which became popular as the solution of the chalk-circle, traces back to the

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[8] London (1889) vol. I, p. 102.

[9] H.T. Francis and E.J. Thomas *Jataka Tales* Cambridge (1916) p. 5 – 6. He called what he found in the jatakas "no more than a scanty contribution to the Aesopic question."

[10] *op. cit.* preface p. vii.

[11] In vol. VI. General Index p. 34.

[12] These respectively reflect the Hades-vision of Ocnus and his ass and the Water-carriers, depicted alongside one another in many art works found in Italy and Greece, perhaps after the Polygnotus murals of the club-house of the Cnidians in Delphi. See my "Another Jataka with a Greek Myth Motif" *Journal of Religious Studies* Punjabi University of Patiala, vol. XVII no. 1 (Spring 1989) p. 46 – 53. For a briefer version, see " A Jataka King's Greek Dreams" *Buddha Pradeepa* (Daily News Vesak Annual) Colombo (2007) p. 40 – 43.

Bible (*Kings* 3.12 – 26). Muller referred to the use (more than once) of the clue of *nulla vestigia retrorsum*, which traces back to the Aesopic fable of *The Lion and the Fox* (though ultimately to the myth of Hercules and Cacus), alerting someone (like the monkey of the *Nalapāna Jataka* (No. 20)) who might otherwise have walked unsuspectingly into grave danger[13].

Among the jatakas with simpler plots, but whose motifs are not as easily referable to their possible sources of inspiration due to the genius of the jataka authors who had built upon them their Buddhist stories, are such compositions as the *Nalapana* just mentioned, the *Bhojajaniya* (No.23), *Vissasabhojana* (No.93), *Godha* (No.138), *Nangutthara* (No.144) and possibly a few others.

Already it would have been evident that where these Indian stories were based on motifs, or portions of such reminiscent of Greek fable, myth or historical anecdote, I have accepted them as having been imitative or inspired by the Greek, not the other way round nor deriving from a common other source, much less a matter of coincidence or of a common, if remarkable, genetic physiology. These 'parallels' are too numerous to be the result of the latter possibilities, yet reasonable in quantum, when considering the totality of Indian story, to be anything but the contribution of the Indo-Greeks whose presence in North–west India as a significant community during the flourishing of Buddhism and the proliferation of the birth-stories of the Buddha is now well established in history. Chronology, opportunity and a comparative study of individual story–motifs and stories based on them have shown this to be the explanation, to the exclusion of any other, at least as regards the original direction of the movement of the generality of such. Admittedly, a few motifs do appear which are attributable to common other sources, Persian Jewish or Babylonian among them - though it is likely that even these were swept into India with the Greeks.

I have neither the wish nor the space to reiterate here my arguments for the view I hold, as they may already have been encountered in my discussion of other jatakas, and have since been more comprehensively presented in my *Greek Story Motifs in the Jatakas*[14]. Of the Greek presence in North-west India (and even Sri Lanka) during this time, readers may find somewhat more information in a recent article of mine published in this journal, titled *Greeks in the Mahavamsa*[15].

As the jatakas which in any way suggest the influence of Greek story or story-motif have perhaps now been recognized, little remains to be added to the discussion unless archaeology turns up new material in the regions of India in which the Greeks lived and worked with Buddhist art, or one is prepared to present a

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[13]Selected Essays on Language, Mythology and Religion vol. I. London (1881) p. 509 – 510.
[14] Colombo (2004)
[15] *Sri Lanka Journal of Humanities* vol. XXXII (2006) p. 1 – 22.

different view-point through a radical reinterpretation of the evidence with which he is faced.

For my part there remains but one jataka upon which I wish to express my opinion, one which I would class under the last sort of stories mentioned above – those with simple plots but whose motifs are not as easily referable to their possible sources of inspiration due (as observed) to the ingenuity of the jataka authors who innovated upon them.

Up until now I had been hesitant about treating this jataka, which I deal with in this note, the popular *Serivanija* (No. 3) even as one of these latter. Yet there was always a nagging suspicion that, if not directly, its author may have been someone, possibly (as I think, in many other instances) an Indo-Greek Buddhist (monk?), who had been, at one or more removes, influenced in the fashioning of his story by an Aesopic fable, one of the most popular of them, one which most of us knew as school-children and could very well also have been carried to India with the crowds of Greeks who settled in those parts following Alexander. This is none other than the fable of *The Woodsman and his Axe* – or, as it is otherwise known, *Hermes and the Woodsman*.

Despite the grounds for my thinking so, I reiterate that I remain somewhat sceptical myself and leave it to readers to judge for themselves – please, of course, in the light of the evidence of the so many other such adaptations as also the argument that I put forward here.

The *Serivanija* is just the third of the 547 jatakas which constitute the *Jatakatthavannana* and belongs with its first book, being commentarial, like the rest of its 150, to just a single *gatha*. It has no proper *paccuppannavatthu* or Story of the Present of its own, leaning, for the most part on the one preceding, with the observation (which I quote in full, italicizing the relevant words),

> This lesson *too* was taught by the Blessed One at Savatthi, *also about a Brother who gave up persevering*.
>
> For, when the man was brought by the Brethren, *exactly as in the foregoing case*, the Master said, " You, Brother, who after devoting yourself to the glorious doctrine which bestows Path and Fruit, are giving up persevering, will suffer long, like the hawker of Seri who lost a golden bowl worth a hundred thousand pieces".
>
> The Brethren asked the Blessed One to explain this to them. The Blessed One made clear a thing concealed from them by rebirth.

As the jataka proper (the *atitavatthu* or Story of the Past) goes – the Bodhisatta had, five aeons ago been born in the kingdom of Seri and earned his livelihood as a travelling salesman, dealing in (among other knick-knacks) items of costume-jewellery. Hence he was called the Serivan.

With him on his rounds went another of the same trade, a greedy fellow (who was, like him, also known as Serivan)[16]. So when one day they crossed the river Telavaha and came to the city of Andhapura, they decided to apportion the streets between themselves and ply their trade there, but on the understanding that each was free to re-visit the streets the other had finished working in his part of the city.

Now, in one of the streets that fell to the lot of this companion of the Bodhisatta lived a poor old woman and her young granddaughter – the only surviving members of the family of a once-rich merchant who had, before he died, lost all his wealth and his sons and been reduced to abject poverty. Nevertheless it happened that they had, among their pots and pans, the solid gold bowl from which the merchant used to eat, it being so covered with grime and dirt from long disuse that the two of them did not know it was of gold.

So when the trader came to their door, calling "Trinkets to sell,"[17] the girl begged her grandmother to get her an ornament from him, and since they had neither money nor anything of worth, offer in exchange this bowl. Thereupon the old woman called the fellow and showed it to him, asking him for something in return for it for the girl

But when the dealer, taking the bowl in his hand, made a scratch upon it and realized it was of gold, such greed came upon him that he thought of getting it for

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[16] The *gatha* confirms the name Serivan as being that of the fellow-trader. So why give the Bodhisatta also the same name, when names are unlimited? The scholiast seeks to diffentiate by the ending – but Chalmers (who is the translator of this and the other jatakas of vol. I of the Cowell edition) shows the attempt is mistaken. The Sinhala *Pansiya Panas Jataka Potha* resolves the matter by calling the Bodhisatta Kacchaputa, falling back on what must have been a nickname for such *vanija*. See n.18 below.

[17] "*Manike ganhatha*" – "Buy waterpots" – or otherwise "Waterpots to sell" (Chalmers – also Rhys Davids (*op.cit.* p. 154 and 155)). But the girl expects to get some ornament from the trader. If he (and the Bodhisatta) were dealing in pots, they would be carrying huge bundles. *Kacchaputa* however suggests a satchel, or if *kaccha* is taken to mean "armpit" instead of pouch, and *puta* the pouch, a pouch carried under the armpit, a satchel – and hence small items – and of the kind the girl expected him to have. The Sinhala version seems to think so – though it is too specific in rendering these as bangles (කදා වළලු). Of *manike* as waterpot the *Pali-English Dictionary* ed. T. W. Rhys Davids and W. Stede says, "Whether this is the original meaning of the word remains doubtful; the connection with *mani* jewel must have been prevalent at some time."

next to nothing. So, crying it was not worth a dime, he threw it on the ground, rose up from his seat and left – expecting, of course, to come back for it (as he did soon afterwards) with a trifling offer.

Before he could do so, however, the Bodhisatta, as agreed, happened to visit this same street crying, "Trinkets to sell." Seeing him, the girl made her request once more, telling her granddaughter that while the first dealer was a harsh-spoken man, this one seemed nice and kindly in his speech. So the old woman, calling him and telling him what had transpired with the other dealer, likewise offered the bowl to him. But when the Bodhisatta saw that the bowl was of gold, he immediately confessed to them that it was so and that it was worth as much as a hundred thousand pieces. Thereupon, the old woman, saying that it must have been his goodness that had turned the bowl's base metal into gold, asked him to pay what he liked, take it and leave. Having but 500 pieces and his goods, also worth as much, the Bodhisatta gave her all of it short of 8 pieces, which he asked to keep back to pay the boatman, and left for the river.

No sooner than he departed, back came the other fellow to take possession of the bowl. But when the old woman told him what had happened[18], such intense grief (and anger) came upon him that, flinging aside his money and goods and arming himself with the beam of his scales, he set off in hot pursuit of the Bodhisatta. Then, finding the latter already in mid – stream, he cried to the boatman to put back to shore - which the boatman did not do, being ordered not to do so by the Bodhisatta.

Thereupon, unable to endure the great loss that had resulted from his greed, the man suffered what appears to have been a massive heart-attack; his heart, we are told, cracked like the mud at the bottom of a tank, which the sun had dried up; blood gushed from his mouth, and through the hatred which he had contracted against the Bodhisatta, he fell dead then and there.

This is no more than a prosaic summary of a jataka that has been rendered more artistically and elaborately in its original Pali and Sinhala versions and consequently one of the more popular of the compendium, being unfolded time and again in sermon, literature, drama, song and paint over the centuries. On the other hand, the original form in which the Aesopic fable that corresponds to this, comes to

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[18]The old woman refers to the Bodhisatta as one who seemed to be the master of the Serivanija (*tayham pana sāmakasadiso eko dhammikavanijo*) – which is surprising, since we are nowhere given to understand such a relationship of the two. Rhy Davids comments (*op. cit.* p. 156 n. 1): "The reader will not take this too seriously. The old lady's scorn turns as easily here to irony as her gratitude above finds expression in flattery" – meaning the bowl turning to gold due to the goodness of the Bodhisatta. Chalmers rightly puts the relevant translation in brackets.

us, like the majority of the Aesopica, as a terse narrative, leaving it to those who wished (like Socrates in jail, for instance, or a Babrius, Phaedrus or Avianus) to present it in more elaborate dressing. To translate the Greek just as we have it:[19]

> A woodsman, who was cutting wood on the bank of a river, lost his axe in its waters. There was nothing he could do about it, so he sat down and wept. Hermes (the god) found out the reason for the man's grief and took pity on him. So he dived into the river and came up with a golden axe and asked him if this was the axe he had lost. The man said it was not. Whereupon the god dived again and came up with a silver axe. Then, when the man said that not even this was his, the god dived in a third time and brought up the axe which truly belonged to him. Accordingly, Hermes was so pleased with his honesty that he gave him all the axes.
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> Now, when our woodsman rejoined his friends and told them what had happened, one of them thought he would do the very thing the other had done. So he went to the river and deliberately threw his axe into the flowing waters, then sat down and wept. Then Hermes appeared to him too, and when he learnt the cause of his lament – just as in the case of the other man, he dived in and brought up a golden axe and inquired of the man whether this was the one he had lost. The man was delighted and cried, "Yes, this is it!".
>
> The god was so disgusted with the fellow's complete lack of shame that he not only kept back that axe but refrained from restoring him his own.

No one, on a superficial reading of the two stories, the Indian birth-story of the Buddha and the Greek fable of the Aesopic mode, would think the one could have had anything to do with the other. The former has as its location an Indian village, its participants, an old woman and her daughter and two traders; the latter is set in the forest and takes place between a god and two woodsmen. One concerns a bowl, the other axes. What the jataka wishes to elicit from its story is no more than the grief experienced at the failure to acquire a valuable thing, presumably through lack of perseverance; what the fable make explicit is not only that honesty is a noble quality (loved by the gods themselves) but that it is (oft – times) rewarded. (I find

[19] C. Halm *Fabulae Aesopicae Collectae* Leipzig (1852) p.153 – 154, fable 308 *Xuleuomenos kai Hermes*.

the latter often coarsely expressed, and in respect of this same fable, by the observation "Honesty is the best policy" as though it were simply a matter of diplomacy).

If however we disregard the grand-daughter of the jataka (she merely supplies the motive for wanting to sell the bowl) and the silver axe of the Greek (a mere intensification), the basic affinity becomes more manifest. The former concerns an old woman, a bowl (declared now iron, now gold), two traders, one of whom tells a lie and loses it, the other speaks the truth concerning it and wins it: the latter concerns a god, axes (one, iron, the other gold, but the two held up like the bowl as a single), two woodsmen, one of whom tells a lie concerning it and loses his own as well, the other, who tells the truth and gets the gold as well as his own.

The artistic innovativeness of the *Serivanija* author is not confined to the mutation of locality and characters alone of the original that was at the back of his mind; it is evident in his treatment of the motif itself. For he has subjected it to inversion, making the trader, who claimed the object at issue (the bowl) was of cheap metal in the jataka the liar as against the man who declared it was gold (the Bodhisatta), whereas it was the other way round in the fable – the woodsman who claimed his axe was gold being the liar as against the honest fellow who claimed his the iron.

The culprits of both stories tell their lie out of greed; whereas their opposites tell the truth, even when they stand to lose by their honesty. The honest woodsman is rewarded with all three axes, his own iron one as well as the gold (and silver); so, the honest Bodhisatta gets the gold bowl, worth a hundred thousand pieces, for just a thousand. Likewise, the dishonest woodsman of the fable must have been heart-broken when he lost, not only the gold axe he coveted but his own – though perhaps not literally heart-broken like the dishonest trader of the jataka when he realized he had lost the bowl, so as to cough up blood and fall dead!

Such an inversion, again with a lie, is to be found in another jataka – or rather, a jataka and its similar companion, the *Sumsumara* and the *Vanara* (mentioned before), the motifs of which raise a thought of the Greek fable of *The Monkey and the Dolphin*. For where in the Greek the monkey's lie costs him his life when the dolphin tosses him back into the sea from which he was rescuing him, the Indian monkey's lie saves him from the drowning by the water-beast, there a crocodile, who was intent on doing so to get his heart for his dear wife.

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The *Serivanija Jataka* was (as said before) narrated by the Buddha about a second Brother who had given up persevering (*ekam ossatthaviriyam eva bhikkum ārabbha kathesi*). The first of these was the Brother of the preceding jataka, the *Vannupatha* (No. 2), who had abandoned his solitary life and meditation on the theme given by the Master, resigning himself to the likelihood that he was of the fourth class of men, as described by the Master, to whom in this birth there was little hope of gaining the Path or Fruit thereof, but whom the Master had encouraged by narrating to him an event of his past birth (again, forgotten by him in rebirth) in which he had, by his perseverance, saved his comrades in a sandy desert.

According to my understanding of the *Vannupatha*, however, the credit of perseverance, if any, which resulted in the discovery of water which saved their comrades, must go, not to the young lad (that previous birth of our faltering Brother), but to the Bodhisatta himself, who, as the proprietor – trader, was leading this company across the desert, when they lost their way and were in danger of dying of hunger and thirst. What the lad had done was no more than break the rock at the bottom of a hole that the Bodhisatta had got dug, and that too upon the Bodhisatta revealing that there was water beneath it and urging him do so. Apparently the author was grudging of giving the credit of this achievement to any other than the Bodhisatta, when he was around – and yet also, for purposes of the *paccuppannavatthu*, needed to suggest that the lad it was who had persevered and was the hero of the rescue.

The *Serivanija*, for its part has been used as complementary of the *Vannupatha*, also intending to show the consequences of not persevering. The Buddhas's words in the *paccupannavatthu* is to this effect, and so also the *gatha*, which reads – and Chalmers translates:

Idha ce hi nam virādhesi saddhammassa niyāmatam
ciram tvam anutapessasi Serivâyam va vānijo ti.

If in the faith you prove remiss, and fail.
To win the goal whereto the teachings lead,
– Then, like the hawker called the Serivan,
Full long you'll rue the prize your folly lot.

Chalmers ignores the prose explanation of this in the Pali, much as if it were a gloss. It however appears in the Sinhala version of the *Pansiya Panas Jataka Potha* in lieu of the *gatha* but likewise emphasizes the great grief (regret) that would come upon our Brother if he gave up as likely to be no less (and then certainly longer) than of the unsuccessful trader - here again underlining it as the result of his giving up persevering.

> යම් සේ පෙර සේරිවාණිජ නම් වෙළඳා ලක්ෂයක් වටිනා රන් තලිය නොලැබ ඒ තලිය ගන්ට වීර්යය නොකොට ඒ තලියෙන් පිරිහී ශෝක කළේද? පශ්චාත් තාපයට පැමිණියේද? ඒ පරිද්දෙන් ම මහණ තොපිත් මේ ශාසනයෙහි සරහා පිළියෙල කරන ලද රන් තලියක් වැනිවූ ආර්ය මාර්ගයකට පසුබට වීර්ය ඇති හෙයින් නොපැමිණ ඒ මාර්ග ඵලයෙනුත් පිරිහී බොහෝ කලක් සෝක කරන්නාහුය. ඉදින් තෝ වීර්ය නො පාළුයෙහි වී නම් නුවණ ඇති වෙළඳාණන් රන් තලිය ගෙන ප්‍රයෝජන වින්ද කලක් මෙන් මගේ ශාසනයෙහි නව විධ ලෝකෝත්තර ධර්මය ලබන්නේ වේ.[20]

It is evident then that what the author of the *Serivanija* uses his story for is to show the poignancy of the grief that the Brother would evince – which he could have got from any other story. But when he expects this particular story to yield it from lack of effort (වීර්ය Pali: *viriyam*) on the part of the loser, its plot shows that this was not what it intended, its moral. For, if any of the two traders made effort to get the gold bowl, it was the rascal!; it came into the hands of the Bodhisatta without any contriving on his part. In fact, the former's grief was all the more because of his zeal and effort to acquire the gold bowl (metaphorically, then the Path (රන් තලියක් වැනි වූ ආර්ය මාර්ගය)). Yet, at the same time, the kind of effort he put in can hardly be considered virtuous – which is why he is no candidate for a previous birth of the Brother and so, resulting in the Bodhisatta being miscast in that role, while he himself, with his grudge and chagrin, finds himself relegated to an incarnation (and the first as a human being?!) of Devadatta – perhaps bracketed by Chalmers in the translation in the notion that it must have been someone's brilliant afterthought?[21]

It is clear then that our jataka tale had not been designed to suit a lesson of perseverance, nor yet of the result of giving up persevering. In short, it may be said to fall between two stools in this respect. What it contributes towards illustrating the matter at issue in the *paccuppannavatthu* is rather the intensity of grief that could arise for the Brother from his failure to gain something of metaphorically similar great value in this life as the *lolakacchaputavaniya* in that.

This then is but the consequential element, not the primary and essential moral basis of the plot, which is how and why the good trader, the Bodhisatta

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[20] *Pansiya Panas Jataka Potha* ed. A. S. Kulasuriya and others – Colombo (2002) vol. I. p. 12 – 13.

[21] *op. cit* p. 14.

succeeded and his rival Devadatta failed. What it in fact expresses, and loud and clear at that, is rather the honesty of the one and the dishonesty (and greed) of the other, with their attendant deserts. As such, it is then no different from the moral of the Aesopic fable of *The Woodsman and his Axe*.

It is undoubtedly with his moral lesson that had the jataka characterizing the two traders as the Bodhisatta and Devadatta – with the episode between them impressive enough to make it the original cause of Davadatta's anger against the Bodhisatta. The shift of focus to non-perseverance, failure and attendant grief (which is also what the *paccuppannavatthu* and *gatha* talk of) must have been the result of attempting to insert this jataka, (with its *causus belli* of the Devadatta) right up front, part-borrowing the *paccuppannavatthu* of the preceeding jataka, the *Vannupatha,* for the purpose and doing so at the expense of the moral lesson implicit of the plot.

As in the instance of several other jatakas ficted upon plots coopted from other sources for their sheer story potential, the *Serivanija* in its own way detracts from the character of the Buddha as presented to us from doctrine, precept and practice. It is true he can escape the charge of being an unconscionable trader who deprived a poor old woman and her granddaughter of a gold bowl by paying only one tenth of its price – for not only was that all he had but they were well aware of its value (thanks to his honesty) when they sold it to him, but they were pleased to imagine it turned from base metal to gold because of his goodness. For their part we may take consolation in the belief that they became the beneficiaries of the goods and money that the rascally Serivanija discarded at their doorstep to go in pursuit of the Bodhisatta – a pursuit from which he never returned to claim them. What is more truly unBuddalike is the *metta*, *karuna*, or what you will, which the Bodhisatta failed to show his rival, who so deeply yearned for what he had deprived him of, that not only did his heart burst and he fall dead, but that it left him with such sorrow that he harboured a grudge against the Bodhisatta in life after life – which did not cease even when the Bodhisatta had attained Buddhahood![22] To have done otherwise would surely have been to deprive a good story of its dramatic ending.

MERLIN PERIS

[22] For reference to these in the jatakas, s.v. *Devadatta* in p. 12, Cowell ed. vol. VI. General Index. Devadatta does not figure in the *paccuppannavatthu* of the jataka (nor, for that matter, of the *Vannupatha*, upon which it relies,), though it does in its own *samodhana*.