

STORY & WORLD:
THE ETHICS OF MORAL VISION IN THE *GATILOK* OF UK NĀ SUTTANTAPRĪJĀ IND

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"And what, Bhikkhus, is the origin of the world? In dependence on the eye and forms, eye-consciousness arises. The meeting of the three is contact. With contact as condition, feeling [comes to be]; with feeling as condition, craving; with craving as condition, clinging; with clinging as condition, existence; with existence as condition, birth; with birth as condition, aging-and-death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, displeasure, and despair come to be. This Bhikkhus, is the origin of the world."¹

The Khmer poet and scholar Uk nā Suttantapriṇā Ind was one of the most significant Buddhist writers of the twentieth century in Cambodia. His work is representative of the kind of vernacular religious literature that scholars of Buddhism have recently begun to examine in order to understand the interactions between cosmopolitan and regional traditions of Buddhism and the production of local religious values.

Born in 1859 in Kandal province, Ind entered the monkhood as a novice at the age of ten. He remained a monk until the age of 37, having achieved a considerable reputation as a Pali scholar trained in monasteries in Battambang, Phnom Penh and Bangkok. After disrobing in 1897, he served as a provincial official in Battambang while continuing his scholarly work and teaching. In 1914, under the Franco-Khmer government, Ind received the title of Uk nā Suttantapriṇā and was called to Phnom Penh to serve on a commission of distinguished scholars and officials charged with the task of reforming Khmer orthography and creating the first official Cambodian language dictionary. Ind's corpus of work includes the *Gatilok*, *Nirās Nagar Vatt* and the *Cpāp' Sṛī*, and numerous translations, including the Khmer versions of the *Paṭhamasambodhigāthā* and the *Lokanītipakaraṇam*.² He died in Battambang in 1925, shortly after his retirement from government service.

Ind's best-known vernacular composition is the *Gatilok* [Ways of the World], a compendium on ethics apparently written in Phnom Penh during the later years of his life. The text is remarkable for the breadth of its aims and vision, its blending of Pāli, Thai, Khmer, and French sources, its seriousness, its humor, its exhaustive length, and above all its contribution from the standpoint of Theravāda Buddhism to the consideration of how to live as a moral person. Raising the problem of the viability of the moral life in a world in which human beings, through desire and ignorance, generate wickedness, harm and suffering for themselves and other beings, the *Gatilok* suggests a pragmatic model for human conduct

¹ From the *Nidānasamyutta*, in *The Connected Discourses of the Buddha: A New Translation of the Saṃyutta Nikāya*, trans., Bhikkhu Bodhi (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2000): 581.

² For more on the corpus of Ind's work, see: Khing Hoc Dy 1993: 10-13; Jacob 1996: 70-71; Tauch Chhuong 1994: 98-103.

centered on the cultivation of *satisampajañña* ["mindfulness and clarity"].

Ind's *Gatilok*, like much other ethical literature in the Theravādin tradition, is composed in narrative form consisting of narratives excerpted from a variety of sources including the *Jātaka*, *Hitopadeśa*, *Mangaladīpanī*, Khmer and Thai folklore, provincial court cases, French history, and La Fontaine's fables. These narratives are themselves embedded in a frame narrative of a discussion between students and their teacher on the "ways of the world" (*gatilok*) and the "ways of the Dhamma." The text, Ind tells us, is written for the benefit of "...the sons of good families," enabling them to "... study the ways (*gati*) of old as examples to use as a basis for comparison to the ways (*gati*) that have risen in the world today."³

In this essay, I will examine Ind's ethical writings on the cultivation of moral vision in the *Gatilok* through the lens of two larger theories about ethics, one Buddhist and one western. Ind's major ethical preoccupations in the *Gatilok* regarding the moral imperative of perceiving the causal or conditional nature of the world are best understood in relation to the Buddhist conception of *paṭicca-samuppāda*. The *Gatilok* represents an effort to apply the ramifications of this idea to the everyday lives of ordinary individuals, a concern and approach that seems to anticipate the thought of a later Southeast Asian Buddhist thinker, Phra Buddhadasa, whose writings on *paṭicca-samuppāda* are helpful for considering the fuller ethical implications of Ind's assumptions about conditionality.

Second, I will argue for the applicability of Martha Nussbaum's contention that the narrative form lends itself to ethical reflection, in that

...there may be some views of the world and how one should live in it – views, especially, that emphasize the world's surprising variety, its complexity and mysteriousness, its flawed and imperfect beauty – that cannot be fully and adequately stated in the language of conventional philosophical prose, a style remarkably flat and lacking in wonder – but only in a language and in forms themselves more complex, more allusive, more attentive to particulars... in a form that itself implied that life contains significant surprises, that our task, as agents, is to live as good characters in a good story do, caring about what happens, resourcefully confronting each new thing (Nussbaum 1990: 3-4).

Nussbaum's work, confined to Western literary contexts, has examined the integral connections between literary form and ethical expression. While Nussbaum has had to argue for the place of literature within Western philosophy, narrative ethical reflection has long held an established place in the articulation and interpretation of Buddhist philosophy, even if Western scholarship on Buddhist ethics has only recently come to acknowledge this (Obeyesekere 1991: 23; Hallisey and Hansen 1996: 309-313). Prominent literary forms for Buddhist ethical writings besides narrative include prose dialogues and verse, genres in which many of the earliest sutta texts were transmitted. The ethical ideas conveyed in these forms are often represented as idealized ethical norms while more often, it is left to commentarial writings composed in narrative form to address the tensions and problems that arise in relation to these normative ideals.

Drawing on this Buddhist literary convention of narrative writing as a medium for critical ethical reflection, the narrative *Gatilok* articulates a particularistic rather than idealized approach to ethics (see Hallisey 1996: 37). The *Gatilok* stories serve as a kind of "moral laboratory"⁴ in which the students in the frame story learn to recognize and analyze the causes and results of foolish, wicked and wise behavior, as

³ Uk nā Suttantapīṭaka Ind, *Gatilok* [Ways of the World], 13th ed., v. 2 (Phnom Penh: Institut Bouddhique, 1971): 1, (hereafter abbreviated as GL). All translations of this text included here are my own.

⁴ Paul Ricœur, *Oneself as Another*, trans., Kathleen Blamney (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992): 115, 140.

well as to cultivate their own development of *satisampajañña* (mindfulness and clarity) by observing how possession (or more often, the lack) of *satisampajañña* can affect the lives of characters in the narratives their teacher is relating to them. With its arrangement of temporally-ordered and causally-related events, the narrative form lends itself to the expression of Ind's understanding of how human actions unfold in the world through a causally-connected process in which one action conditions the moral outcome of its result, which in turn gives rise to another result.

Paṭicca-samuppāda

Paṭicca-samuppāda, variously translated as "interdependent co-arising" or "dependent origination," describes the basis of the knowledge obtained by the Buddha at the time of his Enlightenment concerning the existence, arising and cessation of *dukkha*, or suffering. It has been conceived of within the Buddhist tradition as a wheel of becoming with *avijjā*, ignorance, as an arbitrary starting point that leads, through the mental and physical properties of perception and sensation, to *taṇhā*, craving, which leads to *upādāna*, attachment or clinging. Attachment creates *bhāva*, a sense of being, the perception that the self, memory, fantasy, or emotion to which one is attached, for instance, is real. This in turn perpetuates regeneration or rebirth, which inevitably leads to decay and death, and the *dukkha* or suffering caused by these states.⁵ In general Buddhist understanding, each new spoke in the wheel (or stage in the cycle) is conditioned by the one that preceded it and the *bhāvacakka* ("wheel of becoming") as a whole represents the underlying nature of reality. The nature of reality as such is conditioned; everything in the world proceeds from a cause and gives rise to a result, which in turn is the cause for a future result – and so on.

The ethical implications of Buddhist ideas of conditionality and the specific formulation of *paṭicca-samuppāda* have been examined in the writings of the prominent twentieth century Thai Buddhist thinker, Phra Buddhadasa (1906-1993). Buddhadasa refers to the concept of *koḍ idappaccayatā* ("law of conditionality") as "the ultimate law" (Buddhadasa 1990: 3) and *paṭicca-samuppāda* as "...the very heart of Buddhism" (Buddhadasa 1989: 115). "*Idappaccayatā*," which might be literally translated as "having its cause in 'this,'" or "conditioned by this," is understood by Buddhadasa as a law of nature "...that always creates and controls all things."

This law states that "Because of this thing, that thing is caused to occur; and because of [sic] absence of this thing, that thing does not occur." [...] Everybody should know this and act rightly in accordance with it; otherwise, *dukkha* (suffering) cannot be eliminated (Buddhadasa 1990: 1-4).

Paṭicca-samuppāda, the particular expression of this law in relation to the arising and perpetuation of *dukkha*, is in Buddhadasa's words, a "...complete description of nature or the way things are" (Buddhadasa 1989: 115).

Paṭicca means to relate or to depend; *samuppāda* means whole or complete occurrence. Compounded they form the most significant word in the teaching of the Buddha. It reveals the hidden truth of *citta* [mind], namely that reality is empty; there is no supernatural being or god, no soul, no I, no you, no object – only *paṭicca-samuppāda*. Empty but not empty! There is the

⁵ For instance, see the *Nidānasaṃyutta*, in the *Saṃyutta Nikāya* (Bhikkhu Bodhi 2000): 515-620. An excerpt from this text is cited above in exergue.

arising and ceasing of suffering (*dukkha*); this is *Paṭicca-samuppāda*, eleven systematic, regularly occurring, scientifically observable stages (Buddhadāsa 1989: 115).

As the underlying nature of the world and of human processes such as the production of thought by the individual mind, *paṭicca-samuppāda* describes a world in which nothing is permanent, including the false notions we human beings develop of ourselves as enduring permanent selves, what Buddhadāsa frequently refers to as *tua ku khong ku*, “me-and-mine.” Since the false notion of me-and-mine is the cause of suffering, suffering itself cannot be unraveled and addressed until one begins to recognize the nature of the world in terms of *paṭicca-samuppāda*. This recognition must be cultivated not simply through the accumulation of *paññā* (wisdom), but simultaneously through the development of *sīla* (virtue or morality) and *samādhi* (concentration), the three aspects of Buddhist training that enable one to control the feelings of desire and attachment that generate the sensation of me-and-mine. Recognizing the conditioned nature of the world as *paṭicca-samuppāda* leads one to want to cultivate wisdom, morality and concentration while the cultivation of these three components of purification necessarily leads one to understand *paṭicca-samuppāda* (Buddhadāsa 1989: 107-114).

At the level of viewing *paṭicca-samuppāda* as the cause of suffering and as a description of the world, Buddhadāsa does not depart from usual Theravādin interpretations of the concept. His further analysis, however, takes issues with prominent interpretations in several significant respects. First, as his essay “Conditioned Genesis” makes clear, he takes issue with the authoritative commentarial work of Buddhaghosa, who has maintained that *paṭicca-samuppāda* refers to a process that occurs over the course of several lifetimes. Buddhadāsa refutes Buddhaghosa’s explication, arguing instead that *paṭicca-samuppāda* refers to the cycle through which every set of inter-related thoughts, words and actions are generated, throughout the course of a single day:

Paṭicca-samuppāda is the meaning of life that we can observe over and over again. Each day a reasonable number of lives are born and die within each one of us. With training and guidance, we can observe them, learn to know the causes of suffering, and thereby be freed from them (Buddhadāsa 1989: 122; see also Jackson 1988: 133-142).

Everything that is conditioned (that is, what is not *nirvāṇa*) arises through the contact between sense organ and sense object (or *ārammaṇa*), gives rise to sensation, thirst and attachment, and ultimately generates *dukkha* and ignorance, which creates the conditions for further contact to take place (Buddhadāsa 1989: 121-125). Sensory objects, *ārammaṇa*, may appear to be the root cause of the continuation of this cycle, but as Buddhadāsa points out, if there is no me-and-mine to experience craving and attachment, the cycle stops. The encounter with an *ārammaṇa* or object of sight, for instance, simply ceases if instead of letting the act of seeing generate feelings of pleasure or revulsion, one “simply sees” (Buddhadāsa 1989: 112-113).

Buddhadāsa’s second innovation surrounding *paṭicca-samuppāda* is that because this process is occurring in each and every one of us all of the time, it becomes an ethical imperative for everyone, including lay persons, to recognize the reality of *paṭicca-samuppāda* (Swearer 1998: 89-91).

Even though *paṭicca-samuppāda* is the very heart of Buddhism, most Buddhists, particularly lay people, are unfamiliar with the term. The fact that the truth of conditioned genesis is central to the teaching of the Buddha does not mean that it is beyond the grasp of an ordinary layperson.

It is very much within the reach of everyone. It is inside of us; we need only to look inward (Buddhadāsa 1989: 115).

The key for realizing this truth, and for cultivating purity, lies in the development of *sati*, or mindfulness, which is best cultivated through meditation practice. For Buddhadāsa, even ordinary lay people should be working to increase their mindfulness with the aim of being able to recognize the cycle of conditionality underlying all of their thoughts, words and actions.

Buddhadāsa's analysis of *paṭicca-samuppāda* provides an elaboration of the ethical implications of the concept that are implied but not fully articulated in Uk ṇā Suttantapīṇā Ind's *Gatilok*. While Ind's ethical theory is not identical to Buddhadāsa's, there are striking parallels. The assumption of *paṭicca-samuppāda* as the description of reality and of human behavior underlies all of Ind's ethical writing, seemingly anticipating Buddhadāsa's two most important innovations: the focus on conditionality in the here-and-now rather than with reference to rebirth – the latter being an interpretation that Buddhadāsa contends has been a historically standard but mistaken view in Southeast Asian contexts (Buddhadāsa 1989: 115; Jackson 1998: 143–150) – as well as the insistence that the recognition of conditionality, attainable through the cultivation of mindfulness, is an ethical imperative for every Buddhist or person who wants to become pure.

While Ind does not work his reader/listener through the various stages of *paṭicca-samuppāda*, the vision of the world described in the *Gatilok* is predicated upon it. Rather, *paṭicca-samuppāda* emerges in the narrative action and analysis of the text through the more abbreviated notion of conditionality it employs: all actions have causes and results that are either wholesome or unwholesome, spreading benefit or harm to others. To perceive this reality is to follow *gatidhamm*, the ways of the Dhamma, a recognition that Ind defines as *dharmāññutā*.⁶ To fail to perceive it is to live according to *gatilok*, the ways of the world.⁷ For Ind, those who fail to perceive chains of causation at work, or who through carelessness, lack of attention, delusion, and so on, lose sight of the real nature of the world, are certain to suffer and cause harm and injury to themselves and others.

In one allegorical narrative, Ind addresses the manner in which the cycle of *paṭicca-samuppāda* is understood to “originate” when, in the condition of ignorance, a sense-organ encounters a sense-object or *ārammaṇa*. In this story,⁸ a puppy out looking for food with his mother passes a cremation ground where he sees a swollen corpse. The young dog wants to eat various parts of the body, but his mother forbids him from doing so. When he asks his mother, for instance, if he can eat the corpse's eyes, she refuses, saying the eyes are “useless and extremely unlucky.” “Why do you say the eyes are useless and unlucky, Mama?” asks the puppy,

[With] those eyes, when he [the corpse] was still alive, he looked at and stared at various *rūpa-ārammaṇa* [visual object]. For instance, suppose there was a woman. With those eyes, he saw her beautiful body and was pleased, which led his thoughts to desire and greed, wanting to possess that beautiful body. If he could not have her, this led him to become mournful and angry, which resulted in his daring to do wrong acts, stemming out of malice and enmity and so on. This is why I have said that those eyes are useless and far too unlucky. You must not eat those eyes, child (GI, v. 7: 2).⁹

⁶ *Dharmāññutā* is one of the seven dhammas possessed by a *sappurisa*, a good or moral person. GI, v. 2: 65–66.

⁷ A further assumption made in the text should be clarified. This formulation assumes that anyone who has *satisampajañña* to perceive causes and results has the wisdom to live in a way that minimizes harm to oneself and others. This assumption is consonant with Theravādin views that wisdom, morality and concentration necessarily develop in tandem.

⁸ “Story of the Mother Dog and the Corpse,” GI, v. 7: 1–9. Ind cites this story as “originating in a French volume.”

The story goes on in this same vein to examine the development of cravings and harm that result as the sensory organs make contact with sense objects or *ārammaṇa* and give rise to feelings, desires and attachments, which in turn result in new cycles of causation, all of which are potentially harmful. The allegory's repetitive treatment of the contact between different sensory organs and their objects parallels descriptions of meditation practices focused on parts of the body that a monk might undertake in a charnel ground in order to cultivate mindfulness concerning the impermanent nature of the body and the self (Wilson 1996: 41-57). This parallel suggests that with the puppy's ignorance as the starting point in the cycle of causality, the reader/listener of the narrative (like the monk in the charnel ground) is supposed to develop mindfulness or awareness of the process of conditionality (*paṭicca-samuppāda*) that is being made evident through the mother's recitation of the potential harm associated with each body part.

As the allegory suggests, the key ethical implications of *paṭicca-samuppāda* for Ind are the linkages between ignorance, craving, and the resulting suffering, harm and continuation of ignorance to which they lead. His understanding of the world is predicated on this process, and his perceptions of individual human and societal circumstances proceed from his understanding of the causal relationship between ignorance and hunger. The birth of "craving" or "hunger"⁹ is the critical stage of causation for the determination of human behavior, as it forms the basis for both individual and social pathologies or harm. For individuals, the origin of much of the harm and suffering they encounter lies in the "hungers" to which they succumb, which stem from defilements or impurities.

Like Buddhādāsa, Ind is not terribly interested in the processes of *paṭicca-samuppāda* as it applies to rebirth, but rather to the ways in which it underlies and produces the world, *loka*. "World," for Ind, is defined as "the condition¹⁰ that arises by the power of the rebirth of *khandha*,¹¹ which is the state of non-*nirvāṇa* as a result of being not associated with [it], not certain [of it], not established in the Path."¹² In other words, "world" refers to everything that is conditioned: every being, thought or event that is "born," exists and dies. The "ways of the world," or *gatilok*, the cycles of causation that characterize the conditioned *loka*, are thus the focus of Ind's attention: "The birth of any word, any cause, any thing that occurs and arises in this world – all of this is called *gatilok*" (GL, v. 1: 3).

In Ind's ethical analysis, like Buddhādāsa's, the only way to cut off the cycles of causation that lead to harm is through a perception or recognition of the fundamental workings of the world (GL, v. 2: 64-69). For both Buddhādāsa and Ind, the development of this kind of moral vision is intertwined with what each refers to as "purification," which necessitates the cultivation of good moral conduct, wisdom and mindfulness. Buddhādāsa defines this process in terms of eliminating attachment to "me and mine," which means overcoming a selfishness "...devoid of altruistic or other-regarding feelings" (Buddhādāsa 1989: 89). Buddhādāsa contends that in order to "purify the heart" (Buddhādāsa 1989: 91), the possession of *sati*, or mindfulness, becomes a moral imperative because it affords one correct perception of the world (Buddhādāsa 1989: 108-111). Similarly, Ind explains "the task of purifying oneself" as one that "...involves increasing the well-being of others" (GL, v. 1: 20), and conversely, avoiding causing harm that spreads suffering (GL, v. 1: 20-21). Like Buddhādāsa, Ind also understands the development of "mindfulness and clarity," what he terms "*satisampajañña*," as the necessary precursor to the development of moral vision and simultaneously, to self-purification (GL, v. 2: 58-70). In Buddhādāsa's case, the contention that *sati* or

⁹ Khmer: *ghlān*.

¹⁰ Khmer: *sabbāva*.

¹¹ These are the 5 "aggregates" or processual components of being or existence.

¹² GL, v. 1: 2.

mindfulness can best be cultivated through meditation practice, both for monks and lay people, is in keeping with late twentieth century Theravādin trends toward increased lay participation in meditation. By contrast, Ind does not advocate development of *satisampajañña* through meditation but rather through moral education and study, which leads one to develop a heightened understanding of the difference between Dhammic and worldly (or *lokiya*) truths, one's own actions and desires (hungers), insight into the effects of causes, and the moral nature of others (GL, v. 2: 64-66).

Ind makes his points about the causative, processual nature of reality by having his teacher and students analyze narrative *gati*, "ways" in which human beings behave, in terms of the causes or *paccaya* ("grounds") that gave rise to various individual acts and their consequences. For students still learning to cultivate moral discernment, the narrative perspective affords them an opportunity to practice seeing causes and results. Comprehending the emplotment characteristic of narrative requires them to understand the relationship between events. In similar fashion, the person who possesses the recognition of *dhammaññutā* perceives that events in the world are not random or isolated but rather are a continuous cycle of actions, thought and speech giving rise to new actions, thought and speech.

The Problem of Hunger

Hunger for food, sex and love are the basic human desires considered in the *Gatilok*. Two stories involving crocodiles – who nearly always personify profound ignorance in Khmer stories – deal with the most obvious of human desires, the hunger for food.

In the first story (GL, v. 3: 65-74), a crocodile is forced to look for a new home when his lake dries up during the hot season. He crawls along the road where he meets up with a cart driver. Implying the driver to take pity on him, he asks for a ride to a new body of water. The driver agrees to transport him. Then, because the crocodile is afraid of falling out of the cart, he also consents to tie the crocodile to the cart with a rope. When they reach a lake, the old man unties the crocodile and points him toward the water. But the crocodile, who does not know how to be grateful, has become very hungry by now and wants to eat one of the driver's oxen. If the old man will not give him an ox, he threatens, he will eat the old man as well. Terrified, the old man begs to present their case to a judge. The crocodile consents, and the old man sets off to find a judge.

Before long, he meets Judge Rabbit, who agrees to hear their case and returns with the old man to the place where the crocodile is waiting. The crocodile argues that the old man tied him up to the cart very tightly, causing him much suffering, and therefore now he should forfeit one of his oxen to be eaten or else the crocodile will eat the old man. The old man disputes the story, saying that he only secured the crocodile to the cart at the crocodile's own insistence. Since there are no witnesses, Judge Rabbit rules, they must re-enact the event in question to determine whether or not the old man had caused the crocodile to suffer by tying him too tightly to the cart. He instructs the old man to tie the crocodile to the cart just as he had tied him before. The crocodile keeps insisting that he was tied tighter, and still tighter. When he is tied so tightly that his strength is useless, Judge Rabbit tells the old man to take his ax and chop the crocodile into small pieces. This done, the old man thanks Judge Rabbit and drives away in his cart.

The second crocodile story (GL, v. 3: 74-81), which Ind tells us he has taken from the *Cariyāpitaka*, tells of a birth in which the Bodhisatta was reborn as a monkey-king named Mahakapinda.¹⁵ He lived on the bank of a river across from an island filled with fruit trees and edible roots. On the bank there was a sandy place with a rock, which the Bodhisatta used to spring across the river to the island to gather fruit. Near this same place, there lived two crocodiles. When the female of the pair became pregnant, she developed a craving for monkey liver and told her husband she would die if she could not eat it. Her husband promised to bring her a monkey liver and went to find one. He concealed himself on the rock on the sandy bank, taking on the appearance of the rock, in order to capture the Bodhisatta. When evening came, the Bodhisatta appeared on the island across from the rock where he was accustomed to jumping back to his bank. Observing the crocodile hidden on the rock, he recognized his intentions. He shouted out, "Oh what a marvelous rock! Now you have grown taller! How have you managed this?" He repeated this question three times, and from the tone of his voice, the crocodile began to think that he expected a reply. Perhaps, he thought, the monkey and the rock have a close association with each other and the rock actually speaks to the monkey. So the crocodile answered, "I have indeed grown." The monkey cried out, "Oh rock! Now you are really something! When did you learn to speak the language of the world?" Reaching the "end of his intelligence," the crocodile confessed his reason for hiding on the rock. "Oh, if you desire my life for this reason" said the Bodhisatta, "open your mouth and close your eyes and I will jump straight over right now." The crocodile complied, waiting attentively, with his mouth open and eyes closed, to seize the monkey with his teeth. The Bodhisatta, "having received his opportunity," leapt directly onto the crocodile's head, "and then with his great strength, as swift as the wind, in one instant," sprang to the bank where he lived. The crocodile, defeated by his own ignorance, swam home as well (GL, v. 3: 79-80).

Both of these stories are designated as "*tamrā*" (models or examples) of "hunger-for-food-ignorance." In both stories, the hungers or cravings of the crocodiles for their victims leads to a sense of possession or attachment to eating them, which predictably leads to suffering, just as all unwholesome sensations that arise and die in accordance with *paṭicca-samuppāda* lead to unhappiness. The intended victims of the crocodiles in these stories are spared because Judge Rabbit and the Bodhisatta, who possess *satisampa-jāṇā*, are able to recognize wicked and ignorant persons and intentions. Knowing that the crocodiles are ignorant and foreseeing where their hungers will lead, the rabbit and monkey protect themselves and others from harm by deceiving the crocodiles who intend to do harm. Seeing causes and results and anticipating the probable outcomes of various decisions or actions is an act of perception that permits protection of oneself and others.

The sharp contrast between the rabbit and the monkey as moral agents in these two adjoining narratives, however, is surely an intentional pedagogical ploy on Ind's part intended to illustrate the extent to which moral development is dependent on the simultaneous cultivation of wisdom and morality as well as mindfulness. While it might be argued that the monkey employed a doubled-edged truth to protect himself from the crocodile, his action ultimately saved not only himself but also the crocodile from harm. Prevented from taking the monkey's life, the crocodile was also spared the suffering that would have accrued to him for this wrong-doing. Judge Rabbit, on the other hand, is an imperfected moral agent whose

¹⁵ In other versions of the story, the name of the monkey-king is variously given as Kapirāja and Kapilārāja. See the *Cariyāpitaka* in Jayawickrama 1974: 30. A version of the story also appears in the *Jātaka* as "*Vanarinda jātaka*." In this version, the crocodile is identified as Devadatta. Rhys Davids 1989: 58-60.

judgment saves one life but maliciously takes another. Other *Gatilok* stories suggest that knowing how to respond appropriately to various forms of harm and oppression is a particularly difficult ethical problem. The balance between self-protection and purity is one that shifts according to the situation, demanding that the moral agent have the *satisampajañña* to judge the appropriate ethical response "... according to the circumstances and according to the context..." (GL, v. 3: 20) in which he or she finds him/herself.

This difficulty is emphasized in a *Gatilok* story in which the Bodhisatta (living as a hermit in the forest) is confronted with the dilemma of how to respond to "oppression" from a monkey with a "restless penis."¹⁴ Whenever the Bodhisatta entered into a state of meditation, the monkey would "jump down and put his penis into the ear or nostril of the noble Bodhisatta, and do the 'business of the world,'" (GL, v. 7: 61). The Bodhisatta, even in an advanced state of meditation, recognized what the monkey was doing but did not "kill or slap or kick the monkey out ... because he had already achieved a great number of *jhāna* in his meditation." For a period of time, he simply endured the monkey's oppression. One day, seeing the open mouth of a sleeping turtle, the monkey put his penis into the turtle's mouth. The turtle woke up and bit down hard. The monkey

... experienced terrible suffering and thought, "my suffering at this time is the worst that can be found among anyone in the world. There is no doctor who can understand how to help me lose this pain except Braḥṇa Isī." Thinking this, the monkey, with his painful body, picked up the turtle and held it in both hands, and walked gingerly toward the shelter of the noble Bodhisatta. The Bodhisatta turned and saw the monkey supporting the turtle in this way and understood the reason in one instant, saying, "that monkey is a restless animal who is in the habit of oppressing me very often, and now he has tried to use the mouth of a turtle, and the turtle is not like me..." (GL, v. 7: 62-63).

Using the occasion to humorously tease the monkey into feeling shame, the Bodhisatta asked, "what's this? ... have you brought jackfruit or durian to offer me?" The monkey responded with a lament about his suffering and the behavior that had caused it. The Bodhisatta, hearing these words, felt "pity and compassion" (GL, v. 7: 65) for the monkey and agreed to persuade the turtle to release his grip. The monkey gave up his inappropriate behavior from that day forward and left the Bodhisatta to meditate in peace.

In telling this story, the narrator¹⁵ seems concerned with justifying the Bodhisatta's response to the situation. He clarifies that the Bodhisatta understood what was occurring even though he was in a meditative trance. Yet, the narrator's voice explains, he chose not to protect himself from oppression by the monkey because of his attainment of advanced *jhānas*, apparently meaning that he had moved beyond the state of worldly concerns. The narrator again interjects clarifications into the narrative by having the Bodhisatta note, "the turtle is not like me..." suggesting that the Bodhisatta's response is not to be expected from everyone. Even the Bodhisatta, however, clearly delights in teasing and chiding the monkey, although he is quickly moved to pity and compassion as he hears the monkey express his pain and remorse. The narrative interjections in this story emphasize that even for one who is as far-removed

¹⁴ "Story of the Monkey with the Restless Penis and the Great Ascetic," GL, v. 7: 61-66. Ind cites his source for this story as the "commentary on the *Nipāṇa*."

¹⁵ I.e., the text's teacher. In most cases I assume that the teacher narrating the stories is identical with "Ind's voice." Identifying the "author" of narratives within narratives is in fact somewhat difficult. While Ind compiled the narratives, situating them within his own frame story, it is impossible to be certain to what extent he wrote or rewrote every individual story included in the compilation.

from worldly affairs as the Bodhisatta, knowing how to respond to the “ways of the world” is situational, according to the person, place and circumstances; the appropriate relationship between self-protection and the Buddhist virtues of equanimity, patience and compassion is not always obvious.¹⁶ Being able to discern the conditionality as the nature of the world enables one to make correct ethical decisions.

This form of recognition is one Ind terms “*dhammaññutā*.” In Theravādin commentarial sources this is a term that indicates textual competence, presumably with reference to monks (Buddhaghosa 2463 [1920]: 301; De Silva 1970: 333-334). In Ind’s usage, however, it is reinterpreted as the recognition of causes and results,¹⁷ displaying Ind’s transposition of Buddhist ideals to pragmatic ethical applications meant for ordinary people. Here, it is demonstrated as an understanding that permits wise individuals to protect themselves from others who mean harm. Recognizing wicked and ignorant people, and perceiving how their actions are causally connected to the spread of harm, has the practical result of self-protection as well as the moral consequence of allowing one to become pure.

If everyone in society was pure, there would be no need for envisioning morally permissible ways to protect oneself from others. But given that everyone in society is corrupted by worldly hungers, ethical consideration has to be given to how to realistically live in that world. While perception of the true nature of the world provides protection for wise and mindful characters in these stories, more commonly, the characters are plagued by their inability to see the world that their actions are creating.

The Hunger for Love

The most exhaustive discussion in the text of human hungers is Ind’s cycle of stories on lust, love and sex, an examination of causes and results linked to what Ind terms “hunger-for-love ignorance” (GL, v. 3: 64). Unsurprisingly, given his Buddhist perspectives on the role of desire in the cycles of causation described by *paṭicca-samuppāda*, Ind perceives love and sex, bound up with desire, as a great source of *dukkha* for ordinary people. Yet, sexuality is not represented in the text as moral problematic in itself. Rather, it is the causative effects of sexual passion on the conduct of some individuals that must be examined. This distinction is evident, for example, in a passage that differentiates between the behavior appropriate to “... young men and women just beginning to discover the road of passion, of stroking and caressing bodies, voices, scents, flavors, of the five senses, of things connected to sexual passion giving rise to pleasure, delight and joy...” and that of older men and women who should (the text implies) know better, yet still “... go astray because of *kilesakāma* [lust], spreading like a fire [through them] so intensely that they surrender to it...” (GL, v. 4: 6).

The human hunger for love and sex merits examination not simply as a morally significant human experience, but also as a medium through which to explore the larger causative problem of how harm is perpetuated through desire and ignorance. On this larger level, the stories about lust demonstrate how the response triggered within an individual by a sense-object leads to craving which leads to a sense of attachment, which leads to suffering or harm for oneself and even the potential for spreading harm to

¹⁶ This tension may also be expressive of a more wide spread tendency within the Theravāda tradition, noted by Charles Hallisey, to treat ethics particularistically, avoiding the definition of systematic rules and permitting the juxtaposition and co-existence of seemingly contradictory values, a tendency that promotes the exploration of competing ethical ideas. See Hallisey 1996.

¹⁷ Ind defines *dhammaññutā* as the “condition of one who recognizes causes and results, who recognizes that ‘this thing is the cause [which] is the origin of this result. This result is the result which arose from this cause,’ and so on.” (GL, v. 3: 64-65).

others. The stories about inappropriate sexual passion are particularly able to portray the power of this cycle of becoming because the narrative transformations that occur within them are so profound. Sexual passion is seen as a “fire” “heating up” various individuals,¹⁸ and in each story, it burns up their most significant possessions.

In these stories, the strong power of lust to cloud moral vision demonstrates how in Ind’s understanding, hungers or desires act like intoxicants that befuddle the mind, pollute individual purity, and generate social disorder by causing individuals to lose their proper position in society.

In the first story (drawn from La Fontaine),¹⁹ a lion sees a rich merchant’s daughter and falls deeply in love with her. He goes to her father, and in Ind’s version, with great emotion asks for her hand. The merchant hears the lion’s speech and fears for his daughter. He thinks to himself that it would be a calamity for his child to marry an animal from a different *jāti* (birth or race) than her own, but neither would it be a good idea to oppose the brutal lion’s request. So he pretends to go into the house to consult his daughter. When he returns, he informs the lion that his daughter has consented to the match but is fearful that when she kisses and embraces him, his claws and fangs will pierce and hurt her. She begs that they be removed so the marriage can take place. The lion, “when the force of the hunger of love suppressed [all his consciousness] and rendered him ignorant,” (GL, v. 3: 54) agrees to this and permits the merchant’s men to remove his claws and fangs. Once they are removed, and all of the lion’s strength and power is gone, the servants turn on him with sticks and swords, intending to kill him. He runs away into the forest where he is forced to endure great suffering due to the loss of his power.

Interpreting this story in the commentary, the teacher tells the students to compare it with cases “today” in which someone powerful, such as an abbot, “is deceived by the fake passion of a woman of ill repute.” He gives her all of his wealth, and then when he disrobes because of her, she claims that she does not want to be his wife after all. Like the lion who had his claws and fangs cut out, “he cannot take back what he has lost” (GL, v. 3: 55-56). The strength of sexual passion is so great, the teacher tells the students, that not only abbots and monks, but even elderly people, can “fall from a height” because of it (GL, v. 4: 6), as in the case of Tā Um Yogī who lived in Sruk Brah̄ Tāmaṇ:

This Tā Yogī went astray because of his love for a young woman. Over there at that time, there was a woman of pleasure who knew that Tā Um Yogī wanted to eat fresh *danlāp* fruit,²⁰ so she sent the fresh *danlāp* fruit belonging to her to go give pleasure to Tā Um, caressing and playing with him a bit, in order to take the old man’s wealth from him. Tā Um, becoming ignorant and bewildered, began to take his wealth and belongings to give to this woman of pleasure until she had it all, down to the last *sambat* [sarong], utensils, mat, and pillow, which were obtained through this process of going and doing to Yogī what is done when they set fire to a corpse, and as a result, putting everything into the hands of the woman of pleasure until Tā Um had fallen into poverty (GL, v. 4: 6-7).

Another story tells of an old woman named Yāy Saṃ, a 70-year-old woman with white hair, who walked bent over with a cane:

At that time, there was a young man named Cau Mau, who went and asked Yāy Saṃ to be his foster-mother, and Yāy Saṃ thus came to love him as her foster-son. When some time had

¹⁸ For instance, GL, v. 4: 6, 7, 9.

¹⁹ GL, v. 3: 51-56. See La Fontaine 1993, IV: 93-94.

²⁰ This is a reference to the *Lokanīti* verse that Ind later quotes in the commentary concerning the harm that results when older men marry young women with “breasts like the *timbaru* fruit,” which Ind translates as “*danlāp*,” *Lokanīti* verse 111.

passed, the fire of strong passion arose in Yāy Saṃ, and she began to love Cau Mau in a worldly manner... showing women's wiles to compel Cau Mau to be pleased in various worldly matters. As for Cau Mau, he realized [what was occurring] and ran away from Yāy Saṃ... And indeed, this passion, if it exists in the body of an old woman and she goes astray as this old woman did... if she is white-haired and on some occasion tries to... dye her hair black, or tries to untwist her body, walking with her head uplifted, abandoning her cane and not holding on, passion like this has a strength that can cut away her children and grandchildren, and she may even dare to murder her own child, as in the story of the brahmani who was the mother of the Bodhisatta (GL, v. 4: 9-11).

The teacher then goes on to relate two *jātaka* in which lust engenders cycles of harm and humiliation. In the first story,²¹ four corrupt councilors of the king who are enemies of the Bodhisatta begin to lust after the Bodhisatta's wife Nāṇ Amarādevī when they learn that the Bodhisatta has had to flee. Receiving word through a matchmaker that each councilor intends to make her his mistress, Nāṇ Amarādevī makes special preparations to receive them. That night, when the councilors enter her house one by one, Nāṇ Amarādevī's slaves receive them, leading each man into a chamber where he is told that Nāṇ Amarādevī will receive him after he has been bathed. As soon as each man is undressed, the slaves release a concealed trap door and the councilor falls down into a pit filled with excrement up to the level of a man's mouth, "where his suffering is likened to that of creatures in *gūṭhanarak*..." the "excrement hell" (GL, v. 3: 60). At dawn, Nāṇ Amarādevī has the councilors removed and painfully scrubbed with stones. Then she has them rolled up together in a woven mat, "and carried like corpses are carried" to the palace, where they are presented to the king. As he unrolls them from the mat, she tells her story, and after the councilors are rebuked by the king and sent home in disgrace, "they were so humiliated and degraded that they did not want to go out in public, and from that day forward, they never entered the king's palace again" (GL, v. 3: 63).

The second story is a *jātaka*²² in which an old brahmani, the mother of the Bodhisatta, becomes corrupted by her lust for her son's student. Realizing that her feelings for the student cannot be consummated as long as her son is his teacher, she plots to kill her own son, telling the student,

"I am going to kill my child tonight. I will wait up and watch, and when my child goes to sleep in his bed, I will take a sword, and furtively enter [his room], killing him with one swift blow, instantly. All of this you must not tell to any other person outside, and no one will know except we two, who will be together as husband and wife from now on" (GL, v. 4: 15).

Horried, the student reveals the plot to the Bodhisatta, his teacher. The Bodhisatta places the trunk of a banana tree in his bed, covering it with a cloth so it looks like a sleeping person. He and the student hide themselves to watch and see what the old mother will do. Just as she confided to the student, she steals into her son's bedroom at night, intending to kill him with one swift blow of her sword. Using all her strength, she brings the sword down, but when it hits the banana tree trunk, she falls down, "having shattered her breath," and dies. The Bodhisatta and his student, having furtively watched the old woman's actions, realize that the woman is dead and "shock and repulsion, stemming from the apprehension of evil, arose in them."²³ They "arranged for a coffin to carry the corpse, and went to perform the cremation

²¹ GL, v. 3: 56-64. Ind cites the source of the story as the *Dasajātaka*, a vernacular text on the last ten lives of the Buddha which contains a version of the *Mahā-umagga-jātaka* in which the Bodhisatta is reborn as Mahosadha, a councilor of King Vedeha. See Cowell 1990: 156-246.

²² Ind says that this story is drawn from the "*Tika Brah Dhammacakka*," referring to a commentarial source, GL, v. 5: 18.

²³ Khmer *dhammasaṃveg*, GL, v. 4: 15.

according to the customs of the caste of brahmins" (GL, v. 4: 17).

The numerous stories in this hunger-for-love cycle, analyzed from the perspective of *dharmānūtā* share a discernable pattern: a person lacking in *satisampajāñña* encounters someone to whom he or she becomes inappropriately attracted; the person is unsuited to him or her because of age, *jāti*, profession, or marriage. The infatuated individual, like the lion, becomes befuddled by desire, which results in suffering. It is impossible to determine in these cases whether ignorance leads to hunger or hunger leads to ignorance, but it is clear that the perpetuation of this cycle engenders delusion and other forms of wickedness that spread harm.

Lack of *satisampajāñña* is best exemplified by Tā Um Yogī, who cannot stop himself even as he gives all of his possessions and wealth, piece by piece, to the prostitute. Compared to a corpse on a funeral pyre, Tā Um Yogī is portrayed as someone who has been rendered totally without consciousness because of sexual passion. The imagery of the corpse – with its lack of consciousness – reappears in the Amarādevī story where the supposedly wise councilors of the king undergo a facsimile of punishments applied to the dead in *gūṭhanarak*, "excrement-hell," before being wrapped up and carried like corpses to the king. Similarly, with his consciousness "suppressed" by the "force of the hunger for love," the lion is unable to evaluate the merchant's request to cut out his most important possessions: his weapons of self-protection (GL, v. 3: 54). In all of these cases, ignorance or lack of *satisampajāñña* enables lust to arise and results in the character's inability to discern appropriate sexual behavior, leading ultimately to the utter humiliation and ruin of each of the characters.

The stories as a group examine the manner in which lust brings about self destruction and harm. In the narratives of the two mothers, it becomes clear that wrongful intimate behavior can have a rippling harmful impact on others. In these two stories, lust is shown to be a force so strong, Ind reiterates, it "...can even sever the love of one's own children" (GL, v. 4: 10). The passage implies that while both sexual passion and love between parents and children are powerful kinds of love, parent-child love *should* be the deeper and stronger of the two.

In the view of the text, then, the brahmani story in particular represents a breach of nature, creating a disturbing sensation of shock. Even though the Bodhisatta and his student knew in advance what she was planning to do, they are still shocked and repelled, with an "apprehension of evil," as they watch the brahmani take her sword to the figure she believes to be her son, strike and fall down dead. Their shock no doubt stems in part from her sudden death, but it is their comprehension of the whole sequence of events starting with the brahmani's lust and ending with her death that causes them to apprehend evil. From the outside, the nature of the brahmani's death is not apparent since the son and the student respectfully honor her with appropriate funeral rites. In contrast to other characters in this group of stories who "fall down" and are publically humiliated, the brahmani's "fall" is recognizable only to those inside her family, who know how one cause gave rise to another in the sequence of events that shape the narrative. In the same way, only those with the insight and consciousness to see causes and results fully understand the true nature of reality and thus the true causes and results of harm in their world. Those who lack understanding remain fearful or ignorant, a condition that fosters the spread of further harm rather than causing it to cease.

These themes are reiterated in the final three stories of the text. These stories center around the "base" actions of young wives who betray their husbands (all of whom love their wives deeply) by taking lovers. None of the husbands perceives what is happening, since the wives conceal their actions with cunning "women's wiles." Blinded by their love and devotion, the husbands fail to discern the reality of

their relationships with their wives. In contrast with the stories about “hunger for love” which reveal the cycles of harm set in motion by lust, these stories convey the difficulty of perceiving the unfolding of causes and results even when they are taking place under one’s eyes.

In the first story, when a monkey-wife tricks her husband into believing that her lover is her nephew, the husband warmly invites the “nephew” to live with them, never perceiving the truth until the lovers steal his wealth and run away together, leaving him unhappy.²⁴ In another story, the only person who is able to see clearly is the father-in-law of the adulterous woman, who happens upon the young wife and her lover embracing on the verandah of the house. As evidence of the tryst, the father-in-law takes the wife’s anklet to present to his son but after being deceived by the machinations of his wife who has taken steps to make herself appear innocent, the son refuses to believe him and accuses him of “being an old person who can’t see very well.”²⁵ In a sequence of images from a third story, the undiscerning husband, in bed with his wife, falls happily asleep. His wife touches him to make sure he is sleeping, and then leans down to touch her lover who is hidden under the bed. “Very pleased” that the husband is asleep and that she has come for him, the lover “came out from under the bed and seized the hand of his lover.” The lover, too, is undiscerning, and fails to notice the dagger in her other hand. She plunges it into his neck, and he is “dead in an instant” (GL, v. 10: 57-73).

The three stories, which follow one another with only a few words of commentarial interpretation in between, seem to invite the reader or listener who has reached the end of the text to comment further with narratives drawn from their own memories or experience. While these stories address “hunger for love,” they also present perplexing images of seeing and not seeing, which metaphorically raises the problem of how difficult it is, for most ordinary people caught up in their day-to-day tasks and relationships, to perceive the world as it really is. The contrast between the outward narrative perspective in these stories and the inner empathetic experience of them is marked. While from the outside perspective of narrative omniscience it is possible to see the cycles of causes and results, from the standpoint of characters within the narratives, this perception is difficult to achieve. As the stories end, it is not at all clear whether the perception of causes and results in the world is really enough to stop the spread of harm, and whether or not emotions like love interfere with one’s ability to perceive right and wrong. Their placement at the end of the text also evokes the problem of how to attain and apply the insights of *dhammaññutā* to one’s own life, relationships and events in the world. For the ordinary person who has not withdrawn from the world, how does one live in the confusion of reality and perceive it at the same time? How does one gain the same perspective on life that one has on narrative, seeing it both from an outside and retrospective perspective and simultaneously experiencing it?

Conditionality and the Narrative Form

Ind’s concern with presenting the *Gatilok* as a pedagogical model for moral education makes it possible to understand how he intended his students, readers and listeners to apply narrative ethical thinking to their own lives. In the text, he models the application of his method of ethical analysis to historical societal events, through generating comparisons between narrative and the contemporary

²⁴ “The Story of the Bram Monkey who Asked the Female Auv Monkey to be his Wife,” GL, v. 10: 42-51.

²⁵ “The Wife who was Unfaithful to her Husband,” GL, v. 10: 52-57.

world. In this sense, the *Gatilok* moves back and forth between the moral worlds of narrative action and historical action, demonstrating how to apply narrative ethical analysis to social relationships and societal events.

The text's teacher introduces models for a method of "comparing" (or applying)²⁶ narrative analysis to contemporary social contexts. Emphasizing the processual nature of existence revealed through *dhammaññutā*, and exploring cycles of causation in relation to individual actions, the teacher encourages his students to further apply what they are learning through narrative analysis to their own social world. After telling the "lion in love" story, for example, the teacher prompts the students to analyze it by comparing the story to contemporary cases in which a powerful person such as an abbot "falls" because of love and passion (GL, v. 3: 55-56). Comparisons between narrative and historical problems demonstrate Ind's methodology of using narrative as a medium for recognizing the true nature of the world, allowing his students to cultivate *satisampajañña* through the analysis of ethical *gati*. The method of comparison-making that Ind models in the text and which he wants his audience to imitate is noted explicitly in a passage in which the teacher informs the students, "at this point, I will [turn to] giving out miscellaneous ways of behaving or *gati*..." (GL, v. 4: 25). In a continuation of the model of "comparative" commentarial analysis that the teacher has demonstrated, the students implore the teacher to

"... please give us stories ... to compare. At the conclusion of each narrative, it is no longer necessary, from this point forward, for you to interpret [the stories] and draw comparisons. Instead, please allow us to have the opportunity to make comparisons, and listen to our interpretations..." (GL, v. 4: 26).

The final section of the text proceeds with the teacher supplying the narratives and the students interpreting them. "With what sort of *gati* do you think it compares?" the teacher asks at the conclusion of each story. "Please give your interpretation" (GL, v. 4: 30). The students begin to analyze narratives with narratives until it becomes difficult to differentiate between the voice of the teacher and the voice of the students. This final section of the text serves as a series of exercises through which the students themselves can cultivate and practice *satisampajañña*. They evaluate the moral action within each story and then suggest "comparisons" between the events of the narrative and their own social world. For instance, after hearing a narrative about a donkey who, laden with riches, is taken captive by bandits,²⁷ they conclude, "this story has a *gati* toward those with wealth and possessions. Wealth can be like a poison, as in the story of a certain young woman..." (GL, v. 6: 64) and they recount the story of a young visitor to Vatt Uppālom in Phnom Penh, who, because of her vanity about her possessions, was robbed of her jewelry. In response to a story about a feud between the different parts of the body,²⁸ the students interpret it as "...a *gati* toward the entire population of a kingdom... When the kingdom is at odds internally, other nations and bands of bandits... perceive this weakness and try to take advantage of it by attacking the kingdom..." They end their analysis of this story by stressing the importance of paying taxes (GL, v. 6: 86). Responding to another

²⁶ Khmer *priep* or *priep dhiēp*.

²⁷ "The Story of the Businessman's Donkey and the Band of Forest Robbers," GL, v. 6: 62-66. Ind cites the story as having "its origin in a French volume." As a possible source, see La Fontaine 1993 I, 13: 26.

²⁸ "The Story of the Feet and Hands who were Jealous of the Mouth," GL, v. 6: 80-86. See La Fontaine 1993, III, 2: 71-72.

²⁹ "The Story of the Pregnant Mother Dog About to Give Birth," GL, v. 4: 51-63. See La Fontaine 1993, II, 7: 47-48. This story has been described to me as one of the most significant of the *Gatilok* stories in contemporary Khmer society. (Professor Ketcha Socur (professor of literature at Cambodian Development Research Institute and the University of Phnom Penh) personal communication).

story about a dog who reluctantly takes in a homeless pregnant dog, only to be forced out of her house later by the same mother dog and her children,³⁰ they observe in socially specific terms,

“this story is like the individual who has land or a rice field and who has outsiders come to work or depend on him. But after time passes, this outsider’s children grow up and the children go study and receive an education and become ...a *nābhīn* [high-ranking official]. [They] take the land and rice farm from the first master, like the mother dog with her children...” (GL, v. 4: 63).

This method of identifying contemporary events with the narratives does not have clear antecedents in Theravādin literature, although certain kinds of comparisons are made in the Buddhist texts that Ind consulted in writing the *Gatilok*. In *jātaka*, characters are identified in relation to their past lives in the *samodhana* (“connection”) portion of the narrative which concludes each story (Saddhatissa 1975: 5). While the *samodhana* may have provided Ind with a model for connecting the narratives with past and present events, they are quite different from the identifications made by Ind’s teacher and students, which more often refer to contemporary groups of people or circumstances, or even to particular historical individuals.

In the *Gatilok*, Ind’s incorporation of comparisons with contemporary situations functions on three simultaneous levels, affording the students and audience of the text with an opportunity to practice the forms of ethical recognition they are cultivating, serving as a vehicle for Ind’s social comments and criticism of his society, and articulating a universal societal ethical vision formulated from the Buddhist perspective. The comparisons allow students an opportunity for practicing *satisampajañña*, modeling the way in which Ind intends for students to move between the world of narrative and the world of their own social reality. The application of narrative ethical analysis, involving the development of the ethical discernment that Ind stresses throughout the text, to the “real” world can be accomplished because the underlying nature of narrative and the world is identical. This is the nature perceived by one who has achieved *dhammaññutā*, recognition of the chain of causes and results that shape the world, also known as *paṭicca-samuppāda*.

Narrative and the world are both “worldly,” sharing the condition of things that can be described as *gatilok*, “the coming into being of any word, any cause, any thing that arises and occurs in this world...” (GL, v. 1: 2). This shared nature means that there is no difference between perceiving the experiences of characters in a narrative and those of beings in the world. Yet even though narrative and world share the same nature, encompassed by Ind’s definition of *lok* (“world”), and the experiences of narrative characters are no different from those of beings in the world, narrative is differentiated from the world of lived experience in the text. Similarly perhaps to the way that beings like *devas*, gods, spirits, and humans coexist in separate but intertwined levels of the world in various Buddhist cosmological renderings of the universe, the world of narrative is both intertwined and distinct from the world of lived experience. The commentarial students who listen to stories are themselves part of a narrative, but as they listen to the teacher tell stories, they are outside of and clearly separate from the stories to which they are listening in their narrative of listening to stories. Characters within the stories, too, sometimes tell their own stories, like the mother dog who told her puppy the story of the “useless and unlucky” eyes that he should not consume. Stories told by characters within stories in the text are often indicated with the formulaic phrase, “from the

³⁰ For example, see: GL, v. 1: 15-16; v. 2: 88.

beginning to the end, he [or she] recounted each incident,” a comment that helps to clearly separate the telling of a narrative from the experience of it.³⁰ Yet, just as “anecdotal” stories or stories drawn from court records are intertwined in the text with traditional folktales and other textual and oral literature, when a character tells a narrative drawn from his or her own life, it becomes a story that others, outside of that lived experience, can also tell as a narrative. Thus, in the text, while there is no blurring between narrative and world – they are distinct – they are also sometimes the same, and they share the same underlying nature.

As it is presented in the *Gatilok*, narrative exhibits a temporal/spatial dimension that offers readers and listeners who are ordinary people (though not the characters themselves) the opportunity to perceive the unfolding of actions, causes and results. This dimension of narrative makes it particularly useful as a medium for ethical reflection. On the one hand, there is an “outside” and retrospective quality to narrative. The narrative perspective in the *Gatilok* stories is one that permits the reader or listener to exist outside of and beyond the story, seeing all of the relevant actions and events revealed, even those that are hidden from other characters in the story. By virtue of having an ending, the narratives take place in the past, so the results of the action are known. Throughout the *Gatilok*, there is an implication that the past holds a moral authority over the present, serving as a model, and that the very act in which the students are engaged of seeing and remembering past actions is morally charged.³¹ The narrative of the students is set in the past. This means that the larger audience of the text is hearing or reading a text that recalls a dialogue from the past, recounting and comparing stories of their present-past with stories that are “*purāṇ*,” “ancient” or “old.”

Moral authority in the text also derives from the ability to discern and evaluate causes and results. The retrospective perspective afforded by narrative reproduces the clear, sharp insight and discrimination possessed by those with *satisampajañña*, which allows them to perceive causes and results. Understanding and evaluating narrative actions, the reader or listener can duplicate the perception of the wise person who sees chains of causes and results and understands their probable outcomes, just as the omniscient Buddha of the *jātaka* can perceive the causes and outcomes of a given action or event through a series of lifetimes and rebirths. The Buddha’s vision of the world “collapses” or overturns normal temporal and spatial limitations: he can see present, future and past simultaneously, and can perceive what is happening at a distance as well as things that others believe to be hidden. Lacking this omniscient perception, the vision of ordinary people is constrained by temporality and spatiality. Through narrative, however, they can approximate the vision, if not of the fully-enlightened Buddha, of one who possesses *dhammāññutā*.

At the same time that narrative puts the readers or listeners outside the time and space of the narrative actions, it also pulls them “inside” the story, allowing them to empathize with its characters. In this sense, they gain insight into how the characters are experiencing each moment and event, feeling shock, repulsion and pity, for instance, as the poor old brahmani tries to chop up her own son. Just as the “outside” perspective allows one to become a wise person, it would seem that this inside perspective fosters the growth of compassion in a person. This perspective also thrusts the reader or listener to enter into the experience of the present moment. As plot events unfold, the reader or listener becomes part of the action taking place at that moment, which tests the moral responses of readers and listeners along with those of

³¹ Holistic studies of Khmer culture have treated retrospection or “looking backward” as a morally charged act. For further discussion of this idea, see chapter 3 in Ledgerwood 1990, and Chandler 1982.

the characters. Like the characters in the story, or people living in the world, the reader or listener responds “at once” to these events.

The problem posed by the ethical demands of the “present moment” is an important sub-theme in the *Gatilok*. Exemplary characters, as we have seen, are able to respond wisely “at once” or “in one instant” because they have cultivated mindfulness and discrimination that allows them to see all the time, not just after extended reflection. In the animal stories in particular, the ability to respond wisely and appropriately “at once” – “according to the circumstances and according to the occasion”³² – often determines whether the protagonist will live or die. In a *Hitopadeśa* story included in the text, a brahman who lacks *satisampajāñña* fails to perceive the true cause of his child’s death, wrongfully blaming his faithful mongoose-servant for the tragic event. He kills the mongoose in a moment of rage, but later, after realizing what in fact transpired (the mongoose tried to protect the child from a venomous snake, who was the real killer) he bitterly regrets his action. Had he possessed the wisdom to analyze causes and results and the compassion to acknowledge the mongoose’s devotion, he would not have acted so wrongfully in a moment of rage.³³

Working through the text, readers and listeners are supposed to grow in moral discernment or *satisampajāñña* as they learn to analyze the narratives. In fact, the efficacy of this method is demonstrated by the framing narrative of the students, whose analyses of the stories recounted by their teacher obviously enables them to gain in *satisampajāñña*. Learning to perceive conditionality through narrative affords them the special powers of perception characterized by mindfulness and clarity. Likewise, the larger audience of the text who want to live as good Buddhists, ordinary people being educated and entertained by narratives, must learn to apply the same kind of moral vision, recognizing the causes and results that structure the world.

³² GL, v. 3: 20, from Ind’s definition of those who possess *satisampajāñña*.

³³ “The Story of the Husband and Wife who Kept a Ferret,” GL, v. 8: 18-23; Balasubrahmanyam 1989: 147-48.

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