

## A Critical Analysis of Morality in Gandhāra Jataka

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**Abstract:** The paper details the archaeological, palaeographic, and literary evidence for origin and evolution of Jataka in the Greater Gandhāra region. It argues that Gandhāra Jataka have been discussed and analysed by a number of scholars in past; nonetheless the scholarly literature attending to the moral significance of Gandhāra Jataka is not fulfilling. The present paper attempts to critically analyse the moral messages of love and kindness towards parents, sacrifice for others and generosity, and compares them among Buddhist, Chinese, Greek ethical philosophies and modern psycho-social theories. It details the Śyama Jataka for love and adoration of parents and weighs it against the similar virtues in Confucius, Plutarch and Aristotle doctrines. It further elaborates the case of Mahasattva and Viśvantara Jatakas for their moral messages of generosity, charity and gift giving, and compares them with Aristotle's virtue ethics and modern psycho-social theories. The paper concludes that moral education reduces violence and promotes peace and harmony in the society. Love and respect to parents and other elders of the family; sacrifice, generosity and charity result in cooperation, contentment and peaceful environment in the society. The major recommendations of the paper include an urgent acknowledgement of Gandhāra Jataka as a National cultural heritage and to translate them in National and regional languages.

**Keywords:** Gandhāra Jataka, Morality, Critical Analysis, Eastern and Western philosophies, modern psycho-social theories.

### Introduction

Story telling has been a popular form of ethical teaching in the Buddhist culture. Śīla or morality is primary factor of all spiritual attainments in Buddhist Jataka stories. Jataka stories demonstrated the exemplary behaviour of *bodhisattva*, who wanted to rise to exalted status of Buddha-hood (Joshi & Banerjee 1998: 176). The *bodhisattvas* were shown as heroes and role models for teaching moral perfection, especially compassion, generosity, truthfulness, and self-control to common people. The jataka stories clearly spelled out social norms and vices. These were invented to promote ideals in the society. I-Ching mentions that the object of composing jataka was to make the doctrine popular to common mind (Hamilton 1950: 149). Jataka variously repeated vocabulary of moral perfection, e.g., generosity-*dāna*, morality-*śīla*,

wisdom-*pranna*, effort-*virīya*, patience-*isśanti*, truth-*sacca*, determination-*adhitthāna*, compassion-*mettā* and equanimity-*upakkhā* (Abeysekera 2002: 7; Bell 2000: 35; Ching *n.d.*: 250-253).

The jataka narratives perhaps rose from oral tradition of Madhyadeśa and later on the Mahāyāna movement gave a new impetus to jataka traditions. We take a point here that both Madhyadeśa and Mahayana movement had strong relationship with Gandhāra. Bell (2008) maintains that the term Madhyadeśa refers to Hurayana, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. However, Bagchi (1981:41) has already pointed out that the term was traditionally used by the Buddhists for the whole North India from Punjab to Bihar. At the wake of the British Colonization, the whole North India was called as Madhyadeśa to distinguish it from Himalayan Ranges or the

Southern plains (Risley 1977: 32). Later on, the Colonial scholars translated the term Madhyadeśa as Central India. However, recently the scholars have largely challenged the traditional rendering of the term Madhyadeśa to a geographical territory. They rather suggested the term *Maddhyoddeśika/Madhy'yddeśika* meaning 'Intermediate language/recitation' referring to Gandhari Prakrit (Yuyuma 2001: xviii).

Williams (2009:158) argues that Māhayāna movement started in Indus Valley and Kaśmir. The paleographic evidence also reveals the earliest Māhayāna monasteries in Gandhāra. The British Library collection of 1994 expedition contains twenty nine birch bark scrolls written in Kharoshthī, revealing the earliest Dharmaguptaka monastery at Peshawar or the village of Hadda. According to Paramartha the Dharmaguptaka and Bahuśrutiyas, the earliest Māhayāna Sects were confined to Mathura and Gandhāra in early centuries of the Christian Era. A majority of the Māhayāna Sūtras<sup>1</sup> referring to 'Seven Jewels<sup>2</sup>' were composed in Kaśmir, Taxila, Afghanistan, Nasik and Barygaza and Central Asia (Xinru Lu 2010). There seems to be a consensus of scholars that Māhayāna Buddhism started in Northwestern regions. The Māhayāna *jataka* tradition is extra-ordinary for its immense richness of teaching moral, ethical, socio-cultural and religious precepts.

Gandhāra relief largely represents the figures of historic Buddha, life stories and future *bodhisattvas*. The *jataka* stories though small in

number, but significant for their moral implications to society. In *jataka* exhibited in Gandhāra relief, Buddha or *bodhisattvas* are shown practicing compassion, moral rectitude, truthfulness, determination, self-training and self-control in everyday life scenes. Here, the power of religious art was used to develop and strengthen the behavior code and moral rectitude of the society. The miracles were added to *jataka* to make them more attractive to common people (See Fig. 1, 2 & 3). Buddhist monks were possibly responsible for selecting the themes on Gandhāra relief. The literary and palaeographic evidence reveals that *jataka* were formally taught at the monasteries. The British Library Collection is a representative selection of the works of various types that were taught in monasteries. It contains *sūtras*, as well as *avadana* and *gatha* revealing Gandhāra lore and traditions (Salamon 1999: 36). *Anavatapta Gatha*, forming part of several Gandhāra manuscripts was a popular text in Gandhāra. It is also mentioned in Māhāsāṅghika Vinaya. The *jataka* themselves provide evidence that they were formally written down by experts and taught by a teacher.

This paper asserts that *jataka* stories as revealed from Gandhāra relief and literary sources taught the Buddhist values, i.e., gratitude towards parents, love, kindness and compassion, to laymen. The major objective of this study is to critically analyze the morality in Gandhāra *jataka* in terms of different classical eastern, western and modern social theories.

### Background to the Study

*Dipankara*, *Viśvantara*, *Mahasattva*, *Śyama-Amara*, *Maitryakanyaka* (Ingholt 1957: 30, 48 & 49, ill. 2 & 3), *Chaddanta* (*Saddanta*), *Mahumagga* (*Amaradevipanha*) *Isismgiya-katekan*, *Rishyasringa*, and 'the Scene of *Rishyasring's Birth*' *Jatakas* are reported from Taxila, Dir, Sehri Bahlol, Andan Dheri, Chatpat,

<sup>1</sup> i.e., *Saddharma Pundarika*, *the Pitaputrasamāgama*, *the Bodhisattvapitaka*, *the Tathagataguhyā Sūtra*, *the Śsatesahasrika Prajnapāramita*

<sup>2</sup> *Suvarna*, i.e., gold, *rupya*-silver, *vaidurya*-lapis lazuli, *sphātika*-crystal or quartz, *mukta*-pearl, *lohītika*-a red precious stone or coral, *musāragalva*-ammonite, and *agate*-coral

Timargarha, Gumbatuna, Bajaur in the region of Greater Gandhāra. Marshall (1960: 56-57) reported an unidentified jataka from Block E, Sirkap, Taxila (pl. 222, no. 135), now placed in Taxila Museum. It represents the oldest pictorial relief of Gandhāra, belonging to late Śaka period. The relief shows a young anchorite in the foreground, suspended head downwards on a pole, carried by two young men. Five other anchorites are looking on from the back ground. One on the left holds a flask in his left hand. All have the right hand upraised in front of them. The Gandhāra relief from Swat, representing story of King Śivi, showing self-sacrifice of King Śivi is now placed in British Museum. The story possibly took its inception from the one told in *Mahabharata.III.197* (Dames & Joyce 1913:17; Dutt 1984: xviii). *Dipankara Jataka* (Bell 2000: 37; Nagar 1993: 105) reveals a young ascetic named Sumati buying lotuses from the girl. Sumati prostrates and spread his hair on the ground so that the Buddha would not soil his feet. Most frequent illustrations show Sumati throwing himself on his hands and feet to cover with his hair the mud on the road for the Buddha to walk on (see fig. 1 & 2). Five panels from circular base of the Sikri stupa in Taxila exhibited *Dipankara Jataka*, belonging to Kushan period. It is now placed in Lahore Museum, Pakistan (Marshall 1960 pl. 49). It reveals the Dipankara Buddha in robes, *ushniṣa* and halo, attended by a *bhikṣhu*. The young Sumati is repeated four times in front of the Dipankara Buddha. Another example exhibits a narrow and fragmentary frieze of phyllite from Dharmarajika stupa, Taxila. It reveals the king in hunting dress drawing his bow and an attendant in the background holding a quiver full of arrows. The background shows rocks, vegetation and lion's head coming out of a cave. Śyāma is shown sinking to the ground with an arrow in his breast, beyond the rocks. The next scene reveals the god Indra, haloed, floating in air,

with a flask of ambrosia in his hand, and reviving the boy to life. The reviving Śyāma raises his hands above his head. The king is repeated twice on left of the frieze; first visiting the blind parents of the boy in their leafy huts, and second leading them to the scene of the miracle (Marshall 1960 81-82). Another one in schist, possibly a stair riser, presently placed in Berlin Museum (I 5964), is of typical Gandhāra execution from Kushan period. Six other stelea are reported from Shotorak, the western edge of greater Gandhāra, dated to 6<sup>th</sup> century CE (Bell 2000: 38). *Śyama Jataka*, reported from Dharmarajika stupa is now placed in Taxila Museum (Marshall 1960 pl. 73: fig. 106).

*Chaddanta (Saddanta) Jataka* was found from Goli and Karamar in Gandhāra. The stair riser specimen from Karamar represents the jataka in three scenes, now placed in Lahore Museum (no.1156). In first scene the six tusked elephant king stands over the pit. The hunter has his bow and arrow ready to shoot. In second scene the elephant is kneeling before hunter who is cutting his tusks. In third scene, the hunter is presenting the tusks to a male (Bell 2000: 37; Ingholt 1957: 50). *Mahaumagga (Amaradevi-panha) Jataka* is the largest Pali Jataka, referring to four pretended wisemen and Mahosadha, the Boddhisattva. The jataka is reported from Sahri Bahlol in Gandhāra. It has many versions, variously named as *Yava-Majhakiya*, *Upakosa* (Bell 2000: 36-7). *Maitrakanyaka Jataka* is represented twice in Gandhāra. Presently two fragments are preserved in Peshawar Museum (no. PM 2714 & 2715), dating back to ca. AD 300-400 (Ingholt 1957). It narrates Maitrakanyaka killing his mother and years later has flaming wheel on his head as punishment. He prayed for all those who had sinned. This noble act saved him for his fortune. In *Nalinika* (also known as *Isisinga*, *Alambusa*, *Isisrnga*, *Rṣyasrnga*, the Deer Mother, Deer Queen Mother) *Jataka* (Nagar 1993: 106), a doe,

enamored of an ascetic (*bodhisatva*), eats grass with his urine and gives birth to a full grown male.

### The Literary Evidence of Gandhāra Jataka

The literary traditions of *Anavatapta Gatha* and Aśvaghōṣa's *Sūtralamkara* were originated and evolved in Gandhāra. We find the literary evidence of Gandhāra jataka from rich and varied traditions of Aśvaghōṣa's<sup>3</sup> *Sūtralamkara*; a collection of pious legends after the model of jataka and *Avadana* (Hamilton 1950: 149). The Aśvaghōṣa's *Sūtralamkara* although mentions other parts of the subcontinent, but its main emphasis is on Northwestern Provinces, i.e., *Avanti*, *Ashmaka*, Gandhāra and *Pushkalavati*. Story 39 of the *Sūtralamkara* narrates Kingdom of *Siu-ho-to*, where King Śivi purchased dove at the price of his own flesh, which according to Aurel Stein corresponds to the modern Buner (Nariman 1992: 195). The vast and deep impact of Gandhāra jataka on common masses could be gleaned through chronicles of the Chinese pilgrim who visited this land in first few centuries of the Christian era. I-Ching gives a summarized analysis of Aśvaghōṣa's *Sūtralamkara* and records that it was studied everywhere in the Land of Five Indies as well as in the Southern Seas (Indo-Asia) (Hastings & Johns *n.d.*: 494). It was a common understanding that to read Aśvaghōṣa was to be at once educated, instructed and delighted. Some offshoots of the Gandhāra *Jataka* are still alive in ethnic cultures along the Silk Route in North Western parts of Pakistan.

<sup>3</sup> Aśvaghōṣa (*ca.* 100 century CE) was the India's greatest poet before Kalidasa. He was among the celebrities of Kaniśka's Empire. He either belonged to Ayodhya or Peshawar (Merriam Webster's Encyclopaedia of Literature 1995: 80). He was given as war booty to Kaniśka (Warder 1990: 180).

Aryasutra's *Jatakamala* was affiliated to the Mahayana Buddhism. The fragments of Aryasutra's *Jatakamala* were found from Schoyan manuscript, in Bamiyan valley; part of the ancient kingdom of Gandhāra in north-east Afghanistan. Though Aryasutra's *Jatakamala* contains 34 jataka, the fragmentary collection of Shoyan manuscript preserves only seven jataka stories, in five manuscripts written on birch bark in Gilgit/Bamiyan Type II, dated to 6<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> centuries CE (Braarvig & Fredrik 2010: 84-84). The jataka include *śreshi* and *Aviśahyaśreṣṭhijataka* (two stories of the Buddha as the head of a guild), *Vyāghrjataka* (giving his flesh to a tigress), *Maitribalajataka* (as the generous king Maitribala), *Śarabhajataka* (as a deer), *Aviśahyaśreṣṭhijataka*, *Śibijataka* (as the king of Śibis), and *Viśvaṃtarāvadāna* (as the prince Viśvaṃtarā). Gilgit manuscript is another literary source of Gandhāra jataka stories (Dutt 1984: xviii).

The jataka played a significant role in propagation of Buddhism to common masses through Gandhāra relief and probably also through Buddhist monks and wandering *kathaks* or professional story tellers, who were also among major propagators of jataka tradition. The word '*kathak*' has originated from *Sanskrit* '*katha*' or story. It also refers to the classical dance style of North India. Gour (1929: 47-48) maintained that *kathaks* were same to uneducated masses as were the missionary monks to educated lot. They moved from town to town, and attracted a wide audience by dancing and singing the jataka (Mills, Peter & Sarah 2003: 331; Hamilton 1950: 149). The jataka spread throughout Asia *via* channel of Buddhist missionaries. The translation activities in first few centuries of Christian Era in China initiated the carving and painting of Gandhāra jataka. Binyang Cave 6 at Longmen, China (7<sup>th</sup> century CE) presents a detailed description of

*Mahasattva* and *Viśvantara Jataka*. The *Viśvantara Jataka* and *Mahasattva Jataka* is variously described in Māhayāna scriptures like, *Suvarnaprabhāsa* chapter 8, *Vyāgrhiparivarta*; *Jātakamāla*.1; *Avadānakalpalata*.51.vv. Pilgrims Songyun and Huisheng described Uḍḍiyāna as a commemorating place of *Mahasattva Jataka* and Prince Suddana or *Viśvantara Jataka*. They identified the spot where *Mahasattva* sacrificed himself to the tigress, and the stupa of bones, to southeast of the capital of Uḍḍiyāna and Mount *Dentaloka*, southwest of the capital. They also saw Prince Suddana's thatched cottage, the tree around which the children ran to escape, and the cave of five hundred years old monk Acyuta. Both stories highlighted the Buddhist concept of limitless compassion and generosity. The *jataka* reveal giving of one's own life a way to attain *bodhisattvahood* (Ch'en 1973: 176; Mc Nair 2007: 45, 49). According to *Prajna* text the first step to Path of *bodhisattvahood* consists of one's altruistic tendency (*adhyaśaya*) and readiness to give away even one's own life for the sake of saving other living beings (Leningard 1932: 34).

### **A Critical analysis of the Morality in Gandhāra Jataka**

The Buddhist ethics revolve around generosity, morality, ethical thought and benefit for others. According to Solomon (1985: 462) morality is the core of ethics. Ethics refer to the moral behaviour and moral principles, leading to peace without oppression in society. Aristotle virtue ethics focus on modification of character traits through moral principles (Bunnary 2004: 3). The word 'ethics' comes from the Greek word '*ethos*'. Ethics emphasize the good and bad, right or wrong human character traits. The western theories refer to morality and ethics in terms of virtue and duty. Aristotelian virtue ethics maintains that happiness is the consequence of exercise of virtue. According to

Immanuel Kant's deontological ethics, it is about duty which may not make us happy but it is valuable. Karunadasa (1994: 3) maintained that an individual's psychological dispositions have a direct influence on society in which s/he lives. Thus moral or ethical dispositions reduce violence and increase peace in the society. The following section elaborates love, kindness and gratitude towards parents, sacrifice and generosity as preferred examples of Buddhist morality in Gandhāra jataka. It critically analyzes the eastern and western ethical philosophies for their moral messages. It also attempts to pinpoint the converging themes across the philosophies.

The *Śyama Jataka* (see fig. 2) reveals the story of Śyama's love and adoration for his blind parents. According to the narrative, in one of his previous births, the future Buddha was born as Śyama who was a model of filial piety. His old and blind parents lived as hermits in a remote part of the Himalayas. Śyama was their sole support. One day when Śyama went to a pool to fetch water for his blind parents, he was struck by an arrow of the king of Benarus, who came there hunting deer in the forest. Indra was deeply impressed by Śyama's filial piety and restored him to life (Joshi & Banerjee 1998: 180). Historically we find the evidence of popularity of the *Śyama Jataka* in Gandhāra from Huan Tsang's narratives, who reported a stupa about ten miles from Pushkalavati (Charsadda) believed to mark the site of the *Śyama Jataka* (Joshi & Banerjee 1998: 179; Nagar 1993; Grey 1994). The filial piety, as narrated in *Śyama Jataka* directly corresponds to the teachings in pure Buddhist Sutras, for instance, *Mangala-sutta*. It refers to the meritorious act of repaying one's parents for the tremendous love they devoted to their children (Hallisey *n.d.*).

Filial piety remained a basis of eastern and western ethical philosophies; especially it forms firm foundations of the Chinese morality.

Confucianism considers the filial piety as a prime virtue and the basis of all human relations (Che'n 1908). It leads to integration of family; a basic unit of a peaceful society and a well-controlled country. According to Confucius 'Analects of Filial Piety' and 'Confucian Teachings', filial piety is the root of humanity and basis of moral law and order in the society (Rosemont, Henry & Ames 2009). Filial piety is a return to favours granted us throughout our lives by our parents (Brain 1998; Ebrey 1993). 'The Sutra on the Profundity of Filial Love', an apocryphal scripture<sup>4</sup>; reveals a deep impact of Confucian concept of filial piety. The sutra relates Buddha's sermons on ten types of kindnesses bestowed by mother to her child, i.e., providing protection and care while in her womb; bearing suffering during delivery; forgetting all pain once he or she is born; moving to a dry place and lying in the wet herself; suckling; washing away the unclean; always thinking of him or her when it has travelled far; deep care and devotion; and finally ultimate piety and sympathy. The sutra further relates that those human beings are ignorant who do not care about their parents. When children are un-filial, they may also ignore other social rules. Un-filial children may not aspire to learning and involve in fight and theft (Keiyo 2005).

Though the Greek political philosophies do not directly emphasize the filial piety, still these considered family as a basic unit for the smooth running of a democratic state. The Plutarch's 'The Lives of the Noble Grecians and Romans' refers to democracy to be set up in the family. According to Aristotle, the ancient Greek Polis or city states started in family groups. He referred to family as a model for organization of the State. Furthermore, Louis de Bonald (as cited in Blum 2006: 22) considered family as a

miniature state. Aristotle's *Analects* maintains that filial piety is a lifelong attitude of respect towards seniors. According to Robert Oxnam (as cited in Chan 1963). filial piety derives from parent and child relationship, i.e., the most fundamental of the human relations. Irene Bloom (as cited in Chan 1963) maintained that the children should look after their parents in their old age, just as their parents had looked after the children in their infancy and childhood

Sacrifice, generosity and charity are other important moral values taught in the jataka stories. According to *Mahasattva Jataka*, the prince while wandering in jungle along with his son saw a starving tigress and her cubs. In order to feed himself to the tigress he stripped off his clothes, hung them on Bamboo branches, and placed him before the tigress. He cut off his throat because tigress was too weak to eat him and threw himself from a high hill. The tigress left only his bones. The king, queen and brother of *bodhisattva* collected bones and raised 'Seven Jeweled Stupa' over them in the bamboo groove.

*Viśvantara Jataka* (Nagar 1993: pl. 71) remained the most famous jataka in first few centuries of the present Era, in Gandhāra, and also in other parts of India and China. It emphasized the importance of *dāna* or charity and gift giving. *Viśvantara Jataka* relates the story of *bodhisattva* along with his wife Mandi, and two children. The family travelled to Mount Dantaloka, while in exile. The story narrates that there was a king named Banjaya, in the kingdom of Śivi. He had a son named Viśvantara, who became very famous due to his generosity. Viśvantara tried to give charity and gifts to anyone who appreciated him. He even gave away his auspicious white elephant, the harbinger of rain in the State. People were angry with him. They wanted to punish him. His royal father ordered him to go and live in a forest with his wife and two children. In the forest, he gave away his horse, then chariot. He gave his two

<sup>4</sup> though a Buddhist scripture, but originating in China,

sons to a Brahmin, and last his wife. Indra finally re-united him with his children, wife and sons. The story relates that supreme sacrifice leads to supreme knowledge. While Viśvantara was in forest there was a perfect harmony among animals and beasts of the jungle, due to his benevolent presence ((Joshi & Banerjee 1998: 179). Viśvantara personifies the highest virtue of sacrifice, renunciation and equanimity to fulfill *dāna paramita*.

The virtue of generosity was a predominant thought in eastern and western traditions. In a wider context generosity may refer to hospitality, liberality, love and charity. However, specifically, it refers to the virtue of giving good things to others freely and abundantly.

The Buddhist scripture, i.e., *Milindapañha*, the Nagarjuna's *Ratnavali*, and *Buddhacarita II*, elaborated at length the *dāna paramita* as an act of merit in this life, as the destruction of ignorance and the attainment of the highest learning, fame in the society, etc. and the final salvation in hereafter (Elverskog 2010: 20; Johnston 2000: 22; Walser 2005: 152-153). Such promotion of the act of *dāna paramita* must have resulted in a spirit of giving to the poor, as well as to Dharma. We do not have any direct archaeological evidence of generosity towards poor in the Buddhist period, except for the legendary accounts in jataka stories. However, we find ample literary, palaeographic and iconographic evidence for generosity towards the monastic order. For instance, two relief from Butkara I show princely donors (Swāti 1997: pls.65 & 66), and three relief panels from Shnaisha showing the officials receiving donations from devotees (Swāti 1997: pls. 230, 231, & 238). Furthermore, Konow (1929: 79, 145, 157, 162, & 165) refers to a number of inscriptions revealing the donations of water tanks, dam, wells dug and rooms made in honour of deceased mother/father,

husband/wife, etc. (for further details see Swati & Alia 2013: 32-34). This spirit of giving to *dharma* must have been continued for several centuries, translating them in different ethnical, cultural and religious traits. We still find the tradition of copious donations to the Muslim tombs, and building rooms for the salvation of deceased relatives in different parts of modern Pakistan (ancient Gandhāra).

According to Aristotle's ethical doctrine (Aristotle Nicomachean Ethics *n.d.*) 'generosity is a means between excess of wastefulness and deficiency of stinginess' (Nic Ethics 116). Generosity is the third virtue in Nicomachean Ethics; the first two being bravery and temperance to live a virtuous life. A generous man gives to a right person, the right amounts and at the right time. He will also take care of his possessions. The giver provides according to the amount he/she has. Khiev Chum (as cited in Bunnary 2004) asserts that *dāna* or charity shows ethical behavior in mutual help. Giving reduces poverty, criminal act and violence in society, thus improving living standards of the members of society. *Cakkavattisihanada-sutta* from the *Dighanikaya* maintains that poverty is the cause of crime, violence, robbery and hatred (Bunnary 2004).

According to modern psycho-social theories, generosity is a personal moral orientation to life. Darwin (1871) was of the opinion that altruism allowed humans to evolve in groups, cooperating for mutual survival. One can reject a number of moral vices, e.g., selfishness, greed, fear and meanness, with help of generosity. The social scientists and modern psychologists are of the opinion that the social norm of giving help eliminates social problems. Generosity, as a social good has a number of emotional benefits. Akin, Barington-Leigh Dunn, *et al* (2010) study conducted in diverse economic and cultural contexts revealed that pro-social spending makes people happy. They asserted

that generosity is a fundamental feature of human life. It creates large scale social cooperation. Lyubonirsky, Sheldon & Schkade (2005) maintained that people are emotionally rewarded for helping others. The emotional rewards result in pro-social behaviour.

### **Conclusions**

An attempt has been made in the present paper to bring forth the moral significance of Gandhāra jataka. The authors summarized archaeological and literary evidence of Gandhāra jataka. Though Gandhāra jataka have been reported and analysed by eminent scholars, but the moral significance of Gandhāra jataka have not been properly attended so far. We have made a point here, that the representation of jataka is few in Gandhāra, but significant. They contain important messages in Gandhāra iconography in terms of their morality and moral education to common masses. An effort has also been made to critically analyse the moral messages of love and kindness towards parents,

sacrifice for others and generosity. The above mentioned virtues were compared among Buddhist, Chinese and Greek ethical philosophies. Though eastern and western philosophies somewhat differ in their content, yet contain similar messages for society. Family is the basic unit of a society. Gratitude towards parents creates a reverential association among family members, resulting in a peaceful environment, eventually leading to harmony in a society. Similarly sacrifice for others and generosity results in a benign bond among members of a society. It creates cooperation, happiness and ultimately brings peace in the society. We strongly recommend to acknowledge Gandhāra jataka as a National and cultural repository and to translate them in National and regional languages. It is also commendable to promote these stories through print and electronic media to appreciate their potent implications on reducing violence and increasing peace in the society.

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**Figure 1:** *Dipankara Jataka*. Swat Valley. ca 2<sup>nd</sup> century CE, Schist with gold leaf, 22.2 x 21.3 cm Metropolitan Museum of Arts (1998.491) (Source Behrendt 2007: No. 31)



**Figure 2:** *Dīpaṅkara Jātaka*. Butkara-III 59/62. (Source: Swāti 2007: Pl. 12)



**Figure 3:** *Śyāma Jātaka*. Butkara-III. (Swāti 2007: Pl. 13)