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Research paper

The Concept of Justice in Buddhism: A Case Study of Caṇḍāla in Jātakaṭṭhakathā

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Abstract

This article aims to study the function of Caṇḍāla, the outer caste character in Jātakaṭṭhakathā, the stories of the prior lives of the Buddha, and to study the relationship between the Caṇḍāla characters and the concept of justice in these Jātaka stories. In order to construct the concept of justice in Buddhism, and the framework of this study, Rawls' theory regarding justice as fairness is used as a guideline for exploration of the Sutta, the Buddhist canon. The study reveals that the Caṇḍāla characters appear in nine Jātakas, playing significant roles in parts of many the prose narratives and the connection part of the story in order to illustrate that a low caste person can attain enlightenment. Three concepts of Dharma are conveyed by the Caṇḍāla characters in Jātakaṭṭhakathā: firstly, defilement causes humans in every caste to have suffering; secondly, every occurrence in one's life depends on karma; and thirdly, humans in every caste have the potential to accomplish wisdom by understanding the path to eradicate suffering.

Keywords: *Justice in Buddhism; Caṇḍāla the outer caste; Jātakaṭṭhakathā*

1. Introduction

In ancient India, where the ideas of karma and saṃs□ra formed an important mental set among the people, to be born as a Caṇḍāla was looked upon as the result of having led a life of sin in one's past existence. For example, in the works of Hindu law, it is written that those who are reborn as Caṇḍāla had in their previous lives killed a Brāhma□a, stolen gold from a Brāhma□a, begged for alms from a □□dra to acquire ceremonial good, drunk Sur□ liquor, had not sought expiation for sins that would result in exile from one's var□a (patita status), or had contemplated stealing, committing evil acts, or bearing false thinking.1

The above quotation reveals that Caṇḍāla2, the outer caste character in Jātakaṭṭhakathā (henceforth JA), is not only an indication of social status, but also a matter of prejudice in terms of religious ideology. Within the Brahmanism concept, being Caṇḍāla results from bad actions in the past and also yields bad actions in the present. This concept is in contrast to that in Buddhism that espouses the belief that being Caṇḍāla or other outcaste is only a social status and does not indicate or affect one's actions. The equality between low and high caste people is evident in the Buddhist canon:

Here, someone has been reborn in a low family …He does not obtain food…and lighting. Having shaved off his hair and beard, he puts on ochre robes and goes forth from the house hold life into homelessness. When he has thus gone forth, he abandons the five hindrances, defilements of the mind, things that weaken wisdom; and then, with his mind well established in the four establishments of mindfulness, he correctly develops the seven factors of enlightenment and produces Nibb□na.3

The incongruity between the concept of caste in Brahmanism and Buddhism contributes to a vast body of research, such as Williams (1886)4, Jereerad (1979)5, Imswadi (1979)6. Most of this research identifies their argument with exploration of the Sutta, while Yamazaki (2000)7 is the first article trying to use JA to prove his point. However, Yamazaki's conclusion that Caṇḍāla was a reflection of the caste system in ancient India contradicts Oldenberge's assumption about the uncertain age and origin of the verse and prose in JA 8

The Caṇḍāla character can also be related to the concept of justice. A literature review found that there are many studies about the concept of justice in Buddhism. However, these studies explored the concept of justice in Buddhism without investigation of JA.

For all the reasons mentioned above, the Caṇḍāla characters in JA can be studied using different aspect. As a set of narratives, the Caṇḍāla characters in JA can be interpreted in several ways since JA conveys many layers of the Dharma message. This study does not focus on the reflection of caste in ancient India as previous studies, but proposes the argument that the concept of justice in Buddhism is communicated by inclusion of characters from the lowest caste. Furthermore, drawing a connection between the Caṇḍāla characters and the concept of justice in Buddhist enhances the Dharma message.

The English version, edited by E. B. Cowell, of the JA has been selected as the data for this study since this version contains five hundred and forty seven Jātakas. This study identified nine Jātakas2 that include Caṇḍāla characters:

Table1: The list of selected Jātakas

No.	Title	Order	Abbrev.
1	Satadhamma-J⌖taka	179	JA 179
2	Chavaka-J⌖taka	309	JA 309
3	S✧lav✧ma⑦sa-J⌖taka	362	JA 362
4	Setaketu-J⌖taka	377	JA 377
5	Amba.-J⌖taka	474	JA 474
6	Udd⌖laka-J⌖taka	487	JA 487
7	M⌖ta✦ga-J⌖taka	497	JA 497
8	Citta-Sambh⌑ta-J⌖taka	498	JA 498
9	Khandah⌖la-J⌖taka	542	JA 542

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2. The concept of justice in buddhist canon

Given that the complex, as well as dynamic, nature of the concept of justice, this concept has been mentioned and argued among Western scholars from the past to the present. One famous theories is that of 'justice as fairness' by John Rawls, which is referenced in this article as a guideline to explore the concept of justice in the Tripitaka, the Buddhist canon. Rawls (1999, 53)9 suggests two principles of justice:

First: each person is to have an equal right to the most extensive scheme of equal basic liberties compatible with a similar scheme of liberties of others

Second: social and economic inequalities are to be arranged so that they are both (a) reasonably expected to be everyone's advantage, and (b) attached to positions and offers open to all.

From the above quotation, it can be seen that these two principles of justice overlap concepts in Buddhism. The first principle accords with the concept of wisdom development – that is, everyone, regardless of caste, has the right to learn the Dharma and develop his mind for enlightenment, the absolute goal in Buddhism. This concept appears in many Suttas, namely Assal□yana Sutta and Puggala Sutta. In A□guttara Nik□ya, in the book of the fours, the Tamotama Sutta mentions that a low family man can have a better life in his next birth by practicing good conduct.

And how is a person heading from darkness to light? Here, some person has been reborn form low family – a family of Ca□□□las, bamboo workers, hunters, cart makers, or flower scavengers – one that is poor, with little food and drink that subsists with difficulty, where food and clothing are obtained with difficulty; and he is ugly… or paralyzed. He does not obtain food… and lighting, He engages in good conduct by body, speech, and mind. In consequence, with the breakup of body, after death, he is reborn in a good destination, in a heavenly world. It is in this way that a person is heading from darkness to light10

Apart from the equal right to wisdom development, the concept of justice in Buddhism also covers equality under the rule of karma – that is, everyone, regardless of caste, unavoidably gains both positive and negative result from their own deed. In the Vāseṭṭha Sutta in Majjahima Nik□ya, the Buddha declared that people are distinguished, not by birth, but by deeds. A Brahmin, the highest caste in Buddhist meaning, is therefore someone who conducts good deed and has abandoned his defilements.

56 For those who do not know this fact
Wrong views have long underlain their hearts
Not knowing, the declare to us:
'One is a brahmin by birth.'
57 One is not a brahmin by birth,
Nor by birth a non-brahmin
By action is one a brahmin
By action is one a non-brahmin11

The concept of justice in Buddhism not only embraces equality of individual rights, but also includes equality in society. According to Rawl's second principle, eliminating the caste system in monk society can be seen as an arrangement to eliminate social inequalities. Many Suttas stress the equality of everyone who becomes a monk; one of those is the Agga□□a Sutta – On Knowledge of beginning – in D□gha Nik□ya.

Now since both dark and bright qualities, which are blamed and praised by the wise, are scattered indiscriminately, among the four castes, the wise does not recognize the claim about the Brahmin caste being the highest. Why is that? Because, V□se□□ha, anyone from the four casted who become a monk, an Arahant who has destroyed the corruptions, who has lived the life, done what has to be done, laid down the burden, reached the highest goal, destroyed the fetter of becoming, and become emancipated through super-knowledge- he is proclaimed supreme by virtue of Dhamma and not of non- Dhamma.12

From the passages cited above, it can be seen that many Suttas express a critical opinion about the caste system, while they also indicate the concept of justice. Therefore, it can be concluded that the concept of justice in Buddhism is represented by the equality of everyone to develop their wisdom. Specifically, being a low caste person is not a hindrance to acquiring the Dharma in monk society. In addition, the concept of justice of Buddhism is relevant to equality under the rule of karma in that no one can avoid the results of his own actions.

3. The function of cala characters in ja

Every JA consists of the following parts: (1) an introduction of the story, (Paccupannavaṭṭhu); (2) a prose narrative (Atīta-vatthu); (3) the Gāthās; (4) a short commentary (Veyyākaraṇa); and (5) the connection part (Samodhāna) 13. The structure of JA results from the purpose of the Jātakas, which were designed to narrate the practices of the Bodhisatta in his previous lives. Using the structure of JA as the framework of analysis not only clearly illustrates the actions of Caṇḍāla characters, but also underlines the function of the Caṇḍāla characters, thus enhancing communication of the Dharma message.

In order to highlight the function of the Caṇḍāla characters playing a different role in each part, the first section is divided into four subsections according to the structure of each Jātaka.14 However, it is necessary to mention other parts of the same Jātaka since each part relates to the whole Jātaka.

3.1 Introduction of the story

The introduction of the story, called Paccupannavaṭṭhu, is used to introduce the audience to the background of each Jātaka. For instance, some event causes the Buddha to identify the Jātaka, the audience, as well as the location where the declaration takes place. Caṇḍāla appears in the introduction of only one Jātaka, JA 179, in which the Buddha draws an analogy between the unlawful ways of earning a livelihood and leftover food of the lowest caste. This analogy is relevant to social restrictions:

1) Restriction as to the kind of food allowed to be eaten and preparation by cooks who must not be of a caste inferior to that of the eaters.
2) Restriction as to commensality, that is, as to persons of different castes eating together, outcastes being excluded from all commensality, except among themselves 15

JA 179 is the story about a Brāhman and Caṇḍāla who do not know each other, but are using the same way in the jungle. During breakfast, the Caṇḍāla offers the Brāhman, who does not have any provisions, some food. Due to his arrogance, the Brāhman refuses to eat the Caṇḍāla's food. At dinner time, the Caṇḍāla does not offer the Brāhman his food. When the Caṇḍāla finishes his meal, the Brāhman eats the leftover food owing to his hunger. After eating the leftover food of the outcaste, he is disgusted by his deed:

'What a trifle! and his leavings! given too against his will! And I am a highborn brahmin! and the stuff has made me ill!' Thus did the young gentleman make his lamentation; adding, 'Why did I do such a wicked thing just for life's sake?' He plunged into the jungle, and never let any eye see him again, but there he died forlorn.16

From the above quotation, it can be seen that hunger is one indicator of justice since hunger affects all classes of humans to struggle for their food. The creation of parallel characters faced with the same event underscores not only the prudence of the Caṇḍāla preparing food for his own consumption, but also his kindness to offer the Brāhma some of his food. The attributes of the Caṇḍāla are in sharp contrast to the Brāhma' s attributes in that the Brāhma is under the delusion that he is highborn so that he feels guilty and dies alone in the jungle.

3.2 The prose narrative

The prose narrative section, or At□ta-vatthu, is an important part in understanding the Bodhisatta's practice in the past. Oldenberge 17 indicates the significance of the prose section: 'The verse taken alone are, to a large extent, meaningless. Then comes in the prose, and by it all becomes clear; that the verse were intended to complete just that context indicated by the prose is self-evident.'
In order to underscore the message previously mentioned, most of prose narratives show the Bodhitsatta's action in the past paralleling actions in the present, Paccupannavaṭṭhu. This is shown in JA 309, the story of Caṇḍāla trying to steal mangoes in the king's garden since his pregnant wife wants to eat mangoes. He climbs mango tree and sees the Brāhma teaching the king:
'How wicked this king is. He is learning the sacred texts, sitting on a high seat. The brahmin too is equally wicked, to sit and teach him from a lower seat. I also am wicked, for I have fallen into the power of a woman, and counting my life as naught, I am stealing the mango fruit.' Then taking hold of a hanging bough, he let himself down from the tree, and stood before these two men and said, 'O Great King, I am a lost man, and thou a gross fool, and this priest is as one dead.'18
In the Paccupannavaṭṭhu, the Buddha mentions the discipline that the teacher should sit on a higher position than the pupil. The event in the past not only demonstrates the discipline in the present, but also expresses an opinion about the caste system. It is noticed that the position of the Caṇḍāla, the king (Khattiya) and the Brāhma in this scene is inverse. To demonstrate this point, Figure 1 compares the hierarchy of caste with the position of characters in JA 309.
The inverse position of the characters can be interpreted in various ways. That is to say, the Caṇḍāla is situated in the highest position since he realizes that he should not steal mangoes; likewise, the king should not sit in a higher position than his teacher. On the contrary, the Brāhma deserves to be situated in the lowest position since he breaks the social rule that he is sitting in a lower position than his pupil. Although he knows that he is misbehaving, he is willing to do so owing to his greed.

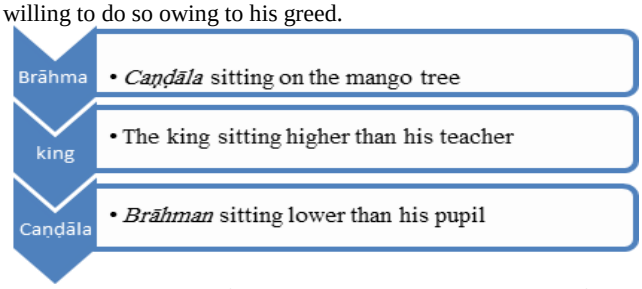


Figure 1: The position of characters in JA 309 and the hierarchy of caste

The implicit message from this prose narrative is that the value of a human is classified according to his actions rather than his caste. Within Buddhist concepts, all individuals are equal since all are under the power of greed; in other words, the individual worthy of respect is the one who understands how passion has influence over his action.

3.3 The Gāthās

Although the advent of the Gāthās, or verses, is controversial, the verses in each Jtaka are dominant elements for emphasis on the Jtaka's message. In JA 487, the Gāthās that appear at the end of the story suggest the idea that everyone, from all walks of life, can attain nirvana or Nibb□na, the ultimate goal of Buddhism.
"Khattiya, Brahmin, Vessa, Sudda, and Caṇḍāla, Pukkusa,
All these can be compassionate, can win Nirvana's bliss:
Who among all the saints is there who worse or better is?"
Then the brahmin recites a stanza to show that there is no higher or lower status from the moment sainthood is won:
"Khattiya, Brahmin, Vessa, Sudda, and Caṇḍāla, Pukkusa,
All these can be compassionate, can win Nirvana's bliss:
None among all the saints is found who worse or better is."
But Uddālaka found fault with this, reciting a couple of stanzas:
"Khattiya, Brahmin, Vessa, Sudda, and Caṇḍāla, Pukkusa,
All these can virtuous be, and all attain Nirvana's bliss:
None among all the saints is found who worse or better is.
You are a brahmin, then, for naught: vain is your rank, I wis."19

It can be noticed that the above conversation between Uddālaka, son of a Caṇḍāla mother, and his father, a Brahmin, repeats the same contents three times. This conversation highlights, and also amplifies, the Buddhist idea by means of word adjustment; for example, the Brahmin changes the word "who" to "none" and Uddālaka alters the word "compassionate" to "virtuous". Such word adjustment shows the concept of equality in that no one is better than anyone else; additionally the concept of justice can be discerned in that everyone can be either compassionate or virtuous, which corresponds to the message from JA 309. Furthermore, the message that everyone, even the lowest class, can develop their wisdom until attaining Nirvana is conveyed in JA 498.

3.4 Connection

Despite being the shortest part, the connection, or Samodh□na, plays a vital role in cohesiveness of the story. All of the connection sections in the nine J□takas that form the scope of this study provide strong evidence to support the above accretions since the connection sections imply that everyone, even the lowest class man, can attain enlightenment. JA 377 and JA 497 clearly make this point:
After the lesson the Master identified the Birth: "At that time Setaketu was the cheating priest, the Caṇḍāla was Sāriputta, and the King's priest was myself."20
When the Master had ended this discourse, he said: "It is not now the first time that Udena has abused religious men, but he did the same before." Then he identified the Birth: "At that time, Udena was Maṇḍavya, and I myself was the wise Mātaṅga

One can say that the connection is the most critical element that connects all parts in the J□takas and communicates the concept of justice in Buddhism as well. By narrating a past life of the Buddha and other disciples who were Caṇḍāla, it can be inferred that the Buddha accepts the ideology of caste. At the same time, the Buddha shed light on wisdom development by which all individuals can attain the ultimate goal of life. Despite the imprecise age of the prose and verse of JA, Caṇḍāla characters appearing in both parts, as well as in the connection section of the J□takas, indicates that such characters are intentionally employed to demonstrate the Bodhisatta's practice. On top of that, the Buddhist doctrine that everyone, even the lowest class man, behaving in a moral way can elevate his life to a purer status is conveyed.

4. Concept of justice conveyed by the cala characters in ja

From an analysis of JA, it can be clearly seen that the Caṇḍāla characters play a significant role in communication of the Dharma message. The Dharma message conveyed by Caṇḍāla characters can be divided in three groups.

4.1 Defilement causes humans in every caste to experience suffering

It is generally accepted that 'the ultimate aim of the Buddha's teaching is, without question, the attainment of Nibbāna with the realization of the Four Noble Truth'22 Suffering and the cause of suffering, two elements in the Four Noble Truth, are expressed through the Caṇḍāla and other caste characters – that is, defilement causes humans in every caste to experience suffering.

JA 497 is the story of wise M□ta□ga, who is a Caṇḍāla, and Maṇḍavya-kumāra, a past life of Udena. The Buddha declares that this J□taka demonstrates that Udena never has respect for religious people. Moreover, many characters whose defilements lead them into suffering are shown in this J□taka.

Firstly, there is Maṇḍavya whose pride in his birth as a Br□hma causes both mental and physical suffering. Pride in his birth can be classified as conceit having an effect on his attitude that he disdains people in lower castes. Maṇḍavya shows his deep contempt for M□ta□ga's birth; consequently, M□ta□ga curses Maṇḍavya and his friends to be deformed:

Maṇḍavya's head was twisted so that it looked backwards over his shoulders; hands and feet were stiff and stark; his eyes were turned up, as though he were a dead man: there he lay stark. The other brahmins turned round and round, drabbling spittle at the mouth. 23

Maṇḍavya's deformity is concrete evidence of suffering since it coheres to the connotation that Maṇḍavya's mentality is abnormal as he is so proud that he cannot realize that his pride is a contributing factor in his mental suffering. M□ta□ga wants to give Maṇḍavya a lesson about his arrogance in his birth, therefore M□ta□ga provides water from his mouth – meaning it is dirty water since it comes from a Caṇḍāla – as an elixir to cure Maṇḍavya and his friends of their deformity.

Secondly, the wise M□ta□ga in keeping his virtues is under the power of hatred because Jātimanta, being proud of his Brāhma birth curses M□ta□ga's head to burst into seven pieces in seven days. On the seventh day, M□ta□ga must stop the sun from rising otherwise Jātimanta's head will burst for the reason that Jātimanta made a virtuous man angry. M□ta□ga tortures Jātimanta in order to force him to abandon his pride in his birth.

Because M□ta□ga often tortures arrogant people, he is killed by the king of Mejjha who has been deceived by Maṇḍavya's friends about M□ta□ga's trait. The death of M□ta□ga is equivalent to suffering, while the king of Mejjha is under bad influence of wrong view since he executes M□ta□ga regardless of an inquisition. Eventually, the execution causes suffering for the king of Mejjha in that the kingdom of Mejjha is deluged by a cruse of the gods.

From JA 497, it can be concluded that defilements have a profound impact on humans in any caste – Caṇḍāla, Brāhma, or Khattiya. By this, the concept of justice is conveyed by the actions of the characters who are faced with defilement and suffering without discrimination.

4.2. Every occurrence in life depends on deeds or Karma.

Although caste is inherited and determines people's duties, every occurrence in one's life does not depend on their caste, rather on deeds or Karma. Many Jātakas show the low caste characters performing good actions that lead to good results; on the other hand the high caste characters perform bad actions that lead to bad results. To analyze and interpret those Jātakas completely, it is necessary to mention the concept of Karma:

The action or movements of sentient beings that are done with volition (cetanā), particularly that of craving and arising through defilements (kilesa), are called karma. An activity that is not called 'karma'; it is called kiriyā (activity). The result of kiriya is called patikiriyā (reaction), the natural consequence of the activity, while the result of karma is called vipāka (fruit of result).24

The above concept of Karma appears in JA 474, the story of Devadatta who deserts his teacher, the Buddha. In the past, Devadatta was a Brāhman who requested that a Caṇḍāla, the Bodhisatta, teach him a magic charm to make trees bear fruit out of season. The Bodhisatta was willing to follow the Brāhman's request, but he imposed one condition that the Brāhman was not allowed to conceal the Caṇḍāla's name, otherwise the charm would not give the fruit.

After he learned the charm, the Brāhman gained much wealth. The king wanted him to show how he could bring the mangoes out of season. Being ashamed that his teacher was a Caṇḍāla, the Brāhman told a lie that his teacher was a Brāhman. The Brāhman broke his promise that he would not conceal his teacher's name, so the charm did not give any more fruit. The king was very angry when he knew that the cheating Brāhman refused to admit who was his teacher:

'Be it Khattiya, Brahmin, Vessa, he from whom a man learns right – Sudda, Caṇḍāla, Pukkusa – seems chiefest in his sight.'25

The king forced the Brāhman to go back to his Caṇḍāla teacher and ask for forgiveness; however, the Caṇḍāla did not forgive him and dismissed him. Finally, he plunging into the woods and died forlornly. The death of the Brāhman is the fruit (Vipāka) of his misbehavior. He would not have met such an end alone in the forest if he had not concealed his teacher's name. His deed began with bad intention (Cetanā), in that he was motivated by greed (defilement – Kilesa) to gain much wealth, so he wanted to learn the magic charm. Wanting only to earn profit, the Brāhman did not have respect for his Caṇḍāla teacher.

JA 474 is an example of how bad deeds yield bad results. Despite being of the highest caste and knowledgeable in all arts from a renowned institute, the cheating Brāhman does not realize that the cause of his fault is his greed. The punishment from the king and the action that his teacher did not forgive him cause him suffering, so much so he punished himself by suicide. It can be said that apart from greed, wrong view is a significant factor leading him to suffer. It can be noticed that the death of the Brāhman is identical to the death of the Brāhman in JA 179.

In JA 542, the decline of social status is identified as a punishment considered to be the fruit of bad action. The Buddha narrated this Jātaka to show Devadatta's bad intention to injure the Buddha. In the past, the Buddha was Candrakumāra whose mislead father, King Ekkarājā, wanted to kill his four sons for sacrifice. At end of the prose narrative, King Ekkarājā was removed from power, and expelled from the palace:

…The multitude decided that they would spare his life, 'but we will not give him rule or dwelling in this city – we will make him an outcast and appoint his dwelling outside this city.' So they stripped him of his royal garments and made him wear a yellow dress, and put a yellow cloth on his head, and having made him an outcast. 26

The decline of social status as a fruit of bad action is used to accentuate the Buddhist notion that even though social status is inherited, social status depends on human actions. That is to say, in spite of a high status birth, bad deeds cause King Ekkarājā to be degraded as a low class man.

The suicide of the Brāhman and the degraded status of the king in these Jātakas infer that deeds or actions are the indicator of one's value. To shed light on the concept of Karma and Saṃsāra, the Buddha used the Hindu caste system as an explanation to convey the Dharma messages that caste is not determined by Karma. In other words, everyone in every caste has an equal opportunity to do both good and bad deeds, whereby everyone can get a result from their own actions.

4.3. Humans in every caste have the potential to accomplish the wisdom to understand the path to eradicate suffering

The concept of justice in Buddhism not only includes the idea about defilements and Karma, but also puts emphasis on how one accomplishes wisdom. In the above discussion, many Caṇḍāla characters are portrayed as wise men who understand the path to develop knowledge; on the contrary, the Brāhmans also know the ways to accomplish wisdom by maintaining virtue. This is shown in JA 362, the story of the virtue of a Brāhman being tested:

Men of high caste with those of base degree,
If virtuous here, in heaven will equal be.

[195] Not birth, nor lore, nor friendship aught avails,
Pure virtue only future bliss entails.27
It can be noticed that the message from JA 362 – that everyone is equivalent based on their virtue – is similar to JA 487. The repetition of similar messages stresses the importance of the precept of Sīla. Virtue or morality is a basic mental practice in order to prepare the mind for concentration. Concentration is the crucial means for mental development leading to wisdom. With wisdom, humans not only understand the truth of life that defilement causes suffering, but also they can realize the path to eradicate suffering.

5. Conclusion

Using the structure of JA as a framework to analyze the function of Caṇḍāla characters reveals that defilement causes suffering and these characters also accentuate the importance of wisdom as the tool to eradicate suffering. As well, Caṇḍāla characters show that Karma is the suitable means to classify the value of humans, rather than caste.
In addition, the Dharma messages conveyed by the actions of the Caṇḍāla character are consistent – defilement leads to bad Karma since defilement is an important factor in determining one's Karma. As well, defilement is a hindrance to wisdom. This shows that these Dharma messages harmonize with the Four Noble Truths, the heart of Buddhism.

6. Discussion

The above analysis shows that the concept of justice is portrayed in the Buddhist texts. The Buddha does not deny the caste system, but he declares the nature of Dharma showing how Dharma also covers the concept of justice, especially the equal right to develop wisdom in a discriminatory society.
Furthermore, it can be seen that the theoretical concept of justice in the Suttas is conveyed through the Caṇḍāla characters in JA. The structure of JA allows the audience not only to interpret, but also appreciate the Dharma message – the elements
of the prose narratives and connection sections of each Jātaka are testimony to the concept of justice in Buddhism since they show that in their past lives the Bodhisatta and Arahats were also Caṇḍāla. This has been done to convey that everyone, even the lowest class man, can attain the ultimate goal of Buddhism.
For this reason, the JA is suitable for readers having many levels of knowledge regarding Dharma. Furthermore, the concept of justice readily appears when reading JA because JA provides the opportunities for readers to develop their wisdom without discrimination.

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