



Thieving criminal culture revealed in Jataka literature

H.Pathum Niwantha^{1*}, WSN. Siriwardhana², P.D. Wickramage³

¹Department of Social Sciences, Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka, ²Department of Social Sciences, Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka, ³Department of Social Sciences, Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka
*hnpatham@gmail.com

Jataka literature is a source of sacred literature that takes a primary place among the sources of Buddhist literature. The Book of Jataka, which is a source showing how the Buddha fulfilled the Paramita Dharma in his previous lives, was codified as a book during the Kurunegala era in Sri Lanka. Jataka book is a literary work of rare volume even from a sociological point of view, as it shows a massive social core and a philosophical as well as a religious core. Cultural criminology studies the cultures that arise due to crimes, and the gangs of thieves that are frequently mentioned in Jataka literature are a cultural group that arose due to such crimes. But due to the lack of academic studies on this proposition, it is an academic necessity to conduct this study. In order to study these groups of thieves, the literature investigation method was followed as the research method and the research has been done using the Pansiyanapanas Jataka kata potha and Jataka Pali as the main sources. Referring to Jataka as the source, the reasons why this criminal gang culture is unique from other cultures have been studied. Thus, according to Jataka stories like Vedabbha Jataka, Sattikumbha Jataka and Chulladhanuggaha, these groups did not live with the common people as they do today, they often settled in caves and temporary dwellings in the jungles. The main reason for this is that forests help criminals to escape and hide easily. And according to stories like Vedabbha, these groups have targeted the roads through the forests and engaged in robberies. Trade groups and passengers have been their main targets. Jataka, like Saththikumbha, reveals that these groups are a barbaric group after being civilized. It housed a large population of around five hundred and had the unofficial equivalent of a contemporary state military force. Chulladhanuggaha Jataka reflects how these groups were a threat even to royalty at times. Also, in some seasons, villages are attacked and looted (Ghandathindu Jataka) and even engaged in hire killing (Somanassa Jataka). Although the administration was led by the leadership to a systematic bureaucratic system, it is not revealed that women were in these groups. According to this, these groups lived as a separate deviant culture in ancient Indian society and in Lankan society and it is clear that they are not easy to control before the law. Accordingly, from the point of view of cultural criminology, this past thief culture is a historical criminal culture that needs further study.

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