

ABSTRACT

Research Theme: Comparative Studies in Pali and Tamil Buddhist Literature

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The Jataka corpus and its cognate literary traditions in Pali and Sanskrit and Tamil. This corpus participates in: the pan-Indian *Katha* tradition; the narrative literature of the Pali commentarial tradition; the *akhyana* tradition that makes these stories a lively didactic strategy, the biographical genre of the *avadana/apadana* tradition modeled on this corpus; the systematization and elaboration of the Buddha's biography; and the later, post-canonical Pali *vamsic* and historical literature that extends this biography to recount the afterlife of material remains as still-vital relics and sacred objects. This literature spans Sanskrit and Pali and much of it, particularly the narrative literature enshrined in the Pali commentarial texts, awaits proper translation or has only been studied in passing and thus warrants scholarly attention. My goal is an academic career in which I can participate in the critical understanding, the preservation and the revitalization of this vigorous literature by making it relevant and accessible in a modern context as a scholar and translator. I envision my doctoral work as culminating in acquiring the skills required for this project through exhaustive analytical study of this material and critical translation of some portion of it.