



THE STUDY ON SIMILE IN PĀLI LITERATURE: TYPES AND ITS SIGNIFICANCES

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Abstract

Simile plays significance role in Buddhist literature, serving as a pedagogical tool to explain deep and complex philosophical concepts in the ways that are easy to understand. This research aims to study the use of similes in the Pāli Literature, analyzing their types and their significance. It is qualitative research that is carried out with a library approach, by collecting the data from primary sources like Tipiṭaka and other Pāli treatises as well as secondary sources such as books, journals, and academic articles. By utilizing this method, this research collects the data relevant to the topic and examines it to produce a comprehensive study of the similes in the Pāli Literature, discovering the types and their significance. Simile (*upamā*) is a figure of speech comparing two things, showing the similarities. In Pāli literature, the simile is used for two functions as a decorative or embellishment (*alaṅkāra*) of the language and as a means used to convey the meaning of philosophical teaching (*atthassa viññāpanāya*) or to elucidate the meaning (*atthasandassanī*). *Subodhālaṅkāra* provides valuable information for the types of similes identified from the Buddhist perspective. Examining the *Sutta Pitaka*, it is discovered many types of similes have been used by the Buddha which can be classified according to their nature and characteristics such as similes on nature, similes on animals, similes on person, and similes on material. The Buddha's use of simile as a teaching method demonstrates his skillfulness in his teaching approach. The use of similes in teaching methods plays a significant role in creating an effective learning process that enables the students to understand the lesson easily.

Keywords: *Pāli Literature, Significance, Simile, Type, Upamā*

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INTRODUCTION

Simile is a figure of speech that is used to make a comparison of two things, showing the similarities between them. A simile can be identified with the use of words “like” or “as” to compare one thing to another. The word simile is derived from the Latin word “simile”, meaning “resemblance and likeness,” technically it means the comparison of two objects with some similarities (Fadaee, 2011). In the Pāli Literature, the use of simile can be found in many occasions. Pāli Literature refers to Buddhist literature written in Pāli language, covering the early texts and later composition. The Pāli Literature consists of four main divisions, such as Pali Canon (*Tipiṭaka*), commentaries (*Aṭṭhakathā*), Sub-Commentaries (*Tīkā*), and other Pāli literary works (*Pāli Pakaraṇas*). In this division, the collection of original teachings of the Buddha is included in the Pāli Canon. Other texts represent the exegetical treatises composed later in order to provide more detailed information and elucidation of words (Medhācitto, 2024). In Pāli Literature, simile refers to Pāli word “*Upamā*” which means “simile” or “parable.” In the Pāli Canon, there is much evidence that the Buddha employed simile as one of his teaching methods. The Buddha used similes or parables (*upamā*) to convey the teaching to diverse audiences. The simile is a very important tool for effective teaching since it can illustrate abstract concepts in the way relatable, memorable and understandable by different people with different capacities (Medhācitto, 2024). Simile is useful to understand philosophical teaching of the Buddha. It is an effective method to help the students to understand the abstract teachings out of their experiences. The difficult philosophical teaching, such as the ultimate goal of liberation, which is difficult to described with words, can be understood with the help of simile (Piyarathana, 2019: 157).

The Buddha’s use of simile as a teaching method demonstrates his skillfulness in his teaching approach. The use of simile not only enhances the power of reasoning, but also helps the students to have a thorough and comprehensive understanding of the Buddha’s doctrine (Xintong, 2020). The simile is used to clarify profound meanings and helps the disciples to easily understand the doctrine (Thera, 2010: 13). By adopting interactive approaches like utilizing parables, asking and answering questions, and emphasizing personal understanding, the Buddha

created an environment conducive to transformative learning experiences (Acharya, 2024). As a simile for glorifying the teachings of the Buddha “It is as if someone were to set up what had been knocked down, or to point out the way to one who had got lost, or to bring an oil-lamp into a dark place, so that those with eyes could see what was there” (Mahatthanadull, 2020). In short, the use of similes in the teaching method plays a significant role in creating an effective learning process that enables the students to understand the lesson easily.

In the Pāli Literature, both early texts and later compositions, there are many similes used. The similes used by the Buddha can be found in the *Sutta Pitaka* of Pali Canon. *Sutta Pitaka* which comprises five *Nikāyas* such as *Dīgha Nikāya*, *Majjhima Nikāya*, *Saṃyutta Nikāya*, *Aṅguttara Nikāya*, and *Khuddaka Nikāya*, provides abundant examples of simile used by the Buddha. The later composition texts, such as *Subodhālaṅkāra* provide valuable information for the types of similes identified from the Buddhist perspective. Those similes can be examined and categorized according to the style and its function.

Although the use of similes found in many important Buddhist texts, they are not studied in detail. Most of scholars focus on the Buddhist doctrines and practices, not paying much attention to the significance of similes in teaching method. This is a gap that deserve attention, especially in the area of Pāli Literature studies. Similes are not only used as decorative language, but also as the tools to explain the complex teachings in easy way to understand. This study is important because it examines the significances and the types of similes in the Buddhist literature. This study contributes to a richer understanding on Pāli literature, by showing the significance of similes used in the Buddhist literature. Therefore, this paper aims to study the similes found in the Pāli Literature, especially in *Subodhālaṅkāra* and *Sutta Piṭaka*, analyzing their types and their significances.

METHOD

This is qualitative research which is carried out with a library approach. The research is also called library research since it uses the method of collecting data from the library. Library research is understood as a series of activities relating to methods of collecting data, reading,

taking notes and processing research materials (Zed, 2003: 3). Library research is classified as qualitative research, but in the context of library research, data is taken from exploration of library materials which are studied holistically, then analyzed based on a particular framework of thought or theory/philosophical paradigm that underlies it, then uses a certain approach in accordance with the research objectives achieved (Hamzah, 2019: 25). By utilizing this library method, this research collects the data relevant to the topic and examines it in order to produce a comprehensive study on the simile in the Pāli Literature, discovering the types and their significances. Based on this method, this research is carried out with three following steps:

1. *Esanā*: Data collection step, or step of collecting information from both primary and secondary sources. Primary sources in Buddhist studies refer to the Buddhist scripture, namely the Pali Canon or Tipitaka. Secondary sources refer to books, journals, articles, and research relevant to the topic.
2. *Vimaṃsā*: Data analysis step. Data analysis in the study was carried out by following the Miles and Huberman model, namely data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. Data reduction is the process of sorting data to obtain data that is important for research. Data presentation is the step of presenting or the process of conveying research data either in the form of text or tables to clarify the research results.
3. *Anubodha*: Conclusion drawing step. Conclusions are drawn to achieve the research objectives.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Significance of Simile

In Pāli Literature, simile refers to Pāli word “*upamā*.” The etymological combination of the prefix “*upa*” and the root “*ma*” (*pamanena*) gives rise to the word *upamā* and *upamāna* which means simile, analogy or comparison. The word *upamā* has been translated into English in various terms such as “similitude”, “simile”, “illustration”, “figure”, “allegory” and “parable” (Piyarathana, 2005: 7). *Upamā* which refers to comparison, bringing out the similarity between two things is called as “simile” or “parable.” It can be identified with the use of words “like” or “as” to compare one thing to another. In Pāli Literature, several words have been used to indicate

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the use of simile (*upamā vācaka*), such as *iva*, *viya*, *evameva*, *yathā*, *tathā*, *yādisa*, *tādisa*, *yathāpi*, *seyyathāpi*, *kappa*, *sadisa*, *sannibha*, *bhūtapubbaṃ*, etc. (Thera, 2010: 24). In the Buddhist texts, the long similes are usually introduced by the adverb of comparison *seyyathā* (just as), whereas in shorter one, it is introduced with simple terms such as *yathā* (as), or followed by indeclinable such as *iva* (as) or *viya* (as) (Piyarathana, 2005: 8). Pāli works such as *Rūpasiddhi* mention that *upamāna* means resemblance (*sādissē upamānan upamā*). Thus, comparison of object or a thing to another object or thing is generally known as *upamā* or *upamāna* (Chandaratana, 2015).

There are four parts of simile, namely:

1. *Upamāna*: an object that is relevant to the context, but referred to as one with which the *upameyya* is compared.
2. *Upameyya*: an object that is the subject of the context, which is compared to another object.
3. *Sādhāraṇadhamma*: the common feature between the *upamāna* and *upameyya*.
4. *Upamāvācaka*: the words denoting similarities.

For instance, if the passage “*mukhaṃ candamiva kāntaṃ*” (the face is charming like the moon) is analyzed the word *mukhaṃ* refers to *upameyya*; *candaṃ* refers to *upamāna*; *kāntaṃ* refers to *sādhāraṇadhamma*; and *iva* refers to *upamāvācaka*. Another example can be taken from the Buddha’s words. The Buddha said, “*Nibbanti dhīrā yathāyaṃ padīpo*” (the arahants become extinct like the flame of this lamp) (Khp. 5). If the passage is analyzed, Arahants (*dhīrā*) is *upameyya*, the flame of the lamp (*padīpo*) is *upamāna*. The flame of the lamp that becomes extinct is used to compare the state of Arahant which is extinct from defilements. Extinct (*nibbanti*) in this passage is *sādhāraṇadhamma*. The word “just as” or “like” (*yathā*) is *upamāvācaka*.

According to Indian poetical criticism, similes and metaphors are two main embellishments among the thirty-five poetical embellishments (*alaṅkāra*). Accordingly, the features that create aesthetic beauty is called embellishment (Thera, 2010: 20). In Buddhist texts,

Nivedana: Journal of Communication and Language

Sekolah Tinggi Agama Buddha Negeri Raden Wijaya Wonogiri

Volume 6, Number 3, July - September 2025 / nivedana@radenwijaya.ac.id

some similes are used as embellishments (*alaṅkāra*). By employing the simile, the idea can be expressed in the sentence more attractive to the readers and pleasant to listeners. Simile can serve as a decorative element of a language used in communication or in writing. The simile also can make the language more beautiful. In the Buddha's discourses, the similes are also used as the decoration or embellishment of the language (Medhacitto, 2019: 129). Many beautiful verses given by the Buddha are expressed with simile. The simile serves as decorative language and also enhances the audiences to understand the moral value in easier manner. For instance, a verse given by the Buddha in the *Dhammapada*, mentioned that "As a flower that is lovely, beautiful and fragrant, even so the fruitful is the well-spoken words of one who practices it" (*Yathāpi ruciram puppham, vannaavantam sagandhakam; Evam subhāsītā vācā, saphalā hoti sakubbato*) (Dhp. 52). The word *Yathāpi* mentioned in the verse indicates the use of simile. Its function is to compare a beautiful and fragrant flower with well-spoken words. Therefore, it can be understood that the best words of wisdom are the words spoken by one who practices them, just like a flower which is beautiful and fragrant. In the *Dhammapada* too, the Buddha stated that the well-spoken words by one who doesn't practice them, are just like a beautiful flower without fragrant (*Yathāpi ruciram puppham, vannaavantam agandhakam; Evam subhāsītā vācā aphalā hoti akubbato*) (Dhp. 51).

There are two kinds of poetical embellishment, namely *Arthalaṅkāra* and *Shabdalaṅkāra*. The embellishment that adorns the meaning is called *Arthalaṅkāra*, while the embellishment that adorns the sound is called *Shabdalaṅkāra* (Thera, 2010: 20-21). Sometimes, in the Buddha's discourses, the similes are used as decorative language that adorns the meaning of the word. Sometimes, the similes are used as embellishments to adorn the sound. Many of the Buddha's verses delivered by the Buddha, contain not only moral teachings expressed with the embellishment of meaning but also expressed with embellishment of the sound. Many of the Buddha's verses can be recited in beautiful tone and rhythm. Furthermore, countless similes are also used in the exegetical treatises, such as the simile of the fetters to the calf's ropes in the *Manorathapūraṇī*, Buddhaghosa's commentary on the *Aṅguttara Nikāya* (AA. II. 131), as Sanu

Mahatthanadull stated, it is “a strategy of explaining the mentality of *saṃyojana* in the feature of metaphor” (Mahatthanadull, 2016) or a simile.

Some think that the use of similes is to adorn the language which contains aesthetic value. Some people state that similes are used to express philosophical ideas in a simple way to understand. In Indian philosophy, schools such as Nyāya, Vedānta, and Mīmāṃsā have recognized *upamāna* as an independent means of knowledge. The *Tarkasaṃgraha Dīpikā* explains that *upamāna* leads to the acquisition of knowledge through resemblance (*upamiti karanam upamānam*). Dinnāga, in his work *Nyāyavārttika*, stated that *upamāna* is included in perception. The Vaiśeṣika school claimed that *upamāna* is part of inference (*anumāna*). Therefore, different philosophers have varied views on whether *upamāna* should be accepted as a theory of knowledge (Chandaratana, 2015).

In the Buddha’s discourse, similes have been used for various purposes. Some similes can be categorized as embellishments. It can be seen in the Buddha’s discourses where verses created by the Buddha contain poetical expression in beautiful words and meanings. However, the primary aim of simile used by the Buddha was not merely for the embellishment of language, but as the way to make the philosophical teaching becomes easier to understand (Medhacitto, 2019: 129). The Buddha had very skillfully used expression with similes, in both prose and verse forms, as methodology to propound doctrinal sermons to his followers (Thera, 2010: 48). He employed the simile (*upamā*) in his teaching method to convey the meaning (*atthassa viññāpanāya*) and for purpose of elucidating the meaning (*atthasandassanī*). It is proved in many discourses that the Buddha directly mentioned that he created the simile to explain the meaning of the topic. For example, in the *Dvedhāvitakka Sutta* of *Majjhima Nikāya*, the Buddha said to his disciples “Monks, this simile has been created by me to make clear the meaning” (*Upamā kho me ayam, bhikkhave, katā atthassa viññāpanāya*) (M. I. 118). The simile is also used for the purpose of elucidating the meaning (*atthasandassanī*). On one occasion, the Buddha stated to the king “Oh King, this simile has been created to you to elucidate the meaning (*Esā te upamā rāja, atthasandassanī kata*)” (J. 33). Similes are used to make philosophical teachings can be understood according to the audience’s capacity. The Buddha understood that some wise people

Nivedana: Journal of Communication and Language

Sekolah Tinggi Agama Buddha Negeri Raden Wijaya Wonogiri
Volume 6, Number 3, July - September 2025 / nivedana@radenwijaya.ac.id

will understand what is said by means of simile (*upamāya midhekacce viññū purisā bhāsitaṣṣa atthaṃ ājānanti*) (D. II. 324).

The Buddha was capable of knowing the psychology and the capacities of the learners he taught. Therefore, he used a different approach in teaching to different learners. He employed several methods of teaching to make the learners easily understand the teaching. He also used various similes to make the philosophical teachings easier to understand. Similes are given according to the learner's experiences and their capacity for understanding. When the learners are farmers or villagers, the Buddha used similes related to farming or natural environments. When the learners stayed near the forest, the Buddha used similes related to the forest, rivers, trees, animals, etc. In short, the Buddha explained that teaching with similes depended on the learners' background and their capacities. The Buddha mentioned about four types of learners according to their capacity, such one who understands quickly (*ugghaṭitaññū*), one who understands through elaboration (*vipañcitaññū*), one who needs to be guided (*neyyo*), and one for whom the world is the maximum (*padaparamo*) (A. II. 135). The different learners should be taught in different teaching methods. As a teaching method, it can be seen that the Buddha's use of simile depends on three factors. They are; 1) Giving the meaning of the topic, 2) Composing them according to the mind of the listener, and 3) Using them in suitable occasions (Piyarathana, 2019:157). Therefore, the use of similes employed by the Buddha in his teaching method is very significant since it enhances effective learning.

The Types of Similes According to *Subodhālaṅkāra*

The Sanskrit work like *Kāvyādarśa* mentions the list of types of similes, such as *niyamopamā* (restrictive simile), *anīyamopamā* (permissive simile), *samuccayopamā* (cumulative quality simile), *atishayopamā* (solitary difference simile), *mohopamā* (illusion simile), *nirṇayopamā* (conclusion simile), *prasaṃsopamā* (praise simile), *virodhopamā* (rivalry simile), *catūpamā* (flattery simile), *bahūpamā* (multifarious simile), *asambhāvitopamā* (incomprehensible simile), *vikkriyopamā* (transformation simile) and *mālopamā* (wreath simile).

Nivedana: Journal of Communication and Language

Sekolah Tinggi Agama Buddha Negeri Raden Wijaya Wonogiri
Volume 6, Number 3, July - September 2025 / nivedana@radenwijaya.ac.id

The Pāli treatise, such as *Subodhālankāra*, provides significant information for the types of similes used by the Buddha in his teachings in the following manner:

1. *Dhammopamā* (quality simile)

Vikāṣipadumaṃ 'vā'ti, sundaraṃ sugatā'nanam;
Iti dhammopamā nāma, tulyadhammanidassanā.

When both the *Upamā* (simile) and the *Upameyya* (the object of simile), are emphasized, when they are of equal importance, that simile is called *Dhammopamā*. For example, the Buddha's face is beautiful just like a lotus.

2. *Viparītopamā* (reversal simile)

Dhammahīnā 'mukha'mbhoja, sadisaṃ munino'iti;
Viparīto'pamā 'tulya, mānanena'mbujam tava'.

The reputed relationship of like objects is reversed. In this case is called a reversal simile. For example, the Buddha's face is similar to a lotus.

3. *Aññamaññopamā* (reciprocity simile)

Tavā'nana'miva'mbhojam, ambhoja'miva te mukham;
Aññamaññopamā sā'yaṃ, aññamaññopamānato.

When there is no third object to which the *upamā* and *upameyya* can be compared, the simile is called as *Aññamaññopamā*. For example, the face is just like a lotus, the lotus is just like a face.

4. *Abbhutopamā* (miracle simile)

Yadi kiñci bhava'mbhojam, locana'bbhamuvibbhamam;
Dhāretuṃ mukhasobham taṃ, tave'ti abbhutopamā.

When the simile emphasizes the marvelous things, it is called as *Abbhutopamā*. For example, if there is a lotus, which has the beautiful eyebrows of a damsel, it is compared to the Buddha's face.

5. *Silesopamā* (pun simile)

Sugandhi sobhā sambandhī, sisiraṃ'su virodhi ca;
Mukham tava'mbujamve'ti'', sā silesopamā matā.

Nivedana: Journal of Communication and Language

Sekolah Tinggi Agama Buddha Negeri Raden Wijaya Wonogiri
Volume 6, Number 3, July - September 2025 / nivedana@radenwijaya.ac.id

When the similar qualities of both the *upamā* and the *upameyya* are given in the same words, that simile is called as *Silesopamā*. For example, the possession of beauty and sweet fragrance are the common qualities of the lotus and her face. Therefore, her face is similar to lotus.

6. *Santānopamā* (verbal simile)

*Sarūpasaddavāccattā, sā santānopamā yathā;
Bālā'vu'yyānamālā'yaṃ, sā'lakā'nanasobhinī.*

When the object of comparison *upameyya* is compared to some other things, which have the same verbal sound, it is called *Santānopamā*. For examples, *sālakāna* (forest of sāla trees) *uyyānāya sālakāna* (the face with curled hair) *sobhinī*.

7. *Nindopamā* (censure simile)

*Khayī cando, bahurajaṃ, padumaṃ, tehi te mukhaṃ;
Samānampi samukkaṃsi, tya'yaṃ nindopamā matā.*

When the *upamā* is censured though its comparison with the *upameyya*, it is called *Nindopamā*. It is to show up the superiority of the object comparison. For example, your face is similar to the moon and to a lotus, but the moon is waning and the lotus is full of pollen. Therefore, your face is more valuable than both.

8. *Paṭisedhopamā* (negation simile)

*Asamattho mukheni'ndu, jina! Te paṭigajjitum;
Jaḷo kalaṅkī'ti ayaṃ, paṭisedhopamā siyā.*

When showing the inability of *upamā* to compare with the *upameyya*, the greatness of the *upameyya* is indicated. The comparison is given indirectly. For example, the moon is quite similar to your face, but it has no power to successfully compete with your face.

9. *Sādhāraṇopamā* (peculiarity simile)

*"Kaccaṃ candāravindānaṃ, atikkamma mukhaṃ tava;
Attanā'va samaṃ jāta'', mitya'sādhāraṇopamā.*

When the object of comparison is incomparable with anything else, it is compared with itself alone. This simile is called as *Sādhāraṇopamā*. For example, though your face is

partially comparable to the moon and a lotus, it surpasses both and is comparable with itself alone.

10. *Abhūtopamā* (something unreal simile)

“*Sabba ’mbhoja ’ppabhāsāro, rāsibhūto ’va katthaci;*
Tavā ’nanaṃ vibhātī ’’ti, hotā ’bhūtopamā ayaṃ.”

When the object of comparison is compared to some non-existing thing, it is called as *Abhūtopamā*. For example, when the splendor of all lotuses is put together, then your face is similar to that collection of splendors.

11. *Atthagammopamā* (that should be conveyed simile)

Patīyate ’tthagammā tu, saddasāmatthiyā kvaci;
Samāsa, ppaccaye, vādi, saddayogaṃ vinā api.

When the speaker directly shows that he is desirous of comparing an *upameyya* with an *upamā*, it is called as *Atthagammopamā*. For example, I am willing to compare your face to the moon, whether it is correct or not.

12. *Sarūpopamā* (the same form simile)

Bhīṅgāne ’māni cakkhūni, nā ’mbujaṃ mukha ’mevi ’daṃ;
Subyattasadisattena, sā sarūpopamā matā.

The comparison implies an illusion at the beginning, but it is dispelled expressively. This type of simile is called *Sarūpopamā*. For example, this is not a lotus, but her face. These are not bees, but her eyes.

13. *Parikappopamā* (fancy simile)

“*Maye ’va mukhasobhā ’sse, tyala ’mindu! Vikatthanā;*
Yato ’mbujepi sā ’tthīti ’’”, *parikappopamā ayaṃ.*

When the simile emphasizes on some qualities, which does not appear in *upamā*, the simile is called *Parikappopamā*. For example, the face is unable to be compared with the moon, because it is similar even to a lotus.

14. *Saṃsayopamā* (doubt simile)

“*Kiṃ vā ’mbuja ’ntobhantāli, kiṃ lolanayanaṃ mukhaṃ;*
Mama dolāyate citta ’’”, *micca ’yaṃ saṃsayopamā.*

Nivedana: Journal of Communication and Language

Sekolah Tinggi Agama Buddha Negeri Raden Wijaya Wonogiri
Volume 6, Number 3, July - September 2025 / nivedana@radenwijaya.ac.id

This is a simile where an object is compared to some other by expressing a doubt. It is a rhetorical method of comparison. For example, is the lotus with bees moving, or is it a face with moving eyes?

15. *Pativatthupamā* (parallel idea simile)

Kiñci vatthum padassetvā, sadhammassā 'bhidhānato;

Sāmyappaṭṭisabbhāvā, pativatthupamā yathā

When a certain idea is stated first, followed by a statement of an analogous idea resulting in a suggestion of likeness is called *Pativatthupamā*. For example, there is no one among the human beings that comes into being nowadays like you. There is no second among tress to the *Parijāta* (Piyarathana, 2005: 11-15).

The Types of Similes According to *Sutta Pitaka*

In the Buddha's discourses, there are many types of similes that have been used by the Buddha. According to Piyarathana (2019: 157), the similes used by the Buddha can be categorized into several kinds, such as similes on daily life, similes of biology, similes on personal experiences, and the similes on the incidents of daily life. Wegama Piyarathana Thera suggests that the similes have been used by the Buddha in the *Sutta Pitaka* can be classified into several kinds, such as lucid similes, similes drawn from the rural environment, similes used to elucidate the matters, similes used to analyze philosophical subject matters, similes used for purposes of ridicule and criticism, stories with similes, similes depicting the splendor of nature, similes inspiring various enrapturing sentiments, complex similes, etc. (Thera, 2010: 27). Hellmuth Hecker classified the similes scattered in the Buddha's discourses into four kinds, namely: Comprehensive simile, Specific simile, Illustrative simile, Concrete simile (Hecker, 2015: 7-8). Comprehensive simile refers to what are commonly known as parables, which are often elaborated in stories, such as *Āsīvisopama Sutta*, or the simile of poisonous snakes. Such extensive similes concern at least one of the Four Noble Truths. Specific similes primarily concern on particular aspect of the teachings. Some similes deal with only one attribute of the teaching, while others cover multiple aspects. There are occasional parables too, but usually, they are allegories or simple comparisons. Illustrative similes consist of situational and

Nivedana: Journal of Communication and Language

Sekolah Tinggi Agama Buddha Negeri Raden Wijaya Wonogiri

Volume 6, Number 3, July - September 2025 / nivedana@radenwijaya.ac.id

illustrative images that appear naturally in the flow of the discourses, helping to clarify the meaning. Concrete similes refer to similes explained by the Buddha when he physical and tangible demonstrations to illustrate his teachings. These comparisons are usually self-explanatory.

Throughout the Buddha's discourses in the *Sutta Pitaka*, many types of similes have been used by the Buddha in his teaching method. Those similes can be classified according to its nature and characteristics as follows:

1. The Similes on Nature

On many occasions, the Buddha employed similes on nature to illustrate his philosophical and ethical teachings. There are various similes of nature such as ocean, river, trees, mountain, soil, stone, etc. The similes on the ocean are used by the Buddha to illustrate his qualities of the Buddha's dispensation. In the *Pahārāda Sutta* of *Āṅguttara Nikāya*, the Buddha highlights eight remarkable qualities of *Dhammavinaya* that inspire and delight among the monks in simile on the ocean. Just as the great ocean deepens gradually, spiritual progress in the *Dhammavinaya* is attained through gradual training and practice. Just as the great ocean strays within the boundaries, the monks do not break the *Vinaya* rules. Just as the great ocean rejects corpses, the Sangha distances itself from immoral individuals. Just as the rivers lose their names when they merge with the ocean, people from various backgrounds who join in the *Buddhasāsana* leave their former identities and become known as ascetics. Just as the ocean is unaffected by the rivers flowing through it, the *Nibbāna* remains unchanged, no matter how many bhikkhus attain the *Nibbāna*. Just as the ocean has one taste, namely the taste of salt, so too the Dhamma has one taste, namely the taste of liberation. Just as the great oceans contain valuable material, so too the Dhamma contains valuable teachings such as mindfulness and the Noble Eightfold Path. Just as the great ocean is the abode of great beings, so too the *Dhammavinaya* is the abode of great beings such as the stream-enterer, the one practicing for realization of the fruit of stream-entry; the once-returner, the one practicing for realization of the fruit of once-

returning; the non-returner, the one practicing for realization of the fruit of non-returning; the arahant, the one practicing for arahantship (A. IV. 202).

Sometimes, the Buddha also used the simile on ocean together with simile on river to illustrate his teaching. In the *Appamāda Sutta*, he said that just as the great rivers such as Ganges, Yamuna, Aciravati, and Sarabhu flow toward and eventually merge with the ocean which is the greatest among them, similarly all skillful qualities are rooted in heedfulness, lead to heedfulness, and heedfulness is regarded as the foremost among them (A. V. 21). In the *Sunakkhatta Sutta*, it is mentioned the simile of rock. It is said that “Just as a thick rock broken in two cannot be put back together again, in the same way, when a person is intent on the dimension of nothingness, he has broken the fetter of the imperturbable” (M. II. 255). The simile on moon is found in the *Dhammapada*. It is said that a young monk who strives in the Awakened One's teaching, brightens the world like the moon set free from a cloud (Dhp. 382). On one occasion, the Buddha used the simile on mountain to illustrate the state of undeluded mind. The Buddha said just as the mountain of rock stands firm and unshaken, a monk who has overcome delusion remains steady and unmovable, unwavering like a mountain (Ud. 27). The simile on tree is used by the Buddha to illustrate the craving. It is said that if the root of tree is not uprooted, the tree will grow back. In the same way, if the hidden defilements are not removed, suffering will keep coming back again and again (Dhp. 338). In the *Pupphavagga* of *Dhammapada*, the Buddha used many similes on flower. For instance, the Buddha said that just as many garlands can be made from heap of flowers, similarly the person who is born and will eventually die should do many good things in their life (Dhp. 53).

2. The Similes on Animals

The simile on the animal is one of the most famous similes used by the Buddha. The Buddha was living in the forest area, therefore he used to see many types of animals. Therefore, the use of simile on animal is considered to be the easiest way to illustrate the teaching. In the *Alagaddūpama Sutta* of *Majjhima Nikāya*, the Buddha used the simile on man searching on water snake to illustrate the dangers misunderstanding and misapplying

the Dhamma. Just as the man wrongly grasps the snake from the coil or the tail, the snake will be turning around and bits him, so too the people who study the Dhamma and misuse it would cause them to misery and suffering (M. I. 133). In the *Potaliya Sutta* of *Majjhima Nikāya*, the Buddha used the simile of a hungry dog gnawing on the bare bones to explain the futility of seeking for sensual pleasures. Just as the dog gets no real nourishment, only weariness and frustration, the person who seeks the sensual pleasure will only experiences temporary satisfaction followed by greater disappointment (M. I. 359). In the *Appamāda Sutta*, the Buddha used the simile of elephant's footprint to compare with the teaching on heedfulness. The elephant's footprint is considered as largest and most encompassing of all footprints. Just as the elephant's footprint is considered as the foremost among other in term of its size, heedfulness is considered as the foremost which brings benefit in this life and the next life (S. I. 86). In the *Sigāla Sutta* of *Saṃyutta Nikāya*, the Buddha used the simile on a sick jackal suffering from mange to illustrate the monk who became attached to material gains, offerings and fame. Just as a jackal finds no comfort no matter where it goes, similarly the monk who attached to gains, offerings and fame experiencing distresses no matter his surroundings (S. II. 230).

In the *Dhammapada*, the Buddha used the simile on monkey. It is said that just as cravings grow like creeping ivy in the person who live heedlessly. In the same way, one leaps from life to life just as the monkey seeking the fruit in the forest (Dhp. 334). In illustrating the nature of mind, on another occasion the Buddha explained it in simile of fish. It is said that just as a fish pulled out of water and thrown on the dry ground, the mind jumps from one thought to another, restless and unsettled (Dhp. 34). The Buddha also used the simile on swan to illustrate the non-clinging to particular place. It is said that just as the mindful ones exerts themselves to not cling any particular abode just as the swans are not bound to any particular home (Dhp. 91). The Buddha used the simile on bees to describe the way of monk living. Just as a bee extracts the nectar from a flower without damaging it, so too the way of monk living in the society, taking the necessary without causing harm or damaging the people and environment surrounding (Dhp. 49). In the *Araka Sutta* of *Aṅguttara*

Nikāya, the Buddha used the simile on a cow to illustrate the life of human being. In this discourse, the Buddha compared the life of human being as the cow being led to slaughter. Just as a cow being led to slaughter, each step brings it closer to the death. Similarly, the human life is short and full of suffering (A. IV. 135).

3. The Similes on Person

On many occasions, the Buddha used the simile on person to illustrate his teaching. In the *Dhammapada*, it is said that just as a silversmith carefully removes impurities from molten silver, so too the wise person little by little gradually purifies himself (Dhp. 239). In the *Paṭhamanānāṭṭhiya Sutta* of *Udāna*, the Buddha used the simile on blind men who were trying to describe the elephant. This simile is used to illustrate how different sects argue about the nature of truth leading to quarrels and disputes. Just as each blind man only experiences a part of the elephant and mistakes it for the whole, the wanderer of other sects, with limited and partial knowledge on the truth, fail to see the full aspects of the truth, causing them in quarrel and disputes (Ud. 66). In another occasion, the Buddha also used the simile on blind man to illustrate the people who are lack of understanding could easily be misled by others. Just as blind men who are unable to see the white cloth, mistakenly believe it a clean cloth solely based on the words of the people who have sight, similarly those who follow a certain teaching without understanding (M. 1. 501).

In the *Dhammapada*, the Buddha used the simile of a merchant to describe his advice to avoid evil actions. It is mentioned that just as a merchant with little protection and great wealth would avoid a dangerous route, or as a person desiring to live would avoid the poison, similarly one should avoid evil deeds to prevent from misery (Dhp. 123). The Buddha also used the simile of cowherd. It is said that a person who does not act according to the teachings, is compared to cowherd who counts other people's cows. Even if someone recites many sacred texts, but does not act accordingly, is like a cowherd who just counts someone else's cows (Dhp. 19).

4. The Similes on Material

Nivedana: Journal of Communication and Language

Sekolah Tinggi Agama Buddha Negeri Raden Wijaya Wonogiri
Volume 6, Number 3, July - September 2025 / nivedana@radenwijaya.ac.id

On many occasions, the Buddha also used similes on material things surrounding him and common to the people. The Buddha used the simile on the wheel of the cart in the *Dhammapada*. It is said that the mind precedes all the mental states. Mind is the chief. If one speaks or acts with an impure mind, suffering will follow him just as the wheel of the cart follows the foot of the ox (Dhp. 1). On the contrary, he used the simile of shadow. It is said that if one speaks or acts with a pure mind, happiness will follow him as a shadow that never leaves him (Dhp. 2). On another occasion, the Buddha used the simile on a clay vessel to illustrate human life. Just as clay vessels, whether big or small, fired or unfired, eventually break, so too the all living beings inevitably move toward death, regardless of age, wisdom or wealth (Sn. 113).

In the *Alagaddūpama Sutta* of *Majjhima Nikāya*, the Buddha also used the simile on a raft to illustrate his teaching. The Buddha compared his teachings to a raft that used to cross the river. The raft is no longer needed, once one arrives at the other shore. Similarly, the Buddha's teaching is a practical tool for achieving final liberation (*Nibbāna*), but should not be clung rigidly (M. I. 134).

CONCLUSION

Simile is used for the comparison of two things, showing the similarities between them. In Pāli literature, simile is called “*upamā*,” which is used to illustrate abstract teaching more easily. Generally, a simile consists of four elements such as *upamāna*, *upameyya*, *sādhāraṇadhamma* and *upamānvācaka*. *Upamāna* refers to an object that is relevant to the context. *Upameyya* refers to an object that is the subject of the context, which is compared to another object. *Sādhāraṇadhamma* is the common feature between the *upamāna* and *upameyya*. *Upamānvācaka* is the word denoting similarities, generally expressed in the words such as *iva*, *viya*, *evameva*, *yathā*, *tathā*, *yādisa*, *tādisa*, *yathāpi*, *seyyathāpi*, *kappa*, *sadisa*, *sannibha*, *bhūtapubbaṃ*, etc. This research shows that in Pāli literature, the simile is used for two functions such as a decorative or embellishment (*alaṅkāra*) of the language and as a means used to convey the meaning of philosophical teaching (*atthassa viññāpanāya*) or to elucidate the meaning (*atthasandassanī*). According to *Sutta Pitaka*, many types of similes have been used by the

Nivedana: Journal of Communication and Language

Sekolah Tinggi Agama Buddha Negeri Raden Wijaya Wonogiri
Volume 6, Number 3, July - September 2025 / nivedana@radenwijaya.ac.id

Buddha which can be classified according to their nature and characteristics such as similes on nature, similes on animals, similes on person, and similes on material. The Buddha's use of simile as a teaching method demonstrates his skillfulness in his teaching approach. The use of similes in teaching methods plays a significant role in creating an effective learning process that enables the students to understand the lesson easily. Therefore, this research contributes to academic development in several important ways, both theoretical and practical aspects. Theoretically, this research provides profound understanding on the significance and types of similes in the Pāli literature. It offers broader perspective on similes used by the Buddha as teachings method and decorative language. Practically, this research shows the guidelines to the translators to identify the similes found in the Buddhist scripture and translate it in the correct manner. For educators, it shows the significance and effectiveness of simile as teaching method, making the complex teachings become easier to understand.

Abbreviations

A.	<i>Āṅguttara Nikāya</i>
AA.	<i>Āṅguttara Nikāya Aṭṭhakathā</i>
D.	<i>Dīgha Nikāya</i>
Dhp.	<i>Dhammapada</i>
Khp.	<i>Khuddakapatha</i>
J.	<i>Jātaka</i>
M.	<i>Majjhima Nikāya</i>
S.	<i>Saṃyutta Nikāya</i>
Sn.	<i>Sutta Nipāta</i>
Ud.	<i>Udāna</i>

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Nivedana: Journal of Communication and Language

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Nivedana: Journal of Communication and Language

Sekolah Tinggi Agama Buddha Negeri Raden Wijaya Wonogiri
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