

SOME PALI DISCOURSES IN THE LIGHT
OF THEIR CHINESE PARALLELS
PART TWO *

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The present article is a follow up to my examination of the potential of the Chinese Āgamas as a corrective and supplement to the Pali discourses, published in the previous issue of *Buddhist Studies Review*.¹ While in the earlier article I took up examples from the first fifty discourses in the Majjhima Nikāya, the present article treats examples from the remainder of the same collection.

Placing the Pali discourses and their counterparts in the Chinese Āgamas side by side often brings to light an impressive degree of agreement, even down to rather minor details. This close agreement testifies to the emphasis on verbatim recall in the oral transmission of the early discourses. In this respect the early Buddhist oral tradition forms a class of its own in the ambit of oral literature in general, where often relatively free improvisation is the rule. Oral performance of a narrative type in a setting like Africa or medieval Europe demands innovation and improvisation from the performer, whose task is to present the tale in such a way as to best entertain the audience. Such a type of oral literature is thus recreated every time it is told. In contrast, the purpose of the early Buddhist oral tradition was to preserve sacred material, for which free improvisation is not appropriate. Moreover, the performance situation of the early discourses was not only public, but

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¹ *Buddhist Studies Review* 22 (2005), 1–14.

also private, and recitation was often undertaken communally, which leaves little scope for free improvisation.²

In this emphasis on verbatim recall, the early Buddhist discourses stand in the tradition of Vedic oral literature, where verbatim recall was similarly of central importance. Unlike the Brahmin reciters, however, not all Buddhist monk reciters were trained in memorizing texts from their early youth onwards.³ Thus in spite of the formidable feat of transmitting a vast corpus of material to posterity, some of the errors bound to occur during oral transmission have also left their impact on the Pali discourses. Such errors can involve a shift of material to a different place, or even loss of material. At times, due to the need for explanation during oral performance, it might also happen that material which originally was of a commentarial nature influenced a discourse, or even became part of it.

An example of a shift of material to a different place can be found in the *Cūḷasakuludāyī Sutta*. The Pali and Chinese version of this discourse record a discussion between the Buddha and the wanderer Sakuludāyī on the way to an entirely pleasant world, which according to both versions is to be found in the development of the *jhānas*. After describing the attainment of the four *jhānas*, the Pali discourse turns to an account of the gradual path, which depicts how someone goes forth and attains the four *jhānas* and the three higher knowledges.

The *Cūḷasakuludāyī Sutta*'s treatment of the gradual path follows each *jhāna* and higher knowledge with the declaration that this attainment is a state superior to the way to an entirely pleasant world discussed earlier. This procedure creates a somewhat perplexing proposition, as in this way the *Cūḷasakuludāyī Sutta* proclaims that each of the *jhānas* mentioned in its description of the gradual path is superior to the *jhānas* mentioned in its earlier discussion of the path to an entirely pleasant world.⁴

² M. Allon, *Style and Function* (Tokyo, 1997), p. 366.

³ O. von Hinüber, *Der Beginn der Schrift und frühe Schriftlichkeit in Indien* (Mainz, 1989), p. 67.

⁴ MN 79 at MN II 38,8: 'He dwells having attained the first *jhāna*. This ... is a state superior and more sublime' [than the earlier mentioned four *jhānas*] (*pathamajjhānaṃ upasampajja viharati. ayam pi kho ... dhammo uttaritaro ca pañītatara ca*).

The Madhyama Āgama parallel to the *Cūḷasakuludāyī Sutta* treats the gradual path already at an earlier point, when describing the path to an entirely pleasant world.⁵ By doing so the Madhyama Āgama version takes up the *jhānas* only once and thus does not have the perplexing proposition found in the Pali discourse, according to which the *jhānas* are superior to the *jhānas*. Judging from its location in the Chinese discourse, perhaps the gradual path exposition up to the four *jhānas* originally served as an introduction to the attainment of an entirely pleasant world. This would leave only the three higher knowledges in the place where they are found now, three attainments that are indeed superior to the entirely pleasant world of the *jhānas*.

Another meeting between the Buddha and the same wanderer Sakuludāyī is the theme of the *Mahāsakuludāyī Sutta*. This discourse lists five qualities that cause the Buddha's disciples to respect their teacher. The treatment of the first four qualities is fairly similar in the Pali and Madhyama Āgama version of this discourse.

The fifth quality in the Madhyama Āgama account takes up the Buddha's instructions on the three higher knowledges.⁶ According to the Madhyama Āgama discourse, these instructions inspire confidence in the Buddha's disciples, as it enables them to go beyond doubt and reach the other shore.

The Pali version instead works its way through a long exposition of various aspects of the Buddhist path, covering the four *satīpaṭṭhānas*, the four right efforts, the four roads to power, the five faculties, the five powers, the seven awakening factors, the noble eightfold path, the eight liberations, the eight bases for transcendence, the ten *kaṣiṇas*, the four *jhānas*, insight into the nature of body and consciousness, production of a mind-made body, supernormal powers, the divine ear and telepathic knowledge of the mind of others, before coming to the same three higher knowledges.⁷

⁵ MĀ 208 at T 1 785c24.

⁶ MĀ 207 at T 1 783b16, which explicitly mentions only the first and the third knowledge, recollection of past lives and destruction of the influxes, though from the context it seems safe to assume that the second knowledge, the divine eye, should be supplemented.

⁷ MN 77 at MN 11–22.

When considering this exposition in the light of its Madhyama Āgama parallel, it would seem that the Buddha's ability to teach how to attain the three higher knowledges suffices to explain why his disciples respect him. In fact the long exposition given in the Pali discourse appears to be somewhat out of proportion, as a comparatively brief treatment of the first four qualities is followed by a disproportionately long exposition of the fifth quality. Due to this extensive exposition of the fifth quality, the *Mahāsakuludāyi Sutta* has become a rather long discourse and would find a more fitting placement in the Dīgha Nikāya, instead of being included among discourses of 'middle length'. Hence one might wonder if the long exposition in the Pali version could be a later expansion of what originally was only a relatively brief treatment, similar to the treatment in its Madhyama Āgama parallel.

A somewhat similar situation can be found in the case of the *Piṇḍapātāpārisuddhi Sutta*. The topic of this discourse, as indicated in the titles of the Pali version and its Saṃyukta Āgama parallel, is 'purification of alms food'.⁸ In order to undertake such purification, according to both versions a monk should avoid the arising of desire and other defilements while collecting alms food. If on inspection the monk realizes that defilements have arisen in his mind, he should make a determined effort to remove them, whereas if he has remained free from defilements he may joyfully continue to train himself in wholesome states.

The Saṃyukta Āgama version explains that through such training in wholesomeness when walking, standing, sitting and lying down a monk purifies his alms food, after which this discourse concludes.⁹ The Pali version continues instead by treating various other topics. These cover overcoming the five types of sensual pleasures and the five hindrances; understanding the five aggregates; developing the four *satipaṭṭhānas*, the four right efforts, the four roads to power, the five faculties, the five powers, the seven factors of awakening, the eightfold noble path, tranquillity and insight; and realizing knowledge and liberation.¹⁰

⁸ MN 151 at MN III 297,36: *piṇḍapātāpārisuddhi* and SĀ 236 at T II 57b₂₅: 清淨乞食.

⁹ SĀ 236 at T II 57b₂₄.

¹⁰ MN 151 at MN III 295,13–297,20.

Though by undertaking all these practices a monk would certainly become a thoroughly purified recipient of alms, the comparatively brief treatment given in the earlier part of the Pali version, found in similar terms also in its Saṃyukta Āgama parallel, would seem to be an adequate and sufficient explanation of how a monk undertakes ‘purification of alms food’. Thus in this case, too, the possibility that the long exposition found only in the Pali version could be due to a later expansion of an originally more concise presentation needs to be taken into consideration.

Another case where a treatment in a Pali discourse is considerably longer than its Chinese counterpart can be found in the *Mahārāhulovāda Sutta*, which presents a range of meditation instructions given by the Buddha to his son Rāhula. The Pali version reports that, on being asked by his son about the development of mindfulness of breathing, the Buddha delivered detailed instructions on how to contemplate the five elements of earth, water, fire, air and space, followed by taking up in brief the *brahmavihāras*, contemplation of the unattractiveness of the body (*asubha*) and perception of impermanence, before giving a detailed exposition of mindfulness of breathing.¹¹

According to the Ekottarika Āgama counterpart to the *Mahārāhulovāda Sutta*, before Rāhula inquired about mindfulness of breathing the Buddha had already briefly instructed him on the *brahmavihāras* and on contemplating the unattractiveness of the body, and it was after Rāhula’s inquiry that the Buddha took up the practice of mindfulness of breathing.¹² The detailed instructions on the five elements, given by the Buddha to his son in the Pali version of the *Mahārāhulovāda Sutta*, are not found at all in the Ekottarika Āgama discourse.

Here again one might wonder whether the Pali version’s exposition on the elements is in its proper place, since in both versions Rāhula had asked the Buddha how to develop mindfulness of breathing so that it will be of great fruit.¹³ In view of such an inquiry one would not expect the Buddha to broach a range of different subjects and give such a de-

¹¹ MN 62 at MN I 421–25.

¹² EĀ 17.1 at T II 581c16 and T II 582a13.

¹³ MN 62 at MN I 421,24: *kathaṃ bhāvitā nu kho, bhante, ānāpānasati ... mahapphalā hoti?* EĀ 17.1 at T II 582a6: 云何修行安般 ... 獲大果報?

tailed exposition of the five elements before taking up the topic of mindfulness of breathing.

A discourse in the Aṅguttara Nikāya and its parallel in the Saṃyukta Āgama also record an instruction on the elements given by the Buddha to his son Rāhula.¹⁴ Though this evidently remains hypothetical, perhaps during the course of oral transmission this instruction on the elements came to be added to the *Mahārāhulovāda Sutta*.

Another instance where comparing the Pali and Chinese versions of a discourse bring to light a noteworthy difference is the *Mahācattārīsaka Sutta*. The Pali version of this discourse examines wrong path factors, right path factors and supramundane path factors. The definitions given to the same wrong and right path factors in its Madhyama Āgama counterpart are similar to the Pali presentation. The Madhyama Āgama discourse differs in so far as it does not treat supramundane path factors at all.¹⁵ A quotation of the same discourse in Śamathadeva's commentary on the *Abhidharmakośa*, preserved in Tibetan, also does not record such a treatment of the supramundane path factors.¹⁶

A closer scrutiny of the *Mahācattārīsaka Sutta* brings to light that the terminology employed to define the supramundane path factors is precisely the same as the terminology used in the *Vibhaṅga*'s exposition of the path factors according to the methodology of the Abhidhamma, distinct from the way the same work analyses these path factors when applying the methodology of the discourses.¹⁷ Some of the Pali terms used in the *Mahācattārīsaka Sutta*, such as when defining supramundane right intention as 'fixing' (*appanā*) of the mind and as 'mental inclination' (*cetaso abhiviropanā*), are not found in other discourses and belong

¹⁴ AN 4:177 at AN II 164–65 and SĀ 465 at T II 118c–119a. SĀ 465 takes up six elements, whereas AN 4:177 treats only four elements. The examination of the elements in AN 4:177 is also shorter than its counterpart in MN 62, as it does not list the bodily manifestations of each internal element.

¹⁵ MĀ 189 at T I 735c18; for a detailed study of this discourse cf. K. Meisig, 'Sheng Tao King, die Chinesische Fassung des Mahācattārīsaka Sutta', *Hinduismus und Buddhismus* (Freiburg, 1987), pp. 220–48.

¹⁶ Derge edition *mngon pa nyu* 44a5 or Peking edition *thu* 83b5.

¹⁷ This is the *Abhidhammabhājanīya* treatment of the fourth noble truth at Vibh 106,3, preceded by treating the same subject from the viewpoint of the discourses in the *Suttantabhājanīya*.

to the type of language used only in the Abhidhamma and historically later Pali texts.¹⁸ When applying the supramundane treatment to speech, action and livelihood, the *Mahācattārīsaka Sutta* uses a string of terms that does not occur in this way in other discourses, while the same string of terms is found in the definition of these three path factors in the Abhidhamma.¹⁹

Another noteworthy aspect of the *Mahācattārīsaka Sutta*'s treatment of the path factors is that it reckons the mundane wholesome path factors to be 'with influx' and as 'ripening in attachment'.²⁰ The way the *Mahācattārīsaka Sutta* defines these mundane path factors corresponds to the definitions used in other discourses, where these path factors are part of the noble eightfold path that leads to the eradication of *dukkha*.²¹ Thus what other discourses reckon as an integral part of the path to liberation, the *Mahācattārīsaka Sutta*'s treatment considers as something that is with influx and ripens in attachment.

This mode of presentation shows the influence of Abhidhammic type of thought, as works like the *Dhammasaṅgaṇī* use the qualification 'without influxes' only for the four paths and fruits, and for the unconditioned element.²² From this perspective, any other type of experience, however wholesome or conducive to liberation it may be, will be reckoned to be 'with influx' and consequently to 'ripen in attachment'.

At this point the question could be posed to what extent the *Mahācattārīsaka Sutta*'s overall exposition requires the treatment of the supra-

¹⁸ MN 117 at MN III 73,15 lists *takko vitakko saṅkappo appanā vyappaṇā cetaso abhiniropanā* to define *sammāsaṅkappo ariyo anāsavo lokuttaro maggaṅgo*. The terms *appanā*, *vyappaṇā*, and *cetaso abhiniropanā* do not seem to recur in other discourses. The same listing can be found at Dhs 10,17 or at Vibh 86,8: *takko vitakko saṅkappo appanā vyappaṇā cetaso abhiniropanā*.

¹⁹ MN 117 at MN III 74,9+35 and MN III 75,25: *āraṭi virati paṭivirati veramaṇī*, a string of terms that recurs in the definition of these path factors at Dhs 63,35 and Dhs 64,2+7 and at Vibh 106,26+30 and Vibh 107,4.

²⁰ e.g. for the path factor of right intention in MN 117 at MN III 73,6: *sāsavo ... upadhivepakko*.

²¹ MN 117 at MN III 73,9, MN III 74,3+30 and MN III 75,20 define mundane right intention, right speech, right action and right livelihood in the same way as e.g. MN 141 at MN III 251,16+19+23+26.

²² Dhs 196,16: *ariyāpannā maggā ca maggaphalāni ca asaṅkhata ca dhātu, ime dhammā anāsavā*.

mundane path factors. According to the preamble found in the Chinese and the Pali versions of this discourse, the main intent of the Buddha's exposition was to show the supportive function of the other path factors for the development of right concentration. That is, the central point at stake was not to present the path factors individually, but rather to show their interrelation as a basis for developing right concentration. To bring out this point, the supramundane treatment of the path factors would not be required.

Hence from the perspective of the central topic of the discourse the treatment of the supramundane path factors does not seem to be indispensable. The same treatment shows distinct Abhidhammic characteristics and vocabulary, and it is absent from the Madhyama Āgama and Tibetan parallels. This suggests the treatment of the supramundane path factors in the Pali version of the *Mahācattārīsaka Sutta* to be a later addition. Perhaps an early commentary on this discourse considered the path factors from the supramundane perspective of path attainment, and what originally was only an alternative mode of explanation preserved in an oral commentary was later absorbed into the discourse itself during the process of oral transmission.

Another case where the understanding of the reciters may have influenced the wording of a discourse could be the *Uddesavibhaṅga Sutta*. The Pali version of this discourse and its Madhyama Āgama parallel begin with a short statement by the Buddha, after which he retired to his dwelling.²³ From the perspective of the Pali discourse this comes as quite a surprise, since the Buddha had announced that he would teach the monks a summary and an exposition.²⁴ In spite of this announcement, he left without giving an exposition, after teaching only the summary. According to the Madhyama Āgama account, however, the Buddha did not announce a summary and an exposition. Thus in the Madhyama Āgama version the Buddha's departure does not stand in contradiction to what he said earlier.

²³ MN 138 at MN III 223,14 and MĀ 164 at T I 694b24.

²⁴ MN 138 at MN III 223,5: 'I will teach you a summary and an exposition, monks, listen and attend well, I am about to speak' (*uddesavibhaṅgaṃ vo, bhikkhave, desissāmi, taṃ suṇātha sādhukaṃ manasikarotha, bhāssissāmi*).

A reference to a summary and an exposition recurs also in the *Mahākaccānabhaddekaratta Sutta* and in the *Lomasakaṅgiyabhaddekaratta Sutta*.²⁵ According to the introductory narration in both discourses, a visiting *deva* had asked a monk if he knew the ‘summary and the exposition on an auspicious night’, followed by also asking him if he knew the ‘verses on an auspicious night’.²⁶ As the verses correspond to the summary, either the reference to the summary or the reference to the verses seems to be redundant.²⁷

Just as in the case of the *Uddesavibhaṅga Sutta*, in the *Mahākaccānabhaddekaratta Sutta* the reference to a summary and an exposition stands in contrast to the remainder of the discourse, since here too the Buddha announced a summary and an exposition but then got up and left after giving only the summary, without delivering the corresponding exposition.

In all these three cases the Chinese and Tibetan parallels do not refer to a summary and an exposition.²⁸ This suggests that the reference to a summary and an exposition originally might not have been part of these discourses.

The reason for these references to a summary and an exposition in the Pali versions could be that the basic pattern of following a summary with an exposition is a characteristic mark of most of the discourses found in the chapter where these three Pali discourses are located, the

²⁵ In MN 133 at MN III 192,10 and in MN 134 at MN III 199,27 a *deva* asked a monk ‘do you, monk, remember the summary and the exposition on an auspicious night?’ (*dhāresi tvaṃ, bhikkhu, bhaddekaratassa uddesaṃ ca vibhaṅgaṃ ca?*).

²⁶ After the inquiry mentioned above in note 25, according to MN 133 at MN III 192,16 and MN 134 at MN III 200,5 the *deva* asked: ‘but do you, monk, remember the verses on an auspicious night?’ (*dhāresi pana tvaṃ, bhikkhu, bhaddekaratiyo gāthā?*).

²⁷ MN 133 at MN III 193,24 reports that after the Buddha had spoken the verses without explaining their meaning, the monks wondered who would be able to explain the meaning of this ‘summary’, *uddesa*, thereby identifying the verses as the summary. In fact, apart from the verses it would be difficult to find anything else that could be reckoned as a ‘summary’.

²⁸ The parallels to MN 133 are MĀ 165 at T I 696c7, T 1362 at T XXI 881c11, and a Tibetan parallel found thrice in the Derge edition at *mdo sa* 161b4, *rgyud ba* 56b2 and *gzungs waṃ* 90a5 (the Peking edition has only two versions of this discourse at *mdo shu* 171a and *rgyud ya* 96b). The parallels to MN 134 are MĀ 166 at T I 698c14 and T 77 at T I 886b7. The parallel to MN 138 is MĀ 164 at T I 694b18.

Vibhaṅga Vagga of the Majjhima Nikāya. Perhaps this caused the reciters to make explicit what in some instances was only implicit, by beginning these three discourses with the announcement that a summary and its exposition will be given.

Another case where a passage in a Pali discourse may have been influenced by later developments can be found in the *Dakkhiṇāvibhaṅga Sutta*. In the context of a treatment of different types of offering, the Pali version states that even if an individual monk should be of evil character and of bad morality, as long as a gift to him is given on behalf of the whole community, such a gift will be of immeasurable merit.²⁹ Its Madhyama Āgama counterpart does not speak of a monk who is of evil character and of bad morality, but only of a monk who is not energetic.³⁰ A quotation of this passage in Śamathadeva's commentary on the *Abhidharmakośa* also does not envisage that a monk worthy of offerings could be of evil character and of bad morality.³¹

The Madhyama Āgama version continues by explaining that as even a gift to a monk who is not energetic is of much merit, what to say of the merit of giving to a monk who practises and has reached various accomplishments. The Pali version instead continues by stating that a gift to an individual will never be as meritorious as a gift given to the whole community.³² The commentary adds that even a gift given to an *arahant* individually will not measure up to a gift given to someone of bad morality, as long as the gift is given in the name of the community.³³

This presentation in the *Dakkhiṇāvibhaṅga Sutta* and its commentary is surprising. If mere membership of the Buddhist order would suffice to ensure the worthiness of receiving a gift, one would be at a loss to un-

²⁹ MN 142 at MN III 256,6: 'there will be clan members, with yellow robes around their necks, immoral and of evil character, I say an offering made to those immoral ones in the name of the community ... is incalculable and immeasurable' (*bhavissanti ... gotrabhuno kāsāvakaṅṭhā dussilā pāpadhammā, tesu dussīlesu saṅghaṃ uddissa dānaṃ ... asaṅkheyyaṃ appameyyaṃ vadāmi*).

³⁰ MĀ 180 at T I 722b1: 不精進.

³¹ Derge edition *mngon pa ju* 255a4 and Peking edition *tu* 290b4.

³² MN 142 at MN III 256,10: 'I say that a gift given to an individual person is never of greater fruit than a gift given to the community', *na ... kenaci pariāyena saṅghatāya dakkhiṇāya pātipuggalikaṃ dānaṃ mahapphalataraṃ vadāmi*.

³³ Ps v 75.

derstand why in the Pali and Chinese versions of the *Mahā-Assapura Sutta* and the *Cūḷa-Assapura Sutta* the Buddha gave recommendations on proper conduct to the monks in order to ensure that gifts given to them will be fruitful,³⁴ or why the Pali and Chinese versions of the *Ākaṅkheyya Sutta* stipulate morality as a factor required to make the services and support a monk receives become fruitful.³⁵

As the declaration about the meritoriousness of a gift given to an evil monk of bad morality in the *Dakkhiṇāvibhaṅga Sutta* seems difficult to harmonize with other discourses, one might wonder whether the need to ensure a constant supply of gifts even for less well-behaved monks may have led to a conscious change of the wording of this discourse.

Such conscious changing of the wording of a discourse, however, does not seem to be behind most of the variations found between Pali discourses and their Āgama counterparts, variations that often appear to be just the outcome of the vicissitudes of oral transmission.

A passage where such a simple transmission error may have occurred can be found in the *Dantabhūmi Sutta*, which proceeds from *satipaṭṭhāna* practice without giving room to thought directly to the attainment of the second *jhāna*.³⁶ This passage strikes an unfamiliar note, since it seems to imply that the practice of thought-free *satipaṭṭhāna* corresponds to the attainment of the first *jhāna*.

Though *satipaṭṭhāna* is an important foundation for the development of the *jhānas*,³⁷ in itself *satipaṭṭhāna* does not constitute a form of *jhāna*. A central characteristic of *satipaṭṭhāna* meditation is to be aware of the changing nature of phenomena,³⁸ whereas attainment of a *jhāna* requires concentration on a single and stable object. Therefore one would not expect that practice of *satipaṭṭhāna* meditation enables the direct

³⁴ MN 39 at MN I 271,16 and MN 40 at MN I 281,10; and their parallels MĀ 182 at T I 724c25 and MĀ 183 at T I 725c24.

³⁵ MN 6 at MN I 33,16 and its parallel MĀ 105 at T I 595c23.

³⁶ MN 125 at MN III 136,26: *mā ... vitakkaṃ vitakkeṣī ti! so vitakkavicāraṇaṃ vūpasamā ... dutiyajjhānaṃ ... upasampajja viharati.*

³⁷ The foundational role of *satipaṭṭhāna* for deeper levels of concentration can be seen e.g. in DN 18 at DN II 216,12 or in S 52:6–24 at SN V 299–305.

³⁸ MN 10 at MN I 56,30: *samudayadhammānupassī vā ... viharati, veyadhammānupassī vā ...*

attainment of the second *jhāna*, without any need to develop the first *jhāna*.

In view of this it comes as no surprise when one finds that the Madhyama Āgama counterpart to the *Dantabhūmi Sutta* proceeds from thought-free *satipaṭṭhāna* practice to the attainment of the first *jhāna*, before turning to the remaining *jhānas*.³⁹

Perhaps the occurrence of the word *vitakka* in the passage on *satipaṭṭhāna* without thought led to a lapse on the part of the reciter(s) of the discourse, who continued straight away with the calming of *vitakka* mentioned at the outset of the standard descriptions of the second *jhāna*, thereby unintentionally dropping the first *jhāna* in between.

Another case of accidental loss of text appears to occur in the *Chabbisodhana Sutta*, which describes how to check someone's claim to be fully awakened.⁴⁰ In spite of announcing a six-fold purity in its title, the *Chabbisodhana Sutta* presents only five aspects of the purity of an *arahant*. The Pali commentary notes this inconsistency and quotes an opinion from the 'elders living on the other side of the sea',⁴¹ who explain that the purity of an *arahant's* attitude towards the four nutriments should also be taken into account. This explanation is puzzling, since though in this way a sixth type of purity will indeed be obtained, the *Chabbisodhana Sutta* does not refer at all to the four nutriments.

The Madhyama Āgama parallel to the *Chabbisodhana Sutta* resolves this puzzle, as in addition to the five types of purity treated in the Pali version, it also describes an *arahant's* detached attitude towards the four nutriments.⁴² Thus, unlike the Pali version, the Madhyama Āgama discourse does indeed treat a six-fold purity.

Judging from the title of the Pali version, it seems safe to conclude that a similar treatment of the four nutriments originally was part of the *Chabbisodhana Sutta's* exposition. The 'elders living on the other side of the sea', mentioned in the Pali commentary, were apparently still familiar with the earlier version that included the four nutriments, a treat-

³⁹ MĀ 198 at T 1 758b₂₅. A translation of this discourse is under preparation for *Buddhist Studies Review* 23.1.

⁴⁰ MN 112 at MN III 29-37.

⁴¹ Ps IV 94: *parasamuddavāsītherā*.

⁴² MĀ 187 at T 1 732b₁₄.

ment lost at some point before or during the transmission of the Pali discourse from India to Sri Lanka.

The variations found between Majjhima Nikāya discourses and their Chinese parallels, selected for the present article, confirm the truth of a statement made in the *Sandaka Sutta*, according to which oral tradition, *anussava*, may be well remembered or else not well remembered.⁴³ The same applies all the more to the discourses found in the Chinese Āgamas, which in addition to transmission errors also sometimes suffer from translation errors. Since, however, the purpose of the present article is to highlight the potential of the Chinese Āgamas as a corrective and supplement to the Pali discourses, I have selected only cases that illustrate this potential.

Thanks to the efforts of the ancient reciters and translators we have a vast corpus of material at our disposal that enables us to place different versions of a discourse side by side. Such comparisons confirm much of what a study of only one tradition will yield, in addition to which they bring out some details with increased clarity. The resultant vision of early Buddhism could be illustrated with the example of a one-eyed man whose second eye had its sight restored. What he now sees with both eyes is the same as what he saw earlier with only one eye, yet his vision has become broader and more precise.

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Abbreviations

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|-----|----------------------|------|----------------------|
| AN | Aṅguttara Nikāya | Ps | <i>Papañcasūdanī</i> |
| Dhs | <i>Dhammasaṅgaṇī</i> | SĀ | Samyukta Āgama |
| DN | Dīgha Nikāya | SN | Samyutta Nikāya |
| EĀ | Ekottarika Āgama | T | Taishō |
| MĀ | Madhyama Āgama | Vibh | <i>Vibhaṅga</i> |
| MN | Majjhima Nikāya | | |

⁴³ MN 76 at MN 1 520,6: *sussutam pi hoti dussutam pi hoti*.