

Konrad Meisig (Ed.)

# Translating Buddhist Chinese

Problems and Prospects

Harrassowitz Verlag

---

East Asia Intercultural Studies  
Interkulturelle Ostasienstudien 3

East Asia Intercultural Studies  

---

Interkulturelle Ostasienstudien

Edited by/Herausgegeben von  
Konrad Meisig

3

2010

Harrassowitz Verlag · Wiesbaden

# Translating Buddhist Chinese

Problems and Prospects

Edited by Konrad Meisig

2010

Harrassowitz Verlag · Wiesbaden

Bibliografische Information der Deutschen Nationalbibliothek  
Die Deutsche Nationalbibliothek verzeichnet diese Publikation in der Deutschen  
Nationalbibliografie; detaillierte bibliografische Daten sind im Internet  
über <http://dnb.d-nb.de> abrufbar.

Bibliographic information published by the Deutsche Nationalbibliothek  
The Deutsche Nationalbibliothek lists this publication in the Deutsche  
Nationalbibliografie; detailed bibliographic data are available in the internet  
at <http://dnb.d-nb.de>.

For further information about our publishing program consult our  
website <http://www.harrassowitz-verlag.de>

© Otto Harrassowitz GmbH & Co. KG, Wiesbaden 2010  
This work, including all of its parts, is protected by copyright.  
Any use beyond the limits of copyright law without the permission  
of the publisher is forbidden and subject to penalty. This applies  
particularly to reproductions, translations, microfilms and storage  
and processing in electronic systems.  
Printed on permanent/durable paper.  
Printing and binding: Hubert & Co., Göttingen  
Printed in Germany

ISSN 1861-101X  
ISBN 978-3-447-06267-1

# *Problems and Prospects of the Chinese Saṃyuktāgama: Its Structure and Content*

CHOONG Mun-keat

## Introduction

In 2000 I published a book entitled *The Fundamental Teachings of Early Buddhism*, in which I highlighted Yin Shun's findings on the three-aṅga structure (sūtra/sutta, geya/geyya, vyākaraṇa/veyyākaraṇa) of the Chinese *Saṃyuktāgama* (Taishō 99) and its Pali counterpart, *Saṃyutta-nikāya*. Since then I have always expected that someone, particularly from the West, will give some responses and comments regarding these findings by Yin Shun, but now I am still waiting for such responses and comments.

In this paper, I will point out some related issues in studies regarding the structure and content of the Chinese *Saṃyuktāgama*, including its Pali counterpart, *Saṃyutta-nikāya*.<sup>1</sup>

## 1. My questions on H-Buddhism

In 2005 at the London Buddhist studies conference, a European scholar told me that Yin Shun had not made any contribution to the study of Indian Buddhism (including his research on the Chinese *Saṃyuktāgama*), because his findings are not recognised by Europeans. Aware that Yin Shun's research on Indian Buddhism is in fact little known to Western scholarship, I decided to post a message on H-Buddhism (on 22 Oct 2005). It read:

Dear All, I would like to ask your opinion regarding Yin-shun's work on the formation of SA/SN (*Saṃyuktāgama/Saṃyutta-nikāya*). Yin-shun's work on the formation of SA/SN is closely linked to the formation of the early Buddhist texts (his two books on this subject published in 1971 and 1983). To my knowledge, there is to date only one scholarly review article written in Japanese by MIZUNO Kogen ("Zōagonkyō no Kenkyū to Shuppan" [Studies and Publications on *Saṃyuktāgama*] in *Bukkyō Kenkyū*, 17 (1988), pp. 1-45). I also introduce this article and Yin Shun's work on the subject in my book, *The Fundamental Teachings of Early Buddhism* (=Beitrage zur Indologie, Band 32) (Harrassowitz Verlag, 2000), pp. 7-11. What is the general perception in European and American Buddhological

1 I am gratefully indebted to Rod Bucknell for his constructive comments, corrections, and relevant information on a draft of this article.

circles (including Buddhist communities) about Yin-shun's findings on the formation of the early Buddhist texts? Do they generally reject his findings entirely, or do some people have accepted his findings? Up to now, at least I do not know and see any English review article written by a Western scholar about Yin Shun's work on the formation of the early Buddhist texts (or SA/SN). Can anyone give me any advice?

The clear answer to my query on H-Buddhism was that there is as yet no such review article by any Western researcher. So, I had to conclude my view regarding this issue to this respondent on H-Buddhism thus (posted on 23 Oct 2005):

Thank you very much for your reply and your analytical view on the Yin Shun's findings. It also gives me some idea about present condition of his study known in the West. Only those who read Chinese are able to access his works on the subject, and one may conclude that Western Buddhological circles are largely still ignorant and uninformed about Yin Shun's findings on and contribution to the Indian Buddhist studies. Hopefully in the near future, at least, a thorough English review article (preferably by a Western scholar) about Yin Shun's study on the formation of the early Buddhist texts (or SA/SN) comes to exist.

I also replied to another H-Buddhism respondent (on 26 Oct 2005) thus:

... The following are the major two publications on the subject by him [i. e. Yin Shun]: *Yuanshi Fojiao Shengdian Zhi Jicheng* [The Formation of Early Buddhist Texts] (1971) (879 pages); *Za-ahan Jinglun Huibian* [Combined Edition of Sūtra and Śāstra of the SA], 3 vols (1983). I consider that those who want to thoroughly and systematically review the study (the formation of early Buddhist texts or SA/SN) should also read this article, "Zōagonkyō no Kenkyū to Shuppan" [Studies and Publications on *Samyuktāgama*], in *Bukkyō Kenkyū*, 17 (1988), pp. 1-45, by MIZUNO Kogen.

MIZUNO's review article published in 1988 includes previous relevant work by Japanese scholars – ANESAKI (1908), SHIHO (1935), HANAYAMA (1954), and MAYEDA (1964) – but particularly praises Yin Shun's work on the formation and three-aṅga structure of SA. Recently, NAGASAKI Hōjun and KAJI Yōichi in their 'New edition of the Japanese translation of the Chinese SA (Taishō 99)' (2004: 49-61)<sup>2</sup> indicate clearly that they have no disagreement with MIZUNO's highly regarded comments on Yin Shun's three-aṅga structure of SA (and SN). Thus, it is likely that Yin Shun's findings on the subject – the formation and three-aṅga structure of SA – have now gained some recognition in Japanese Buddhological circles.

As I said at the beginning of this paper, I am still waiting for responses and comments from the West about Yin Shun's findings on the formation of SA/SN. Why am I so serious about this subject?

This is not just because I wrote a book on the content of the main teachings based on the sūtra-aṅga portion of SA/SN; more important is that research on the formation and three-aṅga structure of SA/SN is very closely relevant to the history of the very foundation of early Buddhism. If, for example, the findings were thor-

2 NAGASAKI Hōjun 長崎法潤; KAJI Yōichi 加治洋一, 2004. 雜阿含經 I, 新国訳大藏經, 阿含部 4 *Zōagonkyō 1*, *Shinkokuyakudaizōkyō Agonbu 4* [The New Japanese Translation of the Chinese SA (Taishō 99) Vol. 1, Āgamas no. 4], Tokyo: Daizoshuppan.

oughly reviewed and internationally accepted, this would certainly change our understanding of the history of early Buddhism.

Here I need to point out something. It took more than ten years to have a review in Japanese (by MIZUNO) of Yin Shun's study, but up to now there has still been little response to this study within Western scholarship. What is the reason for this?

I think one of the main reasons is that the Chinese SA, Taishō 99, has not been completely translated into any Western language, particularly English, whereas the entire contents of the Pali Sutta-Piṭaka have long been available in English translation. Of the Chinese SA, Taishō 99, I have translated only some parts into English in my publications (e. g., Choong, 2000 and 2004). If the whole Chinese SA were translated into English, it would become accessible to the wider English-reading public, and thus Yin Shun's study on the subject might receive more attention in Western scholarship.

## 2. The structure of *Saṃyuktāgama* (SA): Reconstruction of the sequence, and the aṅgas

The structure of SA proposed by Yin Shun entails two main issues. One is the reconstruction of the sequence of SA; the other is the three-aṅga structure of SA.

The sequence of SA in Taishō number 99 is recognised as corrupt. This was first discussed by ANESAKI Masaharu in 1908. But today the issue of the reconstruction of the sequence of SA has come to an end. Yin Shun published his first reconstruction of SA in 1971, followed by a revised version in 1983. His reconstructed sequence of SA was consulted and adopted in the Foguang Dazangjing new edition of SA in 1983.<sup>3</sup> This was followed by a study by MUKAI in 1985, MIZUNO's review article in 1988, my discussion in my 2000 comparative study of SA and SN, and most recently the new Japanese translation of the Chinese SA by NAGASAKI and KAJI in 2004. A useful historical table of the modern reconstruction of Taishō number 99 was presented by Andrew Glass in 2006.<sup>4</sup> Thus, one can conclude that the reconstruction of the original sequence underlying the extant SA in the Taishō edition is completed.

Another structure of SA proposed by Yin Shun is the three-aṅga structure. This is a division of the whole collection into three categories or classifications (aṅga): *sūtra* (short, simple prose), *geya* (verse mixed with prose), *vyākaraṇa* (exposition). My comparative study, *The Fundamental Teachings of Early Buddhism* (2000), focuses on the main teachings contained in the sūtra-aṅga portion of SA and its Pali

3 See the table with full details of the reconstructed five sections/divisions (*varga*) together with classifications (*aṅga*) and *saṃyukta* in Choong (2000), pp. 243-7.

4 'Table 5. Comparison of the modern reconstructions of Taishō number 99' (p. 27 in his PhD dissertation titled *Connected Discourses in Gandhāra: A Study, Edition, and Translation of Four Saṃyuktāgama-Type Sūtras from the Senior Collection*) (Note: This dissertation is published under the title, *Four Gāndhārī Saṃyuktāgama Sūtras, Senior Kharoṣṭhī Fragment 5* by University of Washington Press in 2007. The Table 5 is on p. 40 in this publication).

counterpart, SN. This division into three aṅgas, stressed in Yin Shun's work, is important because of its inferred role in the formation of early Buddhist texts and of their collections.

The three-aṅga structure of SA and its Pali counterpart, SN, is currently a major issue needing further discussion in the study of early Buddhist history. This is because the three-aṅga structure of SA/SN has so far been accepted openly by only a few scholars, for example, the above-mentioned Japanese scholars, MIZUNO in his review article of 1988, and NAGASAKI and KAJI in their new Japanese translation of SA in 2004.<sup>5</sup>

Most researchers appear to be against the idea that the aṅgas represent actual collections of texts. For example, Rhys Davids and Stede, in their *Pali English Dictionary*, explain "navanga-buddhasāsana" (page 348) as: "Scriptures according to their form or style"; that is, they do not see the aṅgas as referring to actual texts. Also, Nyanaponika, under the heading "Sāsana" in his *Buddhist Dictionary* (page 193) says of the nine aṅgas: "It is a classification according to literary styles, and not according to given texts or books."

Thus, there is a widespread view that the aṅgas are types or styles of texts, rather than actual collections of texts. The main reasons for this view possibly are:

- 1) The four nikāyas/āgamas are not obviously covered in the aṅga classification; and
- 2) The first three aṅgas are not obviously represented in the four nikāyas/āgamas.

These two problems are related. Yin Shun addresses both of them by drawing attention to the first three aṅgas in SA/SN and to the secondary nature of *Madhyamaṅgama/Majjhima-nikāya*, *Dirghāgama/Dīgha-nikāya*, and *Ekottarikāgama/Aṅguttara-nikāya*.<sup>6</sup>

Accordingly, while the reconstruction of the sequence of SA is now settled and uncontroversial, the three-aṅga structure of SA/SN remains a controversial issue in Buddhology. It is in need of further study and discussion.

Despite its importance for Buddhist history, the issue of the three-aṅga structure of SA/SN is not at all well known. A first step toward tackling this problem would be for more scholars to systematically review the findings. What is needed is, at the very least, a thorough review article in English, preferably by a Western scholar.

In what follows I offer a brief introduction on how the three aṅgas of SA are identified, how they are distributed, and how they relate to the other āgama collections.

5 Andrew Glass (2007) also includes the three-aṅga division of SA in his investigation of the Gāndhārī anthology and the relevant version by An Shigao (See his Chapter 1, Tables 6-9).

6 Cf. Choong (2000), p. 10.



### 3. The formation and three-aṅga structure of SA

The four āgamas/nikāyas were not compiled at the same time, despite what is said in the traditional accounts. As for how these early Buddhist texts were developed and compiled in sequence, no certainty exists in today's Buddhist studies. However, Yin Shun points out that the *Vastu-saṅgrahaṇī* 攝事分 of the *Yogācārabhūmi-śāstra* 瑜伽師地論 unexpectedly provides some important information about the formation of early Buddhist texts. It indicates that the SA (or SN in Pali) consists of three categories and was the foundation of all four āgamas (nikāyas) in the formation of early Buddhist texts. The following are a few points to briefly explain how Yin Shun made a major breakthrough on this historical issue.

(1) In his two books, *Yuanshi Fojiao Shengdian Zhi Jicheng* 原始佛教聖典之集成 [The Formation of Early Buddhist Texts] (1971) and *Za-ahan Jinglun Huibian* 雜阿含經論會編 [Combined Edition of Sūtra and Śāstra of the SA], 3 vols (1983), Yin Shun, analytically and in concrete detail, recognises the principal information provided in the *Vastu-saṅgrahaṇī* of the *Yogācārabhūmi-śāstra* about the formation of early Buddhist texts. That information is as follows.

The *Vastu-saṅgrahaṇī* of the *Yogācārabhūmi-śāstra* (T 30, no. 1579, 772c) states that SA is so called because the connected discourses or teachings, *xiang-ying-jiao* (相應教 *saṃyukta-kathā*<sup>7</sup>), are grouped together according to their topics/subject matters (事 *vastu*) into *saṃyuktas*, connected units. Then, according to other intensions by means of different structures, the connected discourses associated with their topics subsequently expanded and yielded the other āgamas in the sequence *Madhyama-āgama*, *Dīrgha-āgama*, *Ekottarika-āgama*. Therefore, the four collections, āgamas, are all about "sūtras concerning the topics/subject matters (事契經 *vastu-sūtra*)", and SA is the foundation of all four āgamas.

(2) The topics (事 *vastu*) grouped together into *saṃyuktas*, the connected units for the content of SA, indicated in the *Vastu-saṅgrahaṇī* of the *Yogācārabhūmi-śāstra* (T 30, no. 1579, 772c), are shown in sequence thus:

1. Spoken by the Tathāgata (如來所說)
2. Spoken by Śrāvakas (諸弟子所說)
3. Aggregates (蘊 *Skandha*)
4. Dhātu (界)
5. Sense Spheres (處 *Āyatana*)
6. Causal Condition (緣起 *Pratītya-samutpāda*)
7. Nutriment (食 *Āhāra*)
8. Truths (諦 *Satya*)

7 This Sanskrit term is inferred from the corresponding Tibetan term, *ldan-pa'i gtam* (*ldan-pa'i* = "connected"; *gtam* = "talk, discourse, report"): "即彼一切事相應教間廁鳩集。是故說名雜阿笈摩。" (T 30, no. 1579, 772c) = "gzhi thams-cad dang *ldan-pa'i gtam* de yang-dag-par-ldan-pa-las 'byung-bas-na de'i phyir yang-dag-par-ldan-pa zhes-bya'o" (Peking (Beijing) edition of Tibetan Tripitaka, Vol. 111, text no. 5540, p. 121, leaf/folio 144, side a, line 1).

9. Stations of Mindfulness (念住 *Smṛti-upasthāna*), Right Efforts (正斷 *Samyak-prahāṇa*), Bases of Supernormal Power (神足 *Ṛddhi-pada*), Faculties (根 *Indriya*), Powers (力 *Bala*), Enlightenment Factors (覺支 *Bodhyaṅga*), Path Factors (道支 *Mārga*), Mindfulness of Breathing (入出息念 *Ānāpāna-smṛti*), Training (學 *Śikṣā*), Definite Purity/Faith (證淨等 *Avetya-prasāda*).
10. Eight Assemblies (八眾 *Aṣṭau Pariśadaḥ*)

(3) A list similar to the above is found in the *Bahubhūmika* 本地分 of the *Yogācārabhūmi-śāstra*. It sets out the nine topics (九事 *nava-vastuka*) that the teachings of Buddhas (諸佛語言 *Buddha-vacana*) should contain (T 30, no. 1579, 294a). The *Mūla-Sarvāstivāda-vinaya* contains a similar list regarding the content of SA (T24, no. 1451, 407b). These three listings are as follows:

| <i>Bahubhūmika</i><br>( <i>nava-vastuka</i> )                               | <i>Vastu-saṅgrahaṇī</i>          | <i>Mūla-Sarvāstivāda-vinaya</i>                                   |
|---|----------------------------------|---|
| 1. Five Aggregates  | 3. Aggregates                    | 1. Five Aggregates  |
| 2. Twelve Sense Spheres   | 5. Sense Spheres                 | 2. Six Sense Spheres  |
| 3. Twelve Causal Conditions   | 6. Causal Condition              | 4. Causal Condition   |
| 4. Four Nutriments  | 7. Nutriments                    |   |
| 5. Four Truths  | 8. Truths                        | 5. Noble Truths   |
| 6. Innumerable Dhātus   | 4. Dhātu                         | 3. Eighteen Dhātus  |
| 7. Buddha & Śrāvakas  | 1. Spoken by the Tathāgata       | 7. Spoken by the Tathāgata  |
|   | 2. Spoken by Śrāvakas            | 6. Spoken by Śrāvakas   |
| 8. Four Stations of Mindfulness, etc. of the bodhipakṣya-dharmāḥ (四念住等菩提分法) | 9. Stations of Mindfulness, etc. | 8. Stations of Mindfulness, etc. in the Noble Path section (聖道品處) |
| 9. Eight Assemblies   | 10. Eight Assemblies             | 9. Discourses connected with gāthās (經與伽他相應)                      |

Here, "Eight Assemblies" refers to discourses connected with *gāthās* (經與伽他相應). The Stations of Mindfulness, etc. refer to the discourses connected with the Path. The sequence differs in the three lists, which suggests that it changed over time. Overall, however, the topics are similar in the three lists, and correspond to the entire structure and content of SA.

(4) These topics of the *saṃyuktas*, the connected units of the entire SA, are also grouped into three categories, according to the *Vastu-saṅgrahaṇī* of the *Yogācārabhūmi-śāstra* (T 30, no. 1579, 772c). The three categories are (I) who speaks, (能說), (II) what is spoken (所說), and (III) to whom it is spoken (所為說); these three are explained thus:

(I) who speaks: sections (分 *nipāta*) spoken by Śrāvakas (弟子所說) and spoken by the Buddha/Tathāgata (佛所說).

(II) what is spoken: sections connected with (相應分) the Five Aggregates with Attachment (五取蘊 *Pañca-upādāna-skandha*), the Six Sense Spheres (六處 *Ṣaḍ-āyatana*) Causal Condition (因緣 *Nidāna*); and the section connected with the Elements of the Path (道品分 *Mārga*).

(III) to whom it is spoken: To the assemblies of Bhikṣus, Devas, Māras and so forth, as in the chanted section (結集品 saṃgīta).

Here the third category, the chanted section, refers to the Eight Assemblies, discourses connected with gāthās. It is identified as the geya-aṅga portion of SA. The first category, the sections spoken by Śrāvakas and by the Buddha/Tathāgata, is identified as the vyākaraṇa-aṅga portion of SA.

As for the second category, the sections connected with the Five Aggregates, Six Sense Spheres, Causal Condition, and the Path, this is identified as the sūtra-aṅga portion of SA. One of the main reasons for this identification is as follows.

(5) In its explanation of the twelve aṅgas (十二分教) the *Bahubhūmika* of the *Yogācārabhūmi-śāstra* explains sūtra-aṅga (契經) (T30, no. 1579, 418b-c) thus:

1. discourses connected with the Aggregates (無量蘊相應語)
2. discourses connected with the Sense Spheres (處相應語)
3. discourses connected with Causal Condition (緣起相應語)
4. discourses connected with the Nutriments (食相應語)
5. discourses connected with the Truths (諦相應語)
6. discourses connected with Dhātus (界相應語)
7. discourses connected with the Śrāvaka-yāna, the Pratyekabuddha-yāna, and the Tathāgata-yāna (聲聞乘相應語, 獨覺乘相應語, 如來乘相應語) (i.e. the sections spoken by Śrāvakas and the Tathāgata)
8. discourses connected with the Stations of Mindfulness, Right Efforts, Bases of Supernormal Power, Faculties, Powers, Enlightenment Factors, Path Factors, etc. discourses connected with Impurity, Mindfulness of Breathing, Trainings, and Definite Purity/Faith (念住正斷神足根力覺支道支等相應語, 不淨息念諸學證淨等相應語).

These items and their sequence are similar to the above-mentioned nine topics (*nava-vastuka*), but without the Eight Assemblies (discourses connected with gāthās = the geya portion of SA). That is to say, only the eight topics apart from the Eight Assemblies are regarded as sūtra-aṅga in the *Bahubhūmika* of the *Yogācārabhūmi-śāstra*.

Nevertheless, the *sūtra-mātrkā* (sūtra matrix, 契經摩呬理迦/本母), essentially a commentary on portion of SA, in the *Vastu-saṅgrahaṇī* of the *Yogācārabhūmi-śāstra* not only lacks the Eight Assemblies (the geya portion of SA), but also does not include the sections spoken by Śrāvakas and the Tathāgata (the vyākaraṇa portion of SA). It contains only these seven topics:

1. discourses connected with the Aggregates
2. discourses connected with the Sense Spheres
3. discourses connected with Causal Condition
4. discourses connected with the Nutriments
5. discourses connected with the Truths
6. discourses connected with Dhātus

7. discourses connected with the Path: the Stations of Mindfulness etc. of the bodhipakṣya-dharmāh.

These seven topics are considered by Yin Shun the most fundamental and earliest portion of the connected discourses (相應教 Saṃyukta-kathā) of SA. They are found in the sections (varga) on Aggregates, Sense Spheres, Causal Condition (including Nutriment, Truths, and Dhātus),<sup>8</sup> and Path of the extant SA (and SN). These sections of the connected discourses are thus identified as the sūtra-aṅga portion of SA.<sup>9</sup>

The above is a brief explanation of how Yin Shun considers that SA has the three-aṅga structure and is the foundation of all four āgamas in the formation of early Buddhist texts (including the corresponding Pali nikāyas).

A table giving full details of these three categories or classifications (aṅga) together with the reconstructed sections (varga) and saṃyuktas of the extant SA is provided in my 2000 book, pp. 243-7.

4. On the list of just three aṅgas in *Madhyamāgama* and *Majjhima-nikāya*

In his article, 'The nine aṅgas: An early attempt at grouping Buddhist texts', published in 1994, von Hinüber mentions that at *Ānguttara-nikāya* III 237.14-19 (AN 5.194) is a list of just four aṅgas: sutta, geyya, veyyākaraṇa, abbhutadhamma (that is, aṅgas nos. 1, 2, 3, and 8), and he concludes that this listing is likely to be ancient (i. e., dating from the early oral tradition). However, the text, AN III 237.14-19, has no corresponding āgama text. Thus, this list belongs exclusively to the Pali tradition.

Von Hinüber's article does not mention the detailed study on the sequence of the list of aṅgas recorded in different texts and traditions, presented by Mayeda in his book, *A History of the Formation of Original Buddhist Texts* (1964), especially section [I] of his additional table setting out lists of aṅgas.

As Mayeda's table shows, in the Pali tradition the sequence of the nine aṅgas is 1. sutta, 2. geyya, 3. veyyākaraṇa, 4. gāthā, 5. udāna, 6. itivuttaka, 7. jāta, 8. abbhuta-dhamma, 9. vedalla; however, other traditions, such as the Mahāsaṅghika and Sarvāstivāda, reverse the sequence of the last two aṅgas as 8. vedalla and 9. abbhuta-dhamma. Thus, the sequence of the nine aṅgas in the Pali tradition, with abbhuta-dhamma preceding vedalla, is unusual, making it likely that the unique Pali list of just four aṅgas (at AN III 237.14-19) is, rather, an abbreviation of the entire set of nine aṅgas in their original sequence; that is 'sutta, geyya, veyyākaraṇa, ... abbhuta-dhamma'.

8 In *Saṃyutta-nikāya* Truths is located in Mahā Vagga (= the Path Section of SA). Choong (2000), pp. 22, 244, 251.

9 Cf. Yin Shun (1983), Vol. i, pp. 6-12: 'Za-ahan-jing Bulei zhi Zhengbian'.

Furthermore, von Hinüber does not mention the existence of a list of just three āṅgas, “sutta, geyya, veyyākaraṇa”, found in both *Majjhima-nikāya* (MN) 122 (*Mahāsuññatā-sutta*): iii, page 115 and its Chinese counterpart, *Madhyamāgama* (MA) 191: T 1, page 739c4, though this was pointed out by Yin Shun in 1983.<sup>10</sup>

Thus, von Hinüber, in his article, neither mentions these two scholars’ published works, nor consults different textual versions and traditions on the subject at issue – the āṅgas.

Regarding the fact that MN 122 and its Chinese counterpart, MA 191, list only the first three āṅgas, I consider that this shared information in MN and MA possibly indicates that only these three āṅgas existed in the historical period of Early Buddhism, although the original earliest structure and content of the collection remain uncertain.

I therefore suggest that the three-āṅga structure in the actual collections of SA and SN discovered by Yin Shun should be seriously reconsidered and reviewed.

### 5. The content and structure of SA in comparison with Saṃyutta-nikāya (SN)

Regarding the content and structure of SA in comparison with SN, I would like to make here the following few points.

1. A high degree of agreement is found between the two texts – SA and SN – on matters of doctrine in both content and structure of doctrinal subjects, particularly in the sūtra-āṅga and geya-āṅga portions. As for the content of the sūtra-āṅga portion, one may check my book published in 2000. Recently I have published a few articles comparing the Pali and Chinese versions of some geya-āṅga collections. Here too I find in the two texts a high degree of agreement on matters of teaching.<sup>11</sup> This suggests that these collections are largely pre-sectarian, at least predating the separation of the two Sthavira schools (the Sarvāstivāda/Sabbatthivāda and Vibhajjavāda/Vibhajjavāda).

2. The extant SA and SN certainly do not date from the first council, but belong to the later sectarian period; even though they may belong to the earliest collections, they contain clearly sectarian doctrines, as is also pointed out by Yin Shun. Some examples are discussed in my 2000 book and my recent articles (see footnote 11).

3. The subject items of the sūtra-āṅga portion of SA/SN are evidently the core teachings of early Buddhism and early Abhidharma Buddhism. The content of the subject items shared in common in the sūtra-āṅga portion of SA/SN centres mainly on practice and experience for Buddhist monks, such as the four noble truths in a practical sense, rather than on idealistic and systematic theory.

10 Yin Shun (1983), Vol. i, “Preface”, pp. 1-2.

11 See Bibliography. The comparative study includes also the fragmentary Sanskrit texts published by Enomoto (1994) and another Chinese SA version, Taishō 100. The structure of the Sagātha-Vagga of the Saṃyutta-Nikāya (that is, geya-āṅga portion) is discussed by Bucknell (2007).

Nevertheless, one should note that they are also fundamental to Mahāyāna Buddhism. For example, the *sūtra-māṭṛkā* in the *Vastu-saṃgrahaṇī* of the *Yogācāra-bhūmi-śāstra*, which contains the major subjects of the sūtra-aṅga portion of SA/SN (though the author, Asaṅga, does not explicitly state this), belongs to the Mahāyāna Yogācāra tradition.

Also, the prototype of the notion of emptiness of the Mahāyāna Mādhyamika tradition is found in the sūtra-aṅga portion of SA/SN. For example, the middle way of emptiness, such as neither existence (arising) nor non-existence (ceasing), neither eternalism nor annihilationism, neither sameness nor difference, neither coming nor going of the Mādhyamika tradition,<sup>12</sup> is found in the texts of SA and SN.<sup>13</sup>

Consequently, the fact that subject topics and certain contents of the sūtra-aṅga portion of SA/SN are shared in common by early Buddhist schools and the Mahāyāna suggests that they may entail some pre-sectarian elements.

4. The extant SA and SN are sectarian texts. This means that the structure and content of the collections do not all actually belong to the teachings of Early (or pre-sectarian) Buddhism. It is only through the texts that one can study and seek the teachings of Early Buddhism. For example, in his well-known first discourse, the *Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta* SN 56.11 and its Chinese counterpart SA 379, which belongs to the sūtra-aṅga collection, the Buddha teaches the four noble truths in three aspects. The two versions of this teaching agree in content but differ in sequence. The SN shows each truth in three ways, whereas the SA shows the four truths in each way.<sup>14</sup> Nevertheless, through comparative study of these early

- 12 不生亦不滅 不常亦不斷  
不一亦不異 不來亦不出

anirodham anutpādam anucchedam aśāsvatam/

- 13 Choong (1999), pp. 32-40; (2000), pp. 60-66, 192-199, 239.

- 14 Choong (2000), 237 (The *three-turned, twelvefold, tiparivaṭṭaṃ dvādasākāraṃ* 三轉十二行):

SN 56.11

SA 379

|   |  |
|---|--|
| First truth<br>First truth is to be known (pariññeyya)<br>First truth has been known (pariññāta)            | First truth<br>Second truth<br>Third truth<br>Fourth truth   |
| Second truth<br>Second truth is to be eliminated (pahātabba)<br>Second truth has been eliminated (pahīna)   | First truth is to be known (當知)<br>Second truth is to be eliminated (當斷)<br>Third truth is to be realised (當作證)<br>Fourth truth is to be cultivated (當修) |
| Third truth<br>Third truth is to be realised (sacchikātabba)<br>Third truth has been realised (sacchikata)  | First truth has been known (已知)<br>Second truth has been eliminated (已斷)<br>Third truth has been realised (已作證)<br>Fourth truth has been cultivated (已修) |
| Fourth truth<br>Fourth truth is to be cultivated (bhāvetabba)<br>Fourth truth has been cultivated (bhāvīta) |  |

texts, one knows that the four noble truths are contained in the first sermon of the Buddha. To say that does not mean that the structure and content of the texts all actually belong to the teachings of Early Buddhism, but rather that in essence they belong historically to the teachings of Early Buddhism.

### Conclusion

In this paper I do not intend to promote the view that the three-aṅga structure of SA/SN is a historical fact as such; rather, my intention is to draw scholarly attention to the significance of the historical findings on the formation of early Buddhist texts and on the foundation of the early Buddhist teachings. To date, the findings have been reviewed only in Japan, and therefore require further scholarly discussion, particularly from the West.

In order to enable a wider range of scholars to review and understand this area of study, I suggest that the entire Chinese SA, in its reconstituted structure (i. e., not the sequence of Taishō 99), should be translated into English as soon as possible.

### Bibliography

- Bucknell, Roderick S. 2007. 'The Structure of the Sagātha-Vagga of the Saṃyutta-Nikāya', *Buddhist Studies Review*, Vol. 24.1: 7-34.
- CBETA Chinese Electronic Tripitaka Version. Taipei: Chinese Buddhist Electronic Text Association.
- Choong, Mun-keat. 1999. *The Notion of Emptiness in Early Buddhism* (2nd revised edition). Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass.
- Choong, Mun-keat. 2000. *The Fundamental Teachings of Early Buddhism: A comparative study based on the Sūtrāṅga portion of the Pāli Saṃyutta-Nikāya and the Chinese Saṃyuktāgama* (=Beiträge zur Indologie 32). Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag.
- Choong, Mun-keat. 2004. *Annotated Translation of Sutras from the Chinese Saṃyuktāgama relevant to the Early Buddhist Teachings on Emptiness and the Middle Way*. Johor, Malaysia: Lu Ye Chan Si.
- Choong, Mun-keat. 2006. 'A comparison of the Pāli and Chinese versions of the *Bhikkhu Saṃyutta*, a Collection of early Buddhist discourses on monks', *Buddhist Studies Review*, Vol. 23.1: 61-70.
- Choong, Mun-keat. 2006. 'A comparison of the Pali and Chinese versions of the *Kosala Saṃyutta*, an early Buddhist discourse on King Pasenadi of Kosala', *The Indian International Journal of Buddhist Studies*, no. 7: 21-35.
- Choong, Mun-keat. 2007. 'A comparison of the Pali and Chinese versions of the *Vangisa-thera Saṃyutta*, a Collection of early Buddhist discourses on the Venerable Vangisa', *Buddhist Studies Review*, Vol. 24.1: 35-45.
- Enomoto, Fumio. 1994. *A Comprehensive Study of the Chinese Saṃyuktāgama: Indic Texts Corresponding to the Chinese Saṃyuktāgama as Found in the Sarvāstivāda-Mūlasarvāstivāda Literature*. Kyoto: Kacho Junior College.



- Glass, Andrew. 2007. 'Table 5. Comparison of the modern reconstructions of Taishō number 99', *Four Gāndhārī Saṃyuktāgama Sūtras: Senior Kharoṣṭhī Fragment 5*, University of Washington Press, p. 40 (note: p. 27 in his 2006 PhD dissertation entitled *Connected Discourses in Gandhāra: A Study, Edition, and Translation of Four Saṃyuktāgama-Type Sūtras from the Senior Collection* at University of Washington).
- Mayeda, Egaku 前田惠學. 1964. *Genshi Bukkyō seiten no seiritsushi kenkyū* 原始佛教聖典の成立史研究 (*A History of the Formation of Early Buddhist Texts*). Tokyo: Sankibō Busshorin.
- Mizuno, Kogen 水野弘元. 1988. 'Zōagonkyō no Kenkyū to Shuppan' 雜阿含經の研究と出版 [*Studies and Publications on Saṃyuktāgama*], *Bukkyō Kenkyū*, no. 17: 1-45.
- Mukai, Akira 向井亮. 1985. 'Yugashichiron Shashibun to Zōagonkyō' 瑜伽師地論攝事分と雜阿含經 (*The Vastusaṅgrahaṇī of the Yogācārabhūmi and the Saṃyuktāgama*), *Hokkaidō Daigaku Bungakubu Kiyō*, Vol. 32.2: 1-41.
- Nagasaki, Hōjun 長崎法潤; Kaji, Yōichi 加治洋一. 2004. 'Zōagonkyō Kaidai' 雜阿含經解題 [Explanatory notes of the Chinese SA (Taishō 99)], *Zōagonkyō 1, Shinkokuyakudaizōkyō Agonbu 4* 雜阿含經 I, 新国訳大藏經, 阿含部 4 [The New Japanese Translation of the Chinese SA (Taishō 99) Vol. 1, Āgamas no. 4]. Tokyo: Daizōshuppan, 5-63.
- Nyanaponika. 1980. *Buddhist Dictionary: Manual of Buddhist Terms and Doctrines* (4th revised edition). Kandy, Sri Lanka: Buddhist Publication Society.
- Rhys Davids, T. W. and Stede, William. 1921-5. *Pali-English Dictionary*. London: Pali Text Society.
- Tibetan Tripiṭaka, Peking edition* (1724), 1955-58. Otani reprint, ed. Daisetz T. Suzuki. Tokyo and Kyoto: Tibetan Tripiṭaka Research Institute.
- von Hinüber, Oskar. 1994. 'Die Neun Aṅgas: Ein früher Versuch zur Einteilung buddhistischer Texte' [The nine aṅgas: An early attempt at grouping Buddhist texts], *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde Südasiens und Archiv für indische Philosophie*, Vol. 38: 121-135.
- Yin Shun 印順. 1971. *Yuanshi Fojiao Shengdian zhi Jicheng* 原始佛教聖典之集成 [The Formation of Early Buddhist Texts]. Taipei: Zhengwen Chubanshe.
- Yin Shun. 1983. *Za-ahan Jinglun Huibian* 雜阿含經論會編 [Combined Edition of Sūtra and Śāstra of the Saṃyuktāgama] (3 vols.). Taipei: Zhengwen.
- Yin Shun. 1983. 'Za-ahan-jing Bulei zhi Zhengbian' 雜阿含經部類之整編 [Re-edition of the Grouped Structure of SA], *Za-ahan Jinglun Huibian* 雜阿含經論會編. Taipei: Zhengwen, 1-74.