

These seven topics (without the sections spoken by Śrāvakas and the Tathāgata) are considered by Master Yinshun to be the most fundamental and earliest portion of the ‘Connected Discourses’ (相應教, **saṃyukta-kathā*) of the *Saṃyukta-āgama*.²¹ They are found in the five major sections (*varga*) on aggregates, sense spheres, causal condition (including nutriments, truths and the elements) and path of the extant *Saṃyukta-āgama/Saṃyutta-nikāya*.²² These sections of the ‘Connected Discourses’ are identified by Master Yinshun (1983: I 6–12) as the *sūtra-aṅga* portion of the *Saṃyukta-āgama/Saṃyutta-nikāya* (cf. Mizuno 1988: 25–26, Nagasaki 2004: 52 and Choong 2000: 243–251; cf. also Choong 2012a: 86, note 5) (see Appendices 1 and 2 below).

²¹ As noted in Choong 2010: 57, note 7, the Sanskrit term **saṃyukta-kathā* is inferred from the corresponding Tibetan term, *ldan pa'i gdam* (*ldan pa'i*, ‘connected’; *gdam* ‘talk, discourse, report’): 即彼一切事相應教間廁鳩集。是故說名雜阿笈摩 (T 1579 at T XXX 772c23) = *gzhi thams cad dang ldan pa'i gdam de yang dag par ldan pa las 'byung bas na de'i phyir yang dag par ldan pa zhes bya'o* (P 5540, *sems tsam*, 'i 144a1). Also, according to the *Vastusaṅgrahaṇī* of the *Yogācārabhūmi*, the *Saṃyukta-āgama* is the foundation of all four *Āgamas* (cf. Yinshun 1971: 507–508 and 1983: 7–9 and 39). T 1579 at T XXX 772c23–28 (= P 5540, *sems tsam*, 'i 144a1–2): 即彼一切事相應教間廁鳩集。是故說名雜阿笈摩 = *gzhi thams cad dang ldan pa'i gdam de yang dag par ldan pa las 'byung bas na de'i phyir yang dag par ldan pa zhes bya'o*. 即彼相應教。復以餘相處中而說。是故說名中阿笈摩 = *de dang ldan pa'i gdam nyid rnam pa gzhan du bar gyi mdo sde rnam kyis bstan pas na de'i phyir bar ma zhes bya'o*. 即彼相應教。更以餘相廣長而說。是故說名長阿笈摩 = *de nyid rnam pa gzhan du rgyud ring po'i mdo sde rnam kyis bstan pas na de'i phyir ring po zhes bya'o*. 即彼相應教。更以一二三等漸增分數道理而說。是故說名增一阿笈摩 = *gcig dang gnyis dang gsum la sogs pa nas gcig nas gcig tu sde tshan gyi tshul gyis 'byung bas na gcig las 'phros pa zhes bya'o*, “Because the connected discourses/teachings (相應教, **saṃyukta-kathā*) are grouped together according to all

Regarding the sections on the major subject items, i.e., aggregates, sense spheres, causal condition and path of the extant *Samyukta-āgama/Samyutta-nikāya*, they are evidently the core teachings of early Buddhism and early *Abhidharma* Buddhism. For example, the subject items of the *Samyukta-āgama/Samyutta-nikāya* bear certain resemblances to the structure of these two early *Abhidharma* books: the Pali *Vibhaṅga* and the Sarvāstivāda **Abhidharma-dharmaskandhapāda* (*Apidamo yimen zu [lun]* 阿毘達磨異門足[論]) (Choong 2000: 252) (see Appendix 3 below). Also, *Sāratthappakāsinī*, ‘Revealer of the Essential Meaning’, is the title of Ācāriya Buddhaghosa’s commentary on the *Samyutta-nikāya*. This suggests that the Pali tradition also recognized the practical and essential values of the *Samyutta-nikāya suttas* for Buddhist monks.

the topics/subject matters (事, *vastu*) into connected units (*samyuktas*), it is called *Samyukta-āgama*. Because the connected discourses are expounded in another manner by means of medium-sized discourses, it is called the *Madhyama-āgama*. Because the connected discourses are expounded in another manner by means of lengthy discourses, it is called the *Dīrgha-āgama*. Because the connected discourses are arranged sequentially in sections going from one [topic/subject matter], to two, three and so forth, it is called the *Ekottarika-āgama*.” Thus, according to Yinshun 1971 and 1983, the *Samyukta-āgama* is so called because the connected discourses are grouped together according to their topics into 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 *Samyukta-āgama* is the foundation of all four *Āgamas* in the formation of early Buddhist texts, according to the Sarvāstivāda tradition of the *Vastusaṅgrahaṇī* of the *Yogācārabhūmi*.

²² In the *Samyutta-nikāya* the section on the truths is located in the *Mahāvagga* (= the path section of the *Samyukta-āgama*); see Choong 2000: 22, 244 and 251.