

experiences *nirvana in this very life* (diṭṭhadhamma-nibbāna 見法涅槃) respectively.<sup>146</sup>

### 9. Sectarian components or teachings

The possibility of Mahāyāna influence in SA has already been mentioned in connection with the SA emphasis on emptiness and its seeming downgrading of the arhant. Note will now be taken of a few further pieces of evidence indicating the possible influence of sectarian teachings.

(1) SN 22. 21 states:<sup>147</sup>

... material form [and the rest] is impermanent (aniccam), compounded (saṅkhatam), *arisen by condition* (paticcasamuppannam). It is subject to destruction (khayadhammam), to decay (vayadhammam), to fading away (virāgadhammam), to cessation (nirodhadhammam). Because of its cessation, one says ‘cessation’.

The corresponding SA 260 reads:<sup>148</sup>

... the five aggregates with attachment are grounded on the compounded (本行所作)<sup>149</sup> and are *grounded on the thought out* (本所思願).<sup>150</sup> They (the five aggregates with attachment) are impermanent, subject to cessation. Because those phenomena are subject to cessation, one says ‘cessation’.

Thus, the SA version has “grounded on the thought out”, where the SN has simply “arisen by condition”.

A similar situation is found in another discourse. In SN 22. 81 an activity (saṅkhāro) is described as:<sup>151</sup>

146 See also SA 2: T 2, p. 1a (CSA i, p. 3) = SN 22. 52: SN iii, p. 52. Cf. also Chapter 3, p. 100, and SN 35. 124: SN iv, p. 109 = SA 237: T 2, p. 57c (CSA i, p. 286); SN 12. 16: SN ii, p. 18 = SA 363-365: T 2, p. 101a (CSA ii, p. 81).

147 SN iii, p. 24.

148 T 2, p. 65c (CSA i, p. 51).

149 P. abhisamkhata; Skt. abhisamskṛta.

150 P. Skt. abhisañcetaṭṭhā. Cf. CHOONG Mun-keat (Wei-keat), *The Notion of Emptiness in Early Buddhism* (1995; Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1999), p. 74.

151 SN, iii, pp. 96-99.

... impermanent (anicco), compounded (saṅkhato), arisen by condition (paṭīccasamuppanno).

In its SA counterpart, SA 57, it is described as:<sup>152</sup>

... impermanent, compounded, *subject to arising conditioned by mind* (心緣起法).

The phrases, *grounded on the thought out* (本所思願) and *subject to arising conditioned by mind* (心緣起法), which are present in SA but not in SN, may reflect influence from the theory of conditioned arising by “mind-only” (vijñāpti-mātrā or citta-mātra), a teaching of the Mahāyāna Vijñānavāda school, to which Guṇabhadra is believed to have belonged.<sup>153</sup>

(2) SA 80<sup>154</sup> mentions three kinds of concentration (三昧):<sup>155</sup> emptiness (空), signless (無相), and nothingness (無所有),<sup>156</sup> and describes the teaching as “the purifying view (知見清淨) of the noble dharma-mark (聖法印<sup>157</sup>)”. This SA discourse has no SN counterpart, and furthermore the notion of the *noble dharma-mark* is not found in the Pāli tradition.

(3) Yin Shun maintains that the passages quoted below contain evidence of sectarian teachings. SA 79 (no SN counterpart) contains the following wording:<sup>158</sup>

... because material form (also feeling, perception, activities, consciousness) exists in the past (以有過去色故), ... because material form exists in the future (以有未來色故), ... because material form exists in the present (以有現在色故) ...

Also, in three other SA discourses, but not in their SN counterparts, the word “exist (有)” is found at the end in a statement that it should be substituted in the text, as follows:<sup>159</sup>

152 T 2, p. 14a (CSA i, p. 172).

153 CSA i, “RESA” pp. 58-59.

154 T 2, p. 20a-b (CSA i, pp. 127-128).

155 Skt. samādhi.

156 On the three kinds of concentration, cf. CHOONG Mun-keat, *The Notion of Emptiness in Early Buddhism*, pp. 58-59.

157 Skt. ārya-dharma-mudrā.

158 T 2, p. 20a (CSA i, pp. 126-127, and note 1 on p. 127).

159 SA 69-71: T 2, p. 18b-c (CSA i, pp. 113-116). See also CSA i, p. 133, note 5.

... As for 'should be taught' (當說), so also for 'exist' (有) and 'should be known' (當知).

Yin Shun suggests that the above expressions found in the SA are connected with the Sarvāstivāda emphasis on "existence" in past, future, and present time.<sup>160</sup> By contrast, in SN 22. 62, the discourse called Niruttipatha "Mode of expression", the Buddha explains in detail the need to distinguish the three times: any material form (feeling, perception, activities, consciousness) in the past is to be spoken of as "existed" (ahosi); in the future as "will exist" (bhavissati); in the present as "exists" (atthi).<sup>161</sup> Yin Shun points out that this discourse, which has no SA counterpart, is affirming the theory of "the existence of present time", a teaching of the Tāmraśāṭīya tradition (Pāli Buddhism).<sup>162</sup> This matter is worthy of further research.

The following indications of sectarian influence have been identified:

1. An emphasis on emptiness in SA.
2. Implied acceptance of the Bodhisattva ideal (down-grading of the arhant) in SA.
3. Evidence of the "Mind-only" doctrine in SA.
4. Reference to "the purifying view of the noble dharma-mark" (聖法印知見清淨) found only in SA.
5. Evidence of the theory of the existence of past, future, and present time (Sarvāstivāda) in SA, as against the Pāli tradition's acceptance of only the existence of present time in SN.

Taken together, these strongly suggest that the existing SN and SA contain an admixture of later sectarian teachings.

## 10. Conclusion

This comparison of the Khandha Saṃyutta of SN and its counterpart, the Yin Xiangying of SA, has revealed that most of the teachings covered are shared between the two versions. However, it has also revealed a significant number of unshared elements, some of which are identifiable as sectarian. Such cases of agreement and disagreement would clearly need to be taken into account in any attempt to identify and discuss the teachings of early Buddhism.

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160 CSA i, "RESA", p. 57.

161 SN iii, pp. 71-72.

162 CSA i, "RESA" pp. 57-58.