

(Sa kho so bhikkhave ariyasāvako evaṃ vigatābhijjho vigatavyāpādo asammūlho sampajāno patissato mettāsahagatena cetasā ekam disam pharivā viharati, tathā dutiyam, tathā tatiyam, tathā catuttham).

There is clearly something wrong here. The topic switches abruptly from karma and its results to meditation on loving-kindness (mettā). Also out of place is the reference to 'that noble disciple, thus free from desire and ill-will,' since there has been no previous mention of a disciple or of a process of eliminating desire and ill-will. In his English translation Woodward recognises the problem, commenting in a footnote that the account of loving-kindness meditation 'is introduced without apparent reason thus suddenly.'¹⁰ He fails to mention a second problem: the sutta contains no set of ten items that might account for its inclusion in the Book of Tens.

The Chinese counterpart resolves these problems. In it the Buddha begins with the same brief statement about the inevitability of karmic results; but then he presents an explanatory discussion of ten types of wrong action.¹¹ He goes on to say that a knowledgeable noble disciple avoids such wrong actions, gains thereby in energy and virtue, becomes free of desire, ill-will, and so on, and then undertakes the practice of pervading the four quarters with loving-kindness. Here there is a smooth and natural progression of ideas, and there is a set of ten items (i.e. the ten types of wrong and right action).

From this it becomes clear that the problems in the Pali version are due to loss of a section of the text, perhaps one of the inscribed palm-leaves of which Pali sutta manuscripts traditionally consisted. The Chinese version fills in the gap. The gap in the Pali is between vadāmi. and Sa kho, in line 5 of the sutta (p. 299). The missing section is provided by the Chinese MA 15, pp. 437b27-438a5. From Buddhaghosa's AN commentary (fifth century CE) it is evident that this section was already missing in his day. He comments on a word in line 4 of the sutta and then on a phrase in line 6; there is nothing corresponding to the missing section, which would have been located between these two.¹²

2.2. A comparison of the different versions of the Satipaṭṭhāna-sutta

The second example is a comparison of the different versions of the Satipaṭṭhāna-sutta, a Buddhist meditation text.

The Satipaṭṭhāna-sutta, the 'Discourse on the Foundations of Mindfulness', contained in the Majjhima-nikāya (MN 10) is a highly regarded meditation text of the Pali or southern Buddhist tradition. Its teaching on mindfulness meditation (sati) describes four practices: mindfulness of body, feeling, mind-states, and phenomena. In this example I will first briefly explain the teaching of Satipaṭṭhāna, according to a Pali text in the Saṃyutta-nikāya (SN 47. 2) and its Chinese counterpart in the Saṃyukta-āgama (SA 622).

Then, I will compare the Pali Satipaṭṭhāna-sutta in Majjhima-nikāya with two other versions preserved in Chinese translation in the Madhyama-āgama (MA 98) and the Ekottara-āgama (EA 12. 1).

(1) A brief explanation of the teaching of Satipaṭṭhāna, according to a Pali text in the Saṃyutta-nikāya (SN 47. 2) and its Chinese counterpart in the Saṃyukta-āgama (SA 622).¹³

The Pali SN 47. 2 and its Chinese counterpart SA 622 provide briefly the teaching of Satipaṭṭhāna. They are two different versions of the same text, located respectively in the Satipaṭṭhāna Saṃyutta of the Saṃyutta-nikāya and the Nianchu Xiangying of the Saṃyukta-āgama. The main teachings of these texts relate to the *four foundations of mindfulness* (cattāro satipaṭṭhānā, Si Nianchu). The two versions agree completely in their identification of the four and they concisely present the teaching. For example, the Pali text, SN 47. 2, records the Buddha as saying (p. 142):

A bhikkhu should dwell *mindful* (sato) and *aware* (sampajāno). This is our instruction to you.

And how, bhikkhus, is a bhikkhu *mindful*? Herein, bhikkhus, a bhikkhu abides in **body** contemplating (or looking at) body (kāye kāyanupassī viharati), strenuous, *aware*, mindful, restraining covetousness and distress in the world (ātāpī sampajāno satimā vineyya loke abhijjhādomanassam). He

abides in **feelings** (vedanāsu) contemplating feelings ... in **mind-states** (cittē) contemplating mind ... He abides in **phenomena** (dhammesu) contemplating phenomena, strenuous, aware, mindful, restraining covetousness and distress in the world. Thus, bhikkhus, is a bhikkhu mindful.

And how, bhikkhus, is a bhikkhu *aware*? Herein, bhikkhus, a bhikkhu in going forth and in returning is *acting with awareness* (sampajānakārī). In looking in front and looking behind he is *acting with awareness*. In bending or relaxing he is *acting with awareness*. In wearing his robe, in bearing bowl and outer robe he is *acting with awareness*. In eating, drinking, chewing and tasting he is *acting with awareness*. In easing himself he is *acting with awareness*. In going, standing, sitting and sleeping, in waking, speaking and keeping silence he is *acting with awareness*. Thus, bhikkhus, is a bhikkhu *aware*.

The corresponding Chinese version (SA 622) gives the same explanation of *mindfulness* (Zhengnian) and *awareness* (Zhengzhi), but it reverses the order, putting *mindfulness* second.¹⁴

In both versions *mindfulness* is equated with practice of the *four foundations of mindfulness*: kāya (body), vedanā (feeling), citta (mind-states), dhammā (phenomena),¹⁵ *awareness* is described as applied in all bodily postures and movements, and appears to be covered by the first of the four aspects of *mindfulness*.

No mention is made of *awareness* with respect to *feeling*, *mind-states*, and *phe-*

nomena. This suggests that the practice of *awareness* based on the *body* is intended as an example equally applicable for *feeling*, *mind-states*, and *phenomena*; and the teaching of *awareness* is a practice closely linked to *mindfulness*. These teachings on *mindfulness* and *awareness* are common to the two versions.¹⁶

(2) The Satipatthāna-sutta in its Pali version (MN 10) and two corresponding Chinese versions (MA 98 and EA 12.1).¹⁷

Having given a brief explanation of the

teaching of Satipatthāna, according to a Pali text in the Saṃyutta-nikāya (SN 47. 2) and its Chinese counterpart, Saṃyukta-āgama (SA 622), I now compare the Pali Satipatthāna-sutta in Majjhima-nikāya (MN 10) with the two versions preserved in Chinese translation, i.e., in the Madhyama-āgama (MA 98) and the Ekottara-āgama (EA 12. 1).

The doctrinal items of the Satipatthāna-sutta in its Pali version and the two Chinese versions are shown in the following comparative table.

PALI AND CHINESE VERSIONS OF SATIPATTHANA-SUTTA

MN 10 (Pali)	MA 98 (Chinese)	EA 12. 1 (Chinese)
1. Kāya (body)	1. Kāya	1. Kāya
a) breathing	a) postures	
b) postures	b) actions	
c) actions	c-d) thought control	
	e) breathing	
	f-k) jhānas +	
d) impurities	l) impurities	a) impurities
e) 4 elements	m) 6 elements	b) 4 elements
		c) orifices
f-i) death	n-r) death	d-k) death
2. Vedanā (feeling)	2. Vedanā	2. Vedanā
3. Citta (mind-states)	3. Citta	3. Citta
4. Dhammā (phenomena)	4. Dhammā	4. Dhammā
a) hindrances	a) sense-bases	
b) khandhas	b) hindrances	
c) sense-bases		
d) bojjhaṅgas	c) bojjhaṅgas	a) bojjhaṅgas
e) truths		b-c) jhānas

Some items are shared, or common to the three versions, namely: the four main sections (kāya, vedanā, citta, dhammā); the impurities, elements, and death in the kāya section; and the bojjhaṅgas in the dhammā section. The remaining items are unshared. It is fairly evident how this situation ought to be interpreted. The shared components are likely to date back to the period before the corresponding schools diverged; the unshared components are likely to be sectarian developments, dating from after the schools separated. Thus, comparing the two Chinese versions (Sarvāstivāda and Mahāsaṅghika traditions) with the Pali version, reveals that the earlier Satipatthāna-sutta was considerably smaller than any of the versions we have today.

CONCLUSION

The Chinese translations of the early Buddhist sutras (the four āgamas) are valuable resources for the study of Theravāda doctrinal tradition within early Buddhism. In studies of the Theravāda tradition, historical depth cannot be gained unless one considers the Pali suttas alongside their counterparts from other schools, as preserved in Chinese. The two examples presented above have

revealed significant differences and thereby demonstrated how useful and effective Pali-Chinese sutta comparison can be in advancing the historical/critical study of early Buddhist doctrine within the field of Theravāda or Pali Buddhist textual studies.

A number of recent publications which promise to deal with 'early Buddhism', prove to be actually examining Pali or Theravāda Buddhism alone. Examples are:

1. Hamilton, Sue, *Early Buddhism: A New Approach* (Richmond, UK: Curzon Press, 2000).

2. Gombrich, Richard F., *How Buddhism Began: The Conditioned Genesis of the Early Teachings* (School of Oriental and African Studies: Jordan Lectures in Comparative Religion, 17; Jordan Lectures 1994) (Athlone: London & Atlantic Highlands, NJ, 1996).

These two works exclusively use the Theravāda Pali canon to investigate 'early' Buddhist teachings. It is evident, then, that my emphasis on, and consistent application of, the methodological approach illustrated in this presentation, is by no means superfluous.

REFERENCES

¹ This paper was presented to the "Exploring Theravada Studies: Intellectual Trends and the Future of a Field of Study" Conference in Asia Research Institute, at National University of Singapore, 12-14 August 2004.