

# **Right View and the Scheme of the Four Truths in Early Buddhism – The *Samyukta-āgama* Parallel to the *Sammāditthi-sutta* and the Simile of the Four Skills of a Physician**

***Bhikkhu Anālayo***

*Abstract:*

*In the present paper I explore the significance of the realization of the four truths as the fulfilment of right view attained with stream-entry, based on a translation and study of the *Samyukta-āgama* parallel to the *Sammāditthi-sutta*. For a better appreciation of the scheme of the four truths, I then turn to another discourse in the same *Samyukta-āgama* that compares the four truths to the medical analysis carried out by a skilful physician.*

*Center for Buddhist Studies, University of Hamburg, Germany; Dharma Drum Buddhist College, Taiwan*

## **Introduction**

A recurrent description in the early Buddhist discourses depicts the attainment of stream-entry taking place during the delivery of a 'gradual talk' by the Buddha. Such a gradual talk begins by taking up the importance of morality and generosity and the need to renounce sensuality. When in the course of hearing this instruction the listener's mind reaches a state free from the hindrances, the Buddha then expounds the four noble truths. Upon receiving this teaching on the four noble truths, the "eye of the Dharma" arises in the listener's mind, presumably

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corresponding to the first direct experience of Nirvāṇa which marks the attainment of stream-entry.<sup>1</sup>

The basic pattern underlying such instances points to a progression from an intellectual appreciation of the four noble truths to their experiential realization. Bodhi (1991: 4) points out that "experiential right view is the penetration of the truth ... in one's own immediate experience ... to arrive at direct penetration, one must begin with a correct conceptual grasp of the teaching and transform that grasp from intellectual comprehension to direct perception". "If conceptual right view can be compared to a hand, a hand that grasps the truth by way of concepts, then experiential right view can be compared to an eye – the eye of wisdom that sees directly into the true nature of existence".

On considering the frequent occurrence of the attainment of stream-entry during a discourse given by the Buddha, it needs to be taken into account that, if someone had realized stream-entry while meditating alone and in seclusion, this did not occasion a discourse and therefore was not recorded later. But when someone realized stream-entry while listening to an instruction given by the Buddha, this became part of the later reported discourse. Thus it is to be expected that mainly the latter type of stream-entry realizations, attained when listening to the Buddha teach, are recorded in the discourses.<sup>2</sup>

Whether the attainment of stream-entry occurs during a discourse given by the Buddha or on another occasion, with the attainment accomplished the following three fetters are said to be permanently eradicated:

- the fetter of personality view, *sakkāyadiṭṭhi*, in the sense of belief in the notion of a permanent self,
- the fetter of doubt, *vicikicchā*, in particular uncertainty regarding the nature of what is wholesome and what is unwholesome,
- the fetter of dogmatic clinging to rules and vows, *sīlabbata-parāmāsa*, as in themselves sufficient for reaching liberation.<sup>3</sup>

The 'stream' that has been entered at this point is the noble eightfold path,<sup>4</sup> and the stream-enterer is one who is 'endowed with view',<sup>5</sup>

in other words, he or she has seen the four noble truths and thus attained what early Buddhism considers to fulfil right view.

Various ways of attaining such right view are described in the *Sammādiṭṭhi-sutta* of the *Majjhima-nikāya*.<sup>6</sup> This discourse has two parallels preserved in Chinese translation, found in the *Madhyama-āgama* and in the *Samyukta-āgama*,<sup>7</sup> two collections that probably represent Sarvāstivāda and Mūlasarvāstivāda lines of transmission.<sup>8</sup> In addition to these, another parallel is extant in Sanskrit fragments.<sup>9</sup> In what follows, I translate the *Samyukta-āgama* version as a basis for evaluating the significance of the approaches to the attainment of right view as described in this discourse.<sup>10</sup>

## Translation (1)<sup>11</sup>

[Discourse to Koṭṭhita]<sup>12</sup>

1. Thus have I heard. At one time the Buddha was staying at Rājagaha, in the Bamboo Grove, at the Squirrels' Feeding Ground.<sup>13</sup> At that time, the venerable Sāriputta and the venerable Mahākoṭṭhita were staying at Mount Vulture Peak. Then, in the afternoon, the venerable Mahākoṭṭhita rose from meditating in seclusion and approached the [venerable] Sāriputta and exchanged greetings. Having exchanged greetings, he sat down to one side and said to the venerable Sāriputta: "I would like to ask a question, are you free to answer it?"<sup>14</sup>

2. The venerable Sāriputta said to the venerable Mahākoṭṭhita: "Just ask, friend, knowing I shall answer." The venerable Mahākoṭṭhita said to the venerable Sāriputta: "Having accomplished what factors is a learned noble disciple in this teaching and discipline reckoned to be endowed with [right] view, to have accomplished straight view, to have accomplished unshakeable confidence in the Buddha, to have come to and arrived at the right teaching, to have attained this right Dharma and awoken to this right Dharma?"

3. The venerable Sāriputta said: "Venerable Mahākoṭṭhita, [this takes place if] a learned noble disciple understands unwholesome states as they really are, understands the roots of unwholesomeness as they really are, understands wholesome states as they really are and understands the roots of wholesomeness as they really are.

4. "How does [a learned noble disciple] understand unwholesome states as they really are? Unwholesome bodily actions, verbal actions and mental actions – these are reckoned unwholesome states.<sup>15</sup> In this way unwholesome states are understood as they really are.

5. "How does [a learned noble disciple] understand the roots of unwholesomeness as they really are? There are three roots of unwholesomeness: greed is a root of unwholesomeness, hatred is a root of unwholesomeness, and delusion is a root of unwholesomeness – these are reckoned the roots of unwholesomeness. In this way the roots of unwholesomeness are understood as they really are.

6. "How does [a learned noble disciple] understand wholesome states as they really are? Wholesome bodily actions, verbal actions and mental actions – these are reckoned wholesome states. In this way wholesome states are understood as they really are.

7. "How does [a learned noble disciple] understand the roots of wholesomeness as they really are? That is, there are three roots of wholesomeness: non-greed, non-hatred and non-delusion – these are reckoned the roots of wholesomeness. In this way the roots of wholesomeness are understood as they really are.

8. "Venerable Mahākoṭṭhita, [if] in this way a learned noble disciple understands unwholesome states as they really are, understands the roots of unwholesomeness as they really are, understands wholesome states as they really are and understands the roots of wholesomeness as they really are; then, for this reason, [a learned noble disciple] in this teaching and discipline is endowed with right view, has accomplished straight view, has accomplished unshakeable confidence in the Buddha, has come to and arrived at the right teaching, has attained this right Dharma and awoken to this right Dharma."<sup>16</sup>

9. The venerable Mahākoṭṭhita said to the venerable Sāriputta: "Indeed, it is like this – [but] is there yet another way?"

10. The venerable Sāriputta replied: "There is: If a learned noble disciple understands the nutriments as they really are, [understands] the arising of the nutriments, [understands] the cessation of the nutriments and understands the path to the cessation of the nutriments as it really is.

11. "How does [a learned noble disciple] understand the nutriments as they really are? That is, there are four nutriments. What are the four? [94c] The first is the nutriment of coarse edible food, the second is the nutriment of subtle touch, the third is the nutriment of mental intention and the fourth is the nutriment of consciousness – these are reckoned the nutriments. In this way the nutriments are understood as they really are.

"How does [a learned noble disciple] understand the arising of the nutriments as it really is? That is, there is craving for future existence, together with delight and greed, enjoying and being attached to this and that – this is reckoned the arising of the nutriments. In this way the arising of the nutriments is understood as it really is.

"How does [a learned noble disciple] understand the cessation of the nutriments as it really is? If that craving for future existence, together with delight and greed, enjoying and being attached to this and that, is eradicated without remainder, abandoned, vomited out, destroyed, [made to] fade away, to cease, to become appeased and disappear – this is reckoned the cessation of the nutriments. In this way the cessation of the nutriments is understood as it really is.

"How does [a learned noble disciple] understand the path to the cessation of the nutriments as it really is? That is, there is the eightfold noble path: right view, right intention, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness and right concentration – this is reckoned the path to the cessation of the nutriments. In this way the path to the cessation of the nutriments is understood as it really is.

12. "If a learned noble disciple thus understands these nutriments as they really are, understands the arising of the nutriments as it really is, understands the cessation of the nutriments as it really is and understands the path to the cessation of the nutriments as it really is; then this is the reason why a learned noble disciple in this right Dharma and discipline is endowed with right view, has accomplished straight view, has accomplished unshakeable confidence in the Buddha, has come to and arrived at the right teaching, has attained this right Dharma and awoken to this right Dharma."

68. The venerable Mahākoṭṭhita again asked the venerable Sāriputta: "Indeed, it is like this – [but] is there yet another way?"<sup>17</sup>

69. The venerable Sāriputta replied: "Venerable Mahākōṭṭhita, there is yet another way: [If] a learned noble disciple understands the influxes as they really are, understands the arising of the influxes as it really is, understands the cessation of the influxes as it really is and understands the path to the cessation of the influxes as it really is.

70. "How does [a learned noble disciple] understand the existence of the influxes as it really is? That is, there are three influxes: the influx of sensuality, the influx of becoming and the influx of ignorance – these are reckoned the influxes. In this way the influxes are understood as they really are.

"How does [a learned noble disciple] understand the arising of the influxes as it really is? With the arising of ignorance there is the arising of the influxes – this is reckoned understanding the arising of the influxes as it really is.

"How does [a learned noble disciple] understand the cessation of the influxes as it really is? With the cessation of ignorance there is the cessation of the influxes. In this way the cessation of the influxes is understood as it really is.

"How does [a learned noble disciple] understand the path to the cessation of the influxes as it really is? That is, there is the eightfold noble path ... (*as explained above*). In this way the path to the cessation of the influxes is understood as it really is.

71. "If a learned noble disciple thus understands the influxes as they really are, understands the arising of the influxes as it really is, understands the cessation of the influxes as it really is and understands the path to the cessation of the influxes as it really is; then for this reason a learned noble disciple in this teaching and discipline is endowed with right view ... (*up to*) ... has awoken to this right Dharma."

13. The venerable Mahākōṭṭhita asked the venerable Sāriputta: "Indeed, it is like this – [but] is there yet another way?"

14. The venerable Sāriputta replied: "Venerable Mahākōṭṭhita, there is yet another way: [If] a learned noble disciple understands *dukkha* as it really is, understands the arising of *dukkha* as it really is, [95a] under-

stands the cessation of *dukkha* as it really is and understands the path to the cessation of *dukkha* as it really is.

15. "How does [a learned noble disciple] understand *dukkha* as it really is? That is, birth is *dukkha*, old age is *dukkha*, disease is *dukkha*, death is *dukkha*, separation from what is liked is *dukkha*, association with what is disliked is *dukkha*,<sup>18</sup> not attaining what is wished for is *dukkha*, in this way, said in short, the five aggregates [affected by] clinging are *dukkha* – this is reckoned to be *dukkha*. In this way *dukkha* is understood as it really is.

16. "How does [a learned noble disciple] understand the arising of *dukkha* as it really is? Craving for future existence, together with delight and greed, the arising of attachment to this and that – this is reckoned the arising of *dukkha*.<sup>19</sup> In this way the arising of *dukkha* is understood as it really is.

17. "How does [a learned noble disciple] understand the cessation of *dukkha* as it really is? If that craving for future existence, together with delight and greed, the arising of attachment to this and that, is eradicated without remainder ... (*up to*) ... [made to] become appeased and disappear – this is reckoned the cessation of *dukkha*. In this way the cessation of *dukkha* is understood as it really is.

18. "How does [a learned noble disciple] understand the path to the cessation of *dukkha* as it really is? That is, there is the eightfold noble path ... (*as explained above*) – this is reckoned the path to the cessation of *dukkha*. In this way the path to the cessation of *dukkha* is understood as it really is.

19. "[If] in this way a learned noble disciple understands *dukkha* as it really is, [understands] the arising of *dukkha*, [understands] the cessation of *dukkha* and understands the path to the cessation of *dukkha* as it really is; then in this way a noble disciple in our teaching and discipline is endowed with right view, has accomplished straight view, has accomplished unshakeable confidence in the Buddha, has come to and arrived at the right teaching,<sup>20</sup> has attained this right Dharma and awoken to this right Dharma."

20. Again [the venerable Mahākoṭṭhita] asked the venerable Sāriputta: "Indeed, the Dharma is like this – again, is there yet another way?"

21. The venerable Sāriputta replied: "There is yet another way: That is, [if] a learned noble disciple understands old age and death as they really are, understands the arising of old age and death as it really is, understands the cessation of old age and death as it really is and understands the path to the cessation of old age and death as it really is ... *(as explained earlier in the Discourse on Analysis)*.<sup>21</sup>

22. "How does [a learned noble disciple] understand the arising of old age and death as it really is? With the arising of birth there is the arising of old age and death, with the cessation of birth there is the cessation of old age and death. The path to the cessation of old age and death ... that is, there is the eightfold noble path ... *(as explained above)*).

23. "[If] a learned noble disciple thus understands this old age and death as they really are ... *(up to)* ... and understands the path to the cessation of old age and death as it really is; then in this way a noble disciple in our teaching and discipline is endowed with right view, has accomplished straight view, has accomplished unshakeable confidence in the Buddha, has come to and arrived at the right teaching, has attained this right Dharma and awoken to this right Dharma."

24. - 60. *(In the same way for)* "birth ... becoming ... clinging ... craving ... feeling ... contact ... the six sense-spheres ... name-and-form ... consciousness ... formations.

61. "[If] a noble disciple understands formations as they really are, [understands] the arising of formations, [understands] the cessation of formations and understands the path to the cessation of formations as it really is.

62. "How does [a learned noble disciple] understand formations as they really are? There are three types of formations: bodily formations, verbal formations and mental formations. In this way formations are understood as they really are.

"How does [a learned noble disciple] understand the arising of formations as it really is? With the arising of ignorance there is the arising

of formations. In this way the arising of formations is understood as it really is.

"How does [a learned noble disciple] understand the cessation of formations as it really is? With the cessation of ignorance there is the cessation of formations. In this way the cessation of formations is understood as it really is.

"How does [a learned noble disciple] understand the path to the cessation of formations as it really is? [95b] That is, there is the eightfold noble path ... (*as explained above*).

63. "[Venerable] Mahākoṭṭhita, this is reckoned a noble disciple who understands formations as they really are, [understands] the arising of formations, [understands] the cessation of formations and understands the path to the cessation of formations as it really is; who in our teaching and discipline is endowed with right view, has accomplished straight view, has accomplished unshakeable confidence in the Buddha, has come to and arrived at the right teaching, has attained this right Dharma and awoken to this right Dharma."

The [venerable] Mahākoṭṭhita asked the venerable Sāriputta: "Yes, the Dharma is like this – [but] is there yet another way?"

The [venerable] Sāriputta replied: "Mahākoṭṭhita, why do you keep on pursuing this? Ultimately you cannot exhaust all discussion and get to the end of it. If a noble disciple has eradicated ignorance without a remainder and aroused knowledge, what more needs to be searched for?"<sup>22</sup>

Then, having discussed this matter together, these two virtuous men returned each to his original dwelling place.

## Study (1)

A comparison of the above translated *Samyukta-āgama* discourse (SĀ 344) with its parallels brings to light a variation in the sequence of the approaches to right view. Such variations are a recurrent feature of orally transmitted material and often have relatively little bearing on the actual teaching given in the respective versions.<sup>23</sup> In the present case, whereas the *Majjhima-nikāya* version (MN 9) proceeds from nutriment directly to the

four noble truths, the parallel versions first turn to the influxes. These are taken up at the very end of the *Majjhima-nikāya* version, preceded by also covering the theme of ignorance, see below table 1.

Table 1: Sequence of Topics

SĀ 344 & MĀ 29 & Skt.:	MN 9:
wholesome/unwholesome <sup>24</sup>	wholesome/unwholesome
nutriments	nutriments
influxes	four noble truths
four noble truths	old age ( <i>up to</i> ) formations
old age ( <i>up to</i> ) formations	ignorance
	influxes

A rather significant difference from the perspective of the main topic of the discourse is that the Pāli version concludes each exposition of how to have right view by mentioning the abandoning of the underlying tendencies to lust, to irritation, and to the conceited view 'I am', together with overcoming ignorance and making an end of *dukkha*. Such an indication is not made at all in the parallel versions.<sup>25</sup>

A closer consideration shows this statement to be out of context, since to overcome ignorance and to make an end of *dukkha* represent full awakening. The Pāli discourse follows each reference to overcoming ignorance and making an end of *dukkha* by declaring that "to that extent" (*ettāvata*) a noble disciple is endowed with right view and has gained perfect confidence in the teaching.<sup>26</sup> Yet such right view and perfect confidence are already gained with stream-entry, at which stage the underlying tendencies are far from being abandoned, ignorance has not yet been fully overcome and the making an end of *dukkha* is still to be accomplished. Hence the expression "to that extent" does not tally with the content of the passage to which it refers.<sup>27</sup> Here the Chinese and Sanskrit versions provide a rather significant corrective to the puzzling presentation in the Pāli version, clarifying that the issue at stake is indeed the attainment of stream-entry.

Regarding the implications of stream-entry, however, the different versions are in agreement. Besides the basic distinction between what is unwholesome and what is wholesome, all versions present this by

working their way through nutriment and the links of dependent arising (*paṭicca samuppāda*) that trace the arising of *dukkha* to ignorance, i.e.:

- old age and death,
- birth,
- becoming,
- clinging,
- craving,
- feeling,
- contact,
- six sense-spheres,
- name-and-form,
- consciousness,
- formations.<sup>28</sup>

In this way, the *Sammādiṭṭhi-sutta* and its parallels present the understanding gained with stream-entry as involving insight into the basic principle of conditionality in relation to any of these links, an insight expressed by way of the basic pattern that underlies the four noble truths.

Bodhi (1991: 5) explains that "each phenomenon to be comprehended by right view is expounded in terms of its individual nature, its arising, its cessation, and the way leading to its cessation".<sup>29</sup> That is, besides explicitly taking up the four noble truths as one item in the discussion, each of the other topics is presented with the help of the same basic scheme that underlies the four noble truths, see table 2.

Table 2: Basic Pattern of the Exposition

- 1<sup>st</sup> item in question
- 2<sup>nd</sup> cause of the item
- 3<sup>rd</sup> opposite of the item
- 4<sup>th</sup> cause of opposite of the item

With the four noble truths, this basic pattern then becomes:

- 1<sup>st</sup> truth: *dukkha*,
- 2<sup>nd</sup> truth: arising of *dukkha* (i.e., its cause),
- 3<sup>rd</sup> truth: cessation of *dukkha* (i.e., the opposite of *dukkha*),
- 4<sup>th</sup> truths: path to the cessation of *dukkha* (i.e., cause of opposite)

In this way, the exposition of any of the topics taken up in the *Sammādiṭṭhi-sutta* and its parallels combines understanding something (1 and 3) with understanding its causes (2 and 4). The description of such an understanding proceeds from the particular item to its cause (1 and 2), followed by turning to its opposite and then to the cause that brings about the opposite (3 and 4).

Before turning to examine this pattern in more detail, it needs to be noted that the qualification "noble" appears to be a later addition to references to the "four noble truths".<sup>30</sup> Hence in what follows, I will just speak of the "four truths".

Now the basic scheme of four truths that underlies the exposition in the *Sammādiṭṭhi-sutta* and its parallels mirrors a diagnostic scheme apparently employed in Indian medicine. The correspondence that results from this parallelism is summarized in table 3.

Table 3: Scheme of the Four Truths.

disease: *dukkha*  
 pathogen: craving (arising of *dukkha*)  
 health: Nirvāṇa (cessation of *dukkha*)  
 cure: eightfold path

In other words, after recognizing the 'dis-ease' of *dukkha*, craving is identified as the pathogen responsible for the arising of *dukkha*, the realization of Nirvāṇa is envisaged as the condition of health to be reached, wherein *dukkha* comes to cease, and the eightfold path constitutes the actual cure that needs to be undertaken. This correlation between the four truths and a diagnostic scheme taken from the realm of medicine gives a thoroughly pragmatic flavour to what tradition reckons to be one of the most central teachings of the Buddha.

A short discourse that takes this correlation as its main theme can be found in the same *Samyukta-āgama* preserved in Chinese translation (T 99) that also contains the above translated parallel to the *Sammādiṭṭhi-sutta*. This discourse, however, does not have a parallel in the Pāli canon. Nevertheless, versions of this discourse can be found in another *Samyukta-āgama* (T 100) that has been partially preserved in Chinese translation,<sup>31</sup> in another discourse preserved as an individual translation in Chinese,<sup>32</sup> in a

discourse preserved in Uighur fragments,<sup>33</sup> as a *sūtra* quotation in Śamathadeva's repertory of canonical quotations in the *Abhidharma-kośabhāṣya*, preserved in Tibetan,<sup>34</sup> as a partial *sūtra* quotation in the *Abhidharmakośavyākhyā*,<sup>35</sup> and as a partial *sūtra* quotation in the commentary on the *Arthavinīścaya-sūtra*.<sup>36</sup> In what follows, I translate the *Samyukta-āgama* version (T 99), followed by evaluating its significance.

## Translation (2)

[Discourse on the Physician]<sup>37</sup>

Thus have I heard. At one time the Buddha was staying at Benares in the Deer Park at Isipatana. At that time, the Blessed One told the monks:

"By accomplishing four principles one is reckoned a great royal physician,<sup>38</sup> worthy of being the possession of a king, and of being a member of the king's [retinue]. What are the four?

"One: being skilled in understanding a disease; two: being skilled in understanding the source of a disease; three: being skilled in understanding the cure of a disease; four: being skilled in understanding when a disease has been cured and will not appear again.

"How is someone reckoned to be a good doctor who is skilled in understanding a disease? That is, a good doctor is skilled in understanding various types of disease [105b] – then he is reckoned a good doctor who is skilled in understanding a disease.

"How is someone a good doctor who is skilled in understanding the source of a disease? That is, a good doctor is skilled in understanding that this disease has arisen because of wind, this has arisen due to intestinal disorders, this has arisen due to mucus, this has arisen due to various colds, this has arisen because of a present matter, this has arisen due to seasonal [influence] – then he is reckoned a good doctor who is skilled in understanding the source of a disease.

"How is someone a good doctor who is skilled in understanding the cure of a disease? That is, a good doctor is skilled in understanding that for various types of disease one should administer medication, or

should [bring about] vomiting, or should [administer] a laxative, or should [undertake] nasal instillations, or should [administer] fumigation, or should bring about perspiration – then he is reckoned a good doctor who is skilled in understanding the cure of a disease.

"How is someone a good doctor who is skilled in understanding when a disease has been cured and will never appear again in the future? That is, a good doctor is skilled in understanding how to settle various types of disease so that they are completely eliminated and in the future will never arise again – then he is reckoned a good doctor who is skilled in understanding how to settle a disease so that it will not appear again.<sup>39</sup>

"A Tathāgata, who is an arahant and a Fully Awakened One, is [also] a great royal physician who has accomplished four qualities to cure the 'disease' of living beings, also just like this.<sup>40</sup> What are the four?

"That is, the Tathāgata understands that this is knowing the noble truth of *dukkha* as it really is, this is knowing the noble truth of the arising of *dukkha* as it really is, this is knowing the noble truth of the cessation of *dukkha* as it really is, this is knowing the noble truth of the way to the cessation of *dukkha* as it really is.

"Monks, the secular good physician does not understand as it really is the fundamental cure for birth, for old age, for disease, for death, for sadness, for sorrow, for vexation and he does not understand as it really is the fundamental cure for *dukkha*.<sup>41</sup>

"The Tathāgata, who is an arahant and a Fully Awakened One, being a great royal physician, does understand as it really is the fundamental cure for birth, for old age, for disease, for death, for sadness, for sorrow, for vexation and he does understand as it really is the fundamental cure for *dukkha*. For this reason, the Tathāgata, who is an arahant and a Fully Awakened One, is reckoned a great royal physician."<sup>42</sup>

When the Buddha had spoken this discourse, the monks, who had heard what the Buddha said, were delighted and received it respectfully.

## Study (2)

The above translated discourse from the *Samyukta-āgama* (T 99) shows considerable similarities to the individual translation and the *sūtra* quotation in Śamathadeva's compendium. However, the version preserved in the other *Samyukta-āgama* (T 100), together with the Uighur fragments, differ rather substantially. In these versions we find:

- no detailed exposition of the four skills of a doctor,
- use of a simile of a poisoned arrow,
- stanzas in praise of the Buddha delivered by the monk Vaṅgīsa.

This makes it probable that the extant versions reflect distinct lines of transmission of the discourse that compares the Buddha's teaching of the four truths to four medical skills of a physician.

The similarity between the Buddhist scheme of the four truths and medical science in India has been noted by a range of Buddhist scholars.<sup>43</sup> Already towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Oldenberg pointed out that it is difficult to ascertain if the Buddhists indeed borrowed this scheme.<sup>44</sup> A few decades later, Har Dayal and Filliozat highlighted the fact that there is no proof that ancient Indian medicine had a scheme corresponding to the four truths previous to the time of early Buddhism,<sup>45</sup> an argument presented in a more detailed manner by Wezler (1984: 312-324).

The absence of any pre-Buddhist reference to the four-fold scheme is indeed of considerable significance. Yet, I am not sure if this inevitably entails that such a scheme was entirely unknown at the time of the Buddha, especially in view of the fact, as noted by Wezler (1984: 315), that "even the most ancient of the so-called Āyurvedic texts are of later origin".

It seems to me that the most natural way of reading the above translated *Samyukta-āgama* discourse and its parallels would be as presentations that assume some such diagnostic scheme to be already in existence and known among the target audience of the discourse. In view of this, is it not possible that the Buddhist texts preserve a record of what at that time was a diagnostic scheme known and in use in daily life at the popular level?

While we do not have any corroboration of the existence of the four-fold scheme of diagnosis in pre-Buddhist texts, the perspective afforded by the early Buddhist discourses at least suggests that the formulation of the four truths employed a diagnostic scheme already known to some degree in order to describe the nature of *dukkha* and its Buddhist 'cure'.

Although the above-translated *Samyukta-āgama* discourse is without a counterpart in the Pāli canon, elsewhere in the Pāli discourses the Buddha is regularly referred to as a physician.<sup>46</sup> A discourse in the *Ānguttara-nikāya* even comes quite close to the above presentation. This discourse describes how through the Buddha's teaching one's sorrow and grief, etc., are dispelled, employing precisely the expressions used in the standard description of the first truth to define *dukkha*.<sup>47</sup> Such 'dispelling' is then illustrated with the example of being quickly relieved from a disease by a skilled doctor. Thus it is only the explicit correlation of the four truths to a medical scheme of diagnosis that is not found in the Pāli discourses.<sup>48</sup> Yet, such a correlation can be found in the *Vimuttimaggā* and in the *Visuddhimaggā*.<sup>49</sup>

Regarding the enumeration of the four skills of a physician in the *Samyukta-āgama* discourse, it is noteworthy that this does not fit the sequence of the standard listing of the four truths.<sup>50</sup> The third medical ability is "being skilled in understanding the cure of a disease", while the fourth is "being skilled in understanding when a disease has been cured and will not appear again". In the scheme of the four truths, however, the third truth is about the cessation of *dukkha*, i.e., when the 'disease' has been cured, while the fourth truth is about the path that leads to this goal, the 'cure of the disease'.

Wezler (1984: 322f) notes that "the order of enumeration of the four skills of a physician ... does not perfectly correspond to the traditional order of succession of the Four Noble Truths" and draws the conclusion that the source of this simile "cannot have been a Buddhist text; it was in all probability a medical text, or, at least, the science of medicine".<sup>51</sup>

Following this reasoning, it seems to me that the above variation would make it indeed probable that some form of the four-fold medical diagnosis was in existence at the time the ancestor of the above translated discourse and its parallels came into being. Perhaps this was just a simple pattern regularly followed in medical practice in daily life, not yet a fully

formulated component of ancient Indian medical theory. Such a simple medical diagnosis scheme was then apparently adopted with a sequential modification in the Buddhist texts, perhaps in order to conform better to the pattern of following a particular item (*dukkha* and then the cessation of *dukkha*) with a description of its cause (see above table 2).<sup>52</sup>

According to Halbfass (1991/1992: 245), however, "if the 'four noble truths' had, indeed, been borrowed from an earlier medical scheme, the intense sense of discovery, of a new and overwhelming insight, which the early Buddhists and apparently the Buddha himself attached to the 'four truths', would be hard to understand".

I am not sure if this is necessarily the case, since as far as I can see the four truths are merely a description, whereas the 'new and overwhelming insight' that was discovered is rather the realization of awakening or Nirvāṇa. The discourses indicate that, out of the tasks described in each of the four truths, it is the cessation of *dukkha* or Nirvāṇa that is to be "realized", which is, of course, the theme of the third truth. The implications of such realization are then formulated with the help of the whole set of four truths, indicating that such realization involves also 'understanding' *dukkha*, 'abandoning' its cause and 'developing' the path.<sup>53</sup> The employment of a medical scheme of diagnosis for the sake of describing this in a form easily understood by others need not be seen as taking away from the value of the realization itself.

Instead, for the four truths formulation to parallel medical diagnosis would be significant in so far as it deliberately employs medical terminology to express what has been realized. In the ancient Indian setting, which the early discourses depict as teeming with various philosophers ready to debate their views, the choice of a medical analogy would thus underline the pragmatic approach of early Buddhism and thereby set a contrast to philosophical speculation. In this way, the four truths formulation emphasizes a psychological form of analysis as a distinct feature of the Buddha's realization.<sup>54</sup> This would be well in keeping with a recurrent tendency in the early discourses towards psychological analysis, giving priority to understanding what happens in the mind.

A standard procedure in the early discourses illustrates a teaching with the help of a simile taken from the everyday experience of the audience. The comparison of the four truths to ancient Indian diagnosis

appears to follow this pattern, in that it seems to be similar in kind to other comparisons of the four truths to practices apparently in existence in ancient India, such as, for example, going for refuge to shrines and trees.<sup>55</sup> Instead of such refuges, according to a set of stanzas in the *Dhammapada*, by taking refuge in the Buddha, his teaching and the community, one then finds one's true refuge in the direct vision of the four truths attained with stream-entry:

"Seeing the four noble truths  
with right wisdom:  
*Dukkha*, the arising of *dukkha*,  
the overcoming of *dukkha*,  
and the noble eightfold path  
that leads to the appeasement of *dukkha*.  
This indeed is a safe refuge,  
this is the best refuge,  
having gone for this refuge  
one will be released from all *dukkha*."<sup>56</sup>

**ABBREVIATIONS**

AN	<i>Aṅguttara-nikāya</i>
B <sup>e</sup>	Burmese edition
C <sup>e</sup>	Ceylonese edition
CPD	Critical Pāli Dictionary, Trenckner
D	Derge edition
Dhp	<i>Dhammapada</i>
Dhp-a	<i>Dhammapada-aṭṭhakathā</i>
E <sup>e</sup>	PTS edition
MĀ	<i>Madhyama-āgama</i> (T 26)
MN	<i>Majjhima-nikāya</i>
Ps	<i>Papañcasūdanī</i>
Q	Qian-long (Peking) edition
SĀ	<i>Saṃyukta-āgama</i> (T 99)
SĀ <sup>2</sup>	'other' <i>Saṃyukta-āgama</i> (T 100)
S <sup>e</sup>	Siamese edition
SN	<i>Saṃyutta-nikāya</i>
Sn	<i>Sutta-nipāta</i>
T	Taishō (CBETA)
Vin	<i>Vinaya</i>
Vism	<i>Visuddhimagga</i>

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## NOTES

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<sup>1</sup> Ñāṇananda 2003: 48 explains that "what is called the '*Dhamma-eye*' is the ability to see the *Nibbānic* solution in the very vortex of the *saṃsāric* problem".

<sup>2</sup> The need to become in some way part of a discourse for an attainment to be on record can be seen in, e.g., SN 46.30 at SN V 89,13, which reports a succinct teaching given by the Buddha to Udāyin on the impermanent nature of the five aggregates. Following this instruction Udāyin retires into seclusion to practice and comes to have insight into the four noble truths as they really are, i.e., he attains stream-entry or a higher level of attainment below full realization, as the remainder of the discourse makes clear. In this case, his realization has become part of a discourse because he approaches the Buddha and reports what has happened.

<sup>3</sup> Sn 231 and a parallel to this stanza in the *Mahāvastu*, Senart 1882: 291,23, indicate that the eradication of these three fetters takes place at the moment of stream-entry itself. That the experience of stream-entry is clearly recognizable as an event that takes place at a particular time can also be deduced from AN 3.12 at AN I 107,6, which lists insight into the four noble truths as they really are (a reference to the attainment of at least stream-entry) alongside one's going forth and one's attainment of the destruction of the influxes (a reference to full awakening) as three events worth being remembered.

<sup>4</sup> SN 55.5 at SN V 347,25 and its parallel SĀ 843 at T II 215b17.

<sup>5</sup> Cf., e.g., MN 115 at MN III 64,17, which stipulates various impossibilities for a stream-enterer, referred to with the expression of being "a person endowed with view", *ditṭhisampanno puggalo*. The formulations employed in the Chinese parallels in a way draw out the implications of this expression, as MĀ 181 at T I 724a6 speaks of a "person with a vision of the truth", 見諦人, and T 776 at T XVII 713b26 of a "person with right view", 正見人.

<sup>6</sup> MN 9 at MN I 46,15 to 55,25.

<sup>7</sup> MĀ 29 at T I 461b22 to 464b15 and SĀ 344 at T II 94b2 to 95b9.

<sup>8</sup> On the school affiliations of these two collections cf., e.g., Lü 1963: 242, Waldschmidt 1980: 136, Enomoto 1984, Mayeda 1985: 98f, Enomoto 1986: 21 and 23, Minh Chau 1991: 27, Choong 2000: 6 note 18, Hiraoka 2000, Harrison 2002: 1, Oberlies 2003: 48 and 64, Bucknell 2006: 685 and Glass 2010.

<sup>9</sup> S 474 folio 16V9 to 18V5 in Tripāṭhī 1962: 50–54; a new edition, additional fragments and a juxtaposition with the two Chinese parallels

can be found in Chung 2011: 242-263; for a survey of parallels to SĀ 344 cf. also Chung 2008: 113.

<sup>10</sup> On right view cf. also Anālayo 2006b.

<sup>11</sup> For ease of comparison, I adopt the paragraph numbering used in the English translation of the *Sammādiṭṭhi-sutta* in Ñāṇamoli 1995/2005: 132–144. For the same reason, I employ Pāli terminology (except for anglicized terms like 'Nirvāṇa') in the translation and throughout the article, without thereby intending to take a position on the original language of the *Samyukta-āgama* (which according to de Jong 1981: 108 would in fact have been Sanskrit) or on Pāli terminology being in principle preferable. In the notes to the translation, I focus on a few selected differences between the parallel versions; for a comparative study of MN 9 in the light of its parallels cf. Anālayo 2011a: 66–73. All abbreviations in the translation are found in the original.

<sup>12</sup> Adopting the title suggested by Akanuma 1929/1990: 48.

<sup>13</sup> The location in MN 9 at MN I 46,15 is Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's Park in Sāvathī. MĀ 29 at T I 461b24 agrees with SĀ 344 on the location, fragment S 474 folio 16V9 in Tripāthī 1962: 50 or 16r9 in Chung 2011: 242 has an abbreviated reference to Rājagṛha.

<sup>14</sup> As already pointed out by Waldschmidt 1957/1967: 296 in a summary of the contents of SĀ 344, MN 9 at MN I 46,16 instead reports that Sāriputta addressed the monks in general; cf. also Anālayo 2007: 30. According to MĀ 29 at T I 461b27, Mahākoṭṭhita replied to questions posed by Sāriputta. The fragment S 474 folio 16V11 in Tripāthī 1962: 50 or 16r11 in Chung 2011: 242 agrees with SĀ 344.

<sup>15</sup> MN 9 at MN 47,5 here (and below when defining what is wholesome) instead lists the ten courses of action, *kammaṭṭhāna*. MĀ 29 at T I 461c4 and fragment S 474 folio 16R3 in Tripāthī 1962: 51 or 16v3 in Chung 2011: 242 agree with SĀ 344 on employing the three types of action – bodily, verbal and mental – to define what is unwholesome and what is wholesome.

<sup>16</sup> MN 9 at MN I 47,22 here (and below in relation to each of the subsequent topics) differs from the other versions in as much as it speaks of abandoning the underlying tendencies as well as ignorance and making an end of *dukkha*. I already drew attention to this substantial difference in Anālayo 2005: 5f; cf. also the discussion below.

<sup>17</sup> From this point onwards the sequence of topics in the parallel versions differs; cf. the discussion below.

<sup>18</sup> Instead of taking up separation from what is liked and association with what is disliked, the C<sup>e</sup> and the E<sup>e</sup> edition at MN I 48,32 only list sorrow, lamentation, etc., as manifestations of *dukkha*, to which the B<sup>e</sup> and S<sup>e</sup> editions add separation from what is liked and association with what is disliked.

<sup>19</sup> MĀ 29 at T I 462b1 differs from the other versions in as much as it traces the arising of *dukkha* to old age and death.

<sup>20</sup> Adopting the variant 法, in conformity with earlier formulations. The text here has 道 instead, which would result in the alternative of having arrived at the right "path".

<sup>21</sup> SĀ 344 at T II 95a18: 如前分別經說. The corresponding section in Sanskrit fragment S 474 folio 17R6 has, according to Tripāṭhī 1962: 53, preserved a reference to *[d](i)sūtre*, which Tripāṭhī 1962: 195 then restores to *(pūrvavad yathā ā)d(i)sūtre*, translated as "wie vorher im Ādisūtra" (this being the restored title of another discourse in Tripāṭhī 1962: 157, parallel to the *Vibhaṅga-sutta*, SN 12.2). However, Chung 2011: 245 reads the same fragment 17v6 as just *[g]. sūtre*. In fact the title of the discourse referred to in SĀ 344 is "analysis" (in *Āgama* literature, 分別 regularly renders *vibhaṅga*, "analysis"; cf. also Hirakawa 1997: 183), which would fit the reading in Chung 2011: 245. 前, which can indeed render *ādi*, does not belong to the title, but is part of the recurrent phrase 如前 used in the *Samyukta-āgama* to refer to an exposition given earlier in the same collection. Thus the remark in SĀ 344 seems to intend the exposition of the nature of old age and death provided in SĀ 298. Although the Taishō edition does not give a title for this discourse, one of two parallels to SĀ 298 is the "Discourse on Analysis", the *Vibhaṅga-sutta*, SN 12.2, which at SN II 2,27 gives an exposition of old age and death similar to what is found in SĀ 298 at T II 85b13 to b19; cf. also the corresponding Sanskrit fragment in Tripāṭhī 1962: 163. The passage to be supplemented at the present juncture would thus be an explanation of the nature of old age as manifesting in whiteness of hair, etc., and of the nature of death as becoming evident in the passing away of various living beings, etc.

<sup>22</sup> While MĀ 29 at T I 464b12 and fragment S 474 18V4 in Tripāṭhī 1962: 54 or 18r4 in Chung 2011: 246 agree with SĀ 344 on reporting a rebuffing of an attempt to push the inquiry beyond ignorance, MN 9 at MN I 55,3 in a way does go beyond ignorance by turning to the influxes, presenting

ignorance and the influxes in a reciprocal conditioning relationship; for a more detailed discussion cf. Anālayo 2011a: 71f.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. Anālayo 2011a: 873–876.

<sup>24</sup> The presentation in table 1 does not fully reflect all variations, as MĀ 29 examines the topic of unwholesomeness on its own, followed then by turning to the topic of what is wholesome. Moreover, MĀ 29 and MN 9 give a full exposition to the items that come before formations, after old age and death, whereas SĀ 344 and the Sanskrit fragments refer to these only in an abbreviated manner.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. above note 16.

<sup>26</sup> Following the translation given in CPD II 657 s.v. *ettāvātā* for the present passage.

<sup>27</sup> This impression is further supported by the circumstance that the commentary, Ps I 197,24, records a discussion between the rehearsing monks on the significance of the present passage, indicating that they also had difficulties reconciling the indications given in this passage with the main theme of the discourse.

<sup>28</sup> An insight related approach that also takes up several links of dependent arising individually can be found, e.g., in the *Dvayatānupassanā-sutta*, Sn 724–743.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. also Anderson 1999/2001: 98, who in relation to MN 9 comments that "the analysis embedded in the four noble truths is used to dissect each item in this list". Each item, as pointed out by Fuller 2005: 61, entails "an understanding of things according to the four truths and dependent-origination".

<sup>30</sup> Cf. Norman 1982/1984 and Anālayo 2006a.

<sup>31</sup> SĀ<sup>2</sup> 254 at T II 462c9 to 463a23; partially translated into German in Kudara 1995: 47–48; for extracts rendered into French cf. Demiéville 1974: 229. The school affiliation of this *Samyukta-āgama* is a matter of continued discussion, recent contributions to this topic by Bingenheimer 2011: 23–44 and Bucknell 2011 are in favour of the Mūlasarvāstivāda tradition. The present case does not fit this conclusion too well, as SĀ 389 and SĀ<sup>2</sup> 254 show such substantial differences as to make it probable that they stem from quite separate lines of transmission.

<sup>32</sup> T 219 at T IV 802a16 to b20, the "Discourse on the Simile of the Physician", 醫喻經.

<sup>33</sup> Kudara 1995: 47–52; due to my ignorance of Uighur, my discussion of this version is based on the German translation provided by the authors.

<sup>34</sup> D 4094 *nyu* 1b1 to 2b6 or Q 5595 *thu* 32b6 to 33b6; on Śamathadeva's work, an outstanding source for early Buddhist discourse material in Tibetan translation, cf. Mejer 1991: 63–64 and Skilling 2005: 699; for locating relevant parallels cf. the convenient survey in Honjō 1984. The present *sūtra* quotation takes its occasion from a reference to a doctor endowed with four qualities in the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*, Pradhan 1967: 328,9; cf. also Pāsādika 1989: 100 (§393).

<sup>35</sup> Wogihara 1971: 514,27 to 515,2, introduced as the *Vyādhyādisūtra*, the "Discourse on Disease, etc."; a reference to the four skills of a physician, described in this discourse, can be found in the *Yogācārabhūmi*, T 1579 at T XXX 356a8, noted in Demiéville 1974: 230; for a Sanskrit counterpart cf. Wezler 1984: 311.

<sup>36</sup> Samtani 1971: 159,6 to 160,7.

<sup>37</sup> The translated discourse is SĀ 389 at T II 105a24 to b20; for the title I have decided on a short form based on the titles given in the Chinese translations of the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*, where T 1558 at T XXIX 114a14 (trsl. 玄奘) speaks of the "Discourse on the Good Physician", 良醫經, while T 1559 at T XXIX 266b17 (trsl. Paramārtha) speaks of the "Discourse on the Simile of the Physician", 醫譬經. Extracts from SĀ 389 have been translated into French by Demiéville 1974: 228.

<sup>38</sup> In relation to SĀ 389 at T II 105a26: 名曰大醫王者, 所應王之具, Wezler 1984: 320 suggests to emend 者 to 之, thereby bringing the passage in line with the reading *rājārhaś ca bhavati* in the *Abhidharmakośavyākhyā*, Wogihara 1971: 514,28, an expression found similarly in the commentary on the *Arthaviniścaya-sūtra*, Samtani 1971: 160,1; cf. also D 4094 *nyu* 1b2 or Q 5595 *thu* 32b7: *rgyal po la 'os shing*. This emendation would result in the above translated section reading "reckoned a great physician, worthy of a king, of being the possession of a king", etc. I have not followed Wezler's reasonable suggestion as later on SĀ 389 at T II 105b10 also qualifies the Buddha as being a "great royal physician", 大醫王. Since this appears to intend a comparison with the description of the worldly physician given at the present juncture of the discourse, it seems that the same sense of a "great royal physician" applies also to the present passage. This reading may well be the result of an error, in fact a qualification of the Buddha as a "royal" physician is not found in the parallel versions (although T 219 at T IV 802a23 introduces the simile of the physician with: 得名醫王), which instead refer to him as physician who is "unsurpassed", *anuttaro* / 無上 / *bla na med pa*; cf. Wogihara

1971: 514,33, SĀ<sup>2</sup> 254 at T II 462c14 and D 4094 *nyu* 2b2 or Q 5595 *thu* 33b1. Nevertheless, for the sake of preserving the continuity of the exposition in SĀ 389, it seems to me preferable to render the present section of the text following Demiéville 1974: 228, who translates: "un grand roi de médecins". The notion of someone being a royal physician, like, e.g., the famous Jīvaka, would presumably have been an easily understood reference in the ancient Indian setting. A relation between the simile of the skilled physician and kingship comes up also in T 219 at T IV 802b18, which in its concluding section refers to the contrast between a wheel-turning king and the Buddha. This suggests that the contrast between the royal power of a wheel-turning king and the Buddha's superior dominion by turning the wheel of Dharma is similar to the present contrast between a royal physician and the Buddha's superior 'medical' skill by teaching the Dharma; on the cakravartin motif cf. also Anālayo 2011b.

<sup>39</sup> The above detailed exposition of the four principles is absent from SĀ<sup>2</sup> 254, which after enumerating these four principles in short at T II 462c13 directly proceeds to the comparison with the Tathāgata. While the *sūtra* quotations in the *Abhidharmakośavyākhyā* and in the commentary on the *Arthaviniścaya-sūtra*, Wogihara 1971: 514,31 and Samtani 1971: 160,3, also do not go into the details regarding what the four qualities of a skilled doctor imply, T 219 at T IV 802a26 and the *sūtra* quotation in Śamathadeva's compendium, D 4094 *nyu* 1b5 or Q 5595 *thu* 33a2, do have such a detailed exposition.

<sup>40</sup> In a version of the simile of the skilled physician in the \**Mahāprajñā-pāramitā-(upadeśa-)śāstra* (大智度論), T 1509 at T XXV 235c12, translated by Lamotte 1970: 1515, the physician who 'only' knows the four skills, 但知病, 知病因, 知差病, 知差病藥, illustrates the *śrāvaka*, whereas a bodhisattva is like a physician who additionally knows all types of diseases and medicines.

<sup>41</sup> SĀ<sup>2</sup> 254 at T II 462c17 compares the predicament of the first truth to a poisoned arrow, a simile also found in the Uighur version, Kudara 1995: 48; cf. also Samtani 1971: 160,1.

<sup>42</sup> SĀ<sup>2</sup> 254 at T II 462c26 and the Uighur version, Kudara 1995: 48–52, continue with the venerable Vaṅṅīsa proclaiming a set of stanzas in praise of the Buddha, paralleling SĀ 1220 at T II 332c16.

<sup>43</sup> Cf., e.g., Kern 1896: 46, de La Vallée Poussin 1903, Conze 1951/1960: 17, Frauwallner 1953: 184, Pande 1957: 398, Dutt 1960/1971: 140, Schlingloff 1962: 70, Bareau 1964: 33, Gunaratna 1968/2008: 9, de Silva 1973/1992: 166, Rewata 1997: 55f, Gombrich 2009: 161.

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<sup>44</sup> Oldenberg 1881/1961: 374 note 2, after introducing the parallelism between the four truths and the four aspects of medicine, comments: "ob in Bezug auf die vierfache Gliederung der Buddhismus der entlehrende Teil ist, wird nicht festgestellt werden können; daß die Formulierung der vier Sätze sein Eigentum ist, scheint unzweifelhaft".

<sup>45</sup> Har Dayal 1932/1970: 159 points out that "it has been suggested that the Buddhists borrowed the formula from the medical treatises. But medical science was not highly developed in India in the sixth and fifth centuries B.C. It is more likely that the writers on medicine were indebted to Buddhist literature for the four terms". Filliozat 1934: 301 comments that "sans doute il était parfaitement logique de penser que les vérités applicables à la douleur en général pouvaient s'appliquer à la douleur physique en particulier, mais il était pour le moins hardi d'en inférer que le Bouddhisme les avait empruntées à la médecine. Il eût fallu prouver que cette médecine les possédait avant le Bouddhisme".

<sup>46</sup> Cf., e.g., Rhys Davids 1907: 118 s.v. *bhisakka* (1) and 143 s.v. *sallakatto*, as well as the survey in Collins 1998: 229f.

<sup>47</sup> AN 5.194 at AN III 238,9 speaks of dispelling one's *sokaparidevadukkhadomanassupāyāsā*; for the same terms in the context of the first truth description cf., e.g., the *Sammādiṭṭhi-sutta*, MN 9 at MN I 48,32.

<sup>48</sup> Wezler 1984: 320 suggests that because of the absence of a Pāli discourse counterpart to SĀ 389 or SĀ<sup>2</sup> 254 there is "a high degree of probability that it forms but a later addition; for it is quite impossible to discover a motive for a transmitter dropping it". I would venture to disagree with this conclusion, since the reason for the absence of a version of this discourse in the Pāli canon need not be intentionally dropping only. The same could just be due to the vicissitudes of oral transmission. There are a fair number of discourses in the Chinese *Āgamas* that do not show any evident sign of lateness, even though they have no Pāli parallel. The same holds evidently also the other way round, in that Pāli discourses without a parallel in the Chinese *Āgamas* need not be late. Comparative studies in *Āgama* literature clearly show that none of the extant collection can be considered as complete, in fact I would interpret the Purāṇa episode at Vin II 290,5 to imply that even the early reciters did not consider the Pāli canon as a complete record of the Buddha's saying. In sum, the lack of a Pāli parallel to a discourse in a Chinese *Āgama* collection is in itself not sufficient evidence for coming to a conclusion about the lateness of this discourse.

<sup>49</sup> T 1648 at T XXXII 452c17 explains that "it is just as a clever physician first sees the source of the disease, then inquires about the conditions of the disease and for the sake of extinguishing the disease prescribes the medicine appropriate to the disease. In this way, the disease can be understood to be like *dukkha*. In this way, the causes of the disease can be understood to be like the arising [of *dukkha*]. In this way, the eradication of the disease can be understood to be like the cessation [of *dukkha*]. In this way, the medicine can be understood to be like the path". Similarly, according to Vism 512,7: "the truth of *dukkha* is like a disease, the truth of the arising [of *dukkha*] is like the cause of the disease, the truth of the cessation [of *dukkha*] is like the cure of the disease and the truth of the path like the medicine". On the relationship between these two works cf. Anālayo 2009b (with further references).

<sup>50</sup> This has already been pointed out by de La Vallée Poussin 1903: 580 (in relation to the *sūtra* quotation in the *Abhidharmakośavyākhyā*); cf. also Demiéville 1974: 230 and Wezler 1984: 320.

<sup>51</sup> Wezler 1984: 323 then continues that "it was not until the quadruple division of the science of medicine originating in medical circles became known to Buddhist authors that the Four Noble Truths as such were by way of comparison paralleled" to this scheme, however, "there is not the slightest evidence for the assumption that this fourfold division of the science of medicine ... inspired the Buddha to his Four Noble Truths". Zysk 1991: 38 then goes further, as he holds that "the insignificance of the fourfold division in the medical tradition and its conceptual variation from the Four Noble Truths [i.e. the difference in sequence between the third and the fourth item] render any medical analogy in the Buddha's original teaching untenable".

<sup>52</sup> An example where a Buddhist text adopts a sequence that differs from the standard pattern employed for the four truths can be found in a passage in MĀ 181 at T I 724a23 (absent from its parallel MN 115), which describes the situation of someone afflicted by severe pain who approaches non-Buddhist recluses and Brahmins in the hope of getting relief as: "searching for *dukkha*, the arising of *dukkha*, the path [to liberation from] *dukkha*, and the cessation of *dukkha*", 求苦, 習苦, 趣苦, 苦盡者. The pattern adopted here for physical affliction to be cured by non-Buddhist teachers corresponds to the depiction of the skills of the physician in SĀ 389. For a translation and comparative study of MĀ 181 cf. Anālayo 2009a.

<sup>53</sup> SN 56.29 at SN V 436,11 (on the formulation employed in the discourse cf. Weller 1940/1987 and Norman 1982/1984) and SĀ 382 at T II 104b17; for a brief survey of the four tasks required by the four truths as taking the form of twelve insights in SN 56.11 cf. Moffitt 2008: 281–283; cf. also Vism 507,21: *paramatthato hi dukkhanirodham ariyasaccan ti nibbānaṃ vuccati*, which Harvey 2009: 209 takes up in the context of an argument for rendering *sacca* as "reality" rather than as "truth".

<sup>54</sup> Cf. also Demiéville 1974: 230, who in relation to the simile of the skilled physician comments that it suggests that the Buddha "concevait sa doctrine comme une thérapeutique".

<sup>55</sup> Another illustration of the four truths scheme, just to provide an additional example, would be the simile of the elephant's footprint, which due to its size encompasses the footprints of any other animal. This imagery illustrates the comprehensive function of the four truths in relation to wholesome or skilful states, cf. MN 28 at MN I 184,26 and MĀ 30 at T I 464b23. According to Nāṇaponika 1966/1981: 2, the simile conveys that "the Four Noble Truths comprise ... all that is beneficial; i.e., all that is truly worth knowing and following after". Cousins 1996: 146 adds that "when ... Sāriputta tells (M I 184) us that all skilful *dhammas* are included in the four noble truths, we should ... interpret skilful *dhammas* here as referring to meditational states". Franke 1906: 368 notes a counterpart to the simile of the elephant's footprint found in the *Mahā-bhārata*, where it illustrates the importance of non-violence, *ahiṃsā*; cf. also Neumann 1896/1995: 1141 note 451. The simile of the elephant's footprint could be considered in conjunction with the simile of the handful of *siṃsapā* leaves compared to the leaves in the grove. This simile compares the Buddha's disclosure of the four truths with what he had not disclosed, cf. SN 56.31 at SN V 437,19 and its parallel SĀ 404 at T II 108a29, thereby again highlighting the centrality of the four truths. These and other similes related to the four truths appear to be drawn directly from the everyday experience of the ancient Indian audience, making it probable that, from the perspective of the early discourses, some sort of fourfold medical diagnostic should be understood to have already been in existence.

<sup>56</sup> Dhṃ 190c+d (i.e. the last two lines), Dhṃ 191 and Dhṃ 192. Dhṃ-a III 246,21 explains the reference to seeing with wisdom to imply attainment of the path and then explains that such direct vision of the four noble truths is a safe and supreme refuge. Indic language parallels to these stanzas can be found in the *Udāna(-varga)* stanzas 27.33c+d and

27.34–35, Bernhard 1965: 349f, and in the *Divyāvadāna*, Cowell 1886: 164,12; stanzas Dhṛ 190c+d and 192 also have a parallel in the Patna *Dharmapada* stanzas 218c+d and 219, Cone 1989: 160.