References
1 Ariyapariyesana sutta, M I, 16 ff.
6 Ibid., p.44
8 See, ibid., p.67.

ZEN-YIA-HAN or Tseng-i-han the "collection of texts increasing by one", is the title of the counterpart to the Āguttara Nikāya that has been preserved in Chinese translation as entry no. 125 in the Taishō edition (Nanjo no. 543). Judging from extant Sanskrit references, the corresponding Sanskrit term would be Ākottika Āgama.1

The Ākottika Āgama found at Taishō no. 125 carries a preface by Dao-an, according to which the translation was undertaken during the years 384/385 of the common era by Zhu Fo-nian,2 based on an original recited by the Tocharian Dharmaranandin (T II, 549a14),3 an original that appears to have been in a Prākrit.4 There is some uncertainty in the records of translation activities about whether later on Gautama Sūghadeva did a revision of this Ākottika Āgama translation, or whether what is now found in the Taishō edition is a new translation made by him.

This is, in fact, what happened with the Madhyama Āgama, where an earlier Madhyama Āgama translation by Zhu Fo-nian and Dharmaranandin was replaced by a new Madhyama Āgama translation by Gautama Sāngheva. A close inspection of the two collections extant in the Chinese canon shows, however, that the translation vocabulary found in Madhyama Āgama rendered into Chinese by Gautama Sāngheva differs considerably from the terminology employed in Ākottika Āgama discourses. These differences make it improbable that the two collections could stem from the same translator.5

Another uncertainty regarding this Ākottika Āgama collection is the school that transmitted the original used for translation. Bureau refers to the introductory section of this collection in support of assigning it to the Mahāsāṃghika tradition, though unfortunately he does not offer further specifications.6 Thus a short survey of instances from this introductory section that seem relevant to the question of school affiliation may help to shed light on this issue.

After an expression of homage to the Buddha and his senior disciples, this introductory section gives a brief description of the first council. It reports that when Ānanda was asked to recite the discourses, he at first did not accept this invitation, apparently feeling that this role should better be taken by another monk (T II, 549b29). This detail is also mentioned in the account of the first council in the Mahāsāṃghika Vinaya (T XXII, 491b24), while the other Vinayas do not mention any hesitation by Ānanda.7

The same account of the first council also mentions the presence of various gods and describes how, once Ānanda had concluded his recital of the discourses, the earth shook in approval and a rain of divine flowers set in (T II, 550c). Similar elements can be found in the Mahāvastu, a work of the Lokottaravāda Mahāsāṃghika, which also reports the presence of gods, the shaking of the earth and a rain of heavenly flowers at the conclusion of the first council (Mīru I, 71).

Another relevant aspect of the introduction to the Ākottika Āgama could be its suggestion that, in case the location of a discourse has been forgotten, it should simply be allocated to Śrāvasti (T II, 550b13). A similar injunction to freely supply a location in case of loss of memory is also found in the Mahāsāṃghika Vinaya (T XXII, 497a6) and in the (Māla)-sarvāstivāda Vinaya (T XXIV, 328c15 and 575b29).8
Yet another relevant detail occurs in a brief account of the tale of King Ma(k)hādeva, found in the introduction to the Ekottarika Āgama. The tale itself is preceded by a reference to the three former Buddhas Kāśyapa, Krakucchanda and Kanakamuni (T. II, 551c10). While a reference to former Buddhas is absent from the other versions of the Mahādeva tale, such a reference can be found in the different versions of the tale of Ghatikāra. Notably, of these different versions only the Mahāvastu account brings in these three former Buddhas (Mbh. I, 318), whereas the Pāli and Madhyama Āgama versions only mention a single former Buddha, Kāśyapa (M. II, 45 and T. I, 499a16).9

Hence the reference to three past Buddhas instead of one, the injunction to freely supply a location to a discourse when this has been forgotten, the manifestation of an earthquake and heavenly flowers at the conclusion of the first council, and Ānanda's initial hesitation to take on the role of reciting the discourses at the first council are elements in the introduction to the Ekottarika Āgama that would support associating it with the Mahāsāṃghika tradition.

A problem with such an identification, however, would be that the same introduction to the Ekottarika Āgama lists the four Āgamas in the sequence Ekottarika, Madhyama, Dirgha, Saṃyukta (T. II, 549c28), whereas the Mahāsāṃghika Vinaya adopts the sequence Dirgha, Madhyama, Saṃyukta, Ekottarika (T. XXII, 491c16). Moreover, the introduction to the Ekottarika Āgama indicates that the Kṣudrakapitaka contains Mahāyāna scriptures (T. II, 550c10), whereas according to the Mahāsāṃghika Vinaya the Kṣudrakapitaka assembles sayings by arhants and Pratyekabuddhas (T. XXII, 491c20). Besides, it remains uncertain to what degree the introductory section should be treated as an integral part of the Ekottarika Āgama, hence conclusions on the school affiliation of the introduction may not necessarily hold true for the whole Āgama collection.

In fact, a discourse in the Ekottarika Āgama lists altogether two-hundred-fifty prātimokṣa precepts (T. II, 787b10), whereas the Mahāsāṃghika Vinaya contains a lesser number of rules.9 Moreover, discourses in the Ekottarika Āgama employ the twelve-fold listing of aṅgas, whereas the Mahāsāṃghika Vinaya adopts the nine-fold listing (T. XXII, 227b25).11

Regarding these objections, the argument based on the sequence of listing the four Āgamas loses some of its force since such consistency is also absent elsewhere. Thus the Dharmaguptaka Vinaya (T. XXII 968b15) lists discourses in a sequence that does not accord with the actual order found in the Dirgha Āgama preserved in Chinese translation, even though this collection does seem to stem from the Dharmaguptaka tradition.12 As far as the Kṣudrakapitaka is concerned, the compass and content of this collection appear to have been fluctuating to a great extent, something that holds true also for its counterpart in the Pāli tradition, the Khuddaka Nikāya.13

Regarding the count of prātimokṣa rules, some degree of lack of consistency can also be found elsewhere. Thus the Saṃyukta Āgama, generally held to be from the (Mūla-)sārvaśāstra tradition, speaks of "over two-hundred-fifty" rules (T. II, 210b14; 210c14; and 212c11), which exceeds the number of rules found in the Chinese translation of the (Mūla-)sārvaśāstra Vinaya.14 Pāli discourses just speak of "over one-hundred-and-fifty rules" (A. I, 230 and 231), a count that seems to reflect a stage in the promulgation of rules considerably earlier than the final count of precepts in the Theravāda Vinaya.15

Finally, the twelve-fold listing of āṅgas may well have developed out of the earlier nine-fold listing. Thus it could be that the Mahāsāṃghika Vinaya brought by the pilgrim Fa-hsien from Pāṭaliputra has preserved an earlier stage of this listing, whereas the Ekottarika Āgama collection that the Tocharian Dharmañandhin had memorized could reflect a later stage of development.16

In sum, then, though the introduction to the Ekottarika Āgama furnishes some arguments in favour of attributing this collection to the Mahāsāṃghika school, an attribution that in fact seems to be the one most commonly proposed in scholarly circles,17 there are a number of counter-indications. As neither the arguments in favour of a Mahāsāṃghika affiliation nor the counter-indications seem conclusive, the school affiliation of the Ekottarika Āgama is probably best considered as still to be determined.

What can safely be said about the Ekottarika Āgama, however, is that it contains a fair number of Mahāyāna ideas. Thus one Ekottarika Āgama discourse reports how Maitreyā inquires from the
Buddha about the six perfections (T. II, 645b1). Two discourses present cultivating the bodhicitta in those who have not yet cultivated it as something that necessarily accompanies the appearance of a Tathāgata (T. II, 699a7 and T. II, 703b18). Other discourses reflect the three yāna conception, distinguishing between the path of an arhat, the path of a Pratyekabuddha and the path of a Samyaksambuddha (e.g. T. II, 751a18 or T. II, 757a14). In a particularly telling passage, the Buddha discloses four of his qualities which "the Hinayānists cannot understand" (T. II, 640a5).

Other discourses in the Ekottarika Āgama show the degree to which this collection has incorporated various legends and tales, some of which have their counterparts in later texts of the Pāli tradition. One such tale describes how the nun Upalavannā transformed herself into a wheel-turning king in order to be the first to receive the Buddha on his return from a sojourn in the heaven of the Thirty-three (T. II, 707c8). The commentary to the Dhāmanapada contains a simpler version of this story, not related to the Buddha's descent from the heaven of the Thirty-three. According to the Dhāmanapada commentary, Upalavannā only suggested to the Buddha that she could perform such a miracle, which the Buddha, however, did not sanction (DhpA. III, 211). Another Ekottarika Āgama story with a counterpart in Pāli commentarial literature is the tale of the massacre of the Sākyans and the destruction of their capital by the successor of King Pasenadi (T. II, 692a15 and DhpA. I, 359 or Jā IV, 152). The remarkable passing away of Mahāprajāpati Gautami is also recorded in a discourse in the Ekottarika Āgama (T. II, 822a10), an account that has a Pāli counterpart in the Apadāna (Ap. 540).

Another Ekottarika Āgama discourse records the former Buddha Dīpaṃkara's prediction of Sākyamuni's future attainment of Buddhahood (T. II, 758b26), a story which in the Pāli tradition has its counterpart in the Buddhavamsa (Bu. 9). The same Ekottarika Āgama discourse even traces the former existences of Sākyamuni Buddha further into the past, reporting that at the time when Dīpaṃkara received his prediction, the future Sākyamuni Buddha was a princess (T. II, 758c4). This tale has a parallel in an apocryphal Jātaka collection in Pāli.

Yet another Ekottarika Āgama discourse reports that, during the lifetime of Sākyamuni Buddha, a statue was made in his likeness at the request of a contemporary king (T. II, 706a12). Since archaeological findings demonstrate that the early stages of Buddhist art were restricted to symbolic representations of the Buddha and the idea of depicting the Buddha in sculpture or painting arose only at a later time, this passage must be considerably later than the Mauryan period.

Thus the Chinese translation of the Ekottarika Āgama appears to have remained open to later elements to a remarkable degree. How far these later elements were already part of the Indic original of the Ekottarika Āgama, however, remains open to question. Notably, the Ekottarika Āgama does not present the legend of arhantis who, instead of passing away, remain as protectors of the Dharma (T. II, 787a2). A nearly identical version of this legend, except for a few variants, can be found elsewhere in the Taishō edition (T. XIV, 421a6), attributed to Dharmarākṣa, whose translation activities took place considerably earlier than Dharmanandā's translation of the Ekottarika Āgama. Another similar tale is the tale of the daughter of Anāthapiṇḍika, who married into a household without faith in the Buddha. The Ekottarika Āgama presents this tale in the same way as found in a translation attributed to Zhi Qian (T. II, 660a1 and T. II, 837c12), a translator active over a century before Dharmanandā. Though the identification of the translators of these two texts paralleling parts of the Ekottarika Āgama needs further corroboration, nevertheless, these two cases give the impression as if some material could have been incorporated in the Ekottarika Āgama translation that was not part of its Indic original. This would explain the rather heterogeneous nature of the Ekottarika Āgama collection and clarify why it contains late elements not found in the other Āgamas or in the Pāli Nikāyas.

Lamotte draws attention to another characteristic feature of the Ekottarika Āgama, where at times a single text combines material that appears to stem from originally different discourses. An example for this pattern is an Ekottarika Āgama discourse that reports how a monk publicly refused to obey the Buddha's instruction to eat a single meal per day (T. II, 800c2), thereby paralleling the Bhaddāli Sutta and its Mādhyama Āgama counterpart (M. I, 437 and T. I, 746b27). The same Ekottarika Āgama discourse continues, however, by describing how the sight of another monk who went begging during a stormy night
caused fear to a woman (T. II, 800c8), an event described in the Lattikākāma Sutta and its Mahāyana Āgama parallel (M. I, 448 and T. I, 741b9). After relating this event, the Ekottarika Āgama discourse returns to events related to the monk who refused to eat only a single meal per day, thereby again parallelizing the Bhuddālī Sutta and its Mahāyana Āgama counterpart. That the present case is indeed a conflation of two originally separate events can be seen in a sentence which begins by addressing an exhortation to develop contentment to the monk unwilling to eat a single meal, but ends by telling the monk who went begging on a stormy night to train himself in this way (T. II, 801c5).

On the other hand, however, the Ekottarika Āgama also preserves several discourses that appear to be very early, at times even offering what might be closer to the original than their Pāli counterpart. An example could be the Ekottarika Āgama parallel to the Mahāgatissīka Sutta. The Pāli version presents the ability to reply to questions about Abhidhamma without faltering as a characteristic quality of Mahāmoggallāna (M. I, 214). Yet, other Pāli discourses regularly associate Mahāmoggallāna with the ability to exercise supernormal powers (e.g. A. I, 23). The Ekottarika Āgama parallel to the Mahāgatissīka Sutta indeed reckons the exercise of supernormal powers to be characteristic of Mahāmoggallāna/Mahāmoggallānīyana (T. II, 711a18). The same is also the case with a Mahāyana Āgama parallel to this discourse, which moreover associates the ability to discuss Abhidhamma with another disciple, Mahākācāra/Mahākāryana (T. I, 527b23). As Mahākācāra is not mentioned at all in the Mahāgatissīka Sutta, it seems as if during the course of oral transmission the Pāli version lost a reference to his presence, and what was originally his statement ended up in the mouth of Mahāmoggallāna. Thus, in this case it seems highly probable that the Ekottarika Āgama version, together with the Mahāyana Āgama version, preserves a more original reading than their Pāli counterpart.24

In sum, then, the Ekottarika Āgama preserved in Chinese translation is a text with rather complex features, combining some material that could be relatively early with other texts that clearly reflect later developments. Thus it is no wonder that the Ekottarika Āgama differs from its Pāli counterpart to a considerable degree, exceeding the degree of difference that can be found between other Āgamas and their Pāli Nikāya counterparts. Though the Ekottarika Āgama adopts the same structural principle of collecting discourses in a numerically ascending order from Ones to Twos, more than half of its discourses have no counterpart in the Ānguttara Nikāya. While the degree to which the Ekottarika Āgama has remained open to later additions during the course of its transmission makes it a less reliable witness for early Buddhism, at the same time this collection is a particularly rich source of information on the development of Buddhist thought and narrative literature, in particular in relation to the early stages of development of Mahāyāna thought.

In addition to the Ekottarika Āgama found as Taishō no. 125, parts of another Ekottarika Āgama collection were translated into Chinese by An Shi-gao during the second century of the common era, a translation now found in the Taishō edition as entry no. 150A (covering one fascicle). Besides the material found in the Chinese canon, Sanskrit fragments discovered in Gilgit have brought to light parts of the Ones and Twos of an Ekottarika Āgama. This collection, which could be of (Mūla-)sarvāstivāda provenance,35 shows closer similarities to the Ānguttara Nikāya than the Ekottarika Āgama preserved in Chinese (T. no. 125). A number of Ekottarika Āgama fragments have also been preserved among the fragment findings from Central Asia,26 and a commentary by Śamathadeva on the Abhidharmakosa contains some Ekottarika Āgama extracts in Tibetan.27

See also ĀGAMA

References

1 Allon: Three Čandhari Ekottarikāgama Type Sūtras, Seattle 2001: 11 lists occurrences in the (Mūla-)sarvāstivāda Vinaya (GM. I, 45, 19), the Divyāvadāna (Divy. 329,2+6), the Mahāvutpadāna (Mhvyut § 1421 p. 109), and the Kar安徽省āgopadesa (Kvād. 153,11; 157,9 and 167,2). The alternative expression Ekottara Āgama, in contrast, appears not to be attested (SHT VI 1386 aA1 has preserved ekottar(i)c[i], so that in this case the reading remains uncertain).
However, Dao-an’s introduction speaks of only forty-one fascicles (T. II, 549a15), whereas the extant translation consists of fifty-one fascicles.


5. Nattier: "One Vehicle in the Chinese Agamas: New Light on an Old Problem in Pāli", Annual Report of the International Research Institute for Advanced Buddhism at Soka University, 2007: 196 note 48 explains that “the differences between the two texts are too great to be explained simply by positing that the translator changed his mind over the course of time, or even that the differences are due to the input of different translation committees”. For arguments in favour of attributing T. 125 to Sānghādeva cf. Deméville: "La Yogācārabhūmi de Sangharakṣa", Bulletin de l’École Française d’Extrême Orient, 44, 2, 1954: 374.


7. Cf. the Dharmaguptaka Vinaya, T. XXII, 968b13; the Mahāsāsaka Vinaya, T. XXII, 191a17; the (Mūla-)sarvāstivāda Vinaya, T. XXIV, 406a28; the Sarvāstivāda Vinaya, T. XXIII, 448b12; and the Theravāda Vinaya, Vin. II, 287,13.


11. This has been pointed out by Hirakawa: "The Rise of Mahāyāna Buddhism", The Memoirs of the Toyo Bunko, Tokyo 1963: 63-64, who in other publications has also noted the problems regarding the Kṣudrakapīṭaka and the prātimokṣa.


14. Pachow: A Comparative Study of the Prātimokṣa, Santiniketan 1955: 11, counts 248 rules in the Chinese translation (cf. also T. XXIV, 507b19, which gives a count of each category of precepts, except for the saṅkha rules), but then indicates that the Tibetan translation has 258 rules, with ten additional saṅkha rules.

15. The commentary A4. II, 346 explains that 150 was the number of rules that had been proclaimed by the time of this discourse. The final count covers 220 actual precepts and 7 adhikaraṇasamatho-dhāmas.

16. In fact, the listings of the twelve aṅgavas in the Ekottarika Āgama are not uniform and display variations in sequence, cf. T. II, 653a11; T. II, 657a2; T. II, 728c3; T. II, 794b15; T. II, 813a16.

17. Mayeda [=Maeda]: Japanese Studies on the Schools of the Chinese Agamas", Zur Schulzugehörigkeit von Werken der Hinayāna-Literatur, 1, Göttingen 1985: 102-103, reports that several Japanese scholars favour the Mahāsāṃghika hypothesis, while others have suggested a Dharmaguptaka or a Sarvāstivāda affiliation. The research by Schmithausen: "Beiträge zur Schulzugehörigkeit und Textgeschichte kannonischer und postkannonischer buddhistischer Materialien", Zur Schulzugehörigkeit von Werken der Hinayāna Literatur, 2, Göttingen 1987: 321, however, makes it less probable that the Ekottarika-āgama could stem from a Dharmaguptaka or Sarvāstivāda school. On the improbability of a Sarvāstivāda or (Mūla-)sarvāstivāda affiliation of the Ekottarika Āgama cf. also Harrison: "The Ekottarikāgama Translations of An Shigao", Buddhist Studies in Honour of Hein Bechert, Swisstal-Odentorf 1997: 280.

18. Examples noted by Harrison: op. cit.: 280; and by Barea: "La Fin de la Vie du Buddha selon l’Ekottara-āgama", Hinduismus und Buddhismus, Freiburg 1987: 34.

112. Other passages that show such influence have been noted in the serialized translation of the first sections of the Ekottarika Ágama by Huyen-Vi and Pāṇāḍika, published in Buddhist Studies Review, cf. 1998: 65 note 4, 69 note 15, 206 note 3, and 208 note 8; 2001: 224 note 17; 2002: 49 note 4-5 and 188 note 22.


21 Lamotte: History of Indian Buddhism, Louvain-La-Neuve 1988: 635, notes that similar tales of the establishment of a replica of the Buddha, though with different kings as their respective protagonists, are found in the (Mūla-)sāvastivādā Vinaya (T. XXII, 782b19 and T. XXIV 434b20) and in the Divyāvadvāma (Divyā 547).

22 These two cases have been noticed by Lévi and Chavannes: "Les Seize Arhat Protecteurs de la Loi", Journal Asiatique, 1916: 191 and 263.


26 SHT I 620R (A. V. 342); SHT II 163c; SHT II 163dR (A. IV. 244); SHT III 820; SHT III 952; SHT III 974; SHT III 975; SHT III 990; SHT III 994; SHT III 1600; SHT V 1031; SHT V 1103; SHT V 1160; SHT V 1112; SHT V 1171R (A. II. 45); SHT VI 1326 (212); SHT VI 1341; SHT VI 1343; SHT VI 1395; SHT VIII 1957; SHT IX 2071; SHT IX 2772. Note: SHT stands for Sanskrit handschriften aus den Turfan funden, Waldschmidt et al. ed., Wiesbaden 1965-2004; references are to volume of the series and number of the fragment. The above listing covers also fragments that parallel Aṅguttara Nikāya discourses where it is uncertain if these fragments were part of an Ekottarika collection, but does not take into account fragment parallels to Aṅguttara Nikāya discourses that have a counterpart in the Madhyama Ágama or Sūnyatā Ágama. In cases where a fragment has been identified after the original publication in the SHT series, for ease of reference the location of the Pali parallel in the Aṅguttara Nikāya has been added in brackets.

27 These can be located with the help of Honjō: A Table of Ágama Citations in the Abhidhammakośa and the Abhidhammakośarāhula, Kyoto 1984. Ekottarika Ágama quotations in the Abhidhammakośa itself have been listed by Pāṇāḍika: Kanonische Zitate im Abhidhammakośabhaṅga des Vasubandhu, Göttingen 1989: 135.

ZHONG A-HAN or Chung A-han "collection of texts of medium length", is the title of the Madhyama Ágama preserved in Chinese translation as entry no. 26 in the Taishō edition (Nanjo no. 542). This discourse collection, which is a counterpart to the Majjhima Nikāya preserved in the Pāli canon, was translated by the Kashmiri Gautama Saṅghadeva during the years 397-398 of the present era, based on a written original read out by Saṅgharakṣa, another Kashmiri monk (T. 1. 809b26). The original manuscript used for the translation stemmed with high probability from a Sāvastivāda tradition and appears to have been in a Prākrit. Saṅghadeva's translation was carried out in the presence of a group of forty scholar monks, with Dao-ji acting as the scribe and Li-bao and Kang-hua as assistants. A previous Madhyama Ágama translation undertaken by Zhu Fo-nian and Dharmandanin is no longer extant and was thus apparently replaced by the version rendered into Chinese by Saṅghadeva.

The Madhyama Ágama collection translated by Saṅghadeva contains altogether two hundred-and-twenty-two discourses, which are distributed over eighteen chapters that make up sixty fascicles in the Chinese canon. In contrast, the Majjhima Nikāya has one hundred-and-fifty-two discourses in fifteen chapters. In both collections, the count of ten discourses per chapter is the most common case, though a few chapters in the Madhyama Ágama have considerably more discourses. Of the total number of discourses in the Majjhima Nikāya, close to a hundred suttas have counterparts in the Madhyama Ágama.
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FASCICLE 3: Vācā – Zhong a-han

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