

***Peyāla* in the *Skandha-saṃyukta*:
Contraction and Expansion
in Textual Transmission**

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Abstract

In this contribution I investigate the practice of textual contraction and expansion among the discourses found in the section on the aggregates, the *Skandha-samyukta*, in the *Samyukta-āgama* extant in Chinese translation as entry no. 99 in the Taishō 大正 edition. I first survey the types of abbreviation found in the *Skandha-samyukta*, then calculate the amount of text that is only represented by such abbreviations, and then relate my results to the topic of the early Buddhist oral tradition.

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I. Introduction

The present research takes its inspiration from a remark made by Peter Skilling (2013: 122 note 17), to the effect that:

The immense importance of the ‘*peyāla* principle’, which entails both contraction and expansion, for the understanding of Buddhist literature has unfortunately scarcely been recognized. We could learn a lot by analyzing the many uses of *peyāla* (Pali *peyyāla*).

This remark was followed a few years later, in his contribution to the last seminar convened by the Āgama Research Group, by a survey of the topic “repetition and the *peyāla* principle”, which ends by noting that a paper studying this feature “is called for, but I leave that for someone else” (Skilling 2017: 292 note 52).

In recognition of the pertinence of his remarks, it seemed fitting to me to follow up this suggestion for the present seminar organized by the Āgama Research Group, and try to take at least a modest step in the direction of exploring the practice of textual abbreviation and expansion, *peyāla*.¹ The overall theme of the seminar makes the *Samyukta-āgama* an obvious choice for such an exploration. As a study of the whole *Samyukta-āgama* collection from this viewpoint would probably require a monograph, rather than being possible within the confines of an article, the need arises to choose just one *samyukta*. Here the *Skandha-samyukta* recommends itself as it is the only section of the *Samyukta-āgama* for which *uddānas* have been

¹ On the term *peyāla/peyyāla* see Gethin 2007: 383–384 and on the same principle in Gandhari manuscripts see Lenz 2003: 85–91 and Salomon 2011: 182–183.

preserved. For the present type of research, the information that can be gathered from such summary verses, listing the titles or contents of the discourses of a subsection of the collection, can be quite helpful.²

The same choice also appears apposite from a doctrinal perspective, in so far as out of the different topics that serve as the scaffolding for the *Saṃyukta-āgama* and the *Saṃyutta-nikāya* alike, the five aggregates illustrate an aspect of the topic at hand. This is because the implications of this scheme, in particular of the fourth aggregate, have undergone a process of expansion exemplifying features that also relate to the use of *peyāla*.

In its usage in the early discourses, the analysis into five aggregates affected by clinging serves to highlight the main aspects of individual experience to which one is prone to cling to. Regarding the fourth aggregate, *saṅkhāras*/行, a discourse in the *Saṃyukta-āgama* and its parallel in the *Saṃyutta-nikāya* agree that this particular aggregate stands for ‘volition’, *cetanā*/思, in relation to any of the six sense-doors.³ The employment of a different term, explaining *saṅkhāras*/行 with the help of the term *cetanā*/思, differs from the definition given for the other four aggregates, where each time the term used to refer to the aggregate recurs in the actual definition.

The term *cetanā*/思 in turn can occur in the company of other near-synonyms. An example is a simile that serves to illustrate the nature of volition as one of the four nutriments. The simile depicts how someone about to fall into, or even to be thrown into, a pit full of blazing coal would have the wish to get away.⁴ The *Saṃyukta-*

² On *uddānas* cf. Allon and Silverlock 2017: 7–11. Regarding the distinction between such summary verses and colophons, von Hinüber 2017: 49 explains that *uddānas* “are relics of the oral text transmission, while true colophons belong to the written tradition.”

³ SĀ 41 at T II 9c8 and SN 22.56 at SN III 60,25.

⁴ SĀ 373 at T II 102c18 and SN 12.63 at SN II 99,32.

āgama version of this simile employs the two terms ‘intention’, 思, and ‘wish’ or ‘aspiration’, 願, to describe this person’s mental condition; the *Saṃyutta-nikāya* parallel achieves the same aim with the help of three terms, which in addition to ‘intention’, *cetanā*, are ‘wish’, *patthanā*, and ‘aspiration’, *pañidhi*.

The same three recur together with *sāṅkhāra* as a set of four terms of similar implications in a discourse in the *Āṅguttara-nikāya* to describe the harmful results of wrong view. The repercussions of upholding wrong view are such that whatever is one’s ‘volition’, *cetanā*, ‘wish’, *patthanā*, ‘aspiration’, *pañidhi*, and ‘mental formation’, *sāṅkhāra*, it will only conduce to harm.⁵ A Sanskrit fragment parallel mentions the same four terms in the same sequence.⁶ Another occurrence of this statement with the same set of four expressions, found in a different section of the *Āṅguttara-nikāya*, has a counterpart in the *Saṃyukta-āgama* in the four terms 思, 欲, 願, and 爲, which seem to correspond well to the four Pali terms.⁷

The purpose of this brief excursion has been to show how *sāṅkhāra* via *cetanā* to *patthanā* and *pañidhi* can lead to an accumu-

⁵ AN 1.7.9 at AN I 32,8.

⁶ Tripāthī 1995: 156,7 (§ 17.51): *yā cetanā yā prārthanā yaḥ prañidhir ye ca saṃskārās*. Another parallel, EĀ 17.5 at T II 583a27, reads: 意行, 所趣, 所念及諸惡行. I hesitate to draw any conclusions based on this particular formulation, given the complexity of the translation of the *Ekottarika-āgama* and its general trend towards irregularity. This trend is evident in the present case by the fact that, what should be the same statement a few lines earlier at T II 583a20, only reads 所念, 所趣及餘諸行; a formulation also found in the next discourse, EĀ 17.6 at T II 583b4+10 for the corresponding case of right view. On irregularities in the translation terminology of the *Ekottarika-āgama* see also Radich 2017: 25–26.

⁷ AN 10.104 at AN V 212,26 and SĀ 787 at T II 204 a26.

lation of near-synonyms that serve to express similar nuances in the repetitive manner that is so characteristic of early Buddhist discourse. As explained by Mark Allon (1997: 191),

A common feature of the prose portions of Pāli canonical sutta texts is the proliferation of similar word elements and units of meaning to form sequences or ‘strings’. We frequently encounter sequences of two, three or more adjectives or adjectival units qualifying the same noun, a number of nouns all acting as the subject of the same sentence or as the object of the same verb. We encounter sequences of adverbs modifying the same verb, or a number of parallel verbs occurring together in the same sentence, and so on.

In the context of the fourth aggregate, the tendency to string together near-synonyms could have provided a starting point for a trend to include increasing numbers of other mental factors or qualities under the same header of *saṅkhāras*. As a final result, the fourth aggregate became an umbrella category that comprises anything that is not explicitly covered by the other aggregates.⁸

⁸ An example in case is Dhs 18,10, which concludes a long list of various factors that, from its viewpoint, pertain to the fourth aggregate by stating that, whatever other immaterial states there are, apart from the aggregates of feeling, perception, and consciousness, all these are to be included in the *saṅkhāra*-aggregate. Bodhi 2000: 45 comments that with “the Abhidhamma Piṭaka and the commentaries the *saṅkhāra-kkhandha* further serves as an umbrella category for classifying all mental concomitants of consciousness apart from feeling and perception. It thus comes to include all wholesome, unwholesome, and variable mental factors mentioned but not formally classified among the aggregates in the Sutta Piṭaka.” Karunaratne 1988: 118 reasons that, given that “or-

This in turn results to some degree in a shift of perspective for the entire scheme of five aggregates. What originally appears to have served as an analysis of how clinging to a sense of identity takes place, now becomes a map of what an individual is made up of.⁹ From singling out chief aspects of the sense of identity, the scheme of five aggregates has evolved into a comprehensive survey that accommodates each and all type of mental factors and qualities. This reflects a drive towards comprehensive coverage that is characteristic of *Abhidharma* analysis and exegesis.¹⁰

thodoxy prevented any addition to the number of *khandhas*”, the exegetical tradition “found an ingenious way to satisfy their own needs as well as the demands of orthodoxy. The restrictive conative signification of *sāṅkhāra* was widened to include all mental factors and accordingly *sāṅkhārakkhandha* was treated anew and transformed into the most spacious and accommodating category among the *khandhas*.” Rhys Davids 1978 [1936]: 324 speaks of the need “to find some pigeonhole wherein to store *the increasing number of terms for mental life, taking shape with the growth of mental analysis*.” McGovern 1872 [1979]: 87 notes that in this way a “most convenient dumping ground was found to be *Samṣkāra*, which thus became a weird medley of otherwise unclassified mental factors.” Cox 1995: 68 notes that, since in the case of the *Sarvāstivāda Abhidharma* the same tendency led to “the addition of the non-mental dissociated factors. The inclusion of these dissociated forces within the *saṃskāraskandha* contributed to a certain tension in the meaning of the term *saṃskāra*.” For Sanskrit fragments of the section on the *cittaviprayuktāḥ saṃskārāḥ* in the *Pañcavastuka* cf. Chung and Fukita 2017: 66–70.

⁹ Hamilton 1996: xxiv and xxix concludes that, in its usage in the Pali discourses, “the analysis of the human being into five *khandhas* is not an analysis of what the human being consists of”; instead, such analysis “is given not in terms of what he or she consists of but in terms of how he or she operates.”

¹⁰ In his study of repetition in Buddhist Sanskrit texts, von Simson 1965: 41

In this way, the fourth aggregate exemplifies a tendency to proliferation of synonyms as a feature of early Buddhist oral transmission and the results to which this can lead. Although the use and deployment of *peyāla* is not confined to oral transmission, but makes its impact similarly in manuscript culture and even modern-day printing, the need for its employment and its broad application is a direct effect of the repetitive nature of early Buddhist orality, a feature so evident in the use of strings of synonyms.

II. Types of Abbreviation Found in the *Skandha-saṃyukta*

In what follows I survey instances of the implementation of the *peyāla* principle in the way these manifest in the *Skandha-saṃyukta* of the *Saṃyukta-āgama*.¹¹ I begin, in the present section II, by exploring the different types of abbreviation found. Then I attempt to

(§ 11.1) considers comprehensive coverage (“Vollständigkeit”) and rhetorical efficacy (“rhetorische Wirksamkeit”) as central driving forces in the construction of series of terms with similar meanings. A shift in function of such formulas from the early discourses to exegetical literature has been identified by von Hinüber 1994: 27, in that what earlier served to facilitate memory becomes building material for the construction of commentaries, “scheint es nicht mehr das Ziel der Verfasser zu sein, eine mündlich konzipierte Prose durch Formeln dem Gedächtnis leichter einprägsam zu gestalten Die frühen Kommentare kehren das Prinzip um und nutzen die Reihung von semantisch verwandten Wörtern zur Kommentierung.” On the beginning stages of *Abhidharma* thought as evident in the early discourses see in more detail Anālayo 2014b.

¹¹ A study of abbreviation and expansion in SĀ 139 to SĀ 187, in comparison with their Pali parallels, has already been undertaken by Paek 1997 (I am indebted to Oskar von Hinüber for drawing my attention to this research).

gauge the amount of text involved in section III, and discuss implications of my findings for understanding and assessing the nature of early Buddhist oral transmission in section IV.

My survey of types of abbreviation follows the order in which the relevant discourses occur in the *Skandha-samyukta*. My presentation corresponds to the reconstructed order of the collection as shown in Table 1 (the numbering of discourses is according to the Taishō edition).

Table 1. Reconstructed Order of the *Skandha-samyukta*

Fascicle no.	<i>Skandha-samyukta</i> Discourses
Fascicle 1	SĀ 1 to SĀ 32
Fascicle 2	SĀ 256 to SĀ 272
Fascicle 3	SĀ 59 to SĀ 87
Fascicle 4	SĀ 33 to SĀ 58
Fascicle 5	SĀ 103 to SĀ 110

The first discourse in the *Skandha-samyukta*, SĀ 1, recommends contemplation of impermanence as a way of implementing right insight, which will lead to disenchantment and liberation. The passage for the first aggregate reads as follows:¹²

當觀色無常。如是觀者，則為正觀；正觀者，則生厭離；厭離者，喜貪盡；喜貪盡者，說心解脫。

You should contemplate bodily form as impermanent. One who contemplates like this achieves right insight. One who has right insight arouses disenchantment. One who has disenchantment eradicates delight and lust. One who eradicates delight and lust, I say, liberates the mind.

¹² SĀ 1 at T II 1a7.

The application of this teaching to each of the five aggregates employs a frequently found type of abbreviation, where the text is only given in full for the first and the last item, whereas the middle items are presented in abbreviated manner. The discourse indicates the need for supplementation in this manner:¹³

如是觀受, 想, 行, 識 ...

In the same way contemplate feeling ... perception ... formations ... consciousness ...

Here the expression 如是, ‘in the same way’, serves as a marker of the fact that an abbreviation has taken place. The discourse gives the full formula of the teaching again for consciousness.

SĀ 1 has two Pali parallels in discourses 12 and 51 of the *Khandha-saṃyutta*.¹⁴ Discourse 12 differs in so far as it first qualifies each of the five aggregates as impermanent and then only turns to disenchantment, etc. Discourse 51, however, proceeds similar to SĀ 1 in so far as here the seeing of the bodily form aggregate as impermanent leads on to the description of right view and disenchantment, etc., before taking up the next aggregate.

In the exposition of the ensuing aggregates, the Burmese, PTS, and Siamese editions of discourse 51 abbreviate only the treatment of perception. Thus in these three editions the text of the contemplation to be carried out is found in full for bodily form and feeling, as well as for formations and consciousness. This shows that the pattern mentioned above of giving in full only the first and last member of a list, although frequently found, is not the default approach for such cases.

¹³ SĀ 1 at T II 1a9.

¹⁴ SN 22.12 at SN III 21,8 and SN 22.51 at SN III 51,13.

The Ceylonese edition, however, follows the pattern also observed in SĀ 1 of abbreviating the exposition of the three middle aggregates and giving the full treatment only for the first and the last, the aggregates of bodily form and consciousness. Thus this Pali edition abbreviates in the same manner as the *Samyukta-āgama* discourse, in contrast to the pattern followed in the other Pali editions.¹⁵

Variations between the Pali editions can also be found in regard to the degree of abbreviation employed for the standard introduction to the discourse. Discourses in the *Skandha-samyukta* give the full formula, showing that, for whatever reason, no need was felt to abbreviate this description. The formula reads as follows:¹⁶

如是我聞：一時佛住舍衛國祇樹給孤獨園。

Thus have I heard.¹⁷ At one time the Buddha was staying at Sāvattḥī in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's Park.

A full version of the introductory formula is found in the first discourse of the *Samyutta-nikāya*, but other discourses in this collection employ abbreviation.¹⁸ The Pali parallels to SĀ 1 abbreviate in different ways:

evaṃ me sutam, sāvattḥiyaṃ tatra kho ... (B^e, E^e and S^e
of discourse 12)

¹⁵ In addition to variations in abbreviation practice between different editions of the Pali canon, the same can be observed when comparing *Samyukta-āgama* discourses transmitted by different groups of reciters within the Mūlasarvāstivāda tradition; cf. Dhammadinnā 2020.

¹⁶ SĀ 1 at T II 1a6.

¹⁷ For a survey of scholarship on this introductory phrase and my reasons for taking the expression 'at one time' to refer to the Buddha's sojourn rather than to the hearing of the discourse see Anālayo 2014a.

¹⁸ SN 1.1 at SN I 1,8: *evaṃ me sutam, ekaṃ samayaṃ bhagavā ...*

sāvatti, tatra 'voca ... (E^c of discourse 51)

sāvattihinidānaṃ ... (B^e of discourse 51)

sāvattiyam ... (C^e of discourse 12, C^e and S^e of discourse 51)

The differences between the Pali editions, together with the fact that the Chinese parallel gives the introduction in full, make it clear that even a bare reference to *Sāvattī* is best reckoned as an abbreviation of the standard introductory formula. It is, in my view, out of the question to take such a reference to designate the place where the discourses were collected, as had been suggested by some scholars.¹⁹

The instructions on the five aggregates in *SĀ* 1 being completed, the discourse proceeds with the following reference:²⁰

¹⁹ Rhys Davids 1924: xi–xii reasons that “it is possible that the *Sāvattī* monastery or monasteries became, at least till the rise of the Asokan empire, the centre where the collecting of Suttas was carried on ... if they are just headed ‘*Sāvattī*’ or *Sāvattī nidānaṃ*, this may not mean that the Buddha’s sojourn at *Sāvattī* is to be ‘taken as read’. It may only mean: ‘Sutta from the *Sāvattī* collection’ ... when, centuries later, the Suttas, possibly for the first time anywhere, were fully written out in Ceylon, it was a natural thing to assume that ‘*Sāvattī*’, with or without *nidānaṃ*, meant more than it originally meant.” Woodward 1930: xviiif agrees, considering it likely that “the whole collection was stored and systematized in *Sāvattī*. We should thus read *nidhāna* (store-house) for *nidāna* (context or connection), and picture to ourselves a sort of college or centre for receiving notes of discourses and fitting them into an arbitrary framework, which is about all we have left to-day ... I conclude that this particular Nikāya was made up at this centre; that some of the discourses happened there; that the words *nidāna* and *nidhāna* have been confused; that *nidāna* refers to the collection of source, and not to the locality, of events.”

²⁰ *SĀ* 1 at T II 1a14; notably this is found before the standard conclusion reporting the delighted reaction of the listening monastics.

如觀無常，苦，空，非我亦復如是。

Just as with contemplating impermanence, in the same way also for *dukkha*, emptiness, and not-self.

Here the need for supplementation takes the form 如, ‘just as’, and 亦復如是, ‘in the same way also’. The usage of these markers implies that another three distinct discourses should be recited; in fact the edition by Master Yinshun 印順(1983: 3) counts each individually, as a result of which SĀ 2 in the Taishō edition becomes the fifth discourse in Yinshun’s edition.

Two of these three additional discourses have a counterpart in the *Khandha-samyutta* in discourses 13 and 14, which take up the same basic type of contemplation found in discourse 12 for impermanence and apply this to *dukkha* and not-self.²¹ This is precisely what results from executing the instructions in SĀ 1 for 苦 and 非我.

The lack of a counterpart to ‘emptiness’, 空, reflects a recurrent pattern in the *Samyukta-āgama* and other texts of related reciter traditions (in the present case, a presentation corresponding to the *Samyukta-āgama* discourse can be found in an Uighur fragment).²²

The pattern is to mention emptiness explicitly, in addition to the three characteristics found regularly in Pali discourses.²³ This in a way illustrates the principle mentioned earlier of the proliferation of near-synonyms that in the course of time can lead to a change of meaning. Whereas in their general usage in the early Buddhist discourses, emptiness and not-self are near-synonyms, once they occur

²¹ SN 22.13 at SN III 21,19 and SN 22.14 at SN III 21,25.

²² Fragment A18, Zhang 1996: 350.

²³ According to de Jong 2000: 177, “a later development is a series of four items, void being added between suffering and not-self.” Baba 2004: 944 concludes that in general “the Northern Āgamas include expressions of emptiness that are more recent than those in the first four Pāli Nikāyas.”

side by side they easily come to be interpreted as conveying different nuances. In the present case, then, with not-self already covered, ‘emptiness’ can be taken to stand for what does not belong to a self.²⁴

Pali discourses 13 and 14 of the *Khandha-samyutta* employ some degree of abbreviation. In the Ceylonese and PTS editions both discourses abbreviate the insight contemplation given in full for discourse 12 with the help of *pe* (the PTS edition explicitly marks the abbreviation with *pe* only for discourse 13). The Burmese and Siamese editions, however, only abbreviate in the case of discourse 13, but give the insight contemplation again in full for discourse 14.

The use of abbreviation is also attested in a Sanskrit fragment parallel to SĀ 1, which has preserved *vistarena yāv*. The same fragment has also preserved *samskārā vijñānam anātm*, which shows the application of the not-self characteristic to the five aggregates.²⁵

The next discourse in the *Skandha-samyukta* follows the same basic pattern, in that SĀ 2 gives the introductory formula in full and abbreviates the middle three aggregates with the help of 如是. The exposition completed, it applies the treatment given to impermanence also to *dukkha*, emptiness, and not-self, this time marked with the help of the similar phrasing 如是 ... 亦復如是.²⁶

In Yinshun’s edition, however, SĀ 2 corresponds just to a single discourse, based on his observation that the relevant *uddāna* refers

²⁴ Yinshun 2017 [1985]: 209 note 17 refers for this type of understanding to the **Mahāvibhāṣā*, T 1545 at T XXVII 45b5: 非我行相對治我見, 空行相對治我所見. As pointed out by Yinshun 2017 [1985]: 31 and 206, the addition of 空 in a way narrows down the meaning of the very term 空, inasmuch as, once ‘not-self’ is already covered by 非我, the additional 空 only conveys the sense of ‘not pertaining to a self’, 非我所.

²⁵ Kha ii 9a2+4, de La Vallée Poussin 1913: 580.

²⁶ SĀ 2 at T II 1a25 where, similar to the case of SĀ 1, the instruction is found before the standard conclusion reporting the delighted reaction of the listening monastics.

only to a single discourse.²⁷ This implies that the formula for expansion (by applying the treatment to *dukkha*, emptiness, and not-self) must be of relatively late occurrence, as it appears to have come into being only after the *uddāna* had already reached its present form. In fact the exposition on impermanence itself (SĀ 2) has a parallel in Pali discourse 52 of the *Khandha-samyutta*, but the other discourses that would result from implementing the abbreviation and applying the same treatment to the other characteristics have no parallel.

In other words, what could at first sight appear to be a substantial difference between the *Samyukta-āgama* and the *Samyutta-nikāya*, resulting in the absence of a Pali parallel for altogether three discourses extant in Chinese (albeit only in abbreviation), is probably just the result of a rather late addition in the *Samyukta-āgama*. Perhaps a mistaken copying of the instructions found at the end of SĀ 1 has led to the present form of SĀ 2.

The pattern of abbreviating the middle three aggregates recurs in SĀ 3, and in this case also in its Pali parallel in the Ceylonese and PTS editions.²⁸ The Burmese and Siamese editions, however, again abbreviate only the case of the third aggregate of perception for the first part of the discourse; only in the second part of the discourse do these editions abbreviate all the middle three aggregates.

A few discourses later in the *Skandha-samyukta*, an indication that the exposition on impermanence should similarly be applied to *dukkha*, emptiness, and not-self can be found again, this time in relation to SĀ 8:²⁹

²⁷ Yinshun 1983: 6 note 11. The *uddāna* is found at T II 1c20: 無常及苦, 空, 非我, 正思惟, 無知等四種, 及於色喜樂. This reflects altogether ten discourses, of which the first four (無常及苦, 空, 非我) correspond to SĀ 1, the fifth (正思惟) to SĀ 2, the next four (無知等四種) to SĀ 3 to SĀ 6, and the last (於色喜樂) to SĀ 7.

²⁸ SĀ 3 at T II 1b1 and SN 22.24 at SN III 27,3.

²⁹ SĀ 8 at T II 1c29.

如無常, 苦, 空, 非我亦復如是。

Just as with impermanence, in the same way also for *dukkha*, emptiness and not-self.

The same pattern is also found in a Sanskrit fragment parallel:³⁰

(e)vaṃ duḥkhaṃ śūnyam anātmā.

The resulting four discourses are recognized in the *uddāna*.³¹ These have three parallels in discourses 9 to 11 of the *Khandha-samyutta*, which cover impermanence, *dukkha*, and not-self.³² The last is also taken up in a discourse quotation in the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*, with a full version of the discourse extant in Tibetan in Śamathadeva's *Abhidharmakośopāyikā-tīkā*.³³

A case of internal abbreviation can be seen in SĀ 15, where a monk approaches the Buddha with the request to be given a teaching for his intended withdrawal into solitude. His original request reads as follows:³⁴

善哉, 世尊, 今當為我略說法要。我聞法已, 當獨一靜處, 修不放逸。修不放逸已, 當復思惟, 所以善男子出家, 剃除鬚髮, 身著法服, 信家非家出家, 為究竟無上梵行, 現法作證: 我生已盡, 梵行已立, 所作已作, 自知不受後有。

It would be well if the Blessed One would now teach me

³⁰ SHT IV 30a R7, Sander and Waldschmidt 1980: 78.

³¹ T II 3a4: 過去四種說。

³² SN 22.9 at SN III 19,16, SN 22.10 at SN III 19,35 and SN 22.11 at SN III 20,15.

³³ Pradhan 1967: 464,5 and Up 9001 at D 4094, *mngon pa, nyu* 77b4 or P 5595, *mngon pa'i bstan bcos, thu* 123a3, translated in Dhammadinnā 2012: 71–72.

³⁴ SĀ 15 at T II 3a8.

the essentials of the Dharma in brief. On having heard the Dharma, I shall practice alone in a quiet place without negligence. Having practiced without negligence, I shall in turn reflect on that for whose sake a clansman's son goes forth, shaves off beard and hair, and puts Dharma robes on the body, out of faith going forth from home to homelessness for the unsurpassed supreme holy life, to realize here and now that 'birth for me has been eradicated, the holy life has been established, what had to be done has been done, I know that for myself there will be no receiving of further existence.'³⁵

Whereas in the Pali version the Buddha directly comes out with the required teaching, in the *Samyukta-āgama* version he first repeats what the monk had said. As the statement is rather long, the repetition employs the abbreviation 乃至, 'up to', reading:³⁶

當為我略說法要，我聞法已，獨一靜處，修不放逸，乃至自知不受後有。

[It would be well if the Blessed One] would [now] teach me the essentials of the Dharma in brief. On having heard the Dharma, I shall practice alone in a quiet place without negligence ... *up to* ... 'knowing that for myself there will be no receiving of further existence'.

³⁵ The Pali counterpart, SN 22.36 at SN III 36,15, is considerable shorter, reading: "It would be well if the Blessed One would now teach me the Dharma in brief so that, on having heard the Dharma from the Blessed One, I might dwell alone, secluded, diligent, energetic, and resolute."

³⁶ SĀ 15 at T II 3a15. Regarding the often used 乃至, Silk 2013 [2014]: 208 notes that "the modularity and formulaic structure of these texts was of course obvious to traditional scribes as well, and their frequent recourse to the use of abbreviations such as *peyālam* (or simply *pe*) or 乃至 *nāizhi* illustrate their conscious awareness of the phenomenon."

The abbreviation itself is unproblematic, as the full passage is found just a few lines earlier. Nevertheless, the beginning part of the quote is shortened, wherefore in the passage above I have supplemented in square brackets the part needed for it to correspond to the original. This is a recurrent pattern in the *Saṃyukta-āgama*, in that abbreviated passages can come with some irregularities.³⁷

The two parallels agree in employing abbreviation also in their respective concluding sections, which report that the monk indeed went into seclusion and eventually became an arahant.³⁸ Here the *Saṃyukta-āgama* discourse again uses 乃至, ‘up to’, which has its counterpart in the *Saṃyutta-nikāya* parallel in *pe*.³⁹

The next discourse in the *Saṃyukta-āgama*, SĀ 16, has the same introductory narration. Hence, after the phrase “At that time a certain monk approached the Buddha”, it employs the following expression.⁴⁰

所問如上, 差別者 ...

What he asked is as above, with the difference ...

This makes it clear that the whole introductory narration needs to be supplemented from the preceding discourse, except for the stipu-

³⁷ As noted by Jantrasrisalai et al. 2016: 35–36, “the application of abbreviation formulae in Buddhist manuscripts is typically somewhat casual and inconsistent.” This is in line with a general pattern where, in the words of Salomon 2011: 167–168, “in practice one often finds a surprising degree of textual variation in the manuscript versions of canonical Buddhist texts. In short, in Buddhism there is an underlying sense, and sometimes even an explicit acknowledgement, that the spirit of the law outweighs its letter.”

³⁸ His secluded practice and eventual realization are also reported in a Sanskrit fragment parallel, Kha ii 10a, Chung 2008: 317,7: *ājñātavān sa bhi[k]ṣur arhan babh[ū]va*.

³⁹ SĀ 15 at T II 3b12 and SN 22.36 at SN III 37,23.

⁴⁰ SĀ 16 at T II 3b15.

lated difference, which is then described right after the above formula. A Sanskrit fragment parallel to SĀ 16 gives the introductory narration in full.⁴¹ The Pali parallel is discourse 35 in the *Khandha-samyutta*, which thus occurs before discourse 36 (the parallel to SĀ 15). In line with their respective positioning in the collection, discourse 35 gives the introductory narration and question in full and discourse 36 employs some degree of abbreviation, although only for the standard formulaic description of how the monk approached the Buddha, paid respect, and sat down.⁴² Regarding the concluding section, in both collections the respectively second discourse has the concluding section with the monk's secluded practice and attainment in a more abbreviated manner than the preceding discourse.⁴³ Clearly, reciters of both collections were expected to supplement in similar ways, an expectation that implies fixed collections in which the sequence of discourses remains stable.

The next three discourses in the *Skandha-samyukta* have the same plot of a monk asking for instructions for secluded practice and eventually becoming an arahant, hence these discourses keep abbreviating both parts with 乃至, 'up to'.⁴⁴ Discourse 20 then consists of

⁴¹ Chung 2008: 318,3 (§ 2a to 3): *athānyataro bhikṣur yena bhagavāms tenopasaṃ(krānta upasaṃkramya bhagavataḥ pādau śirasā vanditvāikānte nyaśīdat ekāntaniṣaṇ)[n](a)ḥ sa bhikṣur bhaga[v](a)m[t](a)m idam av[oca]t: sādhu me bhadaṃta bhagavan saṃkṣiptena dharman deśaya yad ahaṃ bhagavato dharmam [ś]ru[tv]ā eko vya[v](akṛṣṭo 'pramatta ātāpī pravivikto vihareyam).*

⁴² SN 22.36 at SN III 36,13.

⁴³ SĀ 16 at T II 3b26 to 3b27 (compared to SĀ 15 at T II 3b9 to 3b13) and SN 22.36 at SN III 37,22 to 37,24 (compared to SN 22.35 at SN III 36,3 to 36,10).

⁴⁴ SĀ 17 at T II 3c9 and 3c25, SĀ 18 at T II 4a3 and 4a26, and SĀ 19 at T II 4b3 and 4b24 (the last two discourses also abbreviate the Buddha's

only a mention of the title, followed by:⁴⁵

亦如是說。⁴⁶

should also be spoken like this.

This seems to imply that exactly the same discourse as SĀ 19 should be recited again, only with a different title. Notably, this discourse is not taken into account in the *uddāna*.⁴⁷ This suggests that the apparent doubling of a discourse, due to being assigned two different titles, happened only after the *uddāna* had reached its present form. The arising of two different titles is of particular interest in so far as the discourses in the *Skandha-saṃyukta* generally come without titles (including SĀ 19), which can only be reconstructed from the *uddānas*. This in turn suggests that SĀ 20 came into being at a time after the closure of the *uddāna* but before the loss of explicit mention of discourse titles in this section of the *Saṃyukta-āgama* (which might in fact just be a decision taken by the translators into Chinese, although the *uddānas* were translated at least for the *Skandha-saṃyukta*).

The last discourse in the first chapter of the *Skandha-saṃyukta*, of which no Pali parallel is known, employs internal abbreviation.

reply with the help of the same 乃至; cf. SĀ 18 at T II 4a6 and SĀ 19 at T II 4b7).

⁴⁵ SĀ 20 at T II 4b25.

⁴⁶ I follow Yinshun 1983: 30 note 2 who suggests emending 深 to read 染.

⁴⁷ T II 5b26 lists 使 (= SĀ 15), 增諸數 (= SĀ 16), 非我 (= SĀ 17), 非彼 (= SĀ 18), 結繫 (= SĀ 19), 動搖 (= SĀ 21), 劫波所問 (= SĀ 22), 亦羅睺羅所問二經 (= SĀ 23 and SĀ 24). The title for SĀ 20 is 深經, which Yinshun 1983: 30 note 2 suggests emending to 染經. The Pali parallel to both, SN 22.70 at SN III 79,7, has the title *rajanīyasaṅḥita* in the Burmese and PTS editions and just *rajanīya* in the Ceylonese edition (S^c does not give a title).

The exposition in SĀ 32 proceeds as follows:⁴⁸

若沙門婆羅門於色不如實知，色集不如實知，色滅不如實知，色味不如實知，色患不如實知，色離不如實知故，不堪能超越色。

If recluses and brahmins do not know bodily form as it really is, do not know the arising of bodily form as it really is, do not know the cessation of bodily form as it really is, do not know the gratification in bodily form as it really is, do not know the danger in bodily form as it really is, do not know the escape from bodily form as it really is, [then] for this reason they are not able to transcend bodily form.

When it comes to the corresponding case of those who do know, the text takes the following abbreviated form:⁴⁹

若沙門婆羅門於色，色集，色滅，色味，色患，色離如實知，此沙門婆羅門堪能超越色。

If recluses and brahmins know bodily form ... the arising of bodily form ... the cessation of bodily form ... the gratification in bodily form ... the danger in bodily form ... the escape from bodily form as it really is, [then] these recluses and brahmins are able to transcend bodily form.

Here the fact of abbreviation is obvious enough, hence no explicit markers are used. Consultation of the full formula given earlier for the negative case of not knowing is required in order to recognize in what way the passage here has been abbreviated.

Continuing with examples from the second chapter of the recon-

⁴⁸ SĀ 32 at T II 7a14.

⁴⁹ SĀ 32 at T II 7a20.

structed *Skandha-saṃyukta*, a case that shows a feature not yet discussed is SĀ 259 together with its Pali parallels. The discourse reports a discussion between Mahākoṭṭhita and Sāriputta on what a monk, who has not yet attained ‘comprehension of the Dharma’, should give attention to.⁵⁰ The discourse has two Pali parallels found consecutively as discourses 122 and 123 in the *Khandha-saṃyutta*; the only difference between them being that the discussion in discourse 122 starts off with a monk who is ‘virtuous’, *sīlavant*, whereas in discourse 123 the monk is instead qualified as ‘learned’, *sutavant* (neither of the two alternative terms in discourses 122 and 123 corresponds to the expression found in SĀ 259). Thus the existence of two separate discourses in this part of the *Khandha-saṃyutta* is only due to this difference, a difference that could easily have arisen due to an error during oral transmission. The same holds for the case of SĀ 20, discussed above. In the present case the doubling of discourses due to a rather minor difference affects only a single term in one passage in the discourse and, in the case of SĀ 20, the issue at stake is just the title. Both cases are noteworthy inasmuch as they reflect a concern with precision, going so far as to result in the creation of an additional discourse just to accommodate a rather minor difference. The PTS edition in fact explains the difference between the two discourses 122 and 123 in a footnote and then just abbreviates the second discourse as:⁵¹

bārāṇasi-nidānaṃ.

⁵⁰ SĀ 259 at T II 65b12: 比丘未得無間等法 (the expression 無間等 is a rendering of *abhisamaya* regularly employed in T 99), with a parallel in SHT IV 30e V4, Sander and Waldschmidt 1980: 85: *dharmena āyuṣ-
maṃ sārīputra bhikṣuṇā dharmān-abhi[sa](mayati).*

⁵¹ SN 22.123 at SN III 169,5.

The three Asian editions, however, still give the body of the discourse. The above drastic abbreviation would be an editorial decision taken by Leon Feer when preparing this volume of the *Samyutta-nikāya*, originally published in 1890. Thus in this case the introduction of a substantial abbreviation can be dated to the late nineteenth century.

My next example is discourse SĀ 262, which reports an instruction on the impermanent nature of the five aggregates. This instruction is given in abbreviation for the middle three aggregates and without the employment of any marker:⁵²

色無常, 受, 想, 行, 識無常.

Bodily form is impermanent. Feeling ... perception ...
formations ... consciousness is impermanent.

The Pali parallel in discourse 90 of the *Khandha-samyutta* has the corresponding passage in full, reading:⁵³

*rūpaṃ kho, āvuso channa, aniccaṃ, vedanā aniccā, saññā
aniccā, saṅkhārā aniccā, viññāṇaṃ aniccaṃ.*

Another abbreviation occurs in a later section of SĀ 262 in relation to the standard formulation of dependent arising, where only the first two and the last two links are given, such that the intervening part is abbreviated with the help of 乃至, ‘up to’:⁵⁴

緣無明有行, 乃至生, 老, 病, 死, 憂, 悲, 惱, 苦集.

conditioned by ignorance are formations ... *up to* ... birth, old
age, disease, death, worry, sorrow, vexation, and pain arise.

⁵² SĀ 262 at T II 66b13.

⁵³ SN 22.90 at SN III 132,23.

⁵⁴ SĀ 262 at T II 67a5.

The use of this abbreviation presupposes that the reciters were sufficiently familiar with this key doctrine to be able to supplement the missing links, as the full formula had not yet been given in the other discourses in this chapter, or in the preceding first chapter of the *Saṃyukta-āgama*. In fact the full formula does not occur anywhere in the remaining chapters of the *Skandha-saṃyukta*.

In line with the earlier mentioned case of SĀ 15, the abbreviated part of SĀ 262 shows some light irregularity, since the correct statement at the end should be ‘conditioned by birth is old age’. In other words, the part that comes after the abbreviation 乃至 should have read 緣生有老, instead of just 生, 老, and this would more naturally have been followed directly by ‘death’, 死, rather than by ‘disease’, 病.

The situation for the parallel discourse 90 in the *Saṃyutta-nikāya* differs, as in the Pali collection the *Khandha-saṃyutta* comes after the *Nidāna-saṃyutta*, which gives the full formula of dependent arising right away in its first discourse.⁵⁵ Nevertheless, the Ceylonese edition of discourse 90 does not abbreviate and gives the whole formula for the twelve links in full; only the other three editions abbreviate after the first two links.

My next case is SĀ 271, which presents a teaching on the need to be free from lust for the five aggregates. After explaining the problem of lust in regard to the first aggregate of bodily form, the instructions take the following form:⁵⁶

於受, 想, 行, 識不離貪, 不離欲, 不離愛, 不離念, 不離
渴; 彼識若變, 若異, 於汝意云何, 當起憂, 悲, 惱, 苦為
不耶?

Not being separated from lust for feeling ... perception ...
formations ... consciousness, not separated from desire for

⁵⁵ SN 12.1 at SN II 1,16.

⁵⁶ SĀ 271 at T II 71b7.

it, not separated from craving for it, not separated from missing it, not separated from thirsting for it, if that consciousness changes, if it becomes otherwise, what do you think, will worry, sorrow, vexation, and pain arise?

Here the middle three aggregates are only mentioned once, without a marker of abbreviation, and then the remainder of the exposition only covers consciousness. The reply to this question then takes up only the case of consciousness, so that, strictly speaking, it only acknowledges explicitly the detrimental repercussions of lust for bodily form and consciousness (although the other three are of course implied).⁵⁷

In most editions of the corresponding Pali discourse the inquiry is given in full for the first and last aggregate, and for the fourth aggregate of volitional formations with only a minor abbreviation, so that only the cases of feeling and perception are completely abbreviated. In the Ceylonese edition perception alone is completely abbreviated, reading *saññāya pe*.

The pattern of abbreviating the middle members of a list, evident in SĀ 271, can also manifest in relation to the six senses. This can be seen in SĀ 61 (found in the third chapter of the *Skandha-samyukta*), which offers definitions of each of the five aggregates. In the case of feeling, this definition proceeds as follows:⁵⁸

眼觸生受, 耳, 鼻, 舌, 身, 意觸生受; 是名受受陰。

Feeling arisen from eye-contact ... ear- ... nose- ... tongue- ... body- ... feeling arisen from mind-contact. This is called the feeling aggregate of clinging.

⁵⁷ In the parallel SN 22.84 at SN III 107,10+16+23 the replies just take the affirmative form *evaṃ bhante*, without going into further details.

⁵⁸ SĀ 61 at T II 15c23; the discourse does not have a Pali parallel.

Here the abbreviation goes so far as to dispense even with a reference to ‘contact’ for the senses in the middle portion. The same pattern of abbreviation, without an explicit marker, occurs in a Tibetan parallel in Śāmathadeva’s *Abhidharmakośopāyikā-tīkā*, so much so that the above translation of the Chinese can equally serve as a rendering of the Tibetan passage below:⁵⁹

mig gi ’dus te reg pa las skyes pa’i tshor ba dang, rna ba dang, sna dang, lce dang, lus dang, yid kyi ’dus te reg pa las skyes pa’i tshor ba ste. ’di ni tshor ba nye bar len pa’i phung po zhes bya’o.

In the case of the next aggregate of perception, the Tibetan version maintains its earlier pattern, but the Chinese abbreviates further, this time employing the marker 乃至, ‘up to’ (as also done for the remaining aggregates).⁶⁰

眼觸生想，乃至意觸生想；是名想受陰。

Perception arisen from eye-contact ... *up to* ... perception arisen from mind-contact. This is called the perception aggregate of clinging.

My next example, SĀ 64, describes consciousness that is not established anywhere in the following manner:⁶¹

識不住東方，南，西，北方。

⁵⁹ Up 1016 at D 4094, *mngon pa, ju* 18a6 or P 5595, *mngon pa’i bstan bcos, tu* 20a7; translated in Dhammadinnā 2013: 126.

⁶⁰ SĀ 61 at T II 15c26.

⁶¹ SĀ 64 at T II 17a17; the parallel SN 22.55 at SN III 58,22 describes the unestablished condition of consciousness without any reference to the four directions.

Consciousness is not established in the eastern direction,
the southern ... the western ... the northern direction.

In line with a standard pattern, the middle members of a list are given in an abbreviated form, without any need for an explicit marker.

The subsequent discourse in the *Skandha-samyukta*, SĀ 65, continues after its formal conclusion with a list of other discourses that should similarly be recited. This reads as follows:⁶²

如觀察，如是分別，種種分別，知，廣知，種種知，親近，
親近修，習，入，觸，證，二經亦如是廣說。⁶³

As for ‘examining’, in the same way for ‘analysing’, ‘analysing in various ways’, ‘understanding’, ‘widely understanding’, ‘understanding in various ways’, ‘becoming familiar with’, ‘becoming familiar with by cultivating’, ‘practicing’, ‘engaging with’, ‘contacting’, and ‘realizing’, (twelve) discourses should also be recited fully in the same way.

SĀ 65 has a parallel in discourse 5 of the *Khandha-samyutta*,⁶⁴ but the additional twelve discourses that would result from executing the above instruction are without a Pali parallel. The next three discourses in the *Skandha-samyukta* have a similar instruction at their end, which is in turn further abbreviated, as follows:⁶⁵

如觀察，如是乃至作證十二經，亦應廣說。

⁶² SĀ 65 at T II 17b14.

⁶³ The mention of ‘two’, 二, needs to be emended by adding +, ‘ten’; see Yinshun 1983: 111 note 3.

⁶⁴ SN 22.5 at SN III 13,29.

⁶⁵ The first quote is taken from SĀ 66 at T II 17c9, the second corresponds to SĀ 67 at T II 18a5 and SĀ 68 at T II 18a23.

As for ‘examining’, in the same way ... *up to* ... ‘realizing’, twelve discourses should also be recited fully in the same way.

如觀察, 乃至作證十二經, 亦如是廣說。

As for ‘examining’ ... *up to* ... ‘realizing’, twelve discourses should also be recited fully in the same way.

Here the abbreviated reference to a set of discourses needs first to be expanded by recourse to the previous abbreviated reference to a set of discourses. Without access to SĀ 65, one would be at a loss to know what comes between ‘examining’ and ‘realizing’ so as to result in altogether twelve activities that then can lead to the recitation of corresponding separate discourses.

SĀ 66 has a parallel in the discourse 5 of the *Khanda-saṃyutta*, but the other two, SĀ 67 and SĀ 68, have no Pali parallel. As a net result of this situation, none of the forty-eight discourses mentioned in these abbreviated recitation instructions has a Pali counterpart.

Another abbreviation in SĀ 66 comes after a detailed instruction on how a lack of examining arising, gratification, danger, and escape leads to delighting, craving, and attachment. Having been expounded in relation to bodily form, the same is then applied to the other aggregates in the following manner:⁶⁶

受, 想, 行, 識亦如是廣說。

Feeling ... perception ... formations ... consciousness
should also be recited fully in the same way.

Most editions of the Pali version instead adopt the pattern of giving the exposition in full for the first and last aggregate and abbreviating

⁶⁶ SĀ 66 at T II 17b24.

the three middle ones;⁶⁷ the Ceylonese edition, however, only abbreviates the case of perception.

A pattern similar in kind to the one mentioned above in relation to SĀ 262 occurs in SĀ 68, where the links of dependent arising from craving to *dukkha* are presented in this manner:⁶⁸

緣受生愛, 乃至純大苦聚生。

In dependence on feeling, craving arises ... *up to* ... this entire great mass of *dukkha* arises.

Clearly, someone not sufficiently familiar with the links of dependent arising would have stood little chance of performing a successful recitation of the *Skandha-samyukta*.

The next discourse, SĀ 69, has three instructions regarding how recitation should be carried out in full. According to the first two of these three, the treatment given to bodily form should be similarly executed for the other aggregates; the third makes it clear that three more discourses should be executed in the same manner. The two instructions read as follows:⁶⁹

如是受, 想, 行, 識廣說。

In the same way feeling ... perception ... formations ... consciousness are to be recited in full.

如色, 受, 想, 行, 識亦如是。

As for bodily form, in the same way also for feeling ... perception ... formations ... consciousness.

⁶⁷ SN 22.5 at SN III 14,9; the exposition of consciousness is slightly abbreviated at its end.

⁶⁸ SĀ 68 at T II 18a11; the passage has already been translated in Choong 2000: 45. SĀ 68 does not have a Pali parallel.

⁶⁹ SĀ 69 at T II 18b4, 18b11 and 18b15.

如當說，有，及當知，亦如是說。

As for ‘I will teach’, [so with] ‘there is’ and ‘you should understand’, [discourses] should also be recited in the same way.

Whereas SĀ 69 has a parallel in discourse 44 of the *Khandha-saṃyutta*,⁷⁰ the additional discourses resulting from the above recitation instruction do not have a Pali parallel. The same type of instruction to execute two further discourses occurs at the end of SĀ 70.⁷¹ In this case, a Pali parallel in discourse 103 of the *Khandha-saṃyutta* corresponds to the first alternative mentioned in the above recitation instruction, rather than to SĀ 70 itself.⁷² The recitation instructions to expand SĀ 69 and SĀ 70 to become three discourses each are reflected in the relevant *uddāna*.⁷³

The next discourse, SĀ 71, has a whole series of recitation instructions for further discourses. The original discourse begins with the Buddha stating, ‘I will now teach you’. The first injunction for reciting another discourse indicates the following:⁷⁴

餘如是說，差別者：當知 ...

Another [discourse] is to be recited in the same way, with the difference: ‘you should understand ...’

⁷⁰ SN 22.44 at SN III 44,1.

⁷¹ SĀ 70 at T II 18b27.

⁷² In SN 22.103 at SN III 158,1 the actual exposition sets in by just stating the matter at hand, which thus corresponds to the alternative ‘there is’, 有, in the recitation instructions in SĀ 70.

⁷³ T II 19a2: 其道有三種，實覺亦三種。

⁷⁴ SĀ 71 at T II 18c12. The discourse has a parallel in Śamathadeva’s *Abhidharmakośopāyikā-ṭīkā*, Up 5006 at D 4094, *mngon pa, ju* 268b1 or P 5595, *mngon pa’i bstan bcos, thu* 11b4, translated by Dhammadinnā 2013: 130–131.

Then comes a paragraph with four phrases that should replace the original ‘I will now teach you’, followed by the standard conclusion to a discourse reporting the delighted reaction of the audience. Then comes the next instruction:⁷⁵

如當說, 有, 及當知, 亦如是說, 又復差別者 ...

As for ‘I will teach’, ‘there is’, and ‘you should understand’, [discourses] should also be recited in the same way; again with the difference ...

The first part refers back to SĀ 71, in that the introductory phrase ‘I will teach’ should be replaced with the other two phrases. Then the same SĀ 71 should be recited with an additional description of a monastic who by dint of successfully applying the teaching becomes an arahant. This description occurs after the reference ‘again with the difference’.

Another five times instructions occur indicating variations to be applied to this description. Four of these express the same basic meaning of the monastic becoming an arahant in different terms, whereas the remaining one adds an explanatory gloss on some of the epithets used in the previously mentioned description of an arahant. The instruction itself reads each time:⁷⁶

又復差別者 ...

Again [it should be recited] with this difference ...

The *uddāna* clarifies that the final result should be four discourses on modes of teaching and six discourses related to the arahant.⁷⁷ The

⁷⁵ SĀ 71 at T II 18c15.

⁷⁶ SĀ 71 at T II 18c18, 18c20, 18c22, 18c23 and 18c27. The instructions are cryptic and I am indebted to the discussion in Su 2009 for enabling me to make sense of them.

⁷⁷ T II 19a3: 有身四種說, 羅漢有六種.

series of discourses that results from executing these instructions has a single parallel in discourse 105 of the *Khandha-saṃyutta*.⁷⁸

An example for a truncated reference to the five aggregates can be seen in another discourse, SĀ 75, which takes the following form:⁷⁹

有五受陰。何等為五？謂色受陰。

There are five aggregates of clinging. What are the five?

That is, they are the bodily form aggregate of clinging.

The discourse continues by examining the bodily form aggregate and thus fails to list the remaining four aggregates. Although the Pali parallel does not have an introductory statement on the five aggregates,⁸⁰ a Sanskrit fragment parallel has preserved the following:⁸¹

(*upā*)*dānaskandhaḥ vedanā saṃjñā*.

This makes it fairly probable that the passage quoted above from SĀ 75 is the result of textual loss, rather than being a radical form of abbreviation. The present case thereby serves to draw attention to the possibility of textual corruption. Due to the recurrent lack of use of a marker of abbreviation, such a case is less easily identified. Nevertheless it needs to be kept in mind that what at times appears to be an abbreviation at first sight, might on closer inspection turn out to be a loss of text.

The survey so far has already covered most of the type of abbreviations found in the *Skandha-saṃyukta*, so that the material to be considered from the remaining two chapters is considerably less. A

⁷⁸ SN 22.105 at SN III 159,6.

⁷⁹ SĀ 75 at T II 19b22.

⁸⁰ SN 22.58 at SN III 65,22.

⁸¹ SHT IV 30b R3, Sander and Waldschmidt 1980: 80.

case that shows how the same passage can be abbreviated in different ways is SĀ 38. The preceding discourse SĀ 37 and the Pali parallel to both, discourse 94 in the *Khandha-samyutta*, do not abbreviate in a comparable manner. Here is the original passage from SĀ 38, followed by two abbreviated repetitions:⁸²

有世間法，我自知自覺，為人分別演說顯示，知見而說，世間盲無目者不知不見。世間盲無目者不知不見，我其如之何？

There is a [worldly] phenomenon in the world which I have myself understood and myself realized, and which I analyse, explain, and disclose to people, speaking with knowledge and vision. Those in the world who are blind and without vision do not understand and do not see it. What can I do about those in the world who are blind and without vision, who do not understand and do not see it?

云何世間世間法，我自知自覺，乃至不知不見？

What is the worldly phenomenon in the world that I have myself understood, myself realized ... *up to* ... who do not understand and do not see it?

是名世間世間法，我自知自見，乃至盲無目者不知不見，其如之何？

This is called the worldly phenomenon in the world that I have myself understood, myself realized ... *up to* ... what can I do about those who are blind and without vision, who do not understand and do not see it?

Here the second instance is more heavily abbreviated than the third. Now once the reciter is expected to expand the first abbreviated pas-

⁸² SĀ 38 at T II 8c16, 8c19 and 8c22.

sage with the full formula, there would be no need to supply more material for the same purpose on a subsequent occasion. Thus the fact that the last statement is less heavily abbreviated than the previous one would be due to the influence of a recurrent pattern, when abbreviating lists, to give not only the first member, but also the last member in full or at least in a more expanded form than the middle members.

An instance of abbreviation that requires recourse to the preceding discourses in the collection can be found in SĀ 40. The passage proceeds in this way:⁸³

色封滯識住, 受, 想, 行封滯識住, 乃至非境界故。

Engaging with bodily form, consciousness is established, engaging with feeling ... perception ... formations, consciousness is established ... *up to* ... because this is outside the sphere of experience.

The discourse itself provides no further clue as to what needs to be supplemented so that the passage links up to the idea of being outside the sphere of someone's experience. In order to locate the relevant material, recourse to the preceding discourse SĀ 39 is required, according to which the claim cannot be upheld that consciousness could be established apart from the other four aggregates, as that is outside of the claimant's sphere of experience.⁸⁴ The same indication occurs also in the Pali parallel to SĀ 40 and probably in a Sanskrit fragment parallel, which has preserved parts of a corresponding passage.⁸⁵

⁸³ SĀ 40 at T II 9b1.

⁸⁴ SĀ 39 at T II 9a11. The same need to have recourse to the preceding discourses arises again in SĀ 40 at T II 9b4: 乃至清淨真實, which needs to be supplemented with material from SĀ 39.

⁸⁵ SN 22.53 at SN III 53,15 and fragment Kha ii 6b, de La Vallée Poussin

An abbreviation of the noble eightfold path on its second and subsequent occurrences in a particular discourse can be seen in SĀ 42, where only the first occurrence lists all factors. The second instance reads:⁸⁶

正見乃至正定。

Right view ... *up to* ... right concentration.

The editions of the Pali parallel right away abbreviate the noble eightfold path by mentioning only its first and last member.⁸⁷

A cross reference to an *Ekottarika-āgama* collection can be found in SĀ 52; in fact the discourse in question consists only of this reference. After giving the title of the discourse, this reference reads:⁸⁸

如增一阿含經四法中說。

It should be recited as in the Fours of the *Ekottarika-āgama*.

This would be a reference to a Mūlasarvāstivāda *Ekottarika-āgama* collection, such that they could supplement a whole discourse from it. It is noteworthy that a discourse comes up for recitation that has already been included in another discourse collection. Perhaps even more remarkable is the fact that, as the very use of this abbreviation shows, reciters of the *Samyukta-āgama* were apparently expected to be able to supplement it easily, be this from memory or from access to a written copy of this collection.

1913: 574.

⁸⁶ SĀ 42 at T II 10b11.

⁸⁷ SN 22.57 at SN III 62,16.

⁸⁸ SĀ 52 at T II 12c3; see also Yao 2020 on the related phenomenon of abbreviated references to discourses in the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya*.

A cross-reference to another discourse can also be seen in SĀ 106 in the fifth chapter of the *Skandha-saṃyukta*, which takes the following form:⁸⁹

如焰摩迦契經廣說，乃至 ...

As spoken fully in the ‘Discourse to Yamaka’, *up to* ...

Fortunately the ‘Discourse to Yamaka’, from which the required material is to be supplied, occurs just two discourses earlier in the same chapter of the *Skandha-saṃyukta* and thus is considerably easier accessed than the earlier reference to a discourse from the *Ekottarika-āgama*. In the *Khandha-saṃyutta* the two corresponding Pali discourses follow each other immediately and the instruction in discourse 86 does not explicitly refer to the preceding discourse to Yamaka for any supplementation.⁹⁰

III. Quantifying Abbreviations in the *Skandha-saṃyukta*

The above survey shows different types of abbreviation in use in the *Skandha-saṃyukta*, which could be distinguished into those that are either ‘marked’ or else ‘unmarked’. Various markers can be used to indicate that an abbreviation has taken place or to give instructions regarding how a passage should be supplemented, such as 如是, ‘in the same way’, or 乃至, ‘up to’, etc. But at times abbreviations occur without any marker. Another distinction could be made between ‘internal’ and ‘external’ abbreviations. At times the passage to be sup-

⁸⁹ SĀ 106 at T II 32c27.

⁹⁰ SN 22.86 at SN III 116,1.

plemented is found internally, within the same discourse, but at other times it is placed externally, in the sense of being found in another discourse in the same collection (or on one occasion even in a different discourse collection). The following four types of abbreviation result from the above distinctions:

- marked and internal
- marked and external
- unmarked and internal
- unmarked and external

In addition to these four types of abbreviation, a fifth alternative to be kept in mind is the possibility that a passage could have suffered from textual loss and does not involve an intentional abbreviation.

In order to gain an impression of the degree to which text has been abbreviated, and of the frequency of each of these four types of abbreviation, I have implemented all instructions for supplementation with the required material in the *Skandha-samyukta*.⁹¹ For this purpose, I have mostly followed Yinshun's understanding of the implications of a particular abbreviation, whenever this was unclear. An exception is SĀ 2, where I have adopted the instruction in the Taishō edition to supplement another three discourses, whereas Yinshun has not followed this instruction because the resultant discourses are not mentioned in the respective *uddāna*. In other words,

⁹¹ I have taken out recitation instructions like 乃至, 'up to', so that these are not counted as either original text or as supplemented text. A few times the original had the first and last statement in full, but with slight differences in formulation. I have followed the formulation in the first statement for my supplementations and also adjusted the last statement accordingly (adjustments which hardly influence the word count of the material reckoned as original).

I have simply taken the text in the Taishō edition as it is, rather than attempting to improve on it.⁹²

A case where I have been unable to execute the instructions is SĀ 52, as this gives only the title and then enjoins to supplement the body of the discourse from the *Ekottarika-āgama*. Without access to this collection, nothing can be done in terms of supplementation. Hence I leave SĀ 52 completely out of account.

Based on a character count of the bare text of the *Skandha-saṃyukta*, with all annotations, punctuation, etc., removed and with the required supplementations carried out, I arrive at about 31% original text (without its *peyāla* markers) and about 69% supplementation. In other words, as illustrated in Figure 1, about two thirds of the full text of the *Skandha-saṃyukta* is present only by way of abbreviation.

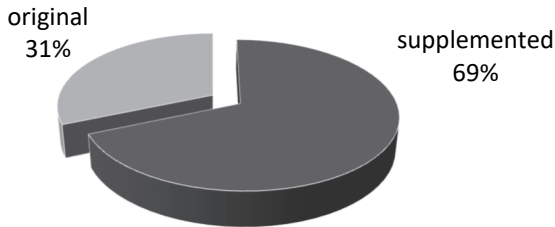


Figure 1. Ratio between Original and Supplemented Text
in the *Skandha-saṃyukta*

The substantial role placed by abbreviation can be further explored by examining how much of it corresponds to the four types identi-

⁹² Thus I have also left out a correction given at T II 65c1 in the CBETA edition, on which my research is otherwise based. In the case of SĀ 65, I have followed the recitation instructions, which result in twelve discourses, and emended the reference ‘two’ to ‘twelve’, as discussed above.

fied above. Here the category of abbreviations that are not marked and are external, in the sense that they need to be supplemented from outside of a discourse, occurs very rarely. This is the case to such an extent that the character count does not even reach up to 1% of the total of abbreviations. Due to its lack of statistical significance, I leave this category out of the survey below in Figure 2.

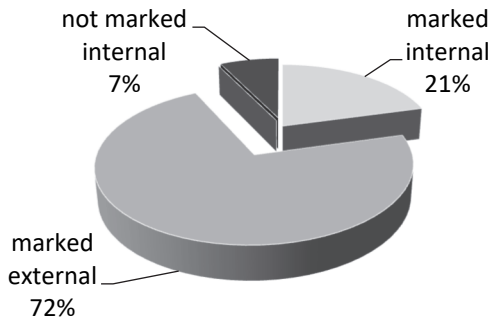


Figure 2. Ratio between Different Types of Supplemented Texts

Regarding the remaining three categories, particularly notable is that marked abbreviations are the clear majority, accounting for 93% of the material all together. This does not reflect the frequency of occurrence of this type, as unmarked abbreviations occur fairly frequently. But these usually concern only a few terms that need to be added, hence the amount of material that results from this type of abbreviation is relatively small.

Out of the marked abbreviations, particularly prominent are those that are external, in the sense of needing to be supplemented from outside of the discourses in which they occur. These amount to about 72% of all abbreviated material. In contrast, abbreviations to be sup-

plemented from within the same discourse amount to only about 28%.

The category of abbreviations that are marked and external accommodates a single reference to another discourse by name and a few instances where similar material is found in the previous text. The bulk of the contribution made by this category, however, is due to the additional discourses that result from recitation instructions given to the effect that the text of a discourse should be repeated in full in the form of another discourse on its own, with a few specified changes. This ‘proliferation of discourses’, if it can be called such, appears to have substantially increased the percentage of material that in the *Skandha-saṃyukta* is present only in abbreviation.

Before exploring this further, I would like to note that the tendency to create a series of discourses based on at times rather minor textual variations is not confined to the reciters of the *Saṃyukta-āgama*. The same tendency is also plainly evident in the textual material analysed in the contribution by Rupert Gethin to this volume (Gethin 2020). Such instances in the Pali collections seem to reflect a similar tendency to proliferation as evident in the *Skandha-saṃyukta*.

In order to explore the impact of such proliferation of discourses in the *Skandha-saṃyukta*, I have removed all additional discourses that had come into being through following the recitation instructions. As a result, the ratio between original and supplemented text changes substantially, as illustrated in Figure 3.

Now only about 40% is supplemented text and 60% original. In other words, when only abbreviations that concern the body of the same discourse are supplemented, the additional material is less than the amount of text that is already there.

Nevertheless, even leaving aside the extra discourses created by following the recitation instructions, the use of other forms of abbreviation still accounts for a substantial portion of text, about 40%.

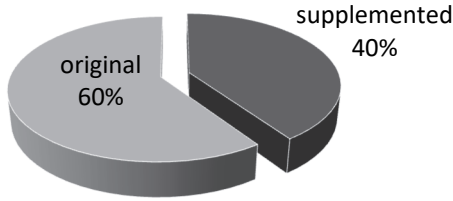


Figure 3. Ratio between Original and Supplementation
When Additional Discourses Are Left out of Account

IV. *Peyāla* and the Early Buddhist Oral Tradition

The quantitative analysis shows the degree to which *peyāla* finds employment in the *Skandha-samyukta*. Needless to say, abbreviation can only perform its function properly as long as the reciters know in what way the text is to be supplemented. At times this is evident enough, for instance when the middle members of a particular list are given in short. Such cases do not even require an explicit marker. No markers are also needed when standard formulas are shortened. Such shortening usually involves an abbreviation of something that can be supplemented from within the same discourse.

According to the quantitative analysis, abbreviations that are not marked and need to be supplemented from outside of a discourse occur so rarely that they are statistically insignificant. What falls into this category are standard lists of terms like the noble eightfold path or the series of dependent arising, which are so well known that they can be given in abbreviation even when no template for filling this up is found within the same discourse. This finding in turns makes

it in my view somewhat less probable that unmarked abbreviation can be taken as a ready-at-hand explanation for substantially different passages in parallel versions of a discourse, involving, for example, the presence or the absence of a full account of the gradual path of training.

Now the recurrent pattern of abbreviating the middle members of a particular list could well harken back to the period of oral transmission. The texts regularly exhibit a feature where a particular statement is followed by a detailed exposition that leads up to a repetition of the initial statement. This type of procedure clearly reflects the oral setting, where the speaker(s) had to make sure that the audience keeps in mind the main topic. The abbreviation of middle members of a list appears to follow the same pattern, as once the full formula is given for the first member of the list, it would seem more natural to abbreviate the entire remainder of the list. The fact that this is not done could well be due to the fact that some degree of abbreviation was already in use in the oral setting, in particular coming in handy as a time saving measure when having to recite a larger portion of text. In such a situation, it would have been natural for such abbreviation to follow the model set by the texts themselves, namely to repeat once more at the end what was stated at the outset. Other cases of abbreviation, however, seem to reflect the written medium.

The use of markers like 乃至, ‘up to’, or 如是, ‘in the same way’, come in handy for passages that are to be supplemented from a similar occurrence earlier in the same discourse. The need to make sure that the reciters know what to do would explain why marked abbreviations account for a high proportion of the supplemented material.

Decisions on when *peyāla* is required differ. Whereas the *Skandha-saṃyukta* in its present form does not reflect a felt need to abbreviate

the standard introductory formula to a discourse, the information about the discourse being ‘thus heard’ and the whereabouts of the Buddha are expressed with a variety of shortened phrases in the parallel Pali discourses.

The proliferation of synonyms, evident in the case of the fourth aggregate of *sāṅkhāras*, can also be seen in the tendency in the *Skandha-samyukta* to mention ‘emptiness’ in addition to ‘not-self’, apparently considered sufficiently important to warrant the recitation of two separate discourses with otherwise equal content to express these two nuances.

The same concern to make sure that even a small nuance in difference is not lost expresses itself also in the instruction to recite the exact same discourse again in order to do justice to an alternative title or to an alternative term somewhere in the exposition. This phenomenon is so pervasive that it can safely be taken to express a basic concern of the transmitters and reciters of the early discourses. As pointed out by Allon (1997: 358), regarding the employment of repetition in Pali discourses,

the scale on which this is pursued, that is the proportion of the text involved, [can hardly be seen] as anything other than proof, or at least as a very strong indication, that these texts were designed to be memorised and transmitted verbatim ... In contrast, material such as the contemporary Yugoslav epics ... which is composed ‘during the performance’, although exhibiting many forms of repetition, does not exhibit the form of gross repetition encountered in Pāli sutta texts.

In fact an application of the research by Parry and Lord on Yugoslav epics to early Buddhist discourse literature is problematic in several

respects. From a methodological viewpoint, it involves a category mistake, inasmuch as conclusions drawn from epic material cannot be taken as a self-evident standard when evaluating material that is not epic and situated in a substantially different performance context.⁹³ As pointed out by William Graham (1987: 138), the

oral use and even oral transmission of scripture should not be confused with folk oral tradition in which verbatim accuracy is not aspired to (i.e., in which ‘formulaic composition’ predominates: see, for example, Albert B. Lord, *The Singer of Tales* ...).

It is also problematic in so far as it can easily appear to stand in continuity with the colonial and post-colonial cultural arrogance of insisting to consider everything non-Western from the sole viewpoint of Western experiences and research. This makes it to my mind indispensable to try to come to terms with the early Buddhist oral tradition on its own cultural terms and situated within its ancient Indian context, rather than resorting to Western models. In other words, rather than Yugoslavian epic, the oral transmission of Vedic texts should be the model against which early Buddhist oral transmission is evaluated.

One of the differences that emerge from such comparison is that the average early Buddhist reciter need not have gone through the rigorous memorization training that a Vedic reciter was expected to undergo from early youth onwards. This makes errors and variations only natural. Moreover, alongside the texts to be transmitted, a growing body of oral commentary came into existence. Given that

⁹³ I already presented this and several other related arguments in Anālayo 2014a and 2015, building on research by von Hinüber 1989 and 1994, Allon 1997 and Wynne 2004.

one of the shortcomings of human memory is to conflate original information with individual inferences drawn, it is again only natural if new material of an original commentarial type should have made its way into the discourses. As I have shown elsewhere, there is substantial evidence corroborating precisely the integration of commentarial material into the early discourses (Anālayo 2010b). This would provide a model for appreciating an evident concern with precision, which is also apparent in the proliferation of different discourses just to accommodate a minor variation in title or a term, discussed above, with an equally evident integration of new material.

In an insightful study of *peyāla* in the *Samyutta-nikāya*, Gethin (2007: 383 and note 25) concludes that:

although over time these repetition sections have become more or less fixed, they originally seem to have been composed in a manner that invites addition and expansion—within certain parameters ... I would wish to stand by the claim that there are good reasons for thinking of different recensions of Buddhist texts crystallizing after a period of somewhat freer composition and adaptation.⁹⁴

As far as I can see, the proposal of an initial period of free improvisation has no firm grounding in the evidence at our disposal. This evidence rather shows that patterns of change were continuous and not something that happened only at an early stage. The same is also evident from the survey in this paper of the practice of abbreviation. Although some abbreviations may well hark back to very early times,

⁹⁴ McGovern 2016: 209 note 4 similarly states: “I believe that the evidence points strongly in favor of Cousins’ original intuition ... that there may have been an improvisational element involved comparable to the epic poetry studied by Parry and Lord.”

others are clearly late, as evident by consulting their parallels or the respective *uddānas*. In fact substantial differences in this and other respects can occur even between parallel Pali discourses, which could clearly not be the product of an early period of improvisation only (Anālayo 2014a: 52–53).

Besides, the texts themselves reflect an ongoing concern with correct reproduction of the oral material to be transmitted. An illustrative example in case is the monastic code of rule, a text that clearly involves fixed wording, leaving no room for an improvisatory model. Still, numbers of differences can be found between the codes of rules of different monastic traditions (Anālayo 2020: 396–405), and these differences are of the same type as those found between parallel discourses.

At times it seems as if the attempt of the reciters to remember precisely has preserved formal aspects, even though the meaning has been lost, a pattern for which Georg von Simson (1965: 137–138) gives the following examples:

vivattacchaddo – *vighuṣṭaśabdo*

brahmujjuggatto – *brhadṛjugātro*

muducittaṃ – *muditacittaṃ*

aññataro – *ājñātavān*

sammodi sammodanīyaṃ – *sammukhaṃ sammodanīṃ*

Such errors are not the result of an early period of free improvisation, but rather must be due to failed attempts to preserve with precision. In sum, what research has brought to light so far concurs with the emic perspective, in that the type of improvisation that is characteristic for the Yugoslavian bard is not relevant to a proper understanding of early Buddhist oral tradition. I believe it is time to

set this model aside so as to enable an appreciation of the strengths and weaknesses of the early Buddhist oral tradition on its own terms, culturally by situating it in its ancient Indian context and genre-wise by distinguishing it from epic material.

With such a proposal I in no way intend to encourage turning a blind eye to differences. In other publications I have relied precisely on at times substantial differences between parallel versions in order to discern, for example, the beginnings of the *bodhisattva* ideal (Anālayo 2010a and 2017). Many more examples could be mentioned, but suffice it to say that the differences that emerge from comparative studies are precisely what makes the early discourses such a fertile field for research and exploration.

The assumption of an initial period of free improvisation would also not work for an extreme case of the use of *peyāla* found in a discourse in the *Madhyama-āgama*, without any known parallel.⁹⁵ This discourse could hardly have ever been recited in full, as on supplementing all the material that has been abbreviated, it would become more than twice as long as the entire *Madhyama-āgama* collection (which takes several days of recital) (Anālayo 2014b: 44–47). In other words, this case could only have come into being after the period of oral transmission was over. Nevertheless, content-wise the discourse stays well within the compass of early Buddhist thought. In other words, the building blocks for this discourse are simply taken from other discourses, an itself natural tendency in oral transmission.⁹⁶ Thus even this case, where *peyāla* has clearly run riot

⁹⁵ MĀ 222 at T I 805c11 to 809a25.

⁹⁶ As observed by Allon 1997: 367, “the insertion of another list of, say, ‘five good things’ in a text containing a parallel list of fives would not be a violation of *buddhavacana*, because the Buddha had in fact spoken of these ‘five good things’ on another occasion.”

and become an exercise in its own right rather than being an actual abbreviation of a text that existed in full, the material itself does not carry any innovation. This conforms with the other cases of abbreviation surveyed here and in Gethin's (2020) contribution to this volume, which similarly proliferate in various ways without resulting in substantial innovation.

Conclusion

The principle of *peyāla* has a pervasive influence in the text studied in this paper, the *Skandha-saṃyukta* of the *Saṃyukta-āgama* extant in Chinese translation, to the extent that nearly two thirds of the full text is now only represented in an abbreviated manner. At times the need to supplement abbreviated material is explicitly marked as such, but at others times abbreviations take place without a marker. These cases need to be distinguished from the occurrence of accidental loss of text. The textual material to be employed for supplementation can be found either internally, in the same discourse, or else externally, in another discourse. In one instance the instructions even refer to a discourse from a no longer extant *Ekottarika-āgama* as the source for supplementation.

Decisions on when to use *peyāla* were clearly not taken only at an early period, but rather reflect an ongoing process of negotiation. Just as it would have been convenient for individual rehearsal to abbreviate standard passages in order to be able to recite a collection of texts swiftly, similarly in a manuscript culture and even in modern day printing the same principle has retained its advantages. Its pervasive use in early Buddhist literature reflects the equally pervasive occurrence of repetition, a characteristic of an oral tradition that

needed to employ this and other means in an attempt at precise transmission. Precise transmission was sometimes hampered by the limitations of human memory and the ongoing flowing in of new ideas and understandings via the medium of commentary during oral performance.

Taken together, these various aspects point to the richness of the material at hand, a close study of which enables identifying the beginning stages of a range of developments that had a considerable impact on later Buddhist traditions.

Abbreviations

AN	<i>Aṅguttara-nikāya</i>
B ^e	Burmese edition
C ^e	Ceylonese edition
CBETA	Chinese Buddhist Electronic Text Association
D	Derge edition
E ^e	European edition (PTS)
EĀ	<i>Ekottarika-āgama</i> (T 125)
Dhs	<i>Dhammasaṅgaṇī</i>
P	Peking edition
PTS	Pali Text Society
S ^e	Siamese edition
SĀ	<i>Samyukta-āgama</i> (T 99)
SN	<i>Samyutta-nikāya</i>
T	Taishō 大正 edition (CBETA)
Up	<i>Abhidharmakośopāyikā-ṭīkā</i>
< >	emendation
[]	supplementation

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